

First Impressions:  
American Muslim Perspectives on the  
9/11 Commission Report:

AMERICAN MUSLIM TASK FORCE

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## Foreword

The mandate of the American Muslim Task Force (AMTF) is to provide preliminary analysis and a foundation for a continued discourse regarding the short- and long-term implications of the 9/11 Commission Report. This publication should serve as a resource for further dialogue and analysis.

As an integral part of the fabric of this society, American Muslims must be fully engaged in all discourse that impacts our nation. Our unique position as Muslims in America necessitates our having an independent voice in matters pertaining to civil rights and liberties, national security and the well being of the country. As responsible citizens, modeling the complementary nature of both Islamic and American values, we need to ensure that our response is balanced, relevant and non-reactionary.

The contributions in this publication are meant to facilitate public discourse. By issuing these initial responses, we hope to offer a tool that will increase our political acumen and enhance further in-depth analysis of key recommendations offered by the Report. The Reference Section and appendices provide vital information on various publications, think tank reports, websites, books and other sources that inform the 9/11 Commission Report.

We would like to acknowledge our contributors for their insightful analysis and recommendations, Amir Al Islam for his contribution and support, Dr. James Jones for his critique and guidance, Rahla Khan for her critical eye in the editing process, and CCMO for sponsoring this endeavor. Without their help and support, this project would not have come to fruition.

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CCMO Executive Committee



## **The “Fault Lines” of the 9/11 Commission Report**

*Mounzer Sleiman, Ph.D.*

One word captured my impression of the 9/11 Commission Report: translucent. Despite its undeniably impressive and extensive investigations, the constraints of the Commission’s limited mandate made a report “transmitting light but causing sufficient diffusion to prevent perception of distinct images”<sup>1</sup> a foregone conclusion.

### **The Catastrophic Threat?**

The Commission declared:

In the post-9/11 world, threats are defined more by the fault lines within societies than by the territorial boundaries between them. The catastrophic threat ... is the threat posed by Islamist terrorism – especially the al-Qaeda network, its affiliates, and ideology. ... Islam is not the enemy. It is not synonymous with terror. Nor does Islam teach terror. America and its friends oppose a perversion of Islam, not the great world faith itself. ... Other religions have experienced violent internal struggles. With so many diverse adherents, every major religion will spawn violent zealots. Yet, understanding the tolerance of people among different faiths, can and must prevail ... the present transnational danger is Islamist terrorism.<sup>2</sup>

The Commission attempted to present a fair and balanced description and analysis of Islam but claiming that Islam is not

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synonymous with terror or that it doesn't teach terror, and still associating Islam with terrorism lacks credibility. The Commission used words like 'struggles' and 'zealots' when it discussed other major religions, but 'terrorism' when it discussed Islam. The word 'terrorism' is becoming so loaded with political, religious, ideological and cultural connotations that I completely reject the association of terrorism with Islam – be it in this report, in government statements, in the media, or in academic circles. We need to focus on judging all acts of violence by international and domestic laws as either self-defense or illegitimate acts.

### **Through a Glass Darkly**

A senior U.S. intelligence official with nearly two decades of experience in national security issues writes:

... these [9/11] attacks are meant to advance bin Laden's clear, focused, limited, and widely popular foreign policy goals. ... Bin Laden is out to drastically alter U.S. and Western policies toward the Islamic world, not necessarily to destroy America, much less its freedoms and liberties.<sup>3</sup>

He continues, "America is able and content to believe the Islamic world failed to understand the benign intent of U.S. foreign policy and its implementation..." so "America...merely needs to better explain the wholesomeness of its views and the purity of its purpose to the uncomprehending Muslim world,"<sup>4</sup> to which the Report responds: "The United States must do more to communicate its message."<sup>5</sup> Shouting the wrong message more loudly won't make it more acceptable.

According to the intelligence expert, "The United States is hated across the Islamic world because of specific U.S. government policies and actions. We are at war with an al-Qaeda-led, worldwide Islamist insurgency because of and to defend those policies and not, as President Bush has mistakenly said, 'to defend freedom and all that is good and just in the world.'<sup>6</sup> It is this anger, endemic throughout the Muslim world, that gives bin Laden's jihad virtually unlimited room for growth and will cost America dearly in money and lives.

However, the Commission concluded that the United States was only "caught up" and was therefore absolved from any responsibility or role in those "fault lines," "clashes," or "conditions" within the Muslim world. It did not offer the American people an explanation of why the United States is the subject of admiration, envy, and blame. The admiration is understandable, but who are these envious people? What is the U.S. being blamed for? Did the Commission simply spend too much time asking how it happened instead of addressing the underlying question of why it happened? Is it really because "they hate our freedom?"

I let the report speak for this problem of denial: "American foreign policy is part of the message. America's policy choices have consequences. Right or wrong, it is simply a fact that American policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and American actions in Iraq are dominant staples of popular commentary across the Arab and Muslim world. *That does not mean U.S. choices have been wrong.*"<sup>7</sup>

### **How – or Why?**

This Commission was effective, efficient and respected, but although it performed an enormous volume of work – 1,200 interviews and 12 separate public hearings composed of 160 witnesses – it apparently lacked the imagination to consider inviting input from prominent leaders, scholars and experts witnesses from the Arab/Muslim community in the United States although Arab/Muslim Americans were among the innocents killed on September 11th. The suffering and grief of their families is ignored and they are completely shut out from the national debate although the Arab and Muslim American communities have been contributing positively in every facet of American life for over 100 years.

Despite the investigations, accusations and detentions, no Arab/Muslim American has been found to have had any connection to the 9/11 attacks. Why could bin Laden and al-Qaeda not recruit one single Arab/Muslim American to aid, abet or participate in their heinous crime on American soil? Perhaps the answer is missing from the 9/11 Commission Report because neither the question, nor the Arab/Muslim community, was ever asked.

However, the Commission defers judgment and avoids assigning the blame after its exhaustive investigation: “We believe the 9/11 attacks revealed four kinds of failures: in imagination, policy, capabilities, and management.” The admiration, envy and blame the United States attracted as it became the pre-eminent military power in the wake of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union,

... created a kind of cultural asymmetry. To us, Afghanistan seemed very far away but to members of al-Qaeda, America seemed very close. ... If the government’s leaders understood the gravity of the threat they faced and understood at the same time that their policies to eliminate it were not going to succeed any time soon, then history’s judgment will be harsh.<sup>8</sup>

One wonders why we have to wait for the ‘harsh judgment of history’ when history’s judgment is harsh now and will be harsh in the future.

### **Whose Lack of Imagination Is To Blame?**

The failure of “imagination” clearly rests with the national leadership. Imagination doesn’t fail when the public is asked, simply and innocently, “to report any suspicious activities.” It runs wild. This “wild imagination” has caused virtually every Arab/Muslim-American to be a “suspect” in this culture of fear, as innocent Arab/Muslim-Americans are accused daily of being suspected terrorists.

The equally imaginative Census Bureau secretly provided special statistical data on Arab-Americans to the Department of Homeland Security and provided law enforcement agencies with information about individuals of Arab descent whose families have lived in the United States for generations.<sup>9</sup>

### **Domestic Terrorism: The Missing Link**

Domestic terrorists matter because *they represent a distinct threat*, and domestic terrorism was conspicuously absent from the Commission’s report.

September 11th represents a disaster for Americans, not only because more than 3,000 human beings perished that day,

but because Americans finally realized they are not safe in their own homeland. But why were the despicable acts of Timothy McVeigh and Eric Rudolph, convicted of bombing abortion clinics and killing innocents, not labeled "terrorism," "Christian terrorism," or "anti-government terrorism"? Why is the JDL (Jewish Defense League) not labeled a "Jewish terrorist" organization? On December 12th, 2001, two men were arrested on suspicion of preparing to attack Muslim and Arab-American organizations in the United States.<sup>10</sup>

Every American can add his own example: William Mettles, arrested recently for conspiring to blow up a federal courthouse with 1,500 pounds of ammonium nitrate,<sup>11</sup> or white-supremacist William Krar. Anthrax spores sent to Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle were the US army strain and what was the source of the suspicious white powder, which tested positive for ricin, in the U.S. Senate building's mailroom? The CNN at least notes that a package in South Carolina, containing ricin, involved a "typewritten letter [that] was addressed to the Department of Transportation and demanded that changes in truckers' sleep/ work schedules not be implemented." Not exactly a concern for Al Qaeda.

The ricin incidents are terrorism – period. We cannot counter terrorism effectively until this is clearly understood and acknowledged by the White House, Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, the U.S. Senate, the House of Representatives and the other institutions of government, law enforcement and the military.

For the Bush administration, it isn't *real* terrorism unless it's committed by brown-skinned foreigners, but domestic terrorists are every bit as capable of inflicting extreme harm on the American homeland as international terrorists. Our so-called "war on terror" is not a serious attempt to combat terrorism but a very costly political marketing campaign. If somebody sends a potent biological toxin through the mail, attempts to kill people in the office of the Senate majority leader, shuts down the Senate offices for testing and decontamination and causes about twenty Senate staffers to go through decontamination, does the racial or ideological identity of the perpetrator determine whether or not it is terrorism?

Although the legal definition of terrorism, as provided by the FBI, is:

“[A] violent act or an act dangerous to human life, in violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any state, to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social goals.<sup>12</sup>

Porter Goss, recently nominated Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, commented that bombings of abortion clinics was “not the kind of terrorism I’m talking about.”

Gossian thinking has allowed the Bush administration to label a marketing campaign as a “war on terror.” America constructed an entire war campaign around Saddam Hussein’s role in “the war on terror,” although it is now clear he had no role whatsoever in the September 11th attacks. This is a highly marketable kind of terrorism; the potential threat can be invoked at any time to justify an entire panoply of political moves and doesn’t require any real sacrifices on the part of the public – unless, of course you happen to be an Arab/Muslim American.

Every year 40,000 Americans die from car accidents, 16,000 are murdered, a staggering 700,000 die from heart attacks and thousands more from drug abuse, smoking, and diet-related causes. We know we could save these lives by addressing the root cause of their problems and applying preventive measures, but why do we believe that we can prevent attacks like those of September 11th without even trying to understand the cause?

### **Justice or Revenge?**

Whether the perpetrators of the September 11th attacks had a political agenda or not, they committed a crime, but is our desire to avenge 3,000 violent deaths a desire for revenge or to apply justice and a right of self-defense? Is it the number of innocents killed, the method by which they were killed, the identity of the individuals who committed the crimes or all of these elements together that justifies using our enormous military power to attack or invade any place that we felt had anything to do with the September 11th attacks, inflicting enormous damage to property and death to innocents?

## **Implications and Recommendations**

The Commission Report reported the most rapid rise in national security spending since the Korean War and concluded:

The United States should consider what to do—the shape and objectives of a strategy. Americans should also consider how to do it—organizing their government in a different way.”<sup>13</sup>

How much is enough? Just how many taxpayer dollars will guarantee our national security?

The 9/11 Commission Report cited failure of imagination as the first weak link in the chain of defense so, although there is no foolproof way of preventing further attacks against the United States, without an ‘imaginative’ bureaucracy the so-called ‘war on terrorism’ is likely to have the same abysmal result as the war on drugs. The real failure is the failure of the entire national security apparatus. Focusing only on Intelligence failure or on Intelligence reforms alone is misleading and misplacing priorities. The entire structure of national security apparatus needs urgent and serious reforms.

Emergency legislation and the new Patriot Act have given the Administration unprecedented powers to monitor travel, personal finances, and many of the freedoms, like protection from arrest and search and seizure that make America unique. Inevitably, national security and the growing power of the National Security Advisor have been linked with what critics label the Imperial Presidency. William Blum concluded:

The American republic had been replaced after World War Two by a national security state, answerable to no one, an extra-constitutional government, secret from the American people, exempt from congressional oversight, above the law.<sup>14</sup>

The National Security Advisor at the center of this growing national security community has the power to make important decisions if the president is incapacitated. In the wrong hands, this power could be catastrophic. Although the President must always have the ultimate responsibility for any national security issue, the NSC needs to be controlled outside the cabinet level,

with a chairman who has more constitutional authority than cabinet secretaries. The Vice President, traditionally underutilized, has the constitutional position and the public support to become the permanent chairman of the NSC. As NSC Advisor, the Vice President would receive critical training for a future as president, add a degree of coordination with the legislative branch in national security debates and have a degree of power over the cabinet heads but, being an elected official, he would ultimately answer to the voters. The National Security Advisor would again be an executive secretary, monitoring the paperwork of the NSC much as he did during the Eisenhower Administration.

