



## Terrorists Cannot End Terrorism, Only We Can

### Maryam Namazie

The terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 on the people in America was a crime against humanity and an act of genocide. News of people saying their last goodbyes on airplanes used as missiles and from offices in the World Trade Center as well as images of people burning, screaming for help, throwing themselves out of windows, and finally being crushed under the collapsed buildings will haunt us forever. Our most heartfelt sympathy goes out to the

victims, their families and friends. Our strongest condemnation is reserved for those responsible. We know who they are.

The reactionary political Islamic movement is responsible for the death and destruction in New York City, Pennsylvania and Washington, just as it has been responsible for death and destruction and countless acts of genocide and inhumanity in Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, the Sudan, Algeria... Islamic states and

movements have made the lives of generations of human beings in the Middle East and North Africa intolerable. In Afghanistan, the Taliban have banned women from school and work. In Iran, youth are flogged in public for listening to music and women and girls are forcibly veiled. In Iraq, women prostitutes are beheaded. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, women and men are still buried in ditches and stoned to death for entering voluntary sexual

relations; there are public hangings on a regular basis. Labour activists and political opponents are imprisoned, tortured and killed. We know who these vile terrorists are because we have also lost countless of our friends, families, comrades and lovers to them.

But they are not the only ones who are to be condemned and who are terrorists. After

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## Ending Terrorism is our Task

### A Discussion with Mansoor Hekmat

*Haftegi: Thousands of people have lost their lives as a result of terrorist attacks on the skyscrapers of the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon Building in Washington..*

**Mansoor Hekmat:** ...We condemn this act as an immense crime against humanity and genocide. Our hearts go out to the people of America and we share deeply in their grief. Reactionary states and organisations have made terrorism a stable aspect of life in our era. We believe that through people's power,

we can and must put an end to state and non-state terrorism. Other than its direct unimaginable criminal dimensions, it is clear to us that this occurrence is just a preface to the further escalation of a global terrorist contest. It is a dark day – a prelude to more calamities. We call on people to come to the fore and take the world in their own hands. The world must be taken out of the hands of bombers and generals.

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all, political Islam was promoted and maintained by Western governments as a bulwark against the Eastern Block during the Cold War and against Left and working class movements. In Iran, Khomeini was put forward in order to prevent the rise to power of the Left after the 1979 revolution. Since then over 100,000 people have been executed. In Afghanistan, the Taliban was armed and supported by the West vis-à-vis the Soviet-backed government of the time. The West has supported Saddam Hussein's government in the past as well as the Israeli government in its indiscriminate killing of Palestinians, mainly youth and children. And the list goes on and on. Still today,



the West continues to support political Islam's terrorist movements and states. Though corpses hang from

cranes in city centers and public amputations and floggings continue unabated, today, Jack Straw, the UK Foreign Minister, will be meeting with officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran, one of the founding pillars of political Islam and terrorism in the world, to obtain their

support for the upcoming 'war against terrorism!'

Yes, we do know who the terrorists are – both sides kill and murder with impunity. Both sides are in a power struggle to assert themselves - the US to once again assert its diminishing superpower status and Political Islam, to prevent its fall. Their war has nothing to do with ending terrorism, but in fact escalates and intensifies it.

It is up to us then to independently come to the fore and demand its end. Much needs to be done, including resolving the Palestinian question and supporting secular

movements in the region. One important step in eradicating terrorism though is an end to the Islamic Republic of Iran. We must support the people's movement for its overthrow and demand that all assistance to and collaboration with that regime cease, its embassies be shut down and its leaders arrested and tried as criminals against humanity. We must demand open borders and the protection of all the victims of terrorism - asylum seekers and refugees fleeing political Islam in Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, etc. We must put an end to racist violence against people who have fled the region. It is up to us.

Clearly, terrorists themselves cannot end terrorism, only we can.

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**Haftegi:** *Who has carried out this terrorist act and to what purpose?*

**Mansoor Hekmat:** The facts of this incident are still not clear. Several possibilities could exist. In the Oklahoma incident, it quickly became clear that a circle from the extremist Right in America itself caused that catastrophe. But this time, indications are that an Islamic current was behind this crime. The suicidal nature of this operation places it within the traditions of Islamic groups. Which Islamic organisation and or

mix of organisations and states were behind this attack is more obscure. The scope of the operation, the existence of four teams with four pilots trained to fly passenger planes who were ready to commit suicide, is indicative of a long-term plan of four to five years. The fact that no hints of such a large-scale operation had been leaked to Western intelligence is indicative that their intelligence sources had not so deeply infiltrated these organisations, and this too points to outside USA and Europe. Nonetheless, it is not possible to comment on

the causes and perpetrators of this incident with certainty. The American government and media are primarily focused on Ben Laden's group.

