

The Religious War Our Secular President Ignores

Contributed by A.W.R. Hawkins
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Since September 11, 2001, the United States has been in a war it did not start against Islamic extremists bent on using terrorism to destroy us and our way life.

To these extremists, this war is an expression of Jihad and is therefore a religious cause for which they are happy to die. Yet for our secular President, it's just an "overseas contingency operation," disconnected from the religion-based motivations of the terrorists.

When Islamic extremists hijacked four airliners and successfully attacked the Pentagon and the World Trade Centers on September 11, 2001, Americans from all walks of life understood these were acts of war. Even previously devout anti-war liberals, like the late Ron Silverman, recognized that it was time to quit "giving peace a chance" and time to starting giving our Stealth bombers a chance instead.

And just one month after the attacks on September 11, Osama Bin Laden made sure the world understood that the United States was not simply up against a determined enemy, but an enemy whose determination was rooted in their religious convictions. It was November 2001 when he praised the 9/11 hijackers then said: "The nature of this war is fundamentally religious";

To turn a deaf ear to Bin Laden and deny that this war is a religious one in the eyes of those attacking us is to deny reality. Moreover, to do so is to reject what the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies' Dr. Walid Phares describes as "the strategic truth";

In other words, our refusal to take Bin Laden at his word handicaps us in this war because it keeps us from understanding its underlying cause.

Consider this: In September 2003, Time Magazine reported that a biological weapons attack on the New York subway system had been stopped. On June 22, 2006, seven people were arrested in Miami, Florida for plotting an attack on Chicago's Sears Tower which they hoped would be "just as good, or greater, than [those on] 9/11." Then six men were arrested on May 7, 2007, and charged with planning to attack the Fort Dix Army Base in New Jersey. And these were but three of the more than thirty planned attacks against the U.S. that were discovered and foiled before being carried out between 2002 and 2008.

The common tie in all these failed attacks was Islamic extremism. And our unwillingness to recognize and address this religious motivation has only emboldened Islamic extremists and their leaders to speak more clearly about their outright war against the United States.

For example, in April 2002, a Washington D.C. Imam named Abdul Alim Musa asked that suicide bombers no longer be referred to as suicide bombers but "as heroes"; In 2004 Professor Hatem Bazian told his audience on the UC-Berkeley campus that it was time for "an intifada in this country." And this all fits perfectly with the language coming out of the Middle East where, in May 2006, Al-Jazeera television carried a message by Ayatollah Ahmad Hussein explaining that theirs was an "offensive Jihad, which means attacking the world, in order to spread [Islam's] word";

Yet even when it was confirmed that Major Nidal Malik Hasan yelled "Allahu Akbar" before opening fire on unarmed American soldiers at Ft. Hood, our secular president could only "caution [us] against jumping to conclusions" about what might or might not have been Hasan's religious motivations.

Within days after the attacks on Ft. Hood the world knew that Hasan had been in frequent contact with Anwar al-Awlaqi, a "Yemeni-based cleric" who supports Jihad against the U.S. We also know that Hasan believed "Muslims

should stand up and fight the aggressor" (which is not-so-code language for "stand up and kill Americans");. And we heard one of the men he'd served with tell us that Hasan was "happy" when two U.S. soldiers were gunned down in Little Rock, AR, this past summer.

While these revelations have led to calls for both House and Senate investigations into what Senator Joseph I. Lieberman (I-Ct) has referred to as "the most destructive terrorist act to be committed on American soil since 9/11," the same revelations about Hasan failed to make a dent in the mind of our secular president.

As a matter of fact, on November 15, 2009, Obama literally asked that the House and Senate hold off on their investigation for a time, "until federal law enforcement and military authorities have completed their probes into the shootings."

We are at war with people who desire to kill us because they view us as the enemy of their religion. This is not a law enforcement matter nor is the level of our commitment to the War on Terror something that can wait and be decided after a probe into the Ft. Hood shooting is completed. And, to be honest, our military's efforts in this war are already hampered by the fact that our secular president wants us to use the phrase "overseas contingency operation" instead of "War on Terror" to describe it.

With all respect to our secular president, can't we at least refer to it as an "overseas contingency operation [against Islamic extremists who want to kill us]"?

**HUMAN EVENTS columnist A.W.R. Hawkins has been published on topics including the U.S. Navy, Civil War battles, Vietnam War ideology, the Reagan Presidency, and the Rebirth of Conservatism, 1968-1988. More of his articles can be found at www.awrhawkins.com.