The National Security Act will need to be amended to codify the Vice President's new role and define the role of Homeland Security in the national security community. The main problems are the traditional role of political balance and the personality of the president. It is difficult to imagine a presidential candidate in a close election selecting a competent foreign policy expert instead of a politician who can deliver a winning number of electoral votes, but it is less difficult to imagine a President with sufficient influence over the Vice President to control the NSC in all but name. Making the Vice President the senior National Security Advisor is nevertheless an idea that merits consideration.

The War Power Resolution implies that the president may use military force unilaterally for up to 60 days – anywhere, any time, for any reason. John Hart Ely, the late constitutional scholar, recommended that the period be reduced to 20 days.<sup>15</sup> The War Power Resolution could also be improved to ensure the process of consultation begins with talking to Congress when a policy is still open to change. Presidents need some emergency authority, for example to evacuate Americans and foreign nationals from war zones or dangerous areas, but not the power to invade other countries.

It is high time to return to the controls provided in the US Constitution to preserve and protect the rights of every American. Justice Robert H. Jackson, who served as Attorney General and later as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, urged us to hold fast to essentials: "With all its defects, delays and inconven-

iences, men have discovered no technique for long preserving free government except that the Executive be under the law, and that the law be made by parliamentary deliberations."<sup>16</sup>

## Endnotes

1. "Translucent," <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=translucent>, August 14, 2004.
2. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 361-62, 363.
3. Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris*, xviii.
4. *Ibid.*, 166-67
5. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 377.
6. *Ibid.*, 241.
7. *Ibid.*, 376.
8. *Ibid.*, 339, 340.
9. "Department of Homeland Security Obtained Data on Arab Americans from the Census Bureau." Electronic Privacy Information Center, [www.epic.org/privacy/census/foia/default.html](http://www.epic.org/privacy/census/foia/default.html), July 30, 2004.
10. "FBI Arrests Jewish Terrorists, Suspects in Alex Odeh Murder," [www.adc.org/index.php?id=1231](http://www.adc.org/index.php?id=1231). December 12, 2001.
11. "Man Accused of Courthouse Bomb Plot," [http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=514&e=4&u=/ap/20040805/ap\\_on\\_re\\_us/terror\\_charges\\_2](http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=514&e=4&u=/ap/20040805/ap_on_re_us/terror_charges_2), Nathaniel Hernandez, AP, August 5th, 2004.
12. "Definition of Terrorism," [www.terrorismfiles.org/encyclopaedia/terrorism.html](http://www.terrorismfiles.org/encyclopaedia/terrorism.html), 2002.
13. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, "What to Do? A Global Strategy," 361.
14. William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War Two* (Common Courage Press: 2003), introduction. (new edition).
15. John Hart Ely, *War and Responsibility* (Princeton University Press: 1993), 120.
16. *Youngstown Co. v. Sawyer*, 343 U.S. at 655.



## **The 9/11 Commission Report: An Entree for American Muslims into the Policy Process?**

*M. A. Muqtedar Khan*

The 585-page report by the bipartisan-independent 9/11 commission has been published and is now a best seller.<sup>1</sup> The report, in great detail, confirms what is generally considered as common wisdom in America today. Most of what it reveals is already known and what it conceals is also known. It therefore is really redundant from a knowledge perspective. But it is a potentially powerful political weapon that can be wielded effectively by politicians of every hue. It enjoys the added appeal of being supported by the families of the victims and in that sense has acquired a sacred quality that people in charge may ignore at their own peril.

It also offers nothing new in terms of genuine strategies and recommendations to make America safer; think tanks and experts in the last three years have already recommended much of what it recommends. Its value lies in its summation and accumulation of a large body of facts in one place and will remain a useful reference tool for all who are engaged in the new enterprise of global counter-terrorism.

### **First Impressions**

The report is comprehensive even verbose, but its key points are:

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- 1) The attacks of 9/11 were unexpected and unprecedented.
- 2) The American security establishment was ill prepared to combat such an eventuality. Its security apparatus, including the intelligence community, had not adjusted institutionally to be able to anticipate and preempt what the report labels as “the new terrorism.”
- 3) The report warns that an attack of even greater magnitude is now possible unless America prepares and acts now.
- 4) It argues that the US needs to reconstitute its security policies and institutions to facilitate coordination of information, rapid decision-making and preemptive action on a global scale. The report redefines American “national interests” on a global scale and recommends preparedness on a global scale.
- 5) It recommends foreign policy shifts acknowledging the critical linkage between American security and its foreign policy. The report does a disservice to the nation by not examining this linkage in its laborious effort to explain how and why 9/11 happened. But thankfully this oversight is corrected in its final recommendations.
- 6) The report systematically downplays the significance of US support for Israel and its foreign policy in the Muslim world in the reasons for the global anti-American fever among Muslims.
- 7) The overriding theme of its operational recommendations is “unity of effort” in all arenas, from intelligence gathering to politics, policy and policing matters.
- 8) The report repeatedly calls for the US to defend its values overseas. It forgets to remind us that we must also practice our values here and overseas. It lacks an adequate criticism of US policies which undermine democracy in the US and elsewhere.
- 9) The report says it is not Islam but a small minority of Islamist terrorists who constitute a serious threat to America.
- 10) It does not express any misgivings about American Muslims.

### **The How and Why Report**

The report broadly tries to answer two questions: how and why? It first tries to explain how 9/11 happened and then why it happened. It then seeks to recommend how the US can be successful in its response and why. The report provides a great deal of detailed information about how the attacks were planned and executed. This should be an eye-opener to those Muslims who still deny the hand of Bin Laden and Al Qaeda in the attacks.

The report makes a distinction between old terrorism and new terrorism without actually providing a satisfactory explanation of what is different.<sup>10</sup> What it does accept is the paradigm shift from the Clinton administration, which treated terrorism as a crime, to the Bush administration that treats it as a war. The report provides useful analysis and suggestions for this new philosophy for combating terrorism. Indeed it is possible that September 11 may fundamentally reconstitute America's defense doctrines and transform its military capabilities. The report offers many tactical ways to deal with the new invisible enemy.

One problematic aspect of the report is the absence of the input of not only American Muslims but also of established scholars of Islam and the Muslim world. Its analysis of Islamic resurgence, the socio-political condition of the Muslim world, and the causes for the emergence of Islamic militancy and groups such as Al Qaeda are poorly studied. For example John Esposito's chapter on Bin Laden in his book, *Unholy War*, provides a more comprehensive understanding of Bin Laden's personality and his politics than the report,<sup>2</sup> which had access to classified data.

If American policy makers continue to ignore the American Muslim perspective and the enormous wealth of understanding that the American scholars of Islam and the Muslim world possess, then they will make serious mistakes in understanding the present challenge.<sup>3</sup> The misunderstanding of the conditions prevalent in the Muslim world will translate into more problematic policies aggravating the situation globally and further compromising American security and interests. American policies will face the danger of being hijacked by policy entrepreneurs and ideologues and lead the country astray.<sup>4</sup>

The report is astonishingly silent on the historical role of US foreign policy in the Muslim world, which many argue contributed to the rise of anti-Americanism in the Muslim world. It was silent on the US role in Afghanistan. We cannot understand how the “Mujahideen” became a “Jihadi” without understanding US policies in the region. This neglect does not serve American interests. If the commission had consulted scholars it would have learned a lot more. Mahmood Mamdani does a better job in his book, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, than the report on this score.<sup>5</sup>

The report sheds light on the involvement or lack of it of American Muslims in the 9/11 operations. One can take home two conclusions. One, that the community had really very little if not nothing to do with the attacks and therefore the excessive focus on Islam in America and American Muslims by the media and many security agencies is unwarranted. But the report also shows that some Muslims can be very stupid. Imagine allowing the use of a mosque account to transfer funds from overseas to an individual who you hardly know.<sup>6</sup> Hopefully after 9/11, American Muslim institutions will not allow their “fellow Muslim brothers” from abusing their institutions. American Muslims as a community must call for a systematic review and revision of the management of American Muslim institutions and implement real training programs. They must focus on upgrading their legal and security measures, revisit adherence to new post-Patriot Act regulations, accountability mechanism, and oversight functions.

The best and the most useful part of the report is Chapter 12, “What to do: A Global Strategy.”<sup>7</sup> Though not without certain limitations the chapter indicates the commissions open and fair analysis of the problem and its willingness to engage with the challenges posed by 9/11 attacks. The report identifies the threat as “Islamist terrorism” and recommends a series of strategies to counter it. The report argues that Al Qaeda and groups inspired by Al Qaeda and its militant ideology are a threat to the US’ global interests and because they are partly motivated by US policies and partly by their radical Islamic ideas that seek either to destroy or convert the US, they leave no option for negotiation for the US.<sup>8</sup>

It would have been better if the report had used the word Jihadism rather than Islamist to qualify the militant groups and make a distinction between Islamists and rogue Islamists.<sup>9</sup> The latter runs the danger of throwing a much wider net leading to repression of Islamists seeking socio-political change through peaceful means. The identification of Islamism itself as a potential enemy also runs the danger of alienating and radicalizing all Islamists, who are easily the most powerful and potent force in Muslim politics worldwide. Here again they reveal the dangers of not consulting Muslims and experts of Islam. The commission would have been more enlightened if they had paid a little more attention to a recent book, *The Future of Political Islam*, by Graham Fuller, a former CIA analyst, which provides a fair analysis of Islamism with a clear concern for long-term US interests.<sup>10</sup>

The report must be commended for its courage in pin pointing and surgically defining the threat. It specially states that Islam is not the threat. The report expresses concern with the condition of politics within Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>11</sup> I fully endorse the reports analysis of Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan but regret its recommendation on Pakistan that appear more like US policy towards Parvez Musharraf than Pakistan. While it is interesting that the report does not discuss Iran, Syria or Sudan in the context of potential sanctuaries for anti-American Jihadi groups, the report commits a gross error by not including Iraq in its short list as a potential sanctuary for Jihadis. An instable Iraq may well become the launching pad for anti-American *Jihadis*. Perhaps the commission chose not to discuss Iraq in this context to avoid underscoring the stark contradictions in the policies it recommends and the policies that the Bush administration has articulated and executed in Iraq.

The report advocates soft and tough, diplomatic and militaristic strategies to combat terrorist organizations in the Muslim world. They are practical and wise and the US government will do well to implement several of them. The strategies sensitivity to the absence of democracy in the Muslim world and the socio-political plight of ordinary Muslims deserves special mention. Its

insistence that the US must eschew compromising democracy in the interest of short term strategic gains is noteworthy but it must also be pointed out that their own recommendations vis-à-vis Pakistan violate this principle.

### **Recommendations for American Muslims**

This is an important report and will have a significant impact on US policy. The report should not be taken lightly. I recommend the American Muslim community to:

1. Start a public dialogue within the American Muslim community to understand what it reveals and recommends. Leaders should ensure that irresponsible responses triggered by “conspiratorial mind frames” are discouraged and confronted immediately. Indeed a fatwa, by the North American Fiqh Council, forbidding Muslims to opine on it without reading it first may be very helpful.
2. American Muslims must eschew getting entangled in disputes stemming from denials or semantic politics and must focus on the substantive aspects of policy. If Muslims react to this report by rejecting it, ridiculing it or engaging it without paramount concern for American security, then they will have only themselves to blame if their marginalization from policy making continues. In case we are not aware, the primary objective of the American foreign policy establishment is to work towards the security and interests of the US, not of Palestine or Iraq or Pakistan. American Muslims must never forget that and also ensure that American policy makers also never forget that. Special interests are anti-thetical to broad national interests.
3. American Muslims must put together a conference of its leaders and issue a comprehensive resolution on how American Muslim organizations and individual citizens can work with the authorities to realize many of the recommendations of the report to make America safe. This should be the primary purpose, criticism and suggestions to include the American Muslim perspective must come in the form of the above-described Resolution of Cooperation.

4. American Muslims must think clearly and dispassionately about the reports definition of the threat without rushing to judgment. It is in the interest of American Muslims to ensure that everyone understands that the threat is not Islam but Muslims who are determined to use terror as a weapon against America and American interests to pursue political ends. If American Muslims see themselves as part of America and American interests then indeed those who wish to undermine America are also our enemies. American Muslims can be secure and thrive only if American is safe and thriving.
5. By ignoring American Muslim perspective the 9/11 commission report actually opens a window of opportunity for American Muslims to capitalize on this glaring deficiency and ride into the policy process on its back. This is a God-sent opportunity; I hope American Muslims will not squander it.

### **Final Thought**

The report is an excellent opportunity for American Muslims to participate in, rejuvenate and expand the debate on America's continuing response to the 9/11 attacks. It gives them an avenue with which they can join other Americans in demanding accountability from the government with regards to its security and foreign policy. This is also a window in to the nature of America in the near future. American Muslim community can now develop anticipatory strategies to adjust to unfolding realities. A constructive response will secure the community and strengthen its bond with the rest of the nation.

