

AFGHANI'S NEW STONE AGE

BY TAMIN ANSARY

I have been hearing a lot of talk about "bombing Afghanistan back to the Stone Age." Ron Owens, on KGO Talk Radio, allowed that this would mean killing innocent people, people who had nothing to do with the atrocity on September 11 against the United States, but "We're at war, we have to accept collateral damage. What else can we do?" I heard a TV pundit discussing whether we "have the belly to do what must be done." And I thought about the issues being raised especially hard because I am from Afghanistan, and even though I have lived here for 35 years I have never lost track of what is going on there. So I want to tell anyone who will listen how it all looks from where I am standing.

I speak as one who hates the Taliban and Osama Bin Laden. There is no doubt in my mind that these people were responsible for the atrocity in New York and Washington, D.C. I agree that something must be done about those monsters. But the Taliban and Bin Laden are not Afghanistan. They are not even the government of Afghanistan. The Taliban are a cult of ignorant psychotics who took over Afghanistan in 1997. Bin Laden is a political criminal with a plan. When you think Taliban, think *Nazis*. When you think Bin Laden, think *Hitler*. And when you think "the people of Afghanistan," think "the Jews in the concentration camps."

It is not only that the Afghan people had nothing to do with this, they were the first victims of the perpetrators. They would exult if someone would come in there, take out the Taliban and clear out the rats nest of international thugs holed up in their country.

Some say, why don't the Afghans rise up and overthrow the Taliban? The answer is, they're starved, exhausted, hurt, incapacitated, suffering. A few years ago, the United Nations estimated that there are 500,000 disabled orphans in Afghanistan --- a country with no economy, no food. There are millions of widows. And the Taliban has been burying these widows alive in mass graves. The soil is littered with landmines; the farms were all destroyed by the Soviets. These are a few of the reasons why the Afghan people have not overthrown the Taliban.

We come now to the question of bombing Afghanistan back to the Stone Age. Trouble is, that's been done. The Soviets took care of it already. Make the Afghans suffer? They're already suffering. Level their houses? Done. Turn their schools into piles of rubble? Done. Eradicate their hospitals? Done. Destroy their infrastructure? Cut them off from medicine and health care? Too late. Somebody already did all that. New bombs would only stir the rubble of earlier bombs. Would they at least get the Taliban? Not likely.



BOB GALE

In today's Afghanistan, only the Taliban eat, only they have the means to move around. They would slip away and hide. Maybe the bombs would get some of those disabled orphans, they don't move too fast, they don't even have wheelchairs. But flying over Kabul and dropping bombs wouldn't really be a strike against the criminals who did this horrific thing. Actually it would only be making common cause with the Taliban --- by raping once again the people they have been raping all this time.

So what else is there? What can be done, then? Let me now speak with true fear and trembling. The only way to get Bin Laden is to go in with ground troops. When people speak of "having the belly to do what needs to be done," they are thinking in terms of having the belly to kill as many as needed. Having the belly to overcome any moral qualms about killing innocent people. Let's pull our heads out of the sand. What's actually on the table is Americans dying. And not just because some Americans would die fighting their way through Afghanistan to Bin Laden's hideout.

It is much bigger than that folks. Because to get any troops to Afghanistan, we would have to go through Pakistan. Would they let us? Not likely. The conquest of Pakistan would have to be first. Will other Muslim nations just stand by? You see where I am going? We are flirting with a world war between Islam and the West. And guess what: that is Bin Laden's program. That is exactly what he wants. That is why he did this. Read his speeches and statements. It is all right there. He really believes Islam would beat the West. It might seem ridiculous, but he figures if he can polarize the world into Islam and the West, he's got a billion soldiers. If the West wrecks a holocaust in those lands, that is a billion people with nothing left to lose, that's even better from Bin Laden's point of view. He is probably wrong. In the end the West would win, whatever that would mean, but the war would last for years and millions would die, not just theirs but ours. Who has the belly for that? Bin Laden does. Anyone else?

Tamin Ansary writes for Pacific News Service. He was once a writer for the famous now defunct *Portland Scribe*.

LETTER TO MOM

Dear Mom

I am moved to respond to all these E-mails flying around in response to the September 11 attack. So many of those diatribes on nationalism, our flag, how tough we are and how we'll defeat terrorism and so on, are of ever less relevance to my mind.

It goes without saying that a serious attack and ongoing threat to our security will not go unanswered. But to dignify so vile and despicable an enemy with so much rhetoric seems somehow beneath humanity and wisdom. I personally don't need the President or anyone else to try and froth things up so I'm full of evil loathing for the evil enemy, those evil doers. And spinning the whole business so I support bombing the hell out of people and killing in the name of God, just seems like so much crap and hot air, beneath human dignity.

Instead, I would say to any terrorist, "I want to understand your mind, and if there is a shred of legitimate basis to your bitch, your hatred, this shall be addressed humanely, thoughtfully and responsibly. But destroying people's lives and their property or any uncivilized behavior cannot, and will not be tolerated. Those responsible for such acts will be held accountable, totally and completely. Whatever your concerns may be, however valid some may even be, there is no room in today's world for uncivilized acts of terror, and for which there will be zero tolerance.

Frankly, I'm just not sure much else really needs to be said. In spite of greatness and great deeds our country is about, a clear study of the facts, our history, all of it, often -- and some would say too often --- betrays our kindness, our goodness; however well meaning or intended, we are culpable.

Much has happened to instigate tremendous ill will, hatred and disrespect for us from others, of which much continues and precipitates more problems on top of the hatred. We must realize this for what it is, the symptoms and sources, not just attempt to cut out the problem like a cancer for it will grow back.

We are one with our world, like it or not. We should not and cannot bully our way, behave irresponsibly independent, or exercise unfair advantage over others. We must be consistent in our word and actions as we profess lofty ideals of liberty and justice for all.

We must understand others better, and know we are one. Nothing separates us. Not self-righteous perceptions, not distance or barriers, certainly not God, and not even our indignation and disdain of others.

We are one and we damn well better ourselves be a shining example of all that we extol if we expect to be affective with the rest of the world. Anything less will be at our peril.

~RICHARD JOHNSON



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BIPOLAR DOGMATA

THE GENESIS OF TERROR

It all begins with the 'traditional family' unit, the mother the father the child.

Not 'the ideal' family, whatever percentage of all families that might be, but the not-ideal family, the dark side, non-family family of the fucking, the fighting, the verbal acid and the accidental child.

This is the sacrifice child of the formerly sacrifice child parents, who learned fucking and fighting and verbal acid and the corrosion of non-love of and for their own being from the first breath of their pre-poisoned world.

These are *Bipolar Dogmata* terrorists Being made.

Domestic terrorism is the first kind of all terrorism And *Bipolar Dogmata* is the consequence And cause Of the Last Hungry Child.

Q.E.D.

~VALERIE LINDHOUT

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