

## London bombed - And this is why they did it

While a vestige of freedom of speech remains in Britain before the Government forces through its religious hatred Bill, I want to speak out about the Islamic origins of the bomb attack on London which occurred on 7 July 2005, coinciding with the opening of the G8 Summit. As I write on the day following that event it is reported that 52 people were killed and 700 injured in the attack. No doubt these figures will rise.

After the attack the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of 'the faith communities hanging together'. This is strange coming from the head of the Christian Church of England. If faith means anything, what should concern him is surely that the Christian communities hang together. Prime Minister Blair said: 'The vast and overwhelming majority of Muslims here and abroad are decent and law-abiding people who abhor these acts of terrorism every bit as much as we do'. This may be true, but we should recognise that it is not the whole story. The whole story lies in the nature of the Islamic faith.

I opened my Times this morning to find that what I was about to write had been said for me in an authoritative way by Amer Taheri, an Iranian commentator on the so-called Middle East (what happened to the Near East, familiar when I was young?). Under the same heading I have given this piece, he puts concisely what I have been arguing in books, speeches and articles over many years.

Taheri begins with a reminder of Theo van Gogh, the Dutch film-maker who was shot by an Islamist assassin on his way to work in Amsterdam last November. Van Gogh begged for mercy and tried to reason with his assailant. 'Surely we can discuss this,' he kept saying as the shots kept coming. 'Let's talk it over.' Van Gogh, who had angered Islamists with his documentary about the mistreatment of women in Islam, was reacting like BBC reporters did yesterday, assuming that the man who was killing him may have some reasonable demands which could be discussed in a calm, democratic atmosphere. Or like the foolish Tony Benn who argued on *Newsnight* last night that the matter could be resolved by holding a Middle East peace conference. It is not a case for talking, says Taheri. What the enemy wants is 'to take full control of your lives, dictate every single move you make round the clock and, if you dare resist, he will feel it his divine duty to kill you'.

Taheri says the ideological soil in which al Qaeda, and the many groups using its brand name, grew was described by one of its original masterminds, the Pakistani Abul-Ala al-Maudoodi more than 40 years ago-

'When God created mankind He made all their bodily needs and movements subject to inescapable biological rules but decided to leave their spiritual, social and political needs and movements largely subject to their will. Soon, however, it became clear that Man cannot run his affairs the way God wants. So God started sending prophets to warn man and try to goad him on to the right path. A total of 128,000 prophets were sent, including Moses and Jesus. They all failed. Finally, God sent Muhammad as the last of His prophets and the bearer of His ultimate message, Islam. With the advent of Islam all previous religions were 'abrogated' (*mansukh*), and their followers regarded as 'infidel' (*kuffar*). The aim of all good Muslims, therefore, is to convert humanity to Islam, which regulates Man's spiritual, economic, political and social moves to the last detail.'

But, says Taheri, what if non-Muslims refuse to take the right path? Here answers diverge. Some believe that the answer is dialogue and argument until followers of the 'abrogated faiths' recognise their error and agree to be saved by converting to Islam. This is the view of

most of the imams preaching in the mosques in the West. But others, including Osama bin Laden, a disciple of al-Maudoodi, believe that the Western-dominated world is too mired in corruption to hear any argument, and must be shocked into conversion through spectacular *ghazavat* (raids) of the kind we saw in New York and Washington in 2001, in Madrid last year, and now in London.

That yesterday's attack was intended as a *ghazava* was confirmed, says Taheri, in a statement by the Secret Organisation Group of al-Qaeda of Jihad Organisation in Europe, an Islamist group that claimed responsibility for yesterday's atrocity. It said 'We have fulfilled our promise and carried out our blessed military raid (*ghazava*) in Britain after our mujahideen exerted strenuous efforts over a long period of time to ensure the success of the raid.' Those who carry out these missions are the *ghazis*, the highest of all Islamic distinctions just below that of the *shahid* or martyr. A *ghazi* who also becomes a *shahid* will be doubly meritorious.

There are, adds Taheri, many Muslims who believe that the idea that all other faiths have been 'abrogated' and that the whole of mankind should be united under the banner of Islam must be dropped as a dangerous anachronism. '*But to the Islamist those Muslims who think like that are themselves regarded as lapsed, and deserving of death*'.

Taheri says that it is, of course, possible, as many in the West love to do, to ignore the strategic goal of the Islamists altogether and focus only on their tactical goals. These include driving the 'Cross-worshippers' (Christian powers) out of the Muslim world, wiping Israel off the map of the Middle East, and replacing the governments of all Muslim countries with truly Islamic regimes like the one created by Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran and by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

How to achieve those objectives has, Taheri adds, been the subject of much debate in Islamist circles throughout the world since 9/11. Bin Laden has consistently argued in favour of further *ghazavat* inside the West. He firmly believes that the West is too cowardly to fight back and, if terrorised in a big way, will do 'what it must do'. That view was strengthened last year when al-Qaeda changed the Spanish Government with its deadly attack in Madrid. At the time bin Laden used his 'Madrid victory' to call on other European countries to distance themselves from the United States or face similar 'punishment'.

Taheri ends by saying that Bin Laden's view has been challenged by his supposed No 2, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who insists that the Islamists should first win the war inside several vulnerable Muslim countries, notably Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Until yesterday it seemed that al-Zawahiri was winning the argument, especially by heating things up in Afghanistan and Iraq. Yesterday, the bin Laden doctrine struck back in London.