**Haftegi:** *American officials are speaking of revenge and of punishing the terrorists and countries supporting terrorism. They have accused Ben Laden and have said that if the Taliban does not hand him over, they might attack Afghanistan. What is your opinion on this?*

**Mansoor Hekmat:** In my

opinion, America and NATO will definitely carry out an immense violent operation, not necessarily or fundamentally to punish the perpetrators who might not even be within America's reach, but rather to assert its power globally as well as for psychological and emotional factors in USA itself. Between an effective political way to confront anti-American terrorism and a futile military course of action, the US will definitely opt for the latter because America's conception of itself and its super power status is based on military might.

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There is still no certainty about the dimensions of America's response. I do not think that they themselves will consider the firing of missiles and dropping of bombs on the regions and cities of Afghanistan from a distance as sufficient. If Taliban hands over Ben Laden, the extent of USA's military reaction might remain limited; otherwise they would plan to carry out a military occupation and ground invasion of Afghanistan or even Iraq. This would change many things. The political picture of the world would change altogether.

**Haftegi:** *In initial reactions to this incident within America, there has been talk of intelligence and security weaknesses. In fact, the Pentagon, the centre of the defence establishment and the most important centre of finance have been attacked and many people have perished. What is the effect of this incident regarding the status of America as a superpower in the world; what measures might America take to prevent a diminished position?*

**Mansoor Hekmat:** In my opinion, this terrorism in fact helps secure America's image as a superpower. USA's superpower status is defined in relation to other economic, political and military powers in the capitalist world and not in relation to Afghanistan, Iraq

or Islamic Jihad and Hamas. USA's status as a superpower is in domineering the world, not in its secure airports and fireproof buildings. And today's climate in the world after this incident, just as the period after Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, is exactly a climate of renewed declarations of allegiance to America by other Western powers and their yielding to the political and military tendencies of the American administration. This terrorist crime gives a blank cheque to America for military intervention in any part of the world and to reassert its world dominance, while a day before, the American government was under pressure by the ruling circles and the media in the West for its obstinate and zealous defence of Israel and its disregard for the Kyoto agreement. USA will exploit this incident as a springboard, and excuse for a show of military power. In the short term, all Western governments will fall in line and stand to attention. In the medium term, however, more lasting economic and political equations will again change the equilibrium to America's disadvantage.

**Haftegi:** *Politically, will this incident affect issues such as peace in the Middle East and the question of Palestine? How?*

**Mansoor Hekmat:** In the short term, everything will definitely be affected by this incident. Both sides of the

conflict in Palestine and Israel are stunned, immobile and concerned. Arafat quickly reaches a microphone and condemns the attack in case he might be held partly responsible. Israeli leaders are extremely infuriated with arguments that this incident is a continuation of the Palestinian question and a reaction against Israeli violence; they deny any responsibility. But the medium term effects of this incident will depend on America's initial reaction. If there is a bloody show of force against Islamic groups, then at the end of the action, a new diplomatic cycle to bring peace between the two sides based on a new military equilibrium will begin, as we saw after the attack on Iraq. But the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israel situation are more deeply rooted in local realities. Peace in Palestine is not feasible without a move to the Left in both Israeli and Palestinian societies. To achieve peace, the forces of secularism and justice must prevail over religion and ethnic bigotry in both sides of the conflict. The Palestinian question does not have a military solution. Intimidation is futile. Consequently, if the views of both societies towards each other and the balance of power between Left and Right in each do not change, the question will remain.

**Haftegi:** *In recent Western media publicity, these terrorist attacks have been portrayed as a*

*confrontation with democracy and have somehow placed some 'Islamic countries' in this confrontation. Is it possible that this might lead to the growth of racism in the West?*

**Mansoor Hekmat:** We have witnessed a limited reference to Huntington's thesis of the 'clash of civilisations' in the Western media; that this is a battle of 'civilisations,' an attack on the Western 'way of life,' democracy, etc. have been heard here and there. But the response of mainstream society and even spokespersons of the American government show that this view does not hold. I am not worried about the rise of racism following this incident. Racists will definitely become more active and aggressive for a while, but Western society will drive them back. On the contrary, the people of America, as far as can be seen from afar, have up to now conducted themselves with admirable dignity and humanity in the face of such a shocking disaster. I think that the American people will not easily accept an indiscriminate military response against the people of Middle East. This incident is too big to lend itself to typical clichés and propaganda. In my opinion, Western society will have a more mature and sophisticated approach in dealing with this incident. Today's communications

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technology has made it more difficult to keep people in ignorance and feed them bigotry. The same television that showed the New York disaster to the world will also broadcast Kabul's destruction. Those who have mourned the New York disaster cannot easily cheer its repetition in Kabul.

