

## Just war – or a just war?



JIMMY CARTER

PROFOUND changes have been taking place in America's foreign policy, reversing consistent bipartisan commitments that for more than two centuries have earned our nation greatness. These commitments have been predicated on basic religious principles, respect for international law, and alliances that resulted in wise decisions and mutual restraint. Our apparent determination to launch a war against Iraq, without international support, is a violation of these premises.

As a Christian and as a president who was severely provoked by international crises, I became

thoroughly familiar with the principles of a just war, and it is clear that a substantially unilateral attack on Iraq does not meet these standards. This is an almost universal conviction of religious leaders, with the most notable exception of a few spokesmen of the Southern Baptist Convention who are greatly influenced by their commitment to Israel based on eschatological, or final days, theol-

ogy.

For a war to be just, it must meet several clearly defined criteria.

The war can be waged only as a last resort, with all nonviolent options exhausted. In the case of Iraq, it is obvious that clear alternatives to war exist. These options -- previously proposed by our own leaders and approved by the United Nations -- were outlined again by the Security Council on Friday. But now, with our own

national security not directly threatened and despite the overwhelming opposition of most people and governments in the world, the United States seems determined to carry out military and diplomatic action that is almost unprecedented in the history of civilized nations. The first stage of our widely publicised war plan is to launch 3,000 bombs and missiles on a relatively

small target.

Its violence must be proportional to the injury we have suffered. Despite Saddam Hussein's other serious crimes, American

efforts to tie Iraq to the 9/11 terrorist attacks have been unconvincing.

The attackers must have legitimate authority sanctioned by the society they profess to represent. The unanimous vote of approval in the Security Council to eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction can still be honoured, but our announced goals are now to achieve regime change and to establish a Pax Americana in the

region, perhaps occupying the ethnically divided country for as long as a decade. For these objectives, we do not have international authority. Other members of the Security Council have so far resisted the enormous economic and political influence that is being exerted from Washington, and we are faced with the possibility of either a failure to get the necessary votes or else a veto from Russia,

a military invasion will destabilise the region and prompt terrorists to further jeopardise our security at home. Also, by defying overwhelming world opposition, the United States will undermine the United Nations as a viable institution for world peace.

What about America's world standing if we don't go to war after such a great deployment of military forces in the region? The heartfelt sympathy and friendship offered to America after the 9/11 attacks, even from formerly antagonistic regimes, has been largely dissipated; increasingly unilateral and domineering policies have brought international trust in our country to its lowest level in memory. American stature will surely decline further if we launch a war in clear defiance of the United Nations. But to use the presence and threat of our military power to force Iraq's compliance with all United Nations resolutions -- with war as a final option -- will enhance our status as a champion of peace and justice.

Jimmy Carter, the 39th president of the United States, is chairman of the Carter Center in Atlanta and winner of the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize.

Courtesy: *The New York Times*

## Armed fight is not jihad

ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER

THESE days the American scholars and academics are having repeated discussions on the meaning and significance of *jihad* in Islamic tradition. There are those scholars who are genuinely interested in understanding the meaning and significance of *jihad* and those who, with agendas of their own, want to either deliberately distort meaning of *jihad* or select Islamic sources selectively to prove their pre-conceived meaning. Some of them do it with malicious intention, not with academic objectivity. This trend has existed for centuries but has again been accentuated in post 9/11 of 2001.

We have before us an article "Jihad and the Professors" written by Daniel Pipes and published in *Commentary* of November 2002. The author is bent upon proving that jihad in Islam is nothing but an "armed warfare" against non-Muslims. Nothing else could be admissible. No amount of different meanings given by respectable academics is admissible. It is explained away as an attempt "to advance their agenda within Western, non-Muslim environments". Mr. Pipes has no regard for conscientious opinion of many Muslim scholars and even some Muslim clerics. For him jihad is only armed conflict with non-Muslims. In fact Pipes even says that it is not even defensive war but offensive and aggressive warfare against non-Muslims.

In the beginning of his above article he quotes opinions of many Muslims and other sympathetic non-Muslim scholars but only to refute them. For example, David Little, a Harvard professor of religion and international affairs, had stated after the attacks of September 11, 2001 that jihad "is not a license to kill," while to David Mitten, a professor of classical art and archaeology as well as faculty adviser to the Harvard Islamic Society, "true jihad is the constant struggle of Muslims to conquer their inner base instincts, to follow the path of God, and to do good in society." He also quotes Iranian professor Roy Mottahedeh saying "a majority of learned Muslim thinkers, drawing on impeccable scholarship, insists that jihad must be understood as a struggle with-out arms."

