

Berlin Appeal:

Fight International Terrorism with Civilized Means and Methods

The devastating terrorist attacks in the USA constitute a challenge to defend the fundamental values of all civilizations – against international terrorism, but also against a self-destructive overreaction.

The attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania have to be condemned as a crime against humanity. With their thousands of casualties, their furious cruelty and their methodical perfidy, they constitute a new dimension of international terrorism. They show the global vulnerability in the high-tech-world. Beside their victims, they hit a lot of targets: the symbols and power-centres of the USA and globalized capitalism, the industrial countries' safety and the peaceful coexistence of cultures in New York and the whole world. The victims came from more than 60 nations, they were Christians, Muslims, members of other religions and people with no religious affiliations.

We mourn for the victims of the attacks. Our sympathy goes to the injured and the relatives of the victims. We have understanding for the rage and anger. But our grief is not a cry for war.

In the face of this new dimension of international terrorism, we urge for fighting it effectively and consequentially. A situation in which thousands of people can be killed by terror at any time is incompatible with the fundamental principles of every civilization and the further development of human rights, democracy and freedom. In this new situation, a change of views is necessary. There can be no offsetting of casualties, no categorizing of victims under old concepts of an enemy, no discrimination between human lives and no acceptance of the "logic" of terror – either in its assessment or in counter-reactions. Nullifying the power of terror means not to align with it, – either in

talking about it or in fighting it. We have to defend the fundamental principles of civilization without damaging them any further.

But in the face of the atrocious threat, in many ways a balanced view and response, which are all too necessary, get lost. The different participants, their goals and interests as well as the causes of escalation must be taken into account, without throwing suspicion on it as excusing or relativising the crime that occurred. In the interests of de-escalation and peaceful coexistence, reciprocal perceptions of the different cultural groups and religions deserve attention, even if they include clear criticisms and the necessity to correct the mistakes of the past. Global injustices and political humiliations are not justifications, but in fact the breeding-ground of a deep discontent, on which terrorist fanatics thrive.

Currently we run the risk of heading for a state of affairs, where the boundary between war and peace is permanently blurred. The disconcerting certainty that there can be no complete protection against terrorist attacks, should not obscure the question, as to which steps would improve security – and which would reduce it. A general strategy is necessary, having short- and longterm measures against international terrorism, that won't fall into the trap of escalation and destabilization. Instead, by remaining calm and prudent, we should draw on the existing strengths of civilization's basic tenets and guiding principles, whilst defending these principles against attack.

That is why the reaction to the terrorist attacks, both in its general strategy and in its individual steps, must adhere to following civilized principles:

1 For good reasons, international law tolerates no revenge, retaliation or actions of punishment. Violence is only legitimate as self-defense or assistance in an emergency. All measures have to be proportionate and appropriate with the least possible side-effects, and in addition must not exacerbate the problems they aim to avoid. A mixing of self-defense and retaliatory acts would cause avoidable counter-reactions.

- Preconditions for all measures are credible *evidence* of guilt, aiding and abetting or concrete endangering by the accused. The possibility of error about the originator must be ruled out. All governments that are participating in the coalition fighting terror have the right to receive the evidence. The necessary international co-operation requires acknowledgement of the evidence through the coalition members and the UN Security Council. The terrorists' fol-

lowers and supporters should not have the luxury of the excuse that no evidence was provided that their leaders perpetrated a crime causing the deaths of innocent people and, therefore, offended a basic tenet of Islam as well as the Christian tradition.

- The *differences between guilt, aiding and abetting and concrete endangering* should be taken into consideration. Instead of bringing perpetrators and accomplices together by the threat of equal treatment, previous accomplices should be encouraged (by pressure or with a

2 Political and economic measures to support the civilian population and allied partners in the region must have absolute priority. These measures have to provide a way out from the hopelessness of poverty, shortage of education and violent conflicts and ways of neutralizing of the terrorism's breeding-ground, namely its recruiting and mobilizing potential. Conflict prevention and international co-operation in the One World are the most effective weapons against globalized terrorism. These weapons include alleviating poverty, improving health care, education, fair trade-conditions as well as reduction and prevention of international indebtedness. This strategy has to be initiated immediately with a strong signal. According to the World Bank, the economic consequences of the present and worsening situation already threaten to plunge ten million people into poverty, in addition more than five million Afghans and many refugees have to be saved from a starvation catastrophe.

- With regard to these constructive measures, *non-governmental organizations* should also be involved in the international coalition for a civilized struggle against ter-

3 For actions to be appropriate, political instruments must also have priority in the measures against the originators of the terrorist attacks or possibly their accomplices. In every respect international terrorism must be ostracized worldwide. For an internationally accepted treatment of apprehended perpetrators the International Criminal Court must be set up quickly. Especially with regard to states, possible further suitable measures can include ultimatums, consistent blockades – also enforced by military means –, boycotts and sanctions.

