seek to poison the nations of Africa, and Islamic nations more generally, with the help of their indigenous or imported dupes, stooges, and agents of influence. Perhaps this is the true reason for the concern of Representative King and the ADL: to stage the lynching of another African-American leader who has dared to question an American foreign policy dictated from London. Malcolm X was so eliminated, by intelligence agencies and corrupt factions of government, when he attempted the same.

Interview: Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammad

EIR: You are aware of how the U.S. press reported the visit of the Minister Farrakhan to, particularly, Libya and Iran, and the overall characterization of the trip as one of "cavorting with dictators." You were one of the people on the trip. How did you see it?

Muhammad: Let's take one point at a time. The issue of "cavorting with dictators" is kind of a confusing characterization. For example, we met with 17 or 18 Heads of State, but we did not meet with the Emir of Kuwait, we did not meet with the King of Saudi Arabia, and these are specifically unelected political leaders of countries. When in fact, some of those who are called dictators . . . in fact, there is some electoral process by which they assume office. As far as I know, the government of Iran is elected. In fact, they just had new elections within the last week. Even in Iraq, there is a political process which is more or less democratic, and Saddam Hussein actually won election. Now, there are people who would criticize their one-party system, or aspects of it, and maybe those are legitimate criticisms, but the language of "cavorting with dictators" is just used more for propaganda purposes than for accuracy.

We traveled far and wide. We were open to meeting with anyone in the African continent, or in the Islamic world, who was open to meeting with us. Minister Farrakhan did not turn down anyone who wanted to meet with him, who wanted to receive his delegation. And some of those people apparently are political enemies of the ruling circles of the U.S. and England, but others of those are apparently on good terms with the ruling circles. I feel it is only an exercise of our human rights to assume that we have a right to travel freely and to meet with whom we choose. And nobody has a right to give us an approved list or disapproved list, and dictate to us whom we should meet with.

As a matter of fact, just in keeping with the spirit of the Million Man March, it was articulated over and over again, in the prelude to, during, and after the march, by Dr. Ben Chavis, that no longer would we allow those outside of our community to dictate whom we can associate with; in this case, we see an exact match between the domestic policy and foreign policy. They want to choose whom we can meet with within the borders of the United States. Now, they extend that principle outside the borders of the United States. It's illegitimate inside the borders; it's illegitimate outside the borders.

There were several leaders of countries with whom we did not meet, simply because we didn't have the time, and we had to get back to the United States in time for Saviors Day. So, I expect that there will be future trips abroad, to meet with those whom we did not have time to meet with before. Some of those that we did not meet as of yet, probably some of those would be disapproved of by the ruling elite. But, so be it. We are looking for universal friendship, respect, and recognition from the human family of the planet Earth. That was the spirit of the Million Man March, and that was the spirit of Minister Farrakhan's World Friendship Tour.

EIR: Did you find that certain situations, for example the Nigeria situation, were much different than they had been portrayed by the U.S. press?

Muhammad: That is absolutely the case. What was so notable in the case of Nigeria, is the pride that Nigerians have in their country. They are very patriotic, they are very, in that sense, nationalistic. No Nigerian that we talked to, from President Abacha on down, thought that there were no problems in Nigeria. Everybody admits that there are problems, that there has been corruption, that several things have gone wrong in the 35 years of Nigerian independence, but they are all patriots, and they are pulling for Nigeria. There are 250 ethnic groups, there are more than 400 different languages, there are several religions that are part of the fabric of Nigerian society, and we were in touch with all of that diversity.

But across the board, the underlying thread was Nigerian patriotism, the sense of Nigeria as a nation destined to play a role, not only in African politics, but on the world stage as well. This issue of patriotism was something you never even find a hint of in what is reported in the press.

The other thing that was quite shocking, was the characterization of General Abacha as a brutal dictator in the western press. In our three different meetings in three different settings, we didn't find him to be that kind of disagreeable person at all. He is very personable, very humble, very self-effacing, very religious, and even pious, very low-key. And he does not rule by decree, but through a council of ministers. He is

very serious about the constitutional convention that he called for, upon assuming power. It should also be noted that he did not assume power on his own, but he was requested by a broad political spectrum of several political parties, and other groupings within Nigerian society, to assume power, and that included Moshood Abiola, who some claim was denied the Presidency of Nigeria. But Chief Abiola *himself* called publicly for General Abacha to take power. And the reason was, just about everyone that we talked to agreed, that the single person in Nigeria who has the personal integrity, and admiration, and respect across the board, who has the ability within his person to represent the Nigerian nation and people, and hold it together during a period of crisis, is Sani Abacha.