### **Endnotes**

1. This analysis is based on the report of The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States as posted on the Web at <http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>.
2. See the report, 71-73.
3. See John L. Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3-26.
4. For an analysis what American Muslims can potentially contribute to the war on terror, see M. A. Muqtedar Khan, "American Muslims as Allies in

- and the War on Terror,” in Adam Garfinkle, ed., *A Practical Guide to Winning the War on Terrorism* (Stanford, CA: Hoover National Security Forum, 2004), 117-32. Also see Imad-ad-Deen Ahmed, “Islam Demands a Muslim Response to the Terror of September 11,” *Middle East Affairs Journal* 7, nos. 2-3 (Summer/Fall 2001). The article is available on the Web at: [www.minaret.org/response%20to%20terror.pdf](http://www.minaret.org/response%20to%20terror.pdf).
5. To understand the politics of policymaking and the role of policy makers, academics and policy entrepreneurs, see M. A. Muqtedar Khan, “US Foreign Policy and Political Islam: Interests, Ideas and Ideology,” *Security Dialogue* 29, no. 4, (December 1998): 449-62. Also see M. A. Muqtedar Khan, “Policy Entrepreneurs: The Third Dimension of American Foreign Policy Culture,” *Middle East Policy* (September 1997): 140-54.
  6. See Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Pantheon Book, 2004).
  7. See the report, 215-20.
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  9. *Ibid.*, 361-63.
  10. For an understanding of the distinction between Islamists and rogue Islamists see M. A. Muqtedar Khan, “Radical Islam, Liberal Islam,” *Current History*, 102, no: 668 (December 2003): 417-21.
  11. See Graham Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam* (Boulder, CO: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

## **“What’s in a Name?” The Use of Terminology in the 9/11 Commission Report in Dealing with Islam and Muslims**

*Maliha Balala*

The “9/11 Commission Report” has been rightly praised for its comprehensive historic narrative on the internal failures of numerous US agencies, as well as a careful documentation of the events that led to the tragic unfolding of 9/11.

However, it has left much to be desired in terms of the actual depth of its analysis. To millions of American Muslims, perhaps the most disappointing part of the report is its failure to demonstrate an informed awareness of Islam. This lack of comprehension was demonstrated in more than one place, besides containing ominous overtones of Huntington’s “clash of civilization” and was decried by prominent Islamic scholars for their conspicuous exclusion in formulating the commissioners’ understanding of Islam and Muslims.

While a few passing comments were made to distance the Islamic faith from terrorism, the two ended up being permanently wed by a categorical definition of the “global enemy” as being “Islamist terrorism.” The definition of Islamism and its distinction from Islam, was relegated to the multitude of notes found at the end of the report: “Islamism is defined as an Islamic militant, anti-democratic movement, bearing a holistic vision of Islam whose final aim is the restoration of the caliphate.”

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Islamism is a term that has been coined and largely debated mainly within academic circles and is used interchangeably in the popular media with “Islamic,” rendering it very hard for the average American to be able to distinguish between the two terms. Coining such a broad definition, without giving people the tools to distinguish between a faith that has an overwhelmingly peaceful message from its extremist elements, is to foster an environment which breeds ignorance and malice.

The most logical question to follow is what actually distinguishes “Islamist” terrorism from any other kind of terrorism? Although to date, there is not one definition of terrorism that is universally acceptable, the following seems to be the preferred definition by the US State Department: “Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.” If the main arbiters for terrorism are “political motivation” and requiring the targets to be “non combatants”, then why the need for an additional prefix?

There is an assumption of uniformity within this definition of “Islamist terrorism” that draws large faultlines between the “good Muslims” and the “bad Muslims.” In reality, there is a lot of diversity in the expression and understanding of Islam among the billion plus Muslims around the world. Even “Islamist” ideas and methodologies range across a large spectrum, not all of which are negative or violent.

In its search for precision, the report would go a long way in acknowledging that each country has its own set of political problems, which sometimes render various forms of dissent necessary for a positive change. This sweeping categorization of the enemy does little other than give tyrannical, oppressive states the green light to continue carrying out their injustices boldly under the guise of a “war on Islamist terrorism”.

The report’s classification of what is considered “extremism” in Islam is also highly problematic. Describing the hijackers’ evolution from “regular” people to extreme practitioners of their faith, it pointed out that one hijacker “began praying five times a day” (page 162). Jarrah was noted to have “grown a full beard and started praying regularly” (page 163). The allusions to

growing beards and praying five times a day as indicators of extremism are very disturbing to a large population of peaceful Muslims in America and the world over, who view the above as basic requirements in the practice of their faith.

Additionally, the very philosophy underlying the "extremist Islamist" version of history needs further clarification. Blaming the current oppressive state of affairs on people who turned away from a true understanding of their religion, is not exclusive to extremist thought (page 50). Many Muslims across the spectrum of religiosity have pointed out to the current desperate conditions of the so-called "Muslim" world as being largely self-inflicted, and an enlightened understanding and practice of the faith would be one of the catalysts for a better civilization. The distinction between what is considered extremist by the commissioners is certainly not based on the self-understanding of Muslims.

If Muslim scholars did not supply the report's information on Islam and Muslims then, who did?

Distressingly enough, the works chosen to furnish this understanding were at the very least condescending in their tone, and at worst, outright hostile. Steven Emerson's *American Jihad* was one such chosen book listed in the references. Emerson has never tried to hide his disdain for Muslims. His bigotry has alienated his ideas from the majority and circumscribed them to very small circles, while most Islamic scholars do not even regard him seriously enough to merit a scholarly engagement. With so many in depth resources on Islam readily available in the US, why was the panel so indiscreet in its choices? What message does this consequential act send to millions of peaceful American Muslims?

The significance of this report is already writ in the pages of American history. Hundreds of thousands of copies have been sold to the public, debates are raging within government and media circles alike, leading it to be hailed as the greatest bipartisan government document to be released. Within the media, terms like "Islamist terrorism" (interchangeable with Islamic terrorism), "extremism," and "Islamism" have fast become buzzwords. Scrutiny of the American Muslim population has

increased since the report's inconclusive verdict on the whether the hijackers had any help from local communities, besides a growing, media-fueled public apprehension of "sleeper Al Qaeda cells" within the US.

The case for American Muslims is made worse when every negative sentiment is associated either directly or indirectly with Islam. According to a Pew Forum survey, 44% of Americans believe Islam encourages violence and 49% believe that one in two Muslims is anti-American. With words like *Islamism*, *Islamist terrorism*, *fundamentalism*, *holy war* and *extremism* constantly spewing out of the airwaves, should we be surprised that a significant majority of Americans have such a tainted perception of their neighbor's faith?

It is imperative for American Muslims to understand that the power to define is the power to control. Think tanks around the US like the Rand Corporation, the Heritage Foundation and the Middle East Forum have been scrambling to publish reports and inform the policy analysis process on who Muslims are and how to shape the understanding of Islam for a better future for all. In most cases, these analysts do not necessarily capture the reality of Islam and Muslims, nor do they have the best interests of Muslims at heart, which leave us to adopt a largely reactionary and defensive posture. It is time to move beyond trying to deflect erroneous definitions, to actually engage in the formulation of our own identity. In the absence of highly specialized think tanks to support Muslim research endeavors, we are doomed to always remain a step behind.

College students remain a largely untapped resource of the American Muslim population, in grooming for these intellectual endeavors. In spite of many Muslim Student Associations mushrooming all over the country, the focus remains largely on spiritual motivation. While that is an imperative part of our faith, it does not necessarily encompass the whole vision. We need Muslim scholars and leaders to reach out to students, support and mentor them through the process of researching and strategize ways that will facilitate our existence as a distinctly American and Muslim community.

It is not intellectual bankruptcy that ails our community, which is one of the highest educated minority populations in the US; rather it is a lack of coordinated vision. Understanding that we cannot live in an ad hoc manner anymore, especially when our very survival is at stake, is just one beginning in this long journey of clarifying and asserting our identity.

Any process of engagement within the American Muslim community cannot take place in a vacuum. We have to consciously build bridges with the government, the media, the community and initiate dialogue. Our role is crucial in building bridges with the Muslim world and opening the doors for a peaceful "dialogue of civilizations" instead of allowing our country to adopt a pessimistic stance akin to the sanctimonious "clash of civilizations" thesis.



## **The 9-11 Commission Report: Recommendations**

*American Muslim Task Force*

The recommendations can be divided into three sections: the first set addresses terrorism, the second homeland security and the final set addresses the intelligence community. Within each section, the recommendations offer directions in both prevention and means of intervention addressing the topic at hand. The recommendations are general in nature and most offer no real depth of detail or specificity. The dialogue taking place on the recommendations is crucial and the details that will be implemented from that dialogue will affect the world and us for generations.

### **Islamist Terrorism**

The set of recommendations addressing terrorism first defines the threat as not just terrorism, some generic evil, but as “Islamist” terrorism. The enemy is then both al Qaeda and the radical ideological movement, which spurs the likes of al Qaeda and their peers. Thus, America is in an ideological war – a war without borders with both an inner core, the ideology and an external force, al Qaeda – focused on America. The recommendations promote the idea of preventative tactics, such as education; targeting the status of women; and providing educational and fiscal opportunity.

These recommendations also reiterate that America must provide moral leadership and standing for a better future for the world. Such assertions ring more of ambition than a measured, long-term strategy. Other recommendations put forth in this section concern starving out the terrorists, making their sustainability as an organization impossible by hunting down money sources and cutting off sanctuaries or lifelines of support.

### **Homeland Security**

The recommendations pertaining to homeland security center around the idea of border control and the means by which to best verify persons do not fall through the cracks in the system and strengthen the verification of identification. Thwarting the travel of terrorists is seen as vital as hunting down terrorist funds in the fight against terrorism. Biometric screening is one means set forth as a strategy to verify the identification of those traveling internationally. Although biometric screening is common in some European countries, it begins to raise questions for Americans as to the civil liberty implications. Although throughout the report, there is a constant call to balance civil liberty issues with the proposals put forth by the commission, they go on to state: “Our history has shown us that insecurity threatens liberty. Yet, if our liberties are curtailed, we lose the values that we are struggling to defend” (p. 395). The recommendations in this section would require enormous coordination and technology, not to mention cost or security of electronic data, and the infrastructure needed to implement many of these recommendations may not be feasible in the near future.

Other recommendations within this section are good and feasible such as providing a nationwide framework for disaster response and increasing the assignment of the radio spectrum for public safety purposes.

### **Intelligence Community**

Perhaps the Commission’s most radical recommendations come in the form of the recommendations targeted at reforming the intelligence community. Based on the text of the report, it is clear that some reform is needed to increase the coordination and efficiency of the intelligence community. The Commission suggests that one of the major failures was the lack of a “quarterback” when the United States was under attack.

Second, there was a general failure of “connecting the dots” by various intelligence agencies in neutralizing al Qaeda operatives and the imagination to consider the scope of the terrorist plot, in their eventual use of airplanes as missiles. The most noted recommendation involves the creation of a National

Intelligence Director and National Counterterrorism Center. The infrastructural changes needed to carry out this change, in addition to the civil liberty issues involved in suggesting that the FBI be the domestic equivalent to the CIA, with the expectation that the FBI will be working within parameters of the United States Constitution deserves in-depth analysis and discussion.

The need for more cooperation and coordination is without question, but the proposed solution may not effectively address the underlying needs and problems of the intelligence agencies while simultaneously maximizing the strengths of each agency. Perhaps the most persistent weakness of the agencies is that of qualified and willing applicants to the respective agencies. This human resource deficiency will require long-term thinking and appropriate incentives.



## “Somebody’s Going To Pay ...”

*Jimmy E. Jones*

According to *The 9/11 Commission Report*, at about 9:45 am on September 11, 2001, the day of the worst terrorist attack ever on US soil, US President George W. Bush made it clear that “Somebody’s going to pay...” (p. 39).

In many ways this strong, determined attitude exemplifies the spirit of the Bush administration’s ongoing response to the horrific attack on that day. Additionally, this view also influences the Report of the bipartisan 9/11 investigative Commission authorized by the President and Congress. Consequently, there is little in the report that honestly deals with the root causes of the tragedy on 9/11.

In the more than two years since this mass murder, many people have indeed paid dearly for what occurred on that day. They include:

*Members of the United States Armed Forces.* Since that fateful day, we have lost hundreds of men and women in the “war on terror.” The body count is still mounting daily while the continuous negative emotional and economic toll on surviving military, their families and home communities is immeasurable.

*The Innocent Civilians of Iraq and Afghanistan.* Solid numbers are hard to come by, but the estimated number of casualties is in the thousands with the number still growing. The vast majority of these people had no enmity toward the US on 9/11 nor did they have a direct or indirect involvement in that day’s

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massacre of innocents on US soil. Sadly, the war-weary populations of both countries have been used as pawns in other peoples' battles for at least two decades.