**Haftegi:** *The Worker-communist Party of Iran's communiqué has pointed to the New York disaster as another step in the escalation of a terrorist contest, a contest in which on the one side the majority*

*of the world's states and on the other side reactionary and particularly Islamic movements are taking part. How can this race be restrained and in your opinion what role must the WPI play in the fight against terrorism?*

**Mansoor Hekmat:** Ending terrorism is our task. It is the task of us who fight for people's equality, for their rights and dignity. State terrorism will end by overthrowing terrorist states. Non-state terrorism must be eradicated by putting an end

to the hardships, discrimination, exploitation and suppression that lead people to desperation and make them fall prey to reactionary and inhuman organisations. It can be eradicated by exposing religion, ethnicism, racism and any reactionary ideology, which has no respect for people. Our response is to fight for the creation of an open, free and equal society in which people, their lives, dignity and well being are valued. The Worker-communist Party of Iran and political parties like ours will confront both sides of this

terrorist contest - reactionary states as well as reactionary movements and parties. But for now, it is they that define the world's image. We must bring to the fore freedom loving and progressive humanity against the totality of this situation. Until then, this state of affairs will continue.

*The above is a translated summary from Persian. It was first published in English in WPI Briefing, Number 26, September 17, 2001. See <http://www.wpibriefing.com>.*

## Open Borders for Afghans

The threat of a US-led attack against Afghanistan has again set off a new wave of flight from that country towards Iran and Pakistan. Afghans are already one of the largest refugee populations in the world as a result of years of war and the reactionary Taliban. In response to this wave of people seeking safety, the Taliban have set up checkpoints to 'dissuade' people from fleeing, and the Pakistani government and Islamic regime of Iran have closed their borders with

Afghanistan. Thousands are amassing at the borders desperate to reach some sort of safety.

IFIR condemns the Pakistani government's and Islamic Republic's closing of borders and calls on people throughout the world to demand that these reactionary governments as well as Western governments open their borders to Afghan refugees. They must be granted protection.

## IFIR Ninth Conference

November 16-18, 2001  
Stockholm, Sweden

IFIR is holding its ninth international biannual conference in Stockholm, Sweden during November 16-18, 2001.

Topics to be discussed include: Asylum as a Right, Freedom of Movement, Equal Rights and Treatment for Asylum Seekers, Situation for Asylum Seekers after September 11, Contemporary Political Situation in Iran, Racism and Cultural Relativism, Harmonisation of Asylum Laws, the Global Refugee Phenomenon, Forms of Resistance, and much more.

Registration packets will soon become available.

For more information, please contact the IFIR Secretariat.

# ASYLUM IS A RIGHT

# International Refugee News

## \* Laws

(The Financial Times (U.K.), September 13, 2001) The European Commission approved a proposal aimed at a common definition of a refugee that would for the first time include women who have been raped or persons who have been tortured or subjected to psychological or sexual violence. The proposal is part of a long-term goal of drawing up a common asylum policy among European Union member states. Yesterday's proposal states that persecution can also originate "from non-state agents" where a state is unable or unwilling to provide effective protection. However, if a person seeking protection is from a state deemed safe, "he or she will have no claim for international protection", a clause which human rights organisations are expected to challenge. The Commission will now pass its proposals to the member

states that are supposed to have a common asylum and immigration policy in place by 2004.

## \* Racism

(Ananova.com, September 19, 2001) Michael Fabricant, the Conservative MP for Lichfield has renewed his call to UK Home Secretary David Blunkett to toughen up arrangements for asylum seekers to prevent Afghan 'terrorists sneaking into the UK.' David Blunkett has dismissed Mr Fabricant's request as "irresponsible and inappropriate".

(The Financial Times (U.K.), September 11, 2001) The UK government came under attack over its asylum policy as the Trades Union Congress yesterday launched a big anti-racism campaign. Delegates unanimously approved a motion condemning ministers for failing to take a lead in sending out "positive

messages" about asylum seekers and criticising the "endemic racism" blighting communities. Bill Morris, general secretary of the TGWU general union, said the government should scrap its voucher system and detention centres and focus on seeking European agreement on managed asylum and immigration. Delegates warmly applauded as Mr Morris said: "The voucher system is demeaning and it stigmatises - it is an indictment on a society which prides itself on the principles of social justice." The TUC is changing its rule book, making it a requirement for all affiliates to combat racism in line with the statutory requirements for the public sector arising from the Macpherson report into the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence.