Mr. Pipes also tells us that he surveyed more than two dozen experts and only four of them admitted that jihad has any military component whatsoever and even they, Pipes says, "with but a single exception, insist that this component is purely defensive in nature. Vasler Hoffman of the University of Illinois is unique in saying that, 'no Muslim she knew would have endorsed such terror-

ism [as the attacks of September 11], as it goes against Islamic rules of engagement'". Then she comments, "No other scholar would go so far as even this implicit hit that jihad includes an offensive component."

He also quotes that John Esposito of Georgetown, perhaps the most visible scholar of Islam, holds that "in the struggle to be a good Muslim, there may be times where one will be called upon to defend one's faith and community. Then jihad can take on the meaning of armed struggle." He quotes another specialist holding this view is Abdulllah Ahmed An-Na'im of Emory, who explains that "war is forbidden by the shari'ah [Islamic law] except in two cases: self defence, and the propagation of Islamic faith." And Pipes also quotes Blake Burleson of Baylore to the effect that "in Islam, an act of aggression like September 11 would not be considered a holy war."

He surveyed more scholars as to their opinion of jihad. Many of them, a large contingent indeed, deny that jihad has any military meaning whatsoever. For Joe Elder, a professor of sociology at

a post-Qur'anic usage. This itself is an interesting area of research as to when and how the word jihad came to be used in the sense of war. In Arabic language jihad does not mean war. For war there are other words like *harb* or *qital*. The Qur'an also uses these words for war. Thus we find the use of the word *harb* in the sense of war in verses like 9:107, 5:33, 22:79, 5:64, 8:57 and 47:4. In all these verses the word *harb* and its derivatives have been used for war.

And the word *qital* has been used in Qur'an in 167 verses. If we consult Arabic lexicon we will find that the words *jahada* and *jahada* signify that a person strove, laboured or toiled; exerted himself or his power, or efforts, or endeavours, or ability; employed himself vigorously, diligently, studiously, sedulously, earnestly, or with energy; was diligent or studious, took pains or extraordi-

nary pains. These meanings are derived from well-known lexicons like Lisan al-Arab, Qamoos of Firozabadi and Lane's Arabic English lexicon etc. This is the classical usage of the word and also its usage in the Qur'an.

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evil prevailing in the Arab society of his time.

It is very important to understand all this for developing proper perspective on Islam and its teachings. Such oversimplified approach that the conflict was mainly on the question of idol worshipping, distorts the issue and gives rise to the belief that Islam urged Muslims to do away with idol worshipping even with the help of sword.

The Qur'an considers religious beliefs a matter of conscience and there can be no compulsion in matter of religion as the Qur'an puts it in 2:256 (*la ikrah fi al-din*). Every one can believe and worship God the way one wants (2:148). Where is then the question of spreading the faith with sword?

In fact the Qur'an was preaching a new way of life which was not acceptable to the kafirs of Mecca. In Meccan society of the Prophet's time there was no respect for morality and there was widespread corruption, moral corruption above all and total neglect of weaker sections of society. The Qur'an gave a universal code of morality with emphasis on equality, justice, truth, non-violence

and them.

We should also bear in mind that in pre-Islamic society there was great deal of violence and it is this violence which continued when the Prophet began to preach. Some people who do not know the history of pre-Islamic Arabia or are prejudiced against Islam see violence as product of Islam. Nothing could be farther than the truth.

The Prophet's (PBUH) mission was to establish a just and peaceful society. And the tribal chiefs of Mecca were a powerful obstacle in his project. Without justice it was not possible to have peace. When the Prophet talked of justice the powerful merchants of Mecca began to inflict violence on him and his followers. All weaker sections of society had rallied round the Prophet, the poor, the slaves, the women and the youth. The Prophet's clearest choice was justice and peace.