- The *financing of international terrorism* must be halted. This concerns money laundering, uncontrolled offshore bank areas and "underground banking". Worldwide regu-

"stick and a carrot") to stop their support. It has to be about setting up a coalition against terrorism, without giving rise to a coalition of terrorists, accomplices and "rogue states" as a counter-part.

- All measures have *to aim directly* at the originators of the attacks of the 11th September and further possible attacks and equally well-aimed support for the civilian population and all conceivable allied partners. Whoever wants a life without terror should consider himself or herself invited to join an equal partnership.

rorism. They are allied partners for a coalition that works from the bottom up to help achieve the interests of the many people whose misery is just abused by demagogic fanatics, but not eliminated at all.

- Also, great significance has to be given to an *international interreligious and intercultural dialogue*. Up to now, reciprocal knowledge and understanding is missing to a large extent. By means of an intensive interreligious dialogue, it is possible to stop the propagandists of a vulgarized Islam in their demagogic business. In western countries, discrimination against Muslims and Arabs must be fought.
- Within the framework of this international anti-terror coalition, the *peace process in the Middle East* is a central political project. It is only possible to reduce the conflicts simultaneously with serious and fast negotiations on the basis of the Mitchell Plan. In these negotiations, attempts must be made to integrate directly or indirectly all Palestinian organizations, which would otherwise possibly make their mark by trying to torpedo such efforts.

lations must be introduced that facilitate the tracking of terrorists financing.

- The *arming of international terrorism* must be stopped. This concerns the whole international arms trade including the black market. In a world under the threat of international terrorism, arms cannot be put on the market, rather the arms trade and, with that, the arming of terror organizations and civil war militias must be eliminated.
- In addition to international co-operation and preventive measures to eliminate the reasons for conflicts, *worldwide co-ordinated investigations against the terror networks and their financial sources* are the most effective weapons against international terrorism. Improved safety standards in selected areas, international co-operation

and better technical equipment for the investigational authorities as well as well-aimed searches hit international terror networks at vulnerable points. The failure of the secret services and their practice of supporting temporarily apparently useful militias and terror organizations are to be examined in great detail in order to devise careful targeting and effective measures to fight those organizations. One of the main tasks is not military but

4 ***Military offensive measures only have a place in a strategy, that serves the above considerations, when they have their own area of application inside the context of the priority measures, – when they do not interfere with the other methods, – and when they do not lead to avoidable creation of new victims.*** On the one hand it is possible that these measures could be reasonable to avoid further attacks. On the other hand they can even provoke further attacks, destabilize an area and cost many lives. In questions of life and death, both risks have to be weighed under conditions of incomplete knowledge about the consequences. However, one appraisal of this difficult question unites us: Every military action that endangers civilians ("collateral damage"), that drops bombs or missiles in cities or inhabited areas, that leads to the deployment of ground forces beyond small special units, that drives masses of refugees to misery and

All in all this is about resolutely fighting international terrorism and not unintentionally strengthening it. Terrorism is to be fought most effectively without escalation. The German Federal Government should try to win over the USA and their other coalition partners in the framework of the United Nations and the NATO, also working bi-laterally for a strategy to fight terror whilst maintaining the above mentioned principles of civilization. The Upper House of the German Federal Parliament (Bundestag) and the Federal Government should show a high commitment to the political and economic measures to fight terrorism and make every participation in military strikes with logistics, financial resources or troops dependent on the adherence to the named principles. Loyalty to the alliance and historical

the well-aimed tracking down and combating of globally distributed terror networks. Even for measures by order of the police or the secret service, the principles of accurate targeting and appropriateness are valid. As regards domestic safety, the standards of civilization and legality, which are to be defended, should not be thrown overboard. A symbolic policy of strong words and tightening the law does not help anyway, but gives in to terror.

death from starvation, – every war, surrogate war and civil war – is, in the framework of a general strategy, unsuitable and even counter-productive, – which costs many human lives and therefore sews further hatred, leads to wanton escalation and possibly stimulates further terror instead of suppressing it. Then the fight against terrorism and the defense of fundamental principles of civilization would result in the opposite effects. This is valid, too, for every delivery of arms and military support that lead, for instance, to a bloodbath involving Taliban and Afghanistan's Northern Alliance. It is now all the more important to reject the use of ABC weapons, which so far have not been expressly eliminated as an option. In military strikes that have already taken place, we appeal urgently to follow these principles and avoid every further escalation because of its unforeseeable consequences.

responsibility cannot mean to support a way of proceeding that damages all participants. For our assessment of military strikes, the question of the German Federal Armed Forces (Bundeswehr) participation is not in the foreground, because the named criteria are valid for every decision about a military strike as a reaction to the 11th of September, since every human life counts equally – whether in New York, Germany or Afghanistan.

We put our trust in the common civilization of our world, to which there is no alternative. The worldwide mourning for the victims of the terrorist attacks that was demonstrated by all cultural groups has laid the foundation of peaceful coexistence, upon which world leaders now should build. ●

– Signatories see next page –

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