

terror and the perpetrators regarded as terrorists. Whether the attackers are acting on their own or on the orders of their governments, whether they are regulars or irregulars, if the attack is against civilians, then they must be considered as terrorists, irrespective of the justification of the operations carried out, irrespective of the nobility of the struggle. . . .

According to this definition of terrorism, the attack on the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, the human bomb attacks by Palestinians and the Tamil Tigers, the attacks against civilians by Israeli forces, the killings of Bosnian Muslims and others must be considered as acts of terror and the perpetrators must be condemned as terrorists. And anyone supporting them must be considered as terrorists. Where states are behind the acts of terrorism, the whole government must stand condemned. . . .

While we should identify terrorists everywhere and act in whatever way prescribed, we must also find ways and means to prevent as much as possible the tendency of certain people or governments to resort to terrorism. We must identify the causes of their bitterness and anger and we must remove these causes. I don't think people would want to blast themselves to death simply because they enjoy doing so. These are acts of the desperate, acts of people who see no way to redress their grievances, to alleviate their sufferings. We cannot just dismiss them as senseless perverts who enjoy terrorizing people. If we want to stop new acts of terrorism, we will have to attend to the causes of the bitterness and anger and try to eliminate them. We must seriously try to do this. . . .

For the Muslims, the grievances are real and truly unbearable, beyond mere understanding and tolerance. For the past

five decades, the Palestinians, for example, have not only had their lands confiscated, but they had also been expelled from their own land by the Israelis. . . . [They] were subjected to oppression and humiliation. Because they throw stones at the Israelis, they are shot at and killed, children included. For the Israelis it is not an eye for an eye; it is a life for being hit by a stone. . . .

The Holocaust did not defeat the Jews. A second Holocaust with Arabs for victims will not defeat the Arabs either. Israelis must come to their senses and opt for de-escalation of terror rather than escalating it. If the Israelis won't, then the world must forcibly stop them. If we are serious about stopping terrorists then we must stop both the Palestinians and the Israelis from mutual massacre. . . .

But Muslims everywhere must condemn terrorism once it is clearly defined. Terrorizing people is not the way of Islam. Certainly killing innocent people is not Islamic. Bitter and angry though we may be, we must demonstrate to the world that Muslims are rational people when fighting for our rights and we do not resort to acts of terror. We must object strongly to the linking of Muslims with terror, just because a few Muslims have resorted to acts of terror. We must point out that Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, and others are equally guilty of terrorism. Terrorists must be identified by their acts, and nothing else. . . .

Unless we are able to turn the present worldwide anger over the terrorist attack of Sept. 11 into a real campaign against all terrorists, irrespective of their religious faiths, we are going to find that Muslim-bashing will be heightened and our struggle to alleviate the sufferings of hundreds of millions of oppressed Muslims will fail.

'War Has Been Declared on Peace!'

The following is the central section of the Easter message "Urbi et Orbi" ("To the City and the World") given on March 31 by Pope John Paul II, who continues to stand in the way of those who would start a Clash of Civilizations global religious war.

Christian communities on every continent, with trepidation and hope I ask you to proclaim that Jesus is truly risen, and to work so that his peace may end the tragic sequence of attacks and killings that bloody the Holy Land, plunged again in these very days into horror and despair. It seems that war has been declared on peace! But nothing is resolved by war; it only brings greater suffering and death. No one can remain silent and inactive, no political or reli-

gious leader! Denunciation must be followed by practical acts of solidarity that will help everyone to rediscover mutual respect and return to frank negotiation.

In that land, Christ died and rose from the dead, and left the empty tomb as a silent but eloquent attestation. By breaking down in himself the hostility, the dividing wall between people, he has reconciled all through the Cross, and now he commits us, his disciples, to remove every reason for hatred and revenge.

How many members of the human family are still subject to misery and violence! In how many corners of the world do we hear the cry of those who implore help, because they are suffering and dying: from Afghanistan, terribly afflicted in recent months and now stricken by a disastrous earthquake; from so many other countries of the world, where social imbalances and rival ambitions still torment countless numbers of our brothers and sisters. Men and women of the third millennium! Let me repeat to you: Open your hearts to Christ, crucified and risen, who comes with the offer of peace!