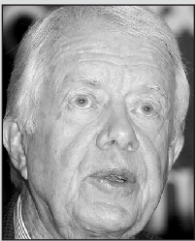


# Just war – or a just war?



JIMMY CARTER

PROFOUND changes have been taking place in American 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-

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

in "collateral damage." Gen. Tommy R. Franks, commander of American forces in the Persian Gulf, has expressed concern about many of the military targets being near hospitals, schools, mosques and private homes.

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

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

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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

defenceless Iraqi population within the first few hours of an invasion, with the purpose of so damaging and demoralising the people that they will change their obnoxious leader, who will most likely be hidden and safe during the bombardment.

The war's weapons must discriminate between combatants and noncombatants. Extensive aerial bombardment, even with precise accuracy, inevitably results

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

France and China. Although Turkey may still be enticed into helping us by enormous financial rewards and partial future control of the Kurds and oil in northern Iraq, its democratic Parliament has at least added its voice to the worldwide expressions of concern.

The peace it establishes must be a clear improvement over what exists. Although there are visions of peace and democracy in Iraq, it is quite possible that the aftermath of

# 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 Muslim 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 without 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. Vaslerie 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 bit 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 Abdullahi 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 Burselon of Baylor 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 *harbor 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, 2:279, 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 *jahadu* 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 extraordinary 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.

However, Daniel Pipes is not at

lims 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 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

them and pagan Arabs (mithaq-e-Madina) to have peace in Madina: the kuffar of Mecca secretly negotiated with the Jews and struck a deal with them. The wars followed and Jews broke the covenant of security and peace with the Prophet and tried to help the kuffar of Mecca. They even tried to eliminate the Prophet. Who is then to be blamed for violence that followed?

The Qur'an showed highest respect for the Jewish religion and even prayed in the direction of the Bait al-Maqdis which was a Jewish sacred place. What more the Prophet could have done to have peace? But it was his enemies who did not want peace in the society, the vested interests who thrive on exploitation and denial of justice always resort to violence.

In view of so much violence in the society the Qur'an also had to permit defensive violence. It is a fact of human history that justice could never be established in any society without fight against the powerful vested interests. Even America could not establish a democratic society without a fierce civil war. Freeing slaves was not an easy task. There was so much turmoil in American society even for conceding equal rights to blacks. The whites are not ready to concede equality to blacks even today in practice, though in theory American Constitution accords equality to them.

How difficult it must have been for the Prophet to establish peace in a violent Arab society where various kinds of interests were clashing, one can imagine. The Qur'an had to emphasise two different dimensions of peace the external and internal. The external had to be met by defensive resistance, a comparatively easier project. But more difficult was to resist and control inner self and to transform ones inner self a true jihad. If one cannot transform inner-self the external peace, even if established, cannot last long. That is why in one of the Prophet's hadith we find that greater jihad (jihad-i-akbar) is to control ones inner-self.

It is just not true that Qur'an urges Muslims to fight aggressively against people of other faiths to spread Islam. This goes against the very spirit of Islam and its doctrine of freedom of conscience. It is important to note that Qur'an again and again repeats four words which also represent its value-system -- *adi, ihsan, rahmah and hikmah* (justice, benevolence, compassion and wisdom). Thus the Qur'an wants to establish a just society for benevolence of human beings with compassion and wisdom. Violence has no place in ushering in such a society.

Mr. Daniel Pipes asserts that jihad was always used to expand Islamic territories what he calls dar al-Islam and to extend control over non-Muslim territories or over dar

It is not true that Muslims in modern times 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... Most of the Muslims in our own times are opposing what happened on 9/11 with all sincerity.

the University of Wisconsin, the idea that jihad means holy war is "a gross misinterpretation." Rather, Elder says, jihad is a "religious struggle, which more closely reflects the inner, personal struggles of the religion." Another scholar Dell De Chant, a professor of world religions at the University of South Florida, says jihad as usually understood means "a struggle to be true to the will of God and not holy war."