*The Taxpayers of the United States of America.* According to the Commission's report:

Between fiscal year 2001, the last budget adopted before 9/11, and the present fiscal year, 2004, total federal spending on defense (including expenditures on both Iraq and Afghanistan), homeland security, and international affairs rose more than 50 percent, from \$354 billion to about \$547 billions. (p. 361)

As a result of these people paying a price, it is clear that the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and Saddam have been disrupted. What is not so clear, however, is whether all of this painful activity has improved homeland security in this country since 9/11. "Somebody's going to pay ..." makes for a great line in a "B" movie, but it is doubtful that such a revenge-tinged approach is a useful ingredient in melding a domestic and foreign policy that promotes long-term peace and stability at home and abroad. Thus, many of us waited hopefully for a more balanced approach from *The 9/11 Commission Report*.

*The 9/11 Commission Report* argued persuasively that one of the four major area areas of federal failure on 9/11 was "imagination" (p. 339). While they attempted to deal with this issue in their recommendations, I would argue that they simply did not go far enough. Again, if your attitude is, "Somebody's going to pay..." then you are most likely to focus, as they did, on military options and strategies when it came to the issue of "imagination" (pp.339-348).

For instance, when it comes to "imagination" it appears that the Commission could not "imagine" an American foreign policy based on consistent application of justice and fair dealing. If it had, it would have more assertive in its recommendations regarding US's counterproductive support of repressive regimes in Muslim-majority countries. Simply saying, "the United States must stand for a better future" (p. 376) soft-pedals what is a major serious issue when it comes to US credibility amongst the

Muslim masses worldwide. Further, real partnerships between the US government and Muslim-majority countries; and partnerships with Muslim American citizens will be more possible if the US government stops using suspicion, intimidation or worse towards innocent Muslims in the US and abroad as an important part of its post 9/11 strategy.

A further lack of "imagination" that is reflected in the Report is its almost cursory handling of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. How the US conducts itself in this conflict has everything to do with future of stability in the Middle East and security in the US. In a report that is otherwise so comprehensive, to devote so little attention to this tinderbox issue between Muslims and Americans is almost scandalous. A more even-handed American foreign policy in this region would go along way in making Americans, Israelis and Palestinians more secure now and in the future.

There is no question that "somebody's got to pay." for the devastating attack on 9/11. Justice demands that the perpetrators of this cowardly assault be dealt with severely. At the same time, we Americans should work hard to ensure that innocents do not suffer due to their proximity to people this administration is pursuing (and finding great difficulty in catching). Further, while most of what the 9/11 Commission recommends is long overdue, we must recognize that imagining and implementing domestic and foreign policies based on morality and justice will go a long way in strengthening US homeland security.



## **The 9/11 Commission Report: Reflections**

*American Muslim Task Force*

The 9/11 Commission recently published its findings on the terrible tragedy of September 11, 2001. The report puts forth an even-toned account of that fateful day and the events that led up to the event. The report builds its case throughout the text for its recommendations that come in Chapters 12 and 13. The report has 41 recommendations ranging in areas from intelligence to education and ideology. It is important that, as Americans, we understand and follow the progression of these recommendations, as it is likely that some, if not all, of the recommended strategies will be adopted as policy and implemented in the coming months and years. This will have an impact on our society, our safety, and our culture as Americans, as we face the effects of terrorism, a war without borders.

### **Overall Reflections**

The mandate of the commission was to investigate the how, who and what of the September 11th attack. In addition, the Commission was to offer recommendations as to what needs to happen now to address the new threats facing America. This has both pros and cons within the report as certain topics and factors that went into 9/11 are marginally discussed or not dealt with at all. Most notable is the lack of discussion of the implications of US foreign policy and its effects on the ideology and platform of Al-Qaeda. This lack of discussion on the issue does give indication that the ambition of some of the recommendations, especially those that respond to ideology and education, are not indicative of a full understanding of the complexity of the region and its diverse political thought.

It is ambitious to say that America should offer an example of moral leadership in the world. The recommendation speaks of a vision: one in which America and its friends will offer educational and economic opportunity, tolerance and political participation to those in the Arab and Muslim parts of the world. This statement is exceedingly arrogant and the issue of mutual accountability is not raised. The underlying ambition is understandable by anyone, “making the world better for my neighbor, makes the world better for me.” As Americans, we must be careful that our intention and ambition is well-understood and not viewed as some form of latent colonialism or crusade, arrogant or, worse yet, the idea that America will set the agenda of Muslim thought and discourse as we engage in the struggle of ideas. This will surely bring failure to any long-term strategy to engage the Arab and Muslim worlds.

The success requires an understanding of Islam and the history of political involvement in the Muslim world. Nothing can be fixed overnight and it is incumbent on us to deal with the realities of the day. The history and tradition of the Arab and Muslim worlds runs deep and we have to ask ourselves: What is the goal of engaging with our neighbors? Do we really understand that when the average Muslim talks of the region needing more Islam that they, too, are speaking of principles of justice, freedom and dignity? For many here in America and elsewhere, the previous statement causes them pause. Have we really done enough to distinguish the religion from a particular ideology?

For Muslims, the principles of justice, freedom and dignity are intrinsic to our faith, it is not a matter of preference to choose these principles over violent sectarianism, and the latter is not a part of the Muslim creed. Those who have hijacked the religion of Islam have muddied the streams from which the discussion of religion, political thought and culture take place. The stakes for our neighbors and for us are too high. Our response must be measured and vigilant. These are some of the questions that need further discussion before we move ahead in the engagement in the struggle of ideas.

The term “Islamist terrorism” is introduced in Chapter Two as a more accurate depiction of the enemy that America is fac-

ing. The term “Islamist terrorism,” although it is meant as a specific qualifier to the ideology of terrorists, is beset with problems for American Muslims.

However unintentional, it can easily continue to confuse religion and ideology in the minds of Americans. The attempt to differentiate the type of terrorism we are up against is understandable but the qualifier will only aid in the continued misrepresentation of Islam as a religion. There has been little or no education of the public on the subtleties and differentiations as to terminologies such as Islamists, Islamism or Islamic fundamentalism. The American Muslim community would be a natural ally in educating the public, but how many American Muslim leaders or scholars of Islam and Muslim cultures were called to the table? We cannot allow, even for a moment, a cultural atmosphere that causes suspicion and distrust among neighbors. It is not a foundation for healing, understanding or dialogue for Americans.

In the chapters in which the enemy and the threat are described, namely al-Qaeda and its ideology, it is important to make note that the report does state in each of these chapters that Islam is not the issue. Unfortunately, continually utilizing the terms Islamist terrorism, Islamism, etc., which few know the distinctions to, in addition to associating normal everyday practice of Muslims around world as an indicator of extremist behavior can, at times, give the impression of doublespeak. This is most likely reflective of the attempt of condensing complex issues and diversity of thought and ideology within the Muslim world into a chapter that is comprehensible to the public. It will most likely require a more in depth look at the raw materials used to produce the chapters “The Foundation of the New Terrorism” and “Al Qaeda aims at the American Homeland.”

The report methodically makes its case for its recommendations concerning the intelligence community throughout the document. Most notably in Chapters 3, 4, 7, 8, and 11, these chapters reiterate and support the conclusions and the language of the recommendations. The FBI and CIA culture and methods are put under scrutiny; here the report makes its strongest arguments of the “connect the dots” argument later addressed in the

recommendations. Homeland Security, in particular in regards to airport safety, is discussed in these chapters and the report makes a very straightforward assessment of the weaknesses of the intelligence and homeland security infrastructure. The chapter “Foresight – Hindsight” summarizes many of the conclusions of the Commission on the failures revealed from the September 11th attack.

The recommendations from the Commission are designed to address the issues of homeland security, addressing the failures of imagination, policy, capabilities and management of the government agencies and addressing what the commission calls “Islamist” terrorism. The recommendations are meant to work as a whole and not piecemeal. The recommendations are broad in scope and some offer little in the way of detail for implementation.

The recommendations, however, have serious civil liberty implications for all Americans, and is never completely resolved in the recommendations, aside from additional oversight. Currently, congressional hearings are being held to discuss various aspects of the recommendations. With this being an election year, and with the continued political pressure to do something, there is a real danger in rushing to implement the recommendations without a thorough dialogue concerning cost and detail. It is incumbent upon anyone wishing to provide an effective response, to continue to track the congressional hearings and keep their finger on the pulse of potential policies that are sure to be implemented from the 9/11 Commission report recommendations.

## **Response to the 9/11 Commission Report**

*Farid Senzai*

The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (the “9/11 Commission”) set up to investigate the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks calls for a new and more candid relationship between America and its Muslim allies. The report insists that “America’s strategy should be a coalition strategy that includes Muslim nations as partners in its development and implementation.”<sup>1</sup> This is a positive sign that the American Muslim community must welcome and do what it can to nurture such a relationship.

Since virtually every policy of the United States vis-à-vis Muslims is now filtered through the lens of September 11, the report and its recommendations cannot be ignored by the American Muslim community. In addition, since many of the conclusions reached by the Commission resonate with the opinions of Muslim scholars worldwide, the report should be seen as an opportunity to engage in a more positive manner with the US administration. It is therefore imperative for American Muslims to thoroughly understand, proactively engage and enthusiastically assist in implementing the report’s recommendations while taking note of some of its shortcomings.

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### **Muslim Relationship**

Acknowledging how unpopular America has become in the Muslim world, the report makes plain that successive administrations have done a poor job in promoting the country and its values. “If the United States does not act aggressively to define itself in the Islamic world,” it declares, “the extremists will gladly do the job for us.” It is here that the American Muslim community can and should help.

The most useful yet untapped coalition partner the United States has in providing insight, resources and partnership with the Muslim world, that understands the Muslim world, is the Muslim community of America – indigenous and immigrant – faithful citizens with more than a century of practice and contributions to the country.

Heretofore, the US administration has made incalculable errors by depending upon a rash of “experts” whose neoconservative ideology and Islamophobic policy recommendations often exhibit a subtle yet tangible disdain for the Muslim world. Many such “experts” are driven by an Orientalist worldview, a colonialist mentality and the polemics of the Middle East. These individuals surfaced prior to the invasion of Iraq from a web of connected origins and their influence was evident through their active presence in electronic and print media. Not surprisingly, their recommendations have proven to be incendiary and counterproductive and, most unfortunately, have rendered the United States more vulnerable and more despised in the Muslim world.

Part of this cooperation, as the report suggests, is the reexamination of American foreign policy vis-à-vis the Muslim world in general and the Middle East in particular. The report states:

American foreign policy is part of the message. America’s policy choices have consequences. Right or wrong, it is simply a fact that American policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and American actions in Iraq is dominant staples of popular commentary across the Arab and Muslim world.<sup>2</sup>

While the 9/11 Commission urged Washington to reexamine its Middle East policies, there does not unfortunately appear

to be any sign that either Democrats or Republicans are ready to do so. This needs to change.

### **Defining the War on Terrorism**

One of the report's most important recommendations is that the enemy, and by implication, the war on terrorism, must be clearly defined – implying that the definition has up to now been fuzzy. Part of the fuzziness is due to the administration's unwillingness to define the threat more clearly. Immediately after the September 11th attacks, President Bush addressed the American people, defining the war on terrorism in the most simple of terms. "Every nation in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." In declaring the war on terrorism, President Bush stated his intent to pursue any nation that provides aid or safe haven to terrorism, suggesting that every nation had a decision to make on the issue. Yet even three years after the September 11 attacks, the White House has yet to clearly define what constitutes a terrorist organization. The failure to do so has increasingly contributed to the country's limited success in making America and the world a safer place.

Unfortunately, rather than merely making the suggestion, the 9/11 Commission has attempted to fill the gap and proposed its own definition with worrying and potentially disastrous results. Even though its report emphasizes that the war on terrorism is not a war on Islam, the report goes on to define it in exactly those terms. In the chapter entitled "What to Do?" the Commission concludes the enemy is not just terrorism, what it terms "some generic evil," but specifically *Islamist terrorism* (report's emphasis). With the stroke of a pen, the authors of the 9/11 report appear to have redefined the war on terrorism, converting it into a war on Islamist terrorism alone.

The problem with substituting Islamist terrorism for terrorism as the enemy is that the 9/11 Commission unfortunately plays into the hands of Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden's rhetoric has unceasingly sought to conflate Islamist violence and terrorism with Islam itself so as, at a minimum, to sow doubt in the hearts and minds of the Muslim street.

