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COMBATting TERRORISM[†]

RUDOLPH W. GIULIANI*

I am pleased that the University of Notre Dame Law School's Thomas J. White Center on Law and Government, and the *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics & Public Policy*, are publishing the text of my remarks made before the United Nations' General Assembly on October 1, 2002. I would like to applaud the White Center's staff, the Law School's White Scholars, this symposium's collaborators, and the *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics & Public Policy* for providing a particularly stimulating perspective on public policy, rooted in Judeo-Christian ethics and sound legal scholarship.

I am honored to be able to introduce this symposium on "Violence in America," which in large part addresses the events of September 11th. It is particularly fitting that an academic discussion of those events—such as the one that follows in these pages—should be sponsored by an organization like the White Center's *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics & Public Policy*. As the readers of this *Journal* already know, it is committed to a robust and inclusive discussion of timely issues within the context of the Judeo-Christian intellectual tradition.

As I told the United Nations' General Assembly, last year's terrorist attacks made clear that moral relativism is unequivocally unacceptable. They reminded us that the difference between good and evil is clear, and they proved that any responsible discussion of violence and terrorism must be informed by an understanding of our common humanity and by the ethical obligations that flow from it. It is in light of those lessons—learned once again at great expense—that the following discussion proceeds.

On September 11, 2001, New York City—the most diverse city in the world—was viciously attacked in an unprovoked act of war. More than twenty-seven hundred men, women, and chil-

[†] Virtually all of this text was taken from a speech Mayor Giuliani gave to the United Nations General Assembly on October 1, 2001.

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dren of every race, religion, and ethnicity are lost. Among these were people from eighty different nations. This was the deadliest terrorist attack in history.

This was not just an attack on the City of New York or on the United States of America. It was an attack on the very idea of a free, inclusive, and civil society.

It was a direct assault on the founding principles of the United Nations itself. The preamble to the UN Charter states that this organization exists “to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person . . . to practice tolerance and live together in peace as good neighbors . . . [and] to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security.”

Indeed, this vicious attack places in jeopardy the whole purpose of the United Nations.

Terrorism is based on the persistent and deliberate violation of fundamental human rights. With bullets and bombs—and now with hijacked airplanes—terrorists deny the dignity of human life. Terrorism preys particularly on cultures and communities that practice openness and tolerance. Their targeting of innocent civilians mocks the efforts of those who seek to live together in peace as neighbors. It defies the very notion of being a neighbor.

This massive attack was intended to break our spirit. It has not done that. It has made us stronger, more determined, and more resolved.

The bravery of our firefighters, our police officers, our emergency workers, and civilians we may never learn of, in saving over 25,000 lives that day—carrying out the most effective rescue operation in our history—inspires all of us. The determination, resolve, and leadership of President George W. Bush has unified America and all decent men and women around the world.

The response of many of your nations—your leaders and people—spontaneously demonstrating in the days after the attack your support for New York and America, and your understanding of what needs to be done to remove the threat of terrorism, gives us great, great hope that we will prevail.

The strength of America’s response, please understand, flows from the principles upon which we stand.

Americans are not a single ethnic group. Americans are not of one race or one religion. Americans emerge from all your nations.

We are defined as Americans by our beliefs—not by our ethnic origins, our race, or our religion. Our beliefs in religious

freedom, political freedom, and economic freedom—that is what makes an American. Our belief in democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human life—that is how you become an American. It is these very principles—and the opportunities these principles give to so many to create a better life for themselves and their families—that make America, and New York, a “shining city on a hill.”

There is no nation, and no city, in the history of the world that has seen more immigrants, in less time, than America. People continue to come here in large numbers to seek freedom, opportunity, decency, and civility.

Each of your nations—I am certain—has contributed citizens to the United States and to New York. I believe I can take every one of you someplace in New York City, where you can find someone from your country, someone from your village or town, that speaks your language and practices your religion. In each of your lands there are many who are Americans in spirit, by virtue of their commitment to our shared principles.

It is tragic and perverse that it is because of these very principles—particularly our religious, political, and economic freedoms—that we find ourselves under attack by terrorists.

