

THE TALIBAN AND TERRORISM

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 2, 2001

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to my colleagues attention a recent op-ed in the Los Angeles Times by Karl Inderfurth, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs under the previous administration. The piece by Mr. Inderfurth details the warnings that the United States clearly, directly and emphatically issued to the Taliban in 1999 regarding their support for, and terrorists activities of, Osama bin Laden. Assistant Secretary Inderfurth informed Mullah Abdul Jalil, a close associate to Mullah Omar, in February of 1999 that the United States would hold the Taliban accountable for bin Laden's future actions and reiterated the request to expel bin Laden to a location where he could be brought to justice.

I ask that the following Los Angeles Times Op-Ed by Karl Inderfurth be placed in the RECORD and I urge my colleagues to read it.

[From the Los Angeles Times]

FACE TO FACE WITH THE TALIBAN

(By Karl F. Inderfurth)

After the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, President Bush said we will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them. The Taliban of Afghanistan should not have been surprised by this statement. They were similarly warned by the U.S. government more than two years ago.

The meeting took place Feb. 3, 1999, at the U.S. ambassador's residence in Islamabad. As the assistant secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, I was instructed to deliver a message about Osama bin Laden and terrorism to a high-ranking official of the Taliban movement. I was accompanied by the State Department's coordinator for counter-terrorism, Michael Sheehan. Mullah Abdul Jalil, a close associate of the Taliban's supreme leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar, and a possible liaison with Bin Laden, traveled to Pakistan to meet with us. The bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania nearly six months earlier had made it horrifyingly clear that Afghanistan-based terrorism was direct threat to the United States. We were outraged that after all the support the United States had given the Afghan resistance during its struggle against the Soviet Union, the terrorists tied to the bombings, including Bin Laden, were trained and based in Afghanistan.

The U.S. government had repeatedly demanded that the Taliban stop giving safe haven to terrorists. It had also appealed to nations, like Pakistan, that have influence in Kabul. But the situation did not change.

The message I delivered at the February meeting went further than any previous one issued by the U.S. government. Arriving late in the evening from Kandahar, Afghanistan, Mullah Jalil was accompanied by the Taliban's representative in Islamabad. Along with Sheehan, I stressed that the Taliban needed to expel Bin Laden to a location where he could be brought to justice. I emphasized that it was vitally important for the Taliban to act, because the American government believed that Bin Laden was still plotting acts of terrorism against the

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U.S.—and that we would hold the Taliban responsible for his actions. The message could not have been clearer.

Speaking softly through his interpreter, and frequently stroking his beard, Mullah Jalil responded. He began with a prayer, then proceeded to argue that the Taliban's actions conformed to their interpretation of Sharia, or Islamic law. He said Bin Laden was an honored guest of the Taliban for the role he had played in the Jihad, or holy war, during the Soviet Union's occupation of Afghanistan. Mullah Jalil acknowledged that Bin Laden was increasingly a burden on Afghanistan, but the Afghani tradition of hospitality did not permit them to force Bin Laden to leave. Mullah Jalil assured us, however, that Bin Laden was under the Taliban's control and that he could not possibly be operating a worldwide terrorist network as we had suggested. Finally, he demanded that we show him the evidence against Bin Laden and that then the Taliban would act according to Islamic law. Sheehan did, citing chapter and verse from the indictment of Bin Laden for his role in the East Africa embassy bombings.

Later efforts were made to provide the Taliban with more information about the U.S. case against Bin Laden, but they never responded. The nearly three-hour session with Mullah Jalil produced no meeting of the minds. Subsequently, the United Nations Security Council tried to persuade the Taliban to turn over Bin Laden. Two resolutions were adopted, in October 1999 and December 2000, and sanctions were imposed on the Taliban to accomplish that purpose. Again, the Taliban defied these calls by the international community.

Meanwhile, the Taliban, and some of their supporters, tried to misrepresent our campaign against Bin Laden and terrorism as an attack against Islam. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The United States does not oppose Islam. The United States respects Islam. But we oppose those who commit or condone criminal acts, especially those who commit and inflict grievous injury against civilians in the name of any ideology, religion or cause.

Today, the Taliban and their leader, Mullah Omar, are facing another hour of truth. Let us hope they will change their mind promptly and turn over Bin Laden to appropriate authorities in a country where he can be brought to justice and close down the terrorist training facilities in Afghanistan. If they do not the United States will respond. The Taliban have been warned.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 2, 2001

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, September 24, 2001, I was delayed in returning to Washington, D.C. from Columbus, OH due to inclement weather. As a result, I was unable to record a vote on rollcall No. 349 (H.R. 717) and rollcall No. 350 (H.J. Res. 65). I fully support these important measures and had I been present, I would have voted in favor of both.

October 2, 2001

POWER TO CHANGE OUR WORLD

HON. WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 2, 2001

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, September 18, family and friends gathered together at St. Helen's Church in Norwell, Massachusetts to mourn the loss of John J. Corcoran, a victim of the tragic terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on September 11. The memorial service was a stirring reflection of the life and spirit of Mr. Corcoran. From the depths of grief came a deeply moving tribute from his sister, Debi Corcoran of Helena, Montana. Her words of eulogy were so genuinely inspirational that I commend them to all of my congressional colleagues:

On the morning of September 11th, my brother Jay kissed his two children and his wife good-bye and raced to catch United Airlines flight 175 from Boston to Los Angeles, where he would resume his job as a Merchant Marine engineering officer. At 9:03 a.m. EST, his plane crashed into the south tower of the World Trade Center, killing all on board and thousands within the building as the tower crumbled to the ground. There had been the possibility that Jay had missed his flight, so my family and I, like many other families, held a vigil of prayer for most of the day while we awaited official word from the airlines. Even when the call finally came, it was all too surreal I had just spent the most wonderful family reunion with all my sisters and brother at West Hyannisport for my mother's 72nd birthday just two weeks before. It had been the first time in five years we had all been together. We shared so much joy and laughter and gave each other so much love and support for all the struggles and challenges going on in each other's lives. We headed off in our separate directions, refreshed and renewed by the blessings only family love gives. Today, we unite again as a family to ease the pain, dull the shock and fill each others spirits as we acknowledge our brother's departure to his home with the Creator.

In all these days of telephone communications with my family, we've each had time to express our deepest thoughts, our rawest emotions, and without exception they have been expressions of love, compassion, and peace. My brother and the thousands more who ascended en masse into God's light were the recipients of an energy called hate. We know this one well. We've seen it in our schools, our cities and towns, and throughout the world. We are familiar with it's bitter taste. But where does it come from? And why was it directed at us—America? Do we need to look at the way we consume disproportionate amounts of the world's resources while billions live in poverty? Do we need to examine the overdue responsibility to rein in greed and waste, and the need to share more equitably with all our brothers and sisters?

It would be easy for us to shun culpability, to proclaim victimization, to extoll political rhetoric and allow military action to be our reaction. But, I don't believe my bother and all those other beautiful spirits made the supreme sacrifice so that we can go on with business as usual. Might makes right! The have and the have nots! An eye for an eye! Money is power! I believe their prayers of the families who lost loved ones and the human