The 9/11 Commission came up short with its insufficient use of terminology. It missed an opportunity to clearly delineate the threat and the scope of the war on terrorism. While the vast majority of the Muslim world and the 9/11 Commission will undoubtedly acknowledge that Islam as a religious tradition and modern day Islamist terrorism are two wholly separate concepts, the 9/11 Commission could have provided the administration and Congress with a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the enemy.

Thus the administration's failure to define the scope of the war on terrorism while the Commission's effort to redefine it as exclusively Islamist terrorism directly contributes to the growing confusion about the nature of our enemies. Struggling to show progress in the war, the White House is now eager to apply the al-Qaeda label to virtually any Islamic group threatening violence or terrorist attacks. With little or no proof, regional groups invariably have been labeled al-Qaeda supporters or affiliates. In so doing, the administration has contributed to the false impression, despite data to the contrary in its own *Patterns of Global Terrorism* report, that the sole enemy is a global conspiracy of Islamist groups, rather than terrorist groups of all religious stripes.

Similarly, the Commission's use of the broad and vague term of Islamist terrorism may play well with conservative elements in the U.S., it is clearly the wrong strategy as the government's own terrorism report amply demonstrates. By identifying every organization as Islamist the administration will continue to fight the wrong war.

## **Conclusion**

The global war against terrorism will be a long, protracted conflict and it will not be won by military means alone. In order for us to win this war, the US must clearly define the threat we face and should work closely with the American Muslim community to flush out that definition. In addition, the 9/11 Commission emphasized that the war on terrorism must be fought by political and diplomatic means as much as by military means – which implies the current focus may be unduly narrow. It goes on to

point out that the US must enlist the help of its diplomats and academics and development experts, as well as its soldiers and spies. This would imply a need to reach out to the Muslim community around the world and American Muslims in particular.

By doing so, the US will not only better understand the threat it faces, with all of its variety and nuances, but will provide affirmative evidence that its war on terrorism is not in fact a war on Islam. Failing to do so, US actions in the war on terrorism may continue to be interpreted in the Muslim world as a war on Islam and the fight for the hearts and minds of the Muslim world will needlessly last for many more years, if not decades and could become a self-fulfilling prophecy with no victory in sight.

### **Endnotes**

1. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 364.
2. *Ibid.*, 376.



## **Missed Targets: Analysis of the Recommendations as a Unit**

*Maliha Balala*

For a government document, *The 9/11 Commission Report* is outstanding. It is easy to read, engrossing even at times, structured in a logical manner and addresses a wide spectrum of audiences. For a bipartisan government document, it has received accolades from many pleasantly surprised readers. The commissioners truly transcended party differences to produce a thorough and detailed history, pointing out government shortcomings, tracing the hijackers' journeys and illustrating a horrifying play-by-play sequence of events on the awful unfolding of the 9/11 tragedy.

However, the bipartisan nature of the report has raised some criticism in the fact that they tried very hard not to issue any blame. Or rather that no particular person/department was singled out for the blame game, since key failures happened at all levels of government and personnel (across administrations), culminating in the final two chapters that addressed the recommendations' overall global strategy and its implementation.

The key to an effective set of recommendations is the actual premise it is founded upon. A faulty understanding of the issues we are faced with, will inevitably lead to a truncated albeit sincere formulation of what needs to be done. The chapter on "What to do? A global strategy" has received almost no atten-

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tion, relative to the “How to do it? A different way of organizing the government” in the 9/11 commission report. Many media pundits, think tanks and civil rights organizations have been participating ardently in the congressional hearings, voicing their support or concerns on the proposed bureaucratic changes within the government.

Bureaucracy aside, no one has adequately challenged the narrowness of the scope of this report or explored the deeper issues feeding into the growing wave of resentment abroad, that have nothing to do with the challenge of an abstract ideology or our own failure of imagination.

The arguments in the report are very well articulated. Each chapter effectively builds its own case, leading us easily into the same conclusions that the commissioners arrived to. The problems begin when we start consciously exploring many of the assumptions stated and unstated within those lines, and whether or not they actually depict reality.

The enemy is defined as being Islamist terrorists whose goal is to either “convert” or “destroy” America, thereby leaving Americans with no choice but to either “destroy” or “utterly isolate the enemy”. While this assertion may be true for a very miniscule percentage of extremists, it certainly does not reflect reality for the majority of Muslims. The report does acknowledge that extremists only make up a small percentage of Muslims, but it still cast a dubious shadow on the American Muslim community for their potential role in aiding the hijackers. The truth is that neither the FBI nor the commissioners could come up with any conclusive evidence of any willful wrongdoing on the part of the American Muslim population.

The media has raised public fear in exploiting this “worrisome” part of the report with newsbytes of “sleeper Al Qaeda cells” potentially lurking in our neighborhoods. In a country that prides itself on the principle of innocent until proven guilty, we have to ensure that any claims we make – especially about a visible minority population – are actually substantiated. Flimsy accusations only increase the risk of public hysteria, hate crimes, discriminatory profiling, and divisiveness in place of tolerance, openness, and unity.

Of course, images from what is constantly referred to as the “Muslim” or “Islamic” world showing angry mobs chanting anti-American slogans only add to the bewilderment of the average American citizen. The conditions in these so-called “Muslim” countries are wrought with repression, tyrannical puppet leaders, high levels of unemployment and stark poverty.

How do the recommendations plan to assuage this bleak reality? A closer look at the actual recommendations will demonstrate that if implemented without proper preconditions, most of them will unintentionally end up fostering more resentment at the least, outright violence at the worst.

Tough talk on rooting out terrorist sanctuaries all over the world will undoubtedly license tyrannical leaders to unleash their forces on innocent masses, under the pretext of a “war on terror.” Legitimate dissent will be crushed along the same vein, creating more resentment and fueling desperate acts of violence. The cycle will never end. While it is important to look for the guilty parties and punish criminal activities, we have to keep in mind that in other countries the rule of law is often wrought with corruption and arbitrariness. A harmonious world will never arise out of the grounds of gross violations of human dignity and justice.

What is needed is the enforcement of international human rights standards by an objective international court system, where states have to submit evidence and due process of law is carried out to try individuals accused of terrorism. The current international court system would be useful to utilize, as long as all countries involved in this war on terror agree to abide by it.

While one recommendation explicitly warns against having good relationships with repressive regimes, the next sentence immediately defends US foreign policy and then explicates the need to engage in a “struggle for ideas” (p. 376). There is a contradiction in those few sentences that calls for a clarification of what stance we are going to adopt. America’s foreign policy remains the biggest contention for many people abroad, for the repercussions are seen daily in their own struggle for survival. Televising America’s values and principles will echo hollow hypocrisy, as long as we continually refuse to critically engage our own policies.

In winning over the struggle for ideas, suggestions were made to prop up primary and secondary education and adult education primarily targeting women and children hoping to reform their paradigms. Building schools that will counter the traditional madrassa system, which remain in dire need for reform is a good idea. How we go about doing it, will determine the failure or success of this endeavor.

Education has to be culturally sensitive, built on an Islamic paradigm and should seek to empower the identity of the learned, to avoid creating schisms that may later fester into extremist ideology. We have to remember that most of the hijackers had a primarily secular education which when mixed with very little superficial Islamic knowledge elicits extreme ideology.

In the search to stop terrorist financing we also need to be extremely cautious of shutting down legitimate charities that seek to provide basic survival amenities to those who desperately need it. Seemingly arbitrary closures of any charities that may be legitimate will fuel more resentment and bitterness. The same international court system proposed above, should figure out whether or not a particular charity has terrorist connections, based on authentic evidence that can be upheld in a court of law. At the very least, the representatives of these charities should have recourse to appeal and counter the allegations made against them.

In terms of homeland security, we also have to be careful about treading the line between civil rights and maintaining vigilance for future attacks. Compromising American liberties and shirking constitutionally safeguarded principles will only create a culture of fear and hysteria. As Americans we pride ourselves in our freedom and ability to model our diversity, tolerance and civilized discourse to others. We can still maintain this balance without resorting to alienating, profiling or holding a segment of the population under perpetual siege without any evidence of wrongdoing.

As American Muslims we have an immense responsibility to counter the misinformation, public fear and actively engage the current and future administrations to work together for a bet-

ter humanity. Our position in this country is unique, since we take pride in all the opportunities and values this society has to offer as well as seek to emulate the best of what our faith stands for. Universal principles of tolerance, justice, kindness and freedom are not exclusive to any one race, culture or nation. As we realize the immense commonalities of our humanity and as the world becomes progressively smaller, it behooves us to reach out and open the doors to allow for a mutual dialogue that fosters hope and ushers in a brighter future for all.



## **An American Muslim Reflects upon the 9/11 Commission Report**

*Aneesah Nadir, MSW, Ph.D.*

The attacks of September 11, 2001 were devastating for America. Her citizens and residents were caught off guard by her vulnerability to foreign terrorism. Members of every segment of the population were clearly shaken by the deaths and injuries of so many innocent people. Muslims in America, just as citizens of other faiths, shared the shock, horror, disbelief, grief and loss. Even though our nation had experienced incidents of domestic terror including the reign of the Ku Klux Klan, Ted Kaczynski in the UNABOM case, and Timothy McVeigh and the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, this is the pivotal incident that has drawn our attention to terrorism by extremists like no other.

The efforts of the bipartisan 9/11 commission are laudable. Their work to uncover the operational failures and their causes, as well as strategic recommendations were painstakingly undertaken. The nation owes the commission members a debt of gratitude for their diligence in exploring the factors that led to the tragic events of that fateful day. But, there are important considerations that have been omitted from the record or seemingly glossed over in this historical document.

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Let the record show that the horrific acts of September 11, 2001 were not limited to members of the dominant group in America. Among the deceased were people from various ethnic groups, religious traditions and countries all over the world. People of various beliefs, including Muslims from various countries were among the victims. Clearly the perpetrators of this crime were not loyal to Islamic beliefs. Rather, Islam was hijacked just as the planes were. Islam's view on the value of human life was ignored. Islamic teachings about the ethics of warfare and treatment of those in combat were ignored. Since September 11th every negative image of Islam has been blown up in the hearts and minds of the American people.

While the report indicates in one sentence that "the enemy is not Islam, the great world faith, but rather a perversion of Islam", throughout the document and in the post 9/11 era, mixed messages have been conveyed which continuously point the finger at Islam and Muslims. The focus in the fight against terrorism is squarely pointed at the Islamic faith and Muslims rather than domestic and foreign terrorists of various religious traditions and nationalities, extreme in their views of America.

As a result of the way the enemy has been defined in the "war on terror," everyday Muslims have become vulnerable to the whims of counter-terrorism rhetoric and hastily passed legislation. The lack of understanding about this diverse minority and growing religious group in the post 9/11 era is not new, but it is worsening as a result of media stereotyping and the narrow, yet extreme perspective of some very vocal and well known American leaders. Xenophobia, the vilification of Islam and the rise of Islamophobia are a real part of the American climate today. The USA Patriot Act and other governmental actions have impacted, in very real ways, ordinary people with no intent to harm the U.S. The erosion of American civil liberties and the detention of more than 1200 non-citizens not charged with crimes related to September 11th have to be included as part of the commission's report.

Let the record show that workplace discrimination is part of the American Muslim reality in the aftermath of September 11th. Many have lost their jobs and are having a difficult time obtain-

ing employment because of the institutionalized racism that marginalizes Muslims today, just as other religious and cultural groups have been and continue to be marginalized. Muslim American citizens, legal residents, immigrants and refugees are represented among the growing hate-crime statistics, which escalated significantly after September 11th.

Muslim community centers, mosques, homes and businesses throughout the nation have been vandalized, received arson and bomb threats and some have been burned to the ground. A swastika was spray-painted on front doors of the Islamic Center in Tempe, Arizona earlier this year. As the commission's report recommends rooting out terrorist sanctuaries, American Muslim sanctuaries become targets so that there are no safe havens even for spiritual contemplation and reflection. Concern for personal and family safety peaks and dips with each new chapter, whether it is a result of the acts of extremists or the military effort to topple them.

Let the record show that Muslim women and youth are most vulnerable to the growing anti-Islam climate. The groups that we have tried to liberate in other countries are being victimized and marginalized right here at home. Adolescent identity issues, post traumatic stress and unresolved grief are among the neglected mental health issues young Muslims and their families are experiencing. The fear of racial profiling, deportation, assault, desperation and worry about family members who are in severe circumstances cannot help to win over the hearts and minds of Muslim Americans.

Let the record show that social issues among Muslims in America have been exacerbated. Muslim community-based sources of funding for social services have all but dried up, even as national faith-based initiatives move forward. Again, the message is mixed. On the one hand, as Americans we are told to volunteer and give to address the nation's social welfare concerns. On the other hand, Muslims are told that giving even to "mainstream Muslim organizations" may result in being charged with assisting terrorism. The consequence is reduced charitable giving among Muslims that leads to increased reliance on governmental agencies to address their social welfare concerns.