Our freedom threatens them, because they know that if our ideas of freedom gain a foothold among their people it will destroy their power. So they strike out against us to keep those ideas from reaching their people.

The best long-term deterrent to terrorism—obviously—is the spread of our principles of freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human life. The more that spreads around the globe, the safer we will all be. These are very powerful ideas and once they gain a foothold, they cannot be stopped.

In fact, the rise that we have seen in terrorism and terrorist groups, I believe, is in no small measure a response to the spread of these ideas of freedom and democracy to many nations, particularly over the past fifteen years.

The terrorists have no ideas or ideals with which to combat freedom and democracy. So their only defense is to strike out against innocent civilians, destroying human life in massive numbers and hoping to deter all of us from our pursuit and expansion of freedom.

But the long-term deterrent of spreading our ideals throughout the world is just not enough, and may never be realized, if we do not act—and act together—to remove the clear and present danger posed by terrorism and terrorists.

The United Nations must hold accountable any country that supports or condones terrorism; otherwise you will fail in your primary mission as peacekeeper.

It must ostracize any nation that supports terrorism.

It must isolate any nation that remains neutral in the fight against terrorism.

Now is the time, in the words of the UN Charter, "to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security." This is not a time for further study or vague directives. The evidence of terrorism's brutality and inhumanity—of its contempt for life and the concept of peace—is lying beneath the rubble of the World Trade Center less than two miles from where we meet today.

Look at that destruction, that massive, senseless, cruel loss of human life, and then I ask you to look in your hearts and recognize that there is no room for neutrality on the issue of terrorism. You are either with civilization or with terrorists.

On one side is democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human life; on the other is tyranny, arbitrary executions, and mass murder.

We are right and they are wrong. It is as simple as that.

And by that I mean that America and its allies are right about democracy, about religious, political, and economic freedom.

The terrorists are wrong, and in fact evil, in their mass destruction of human life in the name of addressing alleged injustices.

Let those who say that we must understand the reasons for terrorism come with me to the thousands of funerals we are having in New York City and explain those insane, maniacal reasons to the children who will grow up without fathers and mothers, to the parents who have had their children ripped from them for no reason at all.

Instead, I ask each of you to allow me to say at those funerals that your nation stands with America in making a solemn promise and pledge that we will achieve unconditional victory over terrorism and terrorists.

There is no excuse for mass murder, just as there is no excuse for genocide. Those who practice terrorism—murdering or victimizing innocent civilians—lose any right to have their cause understood by decent people and lawful nations.

On this issue—terrorism—the United Nations must draw a line. The era of moral relativism between those who practice or condone terrorism, and those nations who stand up against it,

must end. Moral relativism does not have a place in this discussion and debate.

There is no moral way to sympathize with grossly immoral actions. And by trying to do that, unfortunately, a fertile field has been created in which terrorism has grown.

The best and most practical way to promote peace is to stand up to terror and intimidation. The Security Council's unanimous passage of Resolution 1373, adopting wide ranging anti-terrorism measures in the international community is a very good first step. It is necessary to establish accountability for the subsidizing of terrorism.

As a former United States Attorney, I am particularly encouraged that the UN has answered President Bush's call to cut terrorists off from their money and their funding. It is enormously important. We have done that successfully with organized crime groups in America. By taking away their ability to amass large amounts of money, you take away their ability to have others carry on their functioning for them, even if they are removed, arrested, prosecuted, or eliminated through war or through law enforcement. It cuts off the life-blood of the organization. So I believe this is a very good first step.

But now it is up to the member states to enforce this and other aspects of the resolution, and for the United Nations to enforce these new mechanisms to take the financial base away from the terrorists. Take away their money, take away their access to money, and you reduce their ability to carry out complex missions.

Each of you is sitting in this room because of your country's commitment to being part of the family of nations. We need to unite as a family as never before—across all our differences, in recognition of the fact that the United Nations stands for the proposition that as human beings we have more in common than divides us.