One brother who is a member of the constitutional convention, Chief Abia, formerly a history professor at the University of California, compared General Abacha favorably to General Washington, that he is so respected by everyone, and thus is the consensus choice to assume power during this transition to democracy. So certainly, that idea of who Abacha is, and the role that he plays in Nigerian society, is not conveyed accurately by the western media.

EIR: What possible role do you think that the rejection of International Monetary Fund policy by both Nigeria and Sudan plays in the negative assessment of their regimes by agencies in the press?

Muhammad: Well, I'm probably not qualified to really give you an answer on that particular point. I do know that President Abacha himself raised this in conversation at the dinner table, that he cited that one of the reasons that he and Nigeria were under attack, was because for the last three years, they have not borrowed any money from the IMF-World Bank system. And, that in fact, they are being almost *begged* to take out loans. His point was, that Nigeria is *not* a poor country, it is a rich country, and all that they needed to do was properly develop and manage their resources, and they have all they need to finance their development as a nation.

EIR: What do you think about the role of sanctions used against countries like Iraq, sanctions which are also now being contemplated by some against Nigeria?

Muhammad: I think we need to understand that sanctions equal genocide. We should reject the use of international sanctions, whether it's through the United Nations, or through other entities, as a tool of political change. I think that what we saw in Iraq was horrifying. We saw a people, a nation, that is literally being starved to death, that is being forced to live on 1,100 calories a day through a food-rationing program that does not include any source of protein. We were shown figures from the ministry of health, and by the way, the minister of health (Asyeed Ramadan), who happens to be a Kurd, indicated that 565,000 children had died as a result of sanctions imposed after the war. We saw some of those dying children at the Saddam Hussein Hospital for Children in Baghdad. And walking through that hospital, I remarked to Minister Farrakhan that this was not so much a hospital as a death camp. Because, any time you have a hospital with no food, no medicine, very little equipment, very little staff, where literally nothing can be done to alleviate the suffering of those who are seeking help, then, that's not a hospital any longer, the people are merely spending time until they die. We saw infants who were just bags of bones. We saw swollen bellies, we saw sunken eyes, we saw listlessness, we saw depressed immune systems, we saw many children suffering from leukemia, caused by the use of nuclear weapons, low-yield nuclear weapons, which were used during the Gulf war, which I don't think was reported; to my knowledge, the use of such weapons was not reported. But now, five years after the war, there are thousands upon thousands of children, and some adults, suffering the effect of exposure to radiation.

So, sanctions equal genocide. I think that the U.N. should immediately lift those sanctions, and use legitimate political means, and diplomacy, to effect the kinds of postwar changes in Iraq that might be necessary. But I think those that called for the imposition of sanctions should be charged with the crimes that have resulted in the deaths of millions of people in Iraq.

EIR: What is your view of the upcoming March 19 hearing intended to discuss Minister Farrakhan's trip, called by Representative King?

Muhammad: Although the way that the hearings have been proposed to be held might be laughable, under current political and economic circumstances in the U.S. they have to be regarded as dangerous. Because, here we have a blatant attempt to lynch a man who has the unparalleled popular support of not only his own people by the millions, but millions of others besides that, who has demonstrated support all over the world. But when you have the likes of Peter "The Lyin' " King conducting hearings without a pretense of due process, without even a pretense of fairness, without even a pretense of seeking truth, much less the fruits of truth, which is justice, then, we are living in dangerous times.

He has stated in writing that he is calling for an investigation of Minister Farrakhan's travels in order to see whether there has been a violation of current U.S. law. But he goes on to say, that even if there is no violation of law, that there should be some laws *specifically passed,* to punish Minister Farrakhan, and he is openly calling for *prison time* for these travels that, of course, he does not agree with. Whether or not they are legal or not seems to be, in his mind, beside the point.