As we reflect upon the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the aftermath of that tragic day and the 9/11 Commission report, let the record show that Muslims are part of America contributing everyday to the growth and prosperity of this great nation. Efforts to win the war against terrorism require a redefinition of the term terrorist that is not limited to the fringe extremists among Muslims but also the domestic homegrown terrorists and extremists that fan the flames of hate. True appreciation for Islamic life and America's Muslim citizens and residents must be demonstrated in every aspect of this democratic system if we are to truly accomplish the goal of the 9/11 Commission.

Let the record show that an American Muslim perspective recommends inclusion rather than alienation of America's Muslim and other minority citizens.

## Commentary on the 9/11 Commission Report

*Louay M. Safi, Ph.D.*

*The 9/11 Commission Report* presented the American people with the results of investigations conducted by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, into the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

The report purports to answer two questions: “How did [9/11] happen, and how can we avoid such a tragedy again?” The bulk of the report (338 of 428 pages) is devoted to addressing the first question, and describes in detail how the 9/11 attacks were undertaken by the 19 terrorists, based on a staggering number of documents (2.5 million pages) and individuals (1,200) who were interviewed by the Commission.

My comments on the report focus on its attempts to understand the religious and sociopolitical background that formed the actual and motivational context in which the terrorists carried their attacks, and its recommendations for dealing with the threat of terrorism.

The report carefully distinguishes between Osama Bin Laden’s and Al Qaeda’s worldview and outlook and that of the larger Islamic community. While it asserts that Islam is “not the enemy” (p. 363), it recognizes that Bin Ladin “uses cultural and religious allusions to the holy Qur’an and some of its interpreters” (p. 48). It also correctly points out to Bin Ladin’s abili-

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ty to exploit Muslim grievances to rally the public into his anti-pluralist agenda.

The authors of the report show keen awareness of the excesses of Arab regimes and Muslim rulers. “Secular regimes” in the Muslim world “promised a glowing future,” but delivered “autocratic regimes ... unwilling to tolerate any opposition – even in countries, such as Egypt, that has a parliamentary tradition” (p. 52). These regimes “closed off nearly all paths for peaceful opposition, forcing their critics to choose silence, exile, or violent opposition” (ibid).

The report also bring to the fore the dire economic conditions, brought about by corrupt bureaucracies and self-serving elites, that provide a breeding ground for discontent, anger and radicalization:

Frustrated in their search for a decent living, unable to benefit from an education often obtained at great family sacrifice, and blocked from starting families of their own, some of these young men were easy target for radicalization.” (p. 54)

### **Rambling in Defining the Identity of Terror**

The report’s authors recognize the lack of precision in terrorism references and undertake the important step of bringing more precision to the usage of the term. However, the report reveals a great deal of confusion and inconsistency in defining the term terrorist. The report tells us that the enemy is not some generic evil called “terrorism” but rather more specific, “Islamist terrorism – especially al Qaeda network, its affiliates and its ideology” (p. 362).

Terrorism is not Islamic but Islamist, an important distinction the report makes very clear. On the one hand, being Islamic does not pose a threat, for “Islam is not the enemy. It is not synonymous with terror. Nor does Islam teach terror.” The enemy is an ideology that feeds intolerance, a single “stream of Islam (a minority tradition), from at least Ibn Taymiyyah, through the founders of Wahhabism, through the Muslim Brotherhood to Sayyid Qutb” (p. 362).

Yet, after linking terrorism to Islamist terrorism and connecting the latter with a radical ideology and movement, the

report remains ambiguous as to the nature and scope of this ideology and movement. The word “Islamist” has been used in the media and literature to refer to individuals and movements inspired by Islamic values. The Justice party of Turkey is often referred to as Islamist or run by Islamists, given its commitment to Islamic principles and traditions.

Is being Islamist in any way linked to radical ideology or are Islamist terrorists a particular stream of Islamists that are given to violence? Not only is the report ambiguous on this point, but by using the loose term “Islamist” as an adjective for terrorism it has contributed to the mystification, rather than the clarification of the nature of the enemy.

Associating terrorism with al Qaeda or any other organization that incites violence against civilians is more precise than using terms that create more confusion than understanding. As such, the report failed to bring clarity to the identity of the enemy.

### **Focus on Dealing with Symptoms Rather Than Root Causes**

The report rightly recognizes that terrorism is fed by the dire social, political and economic conditions that prevail in most Muslim countries. Poverty, lack of good education, corruption and autocratic regimes are some of root causes of terrorism. It clearly recognizes that Bin Laden’s ability to galvanize support in the Muslim world and find recruits for his violent war against the US is directly linked to “US military presence in the Middle East, policies perceived as anti-Arab and anti-Muslim and support of Israel” (p. 362).

Rather than exploring those areas and making specific recommendations to deal with the root causes of terrorism, the authors or the report conclude that the problem of corruption and poverty are long term problems and hence fall out of the scope of the Commission’s recommendation. Without any investigation, it completely dismisses the perceptions of Middle Easterners on US foreign policy and its one-sided, blind support for Israel as “erroneous and unfounded.”

While the report recognizes the importance of dealing with some of the root causes of terrorism and urges the US govern-

ment to take action to remedy the situation, it gives priority to dealing with the symptoms of the problem rather than confronting its root causes.

For instance, the Commission recommends that the US government pressure Muslim governments to respect the principles necessary for developing an open society that rejects violence and terrorism; principles such as individual education, economic opportunity, widespread political participation and contempt for indiscriminate violence, respect for the rule of law, openness in discussing differences etc. (p. 376). “Where Muslim government, even those who are friends, do not respect these principles, the United State must stand for a better future” (ibid).

The Commission calls on the government to embrace General Musharraf of Pakistan despite the facts that he came to power with the help of the military and that its report places the responsibility for Pakistan’s bleak socioeconomic conditions squarely on the government’s shoulder. “Pakistan’s endemic poverty, widespread corruption and often ineffective government create opportunities for Islamist recruitment, “the Commission point out (p. 367). Further “Pakistan has made little progress,” the report asserts, “toward the return of democratic rule ...”

The Commission, nonetheless, recommends that “[i]f Musharraf stands for enlightened moderation in a fight for his life and for the life of his country, the United State government should be willing to make hard choices too ...” (ibid).

The notion of “enlightened moderation” was introduced, the report tells us, by Musharraf himself in a public essay in which he called on the Muslim world to “shun militancy and extremism” and in return asked the West – the US in particular – to seek to resolve disputes with justice and help better the Muslim world.” (p. 369) However, the Commission made no recommendations to encourage the US government to help resolve disputes mentioned by Musharraf, which include the Palestinian and Kashmiri issues.

### **The Conspicuous Absence of Muslim Americans**

One disturbing aspect of the 9/11 report is the conspicuous absence of the Muslim voice in its preparation, as well as the implications of this exclusion.

To begin with, Muslim and Arab Americans are absent from the Commission membership and the staff who prepared the report. As a result, a frequent subject of the report – Islam and Muslims – are not represented in it. This apparently deprives the Commission from listing and incorporating an important voice that can play a vital role in bringing moderation and understanding to an intricate problem. The lack of an Islamic voice to enlighten the discussion is evident in the language used in the report.

Despite the fact that the report recognizes that violence is spawned by different religious traditions, in the context of the US, only the name of Islam can be use as an adjective to define terrorism. It would be difficult to coin the term “Catholic terrorism” or “Baptist terrorism” when some of the discussants are members of these two faiths.

Similarly, the Commission shows no sensitivity to the concerns of Muslim Americans about their ability to maintain viable charity organizations. Although Muslim Americans are eager to ensure that their charity funds do not fall into the hands of terrorists, they do not want their legitimate charities to get entangled in the “war on terrorism” on the basis of innuendoes and unfounded allegations. The report does not seem to concern itself with the fate of these legitimate Muslim charities.



## **The 9/11 Commission Report's Impact on U.S. Foreign Policy**

*Anwar N. Haddam*

### **The 9/11 Commission Prescribed a Pro-Active Foreign Policy, Not an Isolationist One**

After the first lecture of the 9/11 Commission's report, it appears that the most welcomed strategic position taken by the Commission was, rather than prescribing an isolationist policy for facing the new threat, to recommend a pro-active US foreign policy.

Since World War II, promoting global security, Western world prosperity and ensuring access to vital resources through market relationships, have been the predominant defining and most appreciated elements of US foreign policy.

The devastation that followed World War II demonstrated the vulnerability of many parts of the world, including the US, to an aggressive state. It showed that isolationism is not the answer, rather security and prosperity at home depended on prosperity abroad and on eliminating the acts of aggressive states.

Understanding the consequences of a Nazi-dominated Europe to full employment and free enterprise at home, the US

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had to play a hegemonic role and rightly entered the war to dismantle the Nazi regime, putting an end to that horrible war and laying the ground for a secure and prosperous Western Europe.

During the Cold War, the US had to play a hegemonic role which led to the reconstruction of a secure and prosper Western Europe, and ultimately led to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Indeed, in the aftermath of WWII, Western Europe was deeply worried about the effects of Soviet military power build up in the heart of Europe. The Soviet-inspired coup in former Czechoslovakia and its blockade of Berlin intensified the fears of the aggressive new Communist state controlling the vital resources of Europe and Asia. Appropriately, the US had to intervene overseas once again. It played a crucial role in encouraging cooperation among Western Europeans and reshaping their foreign policy to be able to face the new threat to world peace and prosperity.

We have seen that the only US imposed requirement for receiving Marshall Plan aid was Western European cooperation in coming together, while mutually respecting their people's particular identity, to define the scope of their economic problems and in administration of the funds.

One major consequence of this US hegemony during both WWII and the Cold War was an extraordinary level of peace and prosperity – although the benefits accumulated mainly to Japan and Western Europe – with the probable exceptions of Northern Ireland (which, until recently, had suffered Catholic terrorism as well as Protestant terrorism) and a few Third World countries after the mid-1960s.

US hegemony also caused a significant transformation of the post-Cold War international order, with a positive impact on the politics and socioeconomics of former “East-Bloc” countries.

However, countries of the Muslim world seem to have been left behind from such strategic global change. The expressed desire of Western governments in general, and the US in particular, to see political freedom and socioeconomic development in the post-colonial Muslim world has been incompatible with their silence about, or their support of, the repressive tyrannical

response dealt by most regimes of the region to popular calls for peaceful democratic change.

It is only legitimate to inquire about the impact that the 9/11 Commission's report might have on US foreign policy, particularly toward the Muslim World.

### **The Impact of 9/11 Commission's Defining of the New Enemy**

We welcome the step taken by the Commission to finally engage in public debate on the issue of defining the threat and the enemy in the ongoing war against terror. However, we believe that a more balanced panel of experts on Islam, political Muslim movements and the actual situation in the Muslim world, would certainly have led to more factual findings and hence more beneficial recommendations. The world today is very much in need of a hegemonic power that provides collective goods, including peace, political stability and prosperity, to all nations of the world.

The deprivation of Muslim populations in the world from a real democratic process has caused insecurity, an unstable political situation and has deteriorated the socioeconomic condition of the population. It is only the elite that has benefited from military intrusion in the political arena.

Based on short-term considerations of order and stability, the international community seems to have been accommodated by military institutions and their cruel interference in political life of Muslim world countries, ignoring the large majority of the population's basic human rights.

This attitude toward the Muslim world's call for a change – although driven by a genuine fear of the unknown (i.e., the political Muslim agenda) – has alienated the Western world from those Muslim populations and has, to a certain extent, fulfilled the theory of Western conspiracy against Islam.

In turn, this has seen the radicalization of some frustrated Muslim youths and hence the formation of radical extremist groups. Although small in number, these radical extremist groups are not only threatening world security, but also are a threat to the Muslim world itself and to its efforts for a positive change toward freedom, justice and economic prosperity.

Indeed, the democratic movement in the post-colonial Muslim world is, as never before, in great danger of existence, as ruling autocrats are using their participation in the global “war against terrorism” to terrorize their main critics: namely political Muslim activists. Dictators are the root cause behind the instability and insecurity that the Muslim world is facing today, they cannot be part of the solution.

It is only because they had duly elected governments, that Western Europeans were able to effectively benefit from the Marshall Plan. Corrupt regimes such as the ones in place in most Muslim Countries cannot and should not be entrusted to define the scope of their respective countries nor in the administration of any aid funds.

We appreciate very much the 9/11 Commission’s strong statement about Islam, where it rightly recognizes that:

Islam is not the enemy. It is not synonymous with terror. Nor does Islam teach terror. America and its friends oppose a perversion of Islam, not the great world faith itself. Lives guided by religious faith, including literal beliefs in holy scriptures, are common to every religion, and represent no threat to us.”