Daniel Pipes quotes opinions of many more academics all of whom maintain that jihad is internal struggle to be a good Muslim and not a military offensive of any kind. The Qur'an hardly uses the word jihad for war or for fighting with arms. It mostly means striving in the way of Allah and striving hard. For example the verse 2:218 says, "Those who believed and strove hard (*jahadu*) in Allah's way -- these surely hope for the mercy of Allah." Similarly in 29:6 Qur'an says, "And whoever strives hard (*jahada*), strives for himself. Surely Allah is Self sufficient, above (need of) (His) creatures."

In the Qur'an jihad has always been used in the sense of 'making efforts' or 'striving hard', not making war. Jihad in the sense of war, is

all convinced of this meaning of jihad despite array of opinions of eminent scholars and Islamic thinkers. Mr. Pipes maintains that jihad means nothing but war irrespective of what was its original usage and what is its usage in the Qur'an. He does not even refer to the Quranic usage of the word. He quotes only from the post-Qur'anic sources to substantiate his case.

Thus Pipes says, "In pre-modern times, jihad meant mainly one thing among Sunni Muslims, then as now the Islamic majority. It meant the legal, compulsory, communal effort to expand the territories ruled by Muslims (known in Arabic as dar al-Islam) at the expense of territories ruled by non-Muslims (dar al-harb). In this prevailing conception, the purpose of jihad is political, not religious. It aims not so much to spread the Islamic faith as to extend sovereign Muslim power (though the former has often followed the latter.) the goal is boldly offensive and its ultimate intent is nothing less than to achieve Muslim dominion over the entire world."

If Pipes had carefully studied the Islamic history he would have known that Muslims, right from earliest times never used war (not jihad in any case) for spreading faith. Faith can never be spread with the help of sword or gun. It is only political sovereignty, which can be imposed through sword. But as far as Qur'an is concerned it does not permit war or aggression for any purpose, not even for spreading political sovereignty, much less for spreading the faith. There is not a single verse in the Qur'an for using arms for any purpose except for defensive purpose. And even while defending, the Qur'an advises Muslims not to transcend certain limit.

The verse 2:190 is quite categorical about it. "And fight (qatilo) in the way of Allah those who fight against you but be not aggressive. Surely Allah loves not the aggressors" (emphasis supplied). Thus both things are clear here. You fight only those who fight you and do not be aggressors as Allah does not love aggressors. Those who accuse Islam of being a religion of aggressors and fighters do so either out of ignorance of the text of the Qur'an or do so maliciously.

There are several verses in the Qur'an about war and fighting but if read in proper context in which these verses were revealed, it becomes quite clear that they were all revealed in the background of aggression by the unbelievers of Mecca. It should also be noted that the unbelievers of Mecca, called *kafirs* or *kuffar* (Arabic plural) were not fighting against the Prophet of Islam and his followers just because the Prophet was attacking idol worship. The motives of conflict with Muslims were very complex. And the Prophet's objective was also not simply to oppose idol worshiping. That was not the only

Lest we forget

# Shahed Latif

## The enduring legacy

DR. MIZANUR RAHMAN SHELLEY

"AN 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 yesteryears 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.



Late Shahed Latif

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 Produces' 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, the 'practical visionary' was never daunted by procedures as he was rightly interested in results. He had that rare quality, often lacking in routine-oriented bureaucrats and mediocre political managers, the ability to take the holistic view. Within the civil service and outside he worked relentlessly to help achieve the enduring welfare of fellow human beings.

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 Christianity 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.

His initiation in social service

came early in life. From 1954 as students of the St. Gregory's High School Osman Faruq (now Education Minister), Tanveer Ahmed Siddiqui (Napoleon) (now BNP leader), late Mustafizur Rahman (ex-Foreign Secretary) (who were our senior) Shahed, Masum (Former Ambassador Masum A. Choudhury) and I were encouraged by our Teacher late R.B. Saha to establish "the Palli Mangal Sangha (Rural Welfare Association). Shahed played a central role and continued to work for the organisation until the early nineteen sixties. His dedication and hard work helped the organisation to run free primary schools and income generating programmes for the poor in a number of villages near Dhaka.

He remained unwaveringly faithful to the cause of public and community service till the very end. As a high government official from the nineteen sixties to the nineteen eighties, as an important functionary of the UN ESCAP in Bangkok during the eighties and nineties and finally as Managing Director of Grameen Telecom, he continued to serve disadvantaged and distressed humanity.

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, then 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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