## \* Restrictive / Repressive Measures

(MSNBC.com, September

19, 2001) In response to last week's terrorist attacks, the US Immigration and Naturalization Service has changed its rules to allow non-citizens to be held indefinitely for questioning. In addition, Justice Department lawyers are drafting a bill to give the attorney general the power to order foreigners deported without presenting evidence against them.

(The Bergen (N.J.) Record, September 19, 2001) Before Sept. 11, the United States appeared on its way to adopting some of the most liberal immigration policies in its history. In a development unthinkable only a few years ago, the president and leaders of both political parties were weighing proposals to legalize millions of undocumented workers. But the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon have brought the reform momentum to a halt.

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## Quotes of the Week

This past week, Australian State Liberal MP Peter Slipper and Michael Fabricant, the Conservative MP for Lichfield in the UK attempted to label asylum seekers as terrorists in order to promote further repressive measures against those fleeing persecution. Slipper said: "It's not beyond the realms of possibility that the Taliban regime could well be sending people to Australia

as terrorists under the guise of 'illegals.'" Fabricant, the Conservative MP for Lichfield renewed his call to UK Home Secretary David Blunkett to toughen up arrangements for asylum seekers to prevent Afghan 'terrorists sneaking into the UK!'

In fact, the Afghans who are seeking asylum in the West are fleeing the Taliban and

not acting on its behalf. Islamic terrorist groups and states with enough money and resources to cause the September 11 catastrophe do not need to send 'terrorists' to sea on rickety boats for weeks and months on end only to face life-threatening routes, sharks, drowning, lack of food and water, raids on their boat by armed forces, denied entries, as well as (if they manage to arrive) inhuman living conditions,

dispersal, detention, vouchers, refusals and deportations...

**Next Issue:**

**Monday,  
October 8,  
2001**

(The Guardian (U.K.), September 19, 2001) The UK government is to go ahead with its plans to impose a civil penalty of £2,000 a head on Eurotunnel each time an 'illegal' migrant makes it through the Channel tunnel into Britain, the home secretary, David Blunkett. He will also unveil plans for up to a further 50 British immigration officers to be sent to the French side of the tunnel to help reinforce the operation to prevent 'illegal migrants' using cross-channel trains to get into Britain.

(Reuters, September 19, 2001) As thousands of Afghans fled cities fearing possible U.S. attacks, the United Nations was preparing urgent plans to feed and shelter them. Witnesses said thousands of Afghans on foot, on horseback, in pickup trucks and wagons had arrived at the border with Pakistan and were pleading to be allowed entry. Pakistan this week tightened security along its borders, requiring all travelers to have valid visas. According to UNHCR figures, Afghan refugees total 3.7 million worldwide, with at least two million in Pakistan and 1.5 million in Iran.

(Agence France Presse, September 19, 2001) Indonesia's immigration chief warned in a report that trained terrorists could be among 'illegal immigrants' from the Middle East. Indonesia promised to expand detention centres and consider tougher laws after a visit by three Australian ministers this

month seeking Jakarta's cooperation. After the visit, Jakarta also introduced tougher visa conditions for citizens from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Palestine applying to enter Indonesia.

(The Canberra Times, September 19, 2001) With the first 100 asylum-seekers scheduled to be disembarked at Nauru, the Australian Labour Party agreed to support a sweeping new regime for the treatment of 'boat people' attempting to reach Australian shores. Labour will back the Government in moves to significantly downgrade the rights of people arriving on Christmas and Cocos Islands and Ashmore Reef. It will also support beefed-up powers for Australian

officers to detain and search people suspected of being unauthorised arrivals at sea and take them elsewhere - including Nauru - for processing. Labor's support ensures the legislation will pass the Senate but it was strongly criticised by the Democrats and Greens, and some MPs within its own ranks.

(The Associated Press, September 19, 2001) A hundred Afghan refugees were ferried to the tiny Pacific Island republic of

Nauru after spending three weeks at sea, caught in an international dispute over who would take them. The Afghans were from among 433 asylum-seekers saved from a sinking Indonesian ferry by a Norwegian freighter in late August. They were taken toward Australia, but were denied entry as part of that government's hard-line against illegal immigration. Nauru agreed to take them while their fate was being determined. A second group of 230 asylum seekers were picked up on Sept. 7. Some 533 refugees remain aboard the Australian navy's HMS Manoora. They will be unloaded in the coming days. As the navy completes the process of unloading all the refugees, 150 women and children will be flown from Nauru to New Zealand for processing of their asylum bids.