When the Prophet migrated to Madina due to severe persecution of his followers and to avoid violence and bloodshed the powerful of the Mecca pursued him to Madina and wars followed. The Prophet tried to win over the Jews by entering into a covenant with

al-harb. And this was considered jihad. He also asserts, but gives no citation or proof that the Prophet fought 78 wars of which only one was defensive. The burden of proof of course lies on Mr. Pipes. All Islamic scholars and classical theologians are unanimous that the Prophet never aggressed against others. He was forced to fight the battles. Even while conquering Mecca (in fact conquering is a wrong word, he just peacefully entered Mecca, he did not shed blood. He pardoned all his enemies. He pardoned even Hindah who had taken out liver from the body of Hamzah, Prophet's uncle who was great soldier of Islam, and chewed it. That was in keeping with the Qur'anic morality to suppress ones anger and not to thirst for revenge.

To fight wars of aggression as Pipes alleges, is strictly forbidden by the Qur'an. And the prophet never violated the injunctions of the Qur'an. But it cannot be said of other Muslims. It is not my case that Muslim rulers did not aggress against other non-Muslim rulers. That might have even claimed it to be jihad to legitimise their wars of aggression. But any ones claim cannot make it jihad.

It is also important to note that the word jihad in the sense of armed fight is post-Qur'anic usage. Jihad, as not been used in this sense in the Qur'an. We know that meanings of words do undergo transformation with passage of time and they acquire new usage and new meaning.

Also, it is highly necessary to ascertain what scripture prescribes and how its followers behave. And also, one should not hold entire community guilty for what some members of the community do. The Christians also have not practiced what is prescribed by the Bible. Many Christian rulers have indulged in bloodshed on large scale but for this neither Christians nor all Christians can be blamed.

It is not true that Muslims in modern times, as Pipes writes, are indulging in apologia for jihad. In earliest times in history of Islam there were Muslims who did not agree with those rulers who invoked jihad for their territorial aggrandisement. The Sufis, for example, never supported wars. They were peace lovers and were devoted to love of God and practiced it with great intensity. Most of the Muslims in our own times are opposing what happened on 9/11 with all sincerity. They are not doing so only to live in America as Daniel Pipes assumes unjustly.

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His initiation in social service



Late Shahed Latif

Lest we forget

## Shahed Latif

The enduring legacy

DR. MIZANUR RAHMAN SHELLEY

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Entire world dies when a human being departs from the earth" wrote a noted Bengali novelist. One could as well add that in some cases at least, hundreds of new worlds were born because someone lived and infused life all around. It has been two years since my friend Shahed Latif breathed his last. Vibrant reality of yesterday has become sad yet sweet memory today. Memories, however, are not all Shahed has left behind. His action-packed life, ennobled by sincere service to humanity, has bequeathed an enduring legacy of many and varied dimensions.

He died before he was sixty. He had retired voluntarily from Government service in the late nineteen eighties, years before retirement was due. A member of the prestigious erstwhile Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP, 1964 batch), Shahed was an epitome of dedicated civil servant, silently and steadfastly serving the Republic. But that was not all. Within the disciplined framework of the civil service and beyond, he believed in purposive and meaningful action that served and benefited the society at large. That was the key to his matchless success in recasting and strengthening the Eastern Milk Producers' Cooperative Society and founding its pride project, "Milk Vita" during the first years of post-liberation Bangladesh. Working on deputation as the Managing Director of Milk-Vita, he fought against heavy odds of transitional times to effectively build and run the organisation. Both he and mutual friend Agha Kohinoor Alam (a banker who also died prematurely on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March this year) cut a few corners to implement the project speedily. Agha Kohinoor as a high official of the Bank which provided initial temporary and part funding for Milk Vita matched the courage and dedication of Shahed to complete the project and help millions of children in getting milk at a time of grave scarcity. Both of them suffered as their respective superiors were displeased at their "breach of procedures".

Shahed was more than a man of action. A cultured person, he was a poet and writer with great command over communication skill. Mahfuz Anam, their Executive Editor of the *The Daily Star* persuaded Shahed to become a columnist. He started writing his immensely popular column "Window on Asia" even when he was heavily occupied with the work of a key official in the ESCAP at Bangkok. He strived tirelessly to keep his commitment to his readers and himself.

Shahed's writings were, in essence, an articulation of his constant concern for distressed humanity bleeding on the altar of life, riddled by poverty, hunger, malnourishment and illiteracy.

Undaunted by the odds of inequitable international and national socio-economic systems, Shahed, through his writings, faithfully and sincerely contributed his quota to the world-wide endeavour for the redemption of suffering humanity. In the end, his writings, if not anything else, may constitute an invaluable inheritance for succeeding generations.

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His initiation in social service