



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

KEYWORD SEARCH

[Subject Index](#)[Home](#)[Issues & Press](#)[Travel & Business](#)[Countries](#)[Youth & Education](#)[Careers](#)[About State](#)

You are in: [Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs](#) > [From the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs](#)
> [Remarks by the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs \(2006\)](#)

Where's the Outrage?

Karen Hughes, Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

USA Today Op-Ed

September 12, 2006

Five years after the Sept. 11 attacks, one essential ingredient is still lacking in our international response to terrorism: the concerted moral outrage of everyday citizens of every faith and country.

The names of the people murdered that morning read like a roll call of the world's family: Ahmed, Alonso, Chung, Fazio, Fitzgerald, Goldstein, Gonzalez, Jablonski, Mbaya, McSweeney, Mohammed, Rizzo, Wallendorf and Zukelman. The victims, citizens of more than 90 countries, included a young Muslim woman, seven months pregnant, on her way to attend a friend's wedding; an Iranian grandmother who had overcome her fear of flying to visit her grandsons in Boston; a German businessman in New York to attend a meeting. His son, 4 at the time, said, "If the terrorists knew how much we love Papa, they wouldn't have flown the plane into the tower."

Unfortunately, the extremists we face don't care.

Since that fateful day, hundreds of others have been torn from their families, murdered as terrorists targeted morning commuters in London, Madrid and India, wedding guests at a hotel in Jordan, children in school in Russia and lining up for candy in Iraq, tourists in Egypt and Bali, Indonesia.

Out of the Norm

This is not right, or normal, or acceptable, and a much louder chorus of voices needs to join in condemning it. Terrorism threatens all of us. It targets the very foundations of a free society. Yet where are the mothers organizing against terrorism as American mothers did against drunken driving? Where are the fathers promising to teach their sons to choose to live rather than choose to die? Where are the religious clerics and congregations of all faiths arguing that no just and loving God would call on young men and women to kill themselves and others in the name of religion?

To be fair, many voices, Western and Eastern, Islamic and Christian, have spoken out against the violence. Yet the criticism seems oddly muted. Offensive cartoons sparked massive protests in nations across the Islamic world. The international outcry

was immediate when civilians were killed in the recent conflict between Israel and Hezbollah.

Yet we have seen no similar mass condemnation of terrorist violence and murder, and no hint of remorse from those engaged in these acts. As I have traveled the world, I have met those who try to justify the violence based on policy differences, long-held grievances or a perceived threat from the West.

Those who speak of a clash of civilizations seem to forget that Islam is part of America, that an estimated six to seven million Muslims live and worship freely in America. America and our international partners went to war to protect Muslims in the Balkans and gave generously to help Muslims rebuild their lives after the tsunami in Indonesia and the earthquake in Pakistan, just as many Muslim-majority countries reached out generously to help Americans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

We do this because we believe in the dignity and value of every person. The fifth anniversary of Sept. 11 is both a reminder of the inhumanity of the extremists we are up against and the humanity shared by most citizens of the world. The color of our skin, the language we speak and the way we worship may be different, but much more unites us than divides us.

So why aren't more of us doing more to stop the terror?

First, I believe most of us hope that terrorism is an aberration. Unfortunately, I do not believe it is true. Part of my job is to look at the propaganda being spread on Internet sites and TV sets around the world. It is chilling. Bombings are depicted as acts of glory. Children are being taught the language of hate. Thousands of people have been trained in terror training camps, convinced the only way to defend their faith is to kill all others who have a different point of view.

Second, the presence of religion in this debate makes governments and individuals nervous. We are unsure how to engage; we hesitate to offend. Yet all major faiths - including Christianity, Islam and Judaism - teach that life is precious. We cannot allow what is essentially a death cult to get away with murder in the name of religion.

History's Model

It is in the best interest of all the civilized people that the terror stop. And we have a model. Slavery's path from international norm to pariah began with moral outrage. In 1833, one of every seven adults in Britain signed a petition against slavery. That was twice the number of people eligible to vote at the time and the largest public petitioning of Parliament to that date. The grassroots petition drive was born of the conviction that every person has value - a conviction that should guide us today.

Our challenge is to launch a new grassroots movement across all faiths and continents, a movement that clearly states that no grievance, no complaint, no matter how legitimate, can ever justify the targeting and killing of innocent civilians. A movement that commits to teach our children that life is precious, diversity should be celebrated, and hope can conquer hate.

I have read many stories of lives cut short by acts of terrorism. Almost all the victims' families speak of the joy their loved ones brought to those around them. They didn't deserve to die. And those who killed them earned only shame, not glory. The least the rest of us can do is say so loudly and in concert.



[Updates](#) | [Frequent Questions](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Email this Page](#) | [Subject Index](#) | [Search](#)

The Office of Electronic Information, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

[About state.gov](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [FOIA](#) | [Copyright Information](#) | [Other U.S. Government Information](#)