However, blaming Muslim activists or Islamists for the terrorist acts committed by radical extremist groups will certainly not resolve the problem.

It is our belief that the only effective way to neutralize radical extremist groups is to fully implement the principle that the will of the people shall be the basis of the government’s authority, along with the principle of separation of powers.

It is high time for US foreign policy strategists to realize that the best response to the horrible events of 9/11 is to support the people’s right across the Muslim world to freely elect civilian political authorities, and not to rely anymore on ruling autocrats. Indeed, the people are the real factor for long-term stability, global security, world economic prosperity and hence, for lasting peace.

It is our belief that the real threat comes from those who oppose political change and the right of the Muslim populations to freely choose their governments. They are the true enemy.

### **The Focus of the Muslim World**

It is our hope to see the 9/11 Commission's recommendation focusing on the Muslim world, benefits the region's peace, stability, economic development and prosperity.

The tragic events of September 11 are a clear indication that the Muslim world is in urgent need of a secure political base, in order to have a fair participation in world economy.

It is a moral imperative and fundamental to collective human rights, not to consider the Muslim world as simply an arena of vital sources of energy to the West, nor to assume Western political and socio-economic concepts as the norms for human fulfillment and happiness.

Muslims believe that Islam is not only a religion guiding personal aspects of faith and belief, but also a way of life as well as a system of thought based on which their social system operates. Islam possesses its own concept of liberated economy and politics, together with an integrated philosophy of morality and spirituality.

We strongly support the 9/11 Commission's recommendations on human dignity, opportunity and civil liberties. It is our hope to see that such recommendations encompass all people:

A fair foreign policy is one that promotes the balance of security with liberty and dignity for all people, a foreign policy that promotes the right of all nations to share our planet equally.



## Helping the Righteous

*Muzammil H. Siddiqi*

Yesterday, the National Commission on Terrorist Attack on 9/11 released its report.<sup>1</sup> The 9/11 Commission was a very powerful bipartisan commission. It studied millions of pages of reports on 9/11 terrorist attack. It interviewed more than 1,200 people including the present and past Presidents of United States. The report is very long. I read only its Executive Summary as it became available on the Internet and some discussion on it in the newspapers. It is a very important report and we should all read it very carefully.

The report made one very good observation about Islam. Our media generally ignored it. It said: “The enemy is not Islam, the great world faith, but the perversion of Islam (p. 16).” We have been saying this for a long time and Muslims all over the world have been saying that terrorism is not part of Islam; it is a perversion of Islam’s peaceful teachings. However, there are many in the government and media who have been confusing the issue and putting the blame on Islam in general and abusing all its followers. I hope they will get a clear message from this report.

The Commission has made some useful recommendations: 1) to attack terrorism, 2) to prevent its growth, and 3) to protect against and prepare for terrorist attacks. It is good to see some very positive suggestions on the prevention of the growth of terrorism. The Commission realized that the causes of terrorism and its growth were also political and economic. In the past it was only said, “They hate us because we are good

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and they are evil.” The Commission chose to go beyond this rhetoric. I hope our government will engage more leaders and thinkers including Muslims to develop a strategy directed for the cure of this malaise of terrorism. Among the recommendations we have:

- Define the message and stand as an example of moral leadership in the world. To Muslim parents, terrorists like (Osama) Bin Laden have nothing to offer their children but vision of violence and death. America and its friends have the advantage – our vision can offer a better future.
- Where Muslim governments, even those who are friends, do not offer opportunity, respect the rule of law or tolerate differences, then the United States needs to stand for a better future.
- Communicate and defend American ideals in the Islamic world through much stronger public diplomacy to reach more people, including students and leaders outside of government.
- Offer an agenda of opportunity that includes support for public education and economic openness.

The first recommendation: “Define the message and stand as an example of moral leadership,” is excellent and extremely important. This will solve many problems. Our government has to show moral leadership by correcting and reforming many of its foreign policies and practices, especially those directed towards the Muslim world. I hope there will be a serious review of our policies and changes will be made according to our own and universal moral standards that we so much advocate and emphasize.

On the second recommendation, I say that the primary commitment of our government should be what is good for the masses, and not what is good for particular regimes. This can build a lot of goodwill for America among the people around the world. Overnight America can win the hearts and minds of millions of people, if it chooses to implement this recommendation.

The third recommendation talks about promoting American ideals in the Muslim world. I want to emphasize that many American ideals are not much different from Islamic ideals.

Freedom, democracy, human rights, justice, fair dealing, free enterprise etc. are as much Islamic as they are American. The problem is not with ideals; the problem is with the implementation of these ideals, both in the Muslim world and in America as well. Let us all practice what we preach.

The fourth recommendation says, “Offer an agenda of opportunity that includes support for public education and economic openness.” The whole world is crying for this. Billions of dollars are being spent on weapons and wars and very little is given for the development of education and for economies. The poverty and disparity in the world are increasing. Those who have do not want to share much with those who do not have. This is one of the main causes of violence and terrorism.

We hope the policy makers will pay full attention to these recommendations and put them to practice. May God bless those who work for righteousness. We as Muslims should fully cooperate in this work of peace and justice. May Allah help us and the world to follow the right path. Ameen.

## **Endnotes**

1. Excerpt from a *khutba* at ISOC, 23 July 2004.



## Appendix I: Resources

This list is reflective of items that can be utilized in continued research and facilitation of rigorous dialogue concerning the 9/11 Commission Report. Some on the resource list are suggested titles, for the use of education and dialogue concerning Muslims and other titles are reflective of resources used in the 9/11 Commission Report. [NOTE: This is not a catalog of the AMTF Resource Library.]

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- Council on American-Islamic Relations: [www.cair-net.org/](http://www.cair-net.org/)  
 Muslim Public Affairs Council: [www.mpac.org/](http://www.mpac.org/)

#### *Government*

- 9-11 Commission: [www.9-11commission.gov](http://www.9-11commission.gov)  
 Government Printing Office - Access: [www.gpoaccess.gov/](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/)  
 Central Intelligence Agency: [www.cia.gov/](http://www.cia.gov/)  
 Federal Bureau of Investigation: [www.fbi.gov/](http://www.fbi.gov/)  
 Homeland Security: [www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/](http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/)  
 U.S. Department of Justice: [www.usdoj.gov/](http://www.usdoj.gov/)

#### *Think Tanks*

- The American Enterprise Institute: [www.aei.org/](http://www.aei.org/)  
 The Aspen Institute: [www.aspeninstitute.org/](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/)  
 The Brookings Institution: [www.brookings.edu/](http://www.brookings.edu/)  
 The Cato Institute: [www.cato.org/](http://www.cato.org/)  
 The Center for Strategic and International Studies: [www.csis.org/](http://www.csis.org/)  
 The Heritage Foundation: [www.heritage.org/](http://www.heritage.org/)  
 The Hudson Institute: [www.hudson.org/](http://www.hudson.org/)  
 The RAND Corporation: [www.rand.org/](http://www.rand.org/)

**General**

The American Civil Liberties Union: [www.aclu.org/](http://www.aclu.org/)

C-Span: [www.cspan.org/](http://www.cspan.org/)

PBS: [www.pbs.org/](http://www.pbs.org/)

National Public Radio: [www.npr.org/](http://www.npr.org/)

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## **Appendix II: Summary of the 9/11 Commission Report's Recommendations**

### **What To Do?**

#### *Attack Terrorists and Their Organizations*

- The U.S. government must identify and prioritize actual or potential terrorist sanctuaries. For each, it should have a realistic strategy to keep possible terrorists insecure and on the run, using all elements of national power. We should reach out, listen to, and work with other countries that can help.
- If Musharraf stands for enlightened moderation in a fight for his life and for the life of his country, the United States should be willing to make hard choices too, and make the difficult long-term commitment to the future of Pakistan. Sustaining the current scale of aid to Pakistan, the United States should support Pakistan's government in its struggle against extremists with a comprehensive effort that extends from military aid to support for better education, so long as Pakistan's leaders remain willing to make difficult choices of their own.
- The President and the Congress deserve praise for their efforts in Afghanistan so far. Now the United States and the international community should make a long-term commitment to a secure and stable Afghanistan, in order to give the government a reasonable opportunity to improve the life of the Afghan people. Afghanistan must not again become a sanctuary for international crime and terrorism. The United States and the international community should help the Afghan government extend its authority over the country, with a strategy and nation-by-nation commitments to achieve their objectives.
- The problems in the U.S.-Saudi relationship must be confronted, openly. The United States and Saudi Arabia must determine if they can build a relationship that political leaders on both sides are prepared to publicly defend – a relationship about more than oil. It should include a shared commitment to political and economic reform, as Saudis make common cause with the outside world. It

should include a shared interest in greater tolerance and cultural respect, translating into a commitment to fight the violent extremists who foment hatred.

*Prevent Continued Growth of Islamist Terrorism*

- The U.S. government must define what the message is, what it stands for. We should offer an example of moral leadership in the world, committed to treat people humanely, abide by the rule of law, and be generous and caring to our neighbors. America and Muslim friends can agree on respect for human dignity and opportunity. To Muslim parents, terrorists like Bin Ladin have nothing to offer their children but visions of violence and death. America and its friends have a crucial advantage – we can offer these parents a vision that might give their children a better future. If we heed the views of thoughtful leaders in the Arab and Muslim worlds, a moderate consensus can be found.
- Where Muslim governments, even those who are friends, do not respect these principles, the United States must stand for a better future. One of the lessons of the long Cold War was that short-term gains in cooperating with the most repressive and brutal governments were too often outweighed by long-term setbacks for America's stature and interests.
- Just as we did in the Cold War, we need to defend our ideals abroad vigorously. America does stand up for its values. The United States defended, and still defends, Muslims against tyrants and criminals in Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. If the United States does not act aggressively to define itself in the Islamic world, the extremists will gladly do the job for us. Recognizing that Arab and Muslim audiences rely on satellite television and radio, the government has begun some promising initiatives in television and radio broadcasting to the Arab world, Iran, and Afghanistan. These efforts are beginning to reach large audiences. The Broadcasting Board of Governors has asked for much larger resources. It should get them. The United States should rebuild the scholarship, exchange, and library programs that reach out to young people and offer them knowledge and hope. Where such assistance is provided, it should be identified as coming from the citizens of the United States.
- The U.S. government should offer to join with other nations in generously supporting a new International Youth Opportunity Fund. Funds will be spent directly for building and operating pri-

mary and secondary schools in those Muslim states that commit to sensibly investing their own money in public education.

- A comprehensive U.S. strategy to counter terrorism should include economic policies that encourage development, more open societies, and opportunities for people to improve the lives of their families and to enhance prospects for their children's future.
- The United States should engage other nations in developing a comprehensive coalition strategy against Islamist terrorism. There are several multilateral institutions in which such issues should be addressed. But the most important policies should be discussed and coordinated in a flexible contact group of leading coalition governments. This is a good place, for example, to develop joint strategies for targeting terrorist travel, or for hammering out a common strategy for the places where terrorists may be finding sanctuary.
- The United States should engage its friends to develop a common coalition approach toward the detention and humane treatment of captured terrorists. New principles might draw upon Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions on the law of armed conflict. That article was specifically designed for those cases in which the usual laws of war did not apply. Its minimum standards are generally accepted throughout the world as customary international law.
- Our report shows that al Qaeda has tried to acquire or make weapons of mass destruction for at least ten years. There is no doubt the United States would be a prime target. Preventing the proliferation of these weapons warrants a maximum effort – by strengthening counter-proliferation efforts, expanding the Proliferation Security Initiative, and supporting the Cooperative Threat Reduction program.
- Vigorous efforts to track terrorist financing must remain front and center in U.S. counterterrorism efforts. The government has recognized that information about terrorist money helps us to understand their networks, search them out, and disrupt their operations. Intelligence and law enforcement have targeted the relatively small number of financial facilitators – individuals al Qaeda relied on for their ability to raise and deliver money – at the core of al Qaeda's revenue stream. These efforts have worked. The death or capture of several important facilitators has decreased the amount of money available to al Qaeda and has increased its costs and difficulty in raising and moving that money. Captures have additionally provided a windfall of intelligence that can be used to continue the cycle of disruption.