(The Australian Associated Press, September 19, 2001) A member of the full Federal Court in Australia which threw out Justice Tony North's order to allow the Tampa boat people into Australia today said the lawyers bringing the action had the noblest of intentions. The remarks were made by Federal Court Justice Robert French in a postscript to his reasons for overturning the ruling in the controversial case on the future of the 433 asylum seekers, about to disembark at Nauru. The lawyer behind the bid to have

the asylum seekers brought to Australia, Eric Vadarlis, said he was concerned about the likelihood of being ordered to pay the potentially enormous court costs in the case.

(Reuters, September 17, 2001) A top U.N. official in India urged Pakistan and Iran to allow in asylum seekers from Afghanistan if the United States launches an attack on the Taliban-ruled state.

(BBC, September 13, 2001) The French Government has confirmed that there will no second refugee centre to ease overcrowding at a controversial camp near Calais. Reports had claimed a new facility, run by the Red Cross, was being planned in the grounds of a psychiatric hospital 20 miles from Dunkirk. But after a meeting between the UK's Home Secretary, David Blunkett, and his French opposite number Daniel Vaillant, a joint statement confirmed there would be no second camp. The operator of the Channel Tunnel rail link on Tuesday lost a court attempt to shut down the existing camp at Sangatte, on the doorstep of its Calais terminal, which it says is responsible for rising numbers of people stowing away on its trains. The Red Cross camp at Sangatte holds up to 700 refugees, mostly Afghans and Kurds from Iraq, and is half a mile from the Channel Tunnel entrance.

(The San Francisco Chronicle, September 13, 2001) As shock turns to rage

over Tuesday's horrific attacks, civil rights experts worry that some of America's fundamental freedoms will be the next victims of the terrorist assault. The Federal Aviation Administration already has responded to the breach of security at three major airports with a series of stepped-up measures. But constitutional law scholars fear that lawmakers may respond with more intrusive policies in the name of national security. The backlash could include racial profiling at airports — especially of Arab Americans — tighter restrictions on immigration and increased intrusions on privacy rights, they say.

(The Daily Telegraph (U.K.), September 10, 2001) British immigration experts have been dispatched to Bosnia in a new attempt to stem the flow of 'illegal' immigrants. The team arrived in Sarajevo last week to begin the clampdown on 'people-trafficking' in the Balkans. Many of the 500,000 refugees smuggled into the

European Union each year arrive through the war-ravaged Balkan states. Many Iraqi Kurds and Afghan refugees then travel on to Britain to claim political asylum. Sending specialist immigration investigators to Bosnia is the first in a series of measures promised by



David Blunkett, the Home Secretary, with the aim of solving the asylum crisis. Mr Blunkett said yesterday this would be an "important" week as he stepped up efforts to tackle the threat of large-scale refugee movements.

(The New York Times, September 12, 2001) A French court refused today to shut down a Red Cross shelter, just a few kilometers

from the Channel Tunnel. Today's ruling was prompted by Eurotunnel, the company that runs the tunnel, which had asked an administrative court in Lille to shut the camp.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, September 13, 2001) An Australian navy warship

repelled a craft, with an estimated 120 aboard, which sailed within 24 nautical miles of Australian "contiguous" waters around the reef off north Western Australia.

(Australian Broadcasting Corporation, September 11, 2001) Construction on a detention centre at the El Alamein military facility near Port Augusta in South Australia is to start in about a

week. The centre is expected to be operating by December.

(The Guardian (UK), September 11, 2001) More than 200 asylum and immigration detainees in Haslar prison, Portsmouth, and in Campsfield House, Oxfordshire, UK took part in hunger strikes and protests in the wake of last week's high court ruling that it was illegal to detain asylum seekers without evidence they might abscond or misbehave.

(Courier Mail, September 11, 2001) Australia agreed to a \$20 million assistance package for the republic of Nauru to take an extra 237 asylum seekers. Defence analysts suggest a three-week navy patrol of northern waters will cost more than \$50 million, plus the \$3 million a day it cost to intercept the Tampa, brought the exercise to about \$80 million. Under the \$20 million deal struck yesterday by Defence Minister Peter Reith, Australia will provide Nauru with diesel fuel, medical assistance, extra educational scholarships and additional power generators.

Pictures from BBC.

**FOR LATEST REFUGEE NEWS,  
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