I am hoping that all of those, who understand the fundamental historic importance of the Million Man March and the World Friendship Tour, will do something, before, during, and after the March 19 hearings, to lend their support to Minister Farrakhan, and demand that these kinds of illegitimate, mobster hearings are not allowed, and that taxpayer money should not be expended on any such witch-hunt. If there is a

There should be encouragement of Farrakhan's efforts. Because, if he can convert others to this peaceful way of atonement, then we can scale back the level of violence and warfare and conflict that right now characterizes much of what is happening on the African continent.

legitimate desire to learn the facts of Minister Farrakhan's travel, then let there be a legitimate hearing in which he is invited to participate and to give testimony so that we all might be edified to hear what he has to say. But to hold the hearings that are proposed, about Minister Farrakhan and his travels, and then not to include Minister Farrakhan or any in his party that traveled with him, is ludicrous.

EIR: Could you give some examples of the applications of the principle of atonement in the Friendship Tour?

Muhammad: Yes, we should not lose sight of the very large implications of atonement and reconciliation as it is applied to international relations. For example, today, President Clinton and others have convened a conference in Egypt to discuss the issue of what they call terrorism, and we're all familiar with their lists of terrorists, which includes Col. Muammar Qaddafi, the leader of the Libyan revolution. But if we look at the history of the relationship between Minister Farrakhan and Colonel Qaddafi, we see some interesting outcomes in the area of atonement and reconciliation.

About ten years ago, Colonel Qaddafi was trying to convince Minister Farrakhan that the NOI [Nation of Islam] should receive some kind of military training, and wage armed revolution against America. And, of course, Minister Farrakhan explained at that time that this is not our way, that the Nation of Islam has always been unarmed, and has always been completely non-violent in its approach to solving the social problems that we encounter here in the United States. And from the report that I got, Mr. Qaddafi was a little puzzled by Minister Farrakhan's refusal to even consider an armed approach. Now, here we are, ten years later, in the aftermath of the Million Man March. According to Minister Farrakhan, Colonel Qaddafi was the very first person on the international scene to call him after the march, and to congratulate him on his great success. And when we met with Mr. Qaddafi, in his tent, in Libya on the World Friendship Tour, he very humbly, very seriously, admitted, that, and I quote, "Minister Farrakhan, your way is superior to my way."

And so, what we actually had the pleasure to witness, is a man who has waged violent revolution in the world, supported, what are called terrorist organizations . . . admitting that the non-violent approach, of the Nation of Islam, of Minister Farrakhan, is superior to the armed way. I think you could call that a conversion. I think you could call that significant fruit of the doctrine of atonement and reconciliation. It seems to me that there should be rejoicing in Washington, D.C. and other capitals of the world, and there should be encouragement of Farrakhan's efforts. Because, if he can convert others to this peaceful way of atonement, then we can scale back the level of violence and warfare and conflict that right now characterizes much of what is happening on the African continent. We are driving now for a World Day of Atonement, participated in by billions of people across the face of this Earth. The meaning of Minister Farrakhan's World Friendship Tour, is just that, that we are ushering in an era of peace on earth and good will toward all men.

EIR: Any comment on recent developments in the Middle East?

Muhammad: I would say that certainly the teachings of atonement and reconciliation need to be heard all throughout the Middle East, but especially in Israel. So we are calling on all those inside Israel, and those who are supporters of Israel, to really hear the inner meaning, the real meaning, if you will, of atonement, and let us apply that principle across the board. Whether one is Jewish, or one is Muslim, or one is Christian, this is what we need to do. To do the opposite number, just ensures that we have an escalating cycle of violence, that will never lead to peace, that will never lead to development, that will only continue the suffering of millions upon millions of people. And the only ones who benefit from this continued conflict are those who sell the arms, who sell the drugs, and who make their financial killing in the speculative markets of the world; and who, for reasons of their own, do not want to see peace coming. How could you justify the billions of dollars that come from the U.S. and other countries to Israel if peace actually broke out and became established there? And so, we need to understand very clearly that those opponents of Minister Farrakhan inside the U.S. and throughout the world, are literally the opponents of peace.

EIR: I take it from what you just said, that the Minister's earlier call for a dialogue with Jewish organizations and individuals of good will still stands?

Muhammad: Yes, and just to put a time frame on that: His first call for a dialogue with responsible representatives of Jewish leadership was issued Feb. 25, 1984. It's been more than 12 years that his call has gone unheeded. It's still open.