

take 'em, tiger

The Urth list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 01 Dec 2001

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aturner3 — 01 Dec 2001, 11:37

A message from Wolfe:

? Pioneer Press September 27, 2001

A guest essay by Gene Wolfe, published in a Chicago-area local newspaper, is unfortunately not online. Wolfe urges citizens to act quickly, and pressure the politicians to take action...

We will be told that the perpetrators (and only the perpetrators) must be punished, and that the greatest pains must be taken to make certain no innocent person suffers. That sounds much better than saying no action should be taken, but it comes to the same thing. The perpetrators cannot be punished. They died in the planes they hijacked and are beyond our reach. It is not possible to fight a war (not even a losing war) without causing innocent people to suffer.

Wolfe's recommendations for immediate action: 1) declare war on nations that harbor terrorists; 2) arm the plane crews; 3) seal the borders; 4) return non-citizens to their homelands; 5) root out terrorist organizations everywhere; and 6) stop pressuring Israel to go soft on terrorists.

James Jordan — 01 Dec 2001, 18:37 · follows aturner3

At 03:37 AM 12/1/2001 -0800, Alice wrote:

Wolfe's recommendations for immediate action: 1) declare war on nations that harbor terrorists; 2) arm the plane crews; 3) seal the borders; 4) return non-citizens to their homelands; 5) root out terrorist organizations everywhere; and 6) stop pressuring Israel to go soft on terrorists.

#s3. & 4. seem extreme. As for #1., I prefer the analogy of declaring war on the Barbary Pirates. Declare war on Al Qaeda and anyone similar, not on nations qua nations, unless things change. That would cover #5. Iraq is a special case; I think Bush has done correctly to say let the UN inspectors back in now, or else.... I agree with #6, though I think Israel needs to correct some things in her behavior also.

The main thing, I think, is not to be naive about Islam in general and radical Islamism in particular. The American understanding of society is rooted in Christian notions, that God is One but also a Community, so tht there are multiple "heirarchies" and "spheres" in life (church, state, family, media, business, etc.), and that love & reasonable persuasion is the best way to function in community. Islam is purely monotheistic, with one hierarchy from Allah to men to women & children & slaves, a hierarchy based solely on power and not moderated by love and persuasion. Though many Westerners are not Christian by personal committment, they have been influenced by these Christian (and partly Athenian) ideas; and of course many people in Islam have been influenced by Western ideas. But pure Islam, and thus the Islamic militant revival, rejects those moderating ideas. What they understand is power, and it is important for the West (America in this case) to show Great Power, the "big footprint," in suppressing radical Islamism. Neither kindness nor reasonable persuasion are going to work on people who want to keep their women in total subjection -- and I think the "liberation" of women is one of the main, if not THE main, threat/s these particular people fear and loathe. (Consider the Taliban.)

FWIW

Jim Jordan

Adam Stephanides — 02 Dec 2001, 14:31 · follows James Jordan

For the sake of civility, I suggest that people refrain from making claims for the superiority of one religion over another on this list.

I would dispute Jim Jordan's comments, but I would prefer to just drop the topic.

--Adam

Michael Straight — 03 Dec 2001, 13:35 · follows Adam Stephanides

Not too surprising Wolfe would have strong opinions on this subject. Just about every book he writes has a war in it. The only exceptions I can think of are Peace (heh.), Free Live Free, There Are Doors, and Pandora.

-Rostrum