*Protect against and Prepare for Terrorist Attacks*

- Targeting travel is at least as powerful a weapon against terrorists as targeting their money. The United States should combine terrorist travel intelligence, operations, and law enforcement in a strategy to intercept terrorists, find terrorist travel facilitators, and constrain terrorist mobility.
- The U.S. border security system should be integrated into a larger network of screening points that includes our transportation system and access to vital facilities, such as nuclear reactors. The President should direct the Department of Homeland Security to lead the effort to design a comprehensive screening system, addressing common problems and setting common standards with system-wide goals in mind. Extending those standards among other governments could dramatically strengthen America and the world's collective ability to intercept individuals who pose catastrophic threats.
- The Department of Homeland Security, properly supported by the Congress, should complete, as quickly as possible, a biometric entry-exit screening system, including a single system for speeding qualified travelers. It should be integrated with the system that provides benefits to foreigners seeking to stay in the United States. Linking biometric passports to good data systems and decision-making is a fundamental goal. No one can hide his or her debt by acquiring a credit card with a slightly different name. Yet today, a terrorist can defeat the link to electronic records by tossing away an old passport and slightly altering the name in the new one.
- The U.S. government cannot meet its own obligations to the American people to prevent the entry of terrorists without a major effort to collaborate with other governments. We should do more to exchange terrorist information with trusted allies, and raise U.S. and global border security standards for travel and border crossing over the medium and long term through extensive inter-national cooperation.
- Secure identification should begin in the United States. The federal government should set standards for the issuance of birth certificates and sources of identification, such as drivers licenses. Fraud in identification documents is no longer just a problem of theft. At many entry points to vulnerable facilities, including gates for boarding aircraft, sources of identification are the last opportunity to ensure that people are who they say they are and to check whether they are terrorists.

- Hard choices must be made in allocating limited resources. The U.S. government should identify and evaluate the transportation assets that need to be protected, set risk-based priorities for defending them, select the most practical and cost-effective ways of doing so, and then develop a plan, budget, and funding to implement the effort. The plan should assign roles and missions to the relevant authorities (federal, state, regional, and local) and to private stakeholders. In measuring effectiveness, perfection is unattainable. But terrorists should perceive that potential targets are defended. They may be deterred by a significant chance of failure.
- Improved use of “no-fly” and “automatic selectee” lists should not be delayed while the argument about a successor to CAPPs continues. This screening function should be performed by the TSA, and it should utilize the larger set of watch-lists maintained by the federal government. Air carriers should be required to supply the information needed to test and implement this new system.
- The TSA and the Congress must give priority attention to improving the ability of screening checkpoints to detect explosives on passengers. As a start, each individual selected for special screening should be screened for explosives. Further, the TSA should conduct a human factors study, a method often used in the private sector, to understand problems in screener performance and set attainable objectives for individual screeners and for the checkpoints where screening takes place.
- As the President determines the guidelines for information sharing among government agencies and by those agencies with the private sector, he should safeguard the privacy of individuals about whom information is shared.
- The burden of proof for retaining a particular governmental power should be on the executive, to explain (a) that the power actually materially enhances security and (b) that there is adequate supervision of the executive’s use of the powers to ensure protection of civil liberties. If the power is granted, there must be adequate guidelines and oversight to properly confine its use.
- At this time of increased and consolidated government authority, there should be a board within the executive branch to oversee adherence to the guidelines we recommend and the commitment the government makes to defend our civil liberties.
- Homeland security assistance should be based strictly on an assessment of risks and vulnerabilities. Now, in 2004, Washington, DC, and New York City are certainly at the top of any such list.

We understand the contention that every state and city needs to have some minimum infrastructure for emergency response. But federal homeland security assistance should not remain a program for general revenue sharing. It should supplement state and local resources based on the risks or vulnerabilities that merit additional support. Congress should not use this money as a pork barrel.

- Emergency response agencies nationwide should adopt the Incident Command System (ICS). When multiple agencies or multiple jurisdictions are involved, they should adopt a unified command. Both are proven frameworks for emergency response. We strongly support the decision that federal homeland security funding will be contingent, as of October 1, 2004, upon the adoption and regular use of ICS and unified command procedures. In the future, the Department of Homeland Security should consider making funding contingent on aggressive and realistic training in accordance with ICS and unified command procedures.
- Congress should support pending legislation which provides for the expedited and increased assignment of radio spectrum for public safety purposes. Furthermore, high-risk urban areas such as New York City and Washington, DC, should establish signal corps units to ensure communications connectivity between and among civilian authorities, local first responders, and the National Guard. Federal funding of such units should be given high priority by Congress.
- We endorse the American National Standards Institute's recommended standard for private preparedness. We were encouraged by Secretary Tom Ridge's praise of the standard, and urge the Department of Homeland Security to promote its adoption. We also encourage the insurance and credit-rating industries to look closely at a company's compliance with the ANSI standard in assessing its insurability and creditworthiness. We believe that compliance with the standard should define the standard of care owed by a company to its employees and the public for legal purposes. Private-sector preparedness is not a luxury; it is a cost of doing business in the post-9/11 world. It is ignored at a tremendous potential cost in lives, money, and national security.

## **How To Do It?**

### *Unity of Effort Across the Foreign-Domestic Divide*

- We recommend the establishment of a National Counter-terrorism Center (NCTC), built on the foundation of the existing Terrorist

Threat Integration Center (TTIC). Breaking the older mold of national government organization, this NCTC should be a center for joint operational planning and joint intelligence, staffed by personnel from the various agencies. The head of the NCTC should have authority to evaluate the performance of the people assigned to the Center.

#### *Unity of Effort in the Intelligence Community*

- The current position of Director of Central Intelligence should be replaced by a National Intelligence Director with two main areas of responsibility: (1) to oversee national intelligence centers on specific subjects of interest across the U.S. government and (2) to manage the national intelligence program and oversee the agencies that contribute to it.
- The CIA Director should emphasize (a) rebuilding the CIA's analytic capabilities; (b) transforming the clandestine service by building its human intelligence capabilities; (c) developing a stronger language program, with high standards and sufficient financial incentives; (d) renewing emphasis on recruiting diversity among operations officers so they can blend more easily in foreign cities; (e) ensuring a seamless relationship between human source collection and signals collection at the operational level; and (f) stressing a better balance between unilateral and liaison operations.
- Lead responsibility for directing and executing paramilitary operations, whether clandestine or covert, should shift to the Defense Department. There it should be consolidated with the capabilities for training, direction, and execution of such operations already being developed in the Special Operations Command.
- Finally, to combat the secrecy and complexity we have described, the overall amounts of money being appropriated for national intelligence and to its component agencies should no longer be kept secret. Congress should pass a separate appropriations act for intelligence, defending the broad allocation of how these tens of billions of dollars have been assigned among the varieties of intelligence work.

#### *Unity of Effort in Sharing Information*

- Information procedures should provide incentives for sharing, to restore a better balance between security and shared knowledge.
- The president should lead the government-wide effort to bring the major national security institutions into the information revolution. He should coordinate the resolution of the legal, policy, and

technical issues across agencies to create a “trusted information network.”

### *Unity of Effort in the Congress*

- Congressional oversight for intelligence – and counterterrorism – is now dysfunctional. Congress should address this problem. We have considered various alternatives: A joint committee on the old model of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy is one. A single committee in each house of Congress, combining authorizing and appropriating authorities, is another.
- Congress should create a single, principal point of oversight and review for homeland security. Congressional leaders are best able to judge what committee should have jurisdiction over this department and its duties. But we believe that Congress does have the obligation to choose one in the House and one in the Senate, and that this committee should be a permanent standing committee with a nonpartisan staff.
- Since a catastrophic attack could occur with little or no notice, we should minimize as much as possible the disruption of national security policymaking during the change of administrations by accelerating the process for national security appointments. We think the process could be improved significantly so transitions can work more effectively and allow new officials to assume their new responsibilities as quickly as possible.

### *Organizing America's Defenses*

- A specialized and integrated national security workforce should be established at the FBI consisting of agents, analysts, linguists, and surveillance specialists who are recruited, trained, rewarded, and retained to ensure the development of an institutional culture imbued with a deep expertise in intelligence and national security.
- The Department of Defense and its oversight committees should regularly assess the adequacy of Northern Command's strategies and planning to defend the United States against military threats to the homeland.
- The Department of Homeland Security and its oversight committees should regularly assess the types of threats the country faces to determine (a) the adequacy of the government's plans – and the progress against those plans – to protect America's critical infrastructure and (b) the readiness of the government to respond to the threats that the United States might face.

## **Appendix III: Concept Paper**

### **Introduction**

As an integral part of the fabric of society American Muslims need to be fully engaged in all discourse that impacts our nation. Our unique position as Muslims in America necessitates our having an independent voice in matters pertaining to civil rights and liberties, national security, and the well being of the country.

American Muslims need to be part of any dialogue pertaining to defining Islam and Muslims as we model the complementary nature of both Islamic and American values. As responsible citizens, we need to ensure that any response we have is balanced, relevant and non-reactionary.

### **Task Force Objective**

A task force has been assembled to construct an American-Muslim response to the 9/11 Commission Report. The mandate of the American Muslim Task Force (AMTF) is to provide preliminary analysis and a foundation for a continued discourse regarding the short and long-term implications of the 9/11 Commission's report. We will be releasing "The American Muslim Response to the 9/11 Commission Report," available September 1, 2004.

### **Call for Participation**

AMTF invites all organizations, councils, leaders and community members to participate in this endeavor by reviewing, endorsing, and distributing "The American Muslim Response to the 9/11 Commission Report" upon its release.

### **GOALS**

AMTF is undertaking analysis and research to facilitate the formulation of an informed response by the American Muslim community. We intend to contribute towards two main audiences:

To the Authors of the Report, Public at large, and Administration pertaining to:

- The Recommendations and their implications on the American Muslim community, listing both the strengths of the report as well as our concerns.
- Identify inconsistencies, inaccuracies, and inadequacies of the report and its sources.
- Define the terminology relating to Islam and Muslims.
- Highlight and strengthen our role as contributing citizens of the United States.
- Engage the process of policy formulation.

To the Muslim Community pertaining to:

- Keep the Muslim community informed about potential implications of proposed policy.
- Recommend how Muslims can participate and engage in civic discourse.
- Compile a library of resources providing the proper context for the 9/11 Commission report and beyond.
- Encourage the plurality of thought and voice within the Muslim community.

## **SCOPE**

Our initial project is the publication of “The American Muslim Response to the 9/11 Commission Report” due on September 1, 2004. The forthcoming “The American Muslim Response to the 9/11 Commission Report,” based on initial analysis and research, is designed to help formulate an informed response and will include contributions from thinkers, scholars, activists, and leaders within the Muslim community.

We envision this publication will serve as a beginning point for a sustained effort by the American Muslim community to have a balanced, informed, and non reactionary response to address relevant challenges. For the future we would like to see several books, position papers, strategic plans, in depth analysis to emerge from this foundation.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS**

Library of resources providing the proper context for the 9/11 Commission report and beyond.

Publication of the “The American Muslim Response to the 9/11 Commission Report” due on September 1, 2004.

Longer term strategies to incorporate books, several papers, position papers, media etc.

### **OUTREACH**

The distribution list will include academia, organizations, policy institutes, mosques, think-tanks and government officials.



## **Appendix IV: CCMO: The Coordinating Council of Muslim Organizations of the Greater Washington Area**

CCMO, a not-for-profit association, is a broad-based union of Muslim organizations of the greater Washington area, from diverse backgrounds, which are committed to the mission of Islam, nurturing in the heart and behavior of Muslims the characteristics of the Muslim faith as defined in the Quran and Sunnah, establishing a positive Muslim community presence in the area, and proclaiming the life-giving message of Islam to all people.

Founded in 1987 by few Maryland-based Muslim organizations, CCMO is today the premiere federated body representing the Greater Washington area Muslim population of over 200,000. Indeed, in fifteen years, CCMO has grown into a strong federation of almost forty five Muslim organizations of the Greater Washington Area. Among its members are the area largest Massajid and Islamic Centers, community service centers, full time Muslim Schools, Muslim institutions of higher education, civil rights groups, as well as professional associations. Several other Muslim Organizations are loosely affiliated or otherwise within the CCMO network.

CCMO aims to:

- Foster the unity of all Muslim organizations based in the greater Washington area to fulfill a positive role in North America.
- Promote and aiding in the organization of activities involving Muslims in social issues confronting North America.
- Promote dawah activities and developing dawah materials.
- Promote community building skills.
- Establish educational programs that will assist in the training of Muslims in practicing Islam.

- Assist in building dynamic, stable Muslim families in the community.
- Promote and organizing Muslim youth activities to improve their education, preparing them for leadership role.
- Support Muslim causes by promoting political participation in North America political process.

The Coordinating Council today is actively engaged in diverse community projects via structured committees and ad-hoc teams. These include:

- Interfaith dialogue and relationships.
- Media relations, including professional outreach, media watch, press releases and conferences, and qualitative media representatives.
- Training and education.
- Legal affairs.
- Government relations, including participation in high level talks on critical issues impacting Muslims in North America.
- Civic and social service projects

**For further information,  
visit the CCMO website at:  
[www.ccmoc.net](http://www.ccmoc.net).**