If you need to be reminded of this, you do not need to look very far. Just go outside for a walk in the streets and parks of New York City. You cannot walk a block in New York City without seeing somebody who looks different than you, acts different than you, talks different than you, believes different than you. If you grow up in New York City, you learn that. And if you are an intelligent or decent person, you learn that all those differences are nothing in comparison to the things that unite us.

We are a city of immigrants—unlike any other city—within a nation of immigrants. Like the victims of the World Trade Center attack, we are of every race, religion, and ethnicity. Our

diversity has always been our greatest source of strength. It is the thing that renews us and revives us in every generation—our openness to new people from all over the world.

So from the first day of this attack, an attack on New York and America, and I believe an attack on the basic principles that underlie this organization, I have told the people of New York that we should not allow this to divide us, because then we would really lose what this city is all about. We have very strong and vibrant Arab and Muslim communities in New York City. They are an equally important part of the life of our city. We respect their religious beliefs. We respect everybody's religious beliefs—that is what America is about, that is what New York City is about. I have urged New Yorkers not to engage in any form of group blame or group hatred. This is exactly the evil that we are confronting with these terrorists. And if we are going to prevail over terror, our ideals, principles, and values must transcend all forms of prejudice. This is a very important part of the struggle against terrorism.

This is not a dispute between religions or ethnic groups. All religions, all decent people, are united in their desire to achieve peace, and understand that we have to eliminate terrorism. We are not divided about this.

There have been many days in New York when I was running for mayor, and then since I have been mayor, when I would have a weekend in which I would go to a mosque on Friday, and a synagogue on Saturday, and a church—sometimes two churches—on a Sunday. And by the time I finished, I would say to myself, "I know that we are getting through to God." We are talking to him in every language that He understands, we are using every liturgy that exists, and I know that we are getting through to the same God, even though we may be doing it in slightly different ways. God is known by many different names and many different traditions, but identified by one consistent feeling, love. Love for humanity, particularly love for our children. Love does eventually conquer hate, but it needs our help. Good intentions alone are not enough to conquer evil.

Remember British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, who—armed only with good intentions—negotiated with the Nazis and emerged hopeful that he had achieved peace in his time. Hitler's wave of terror was only encouraged by these attempts at appeasement. At the cost of millions of lives, we learned that words—though important—are not enough to guarantee peace. It is action alone that counts.

For the UN, and individual nations, decisive action is needed to stop terrorism from ever orphaning another child.

That is for nations. For individuals, the most effective course of action they can take to aid our recovery is to be determined to go ahead with their lives. We cannot let terrorists change the way we live—otherwise they will have succeeded.

In some ways, the resilience of life in New York City is the ultimate sign of defiance to terrorism. We call ourselves the capital of the world in large part because we are the most diverse city in the world, home to the United Nations. The spirit of unity amid all our diversity has never been stronger.

On Saturday night I walked through Times Square. It was crowded, it was bright, it was lively. Thousands of people were visiting from all parts of the United States and all parts of the world. And many of them came up to me and shook my hand and patted me on the back and said, "We're here because we want to show our support for the City of New York." And that is why there has never been a better time to come to New York City.

I say to people across the country and around the world: if you were planning to come to New York sometime in the future, come here now. Come to enjoy our thousands of restaurants, museums, theaters, sporting events, and shopping . . . but also come to take a stand against terrorism.

We need to heed the words of a hymn that I, and the Police Commissioner, and the Fire Commissioner, have heard at the many funerals and memorial services that we have gone to in the last two weeks. The hymn begins, "Be Not Afraid."

Freedom from fear is a basic human right. We need to reassert our right to live free from fear with greater confidence and determination than ever before. Here in New York City, across America, and around the world, with one clear voice, unanimously, we need to say that we will not give in to terrorism.

Surrounded by our friends of every faith, we know that this is not a clash of civilizations; it is a conflict between murderers and humanity.

This is not a question of retaliation or revenge. It is a matter of justice leading to peace. The only acceptable result is the complete and total eradication of terrorism.

New Yorkers are strong and resilient. We are unified. And we will not yield to terror. We do not let fear make our decisions for us. We choose to live in freedom.

