

Friends & Relatives,

2001 was the year the world changed. Those of you who know me well understand that I have no choice but to write this letter.

On September 11th four commercial aircraft were hijacked by fundamental militant Muslims and crashed into the World Trade Center, Pentagon, and a field in Pennsylvania. All 266 people on board the aircraft were killed as well as 189 at the Pentagon and 3500 at the Twin Towers. In a speech before congress on September 20th George W. Bush identified the objective of his administration as the elimination of the international terrorist threat to Americans. On October 7th the U.S. launched an attack against the radical Taliban regime in Afghanistan and the thousands of al-Qaeda terrorists whose only mission in life was to kill American civilians and eliminate the Israeli state. By December 7th the military campaign was virtually over and Osama bin Laden along with his remaining lieutenants and diminished al-Qaeda forces were hiding in the mountain caves near the rugged Khyber Pass.

While virtually every human being in the modern world is aware of what's transpired over the past three months it has become apparent to me that most Americans do not understand how profound and widespread the Arab hatred of America is that produced the individuals and organizations that were so committed to the attack.

In February 1998 Osama bin Laden and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad merged to form the current al-Qaeda organization. At that time, they issued a *fatwa* (strict Islamic ruling) stating that "*to kill Americans and their allies-civilians and military-is an individual duty for every Muslim.*" Later that same year, bin Laden said it was "*his Islamic duty to acquire chemical and nuclear weapons to use against the U.S.*" Concurrently, we were deeply involved in the inconsequential Lewinsky scandal and Clinton impeachment.

For virtually the entire 1400-year history of the Muslim religion, its followers have been respectful of life, peaceful, and tolerant of other cultures. It has only been during the last 30 years that something has gone wrong in the Arab nations of the Middle East to incite this animosity toward America. As recently as the 1950s and '60s the Arab world admired America and the west for its glamour. Luxury cars, Hilton Hotels, and Coca-Cola were icons when I lived in pre-revolutionary Iran during the late 1970s. Most Middle Eastern countries have squandered the opportunity that oil money provided them and have failed to develop alternative businesses, allow for political freedom, or implement social programs. Consequently, the ideals of al-Qaeda are not a fringe belief and their support comes from grass roots movements in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, the UAE, Syria, Jordan, the occupied territories, and Yemen.

The sources of Middle Eastern hostility are fairly obvious. We stand for freedom and they hate it. We are rich and they envy us. We are strong and they resent this. But these arguments simplify and mask a more complex and serious problem. The foundation of the hatred is caused by the failed policies of the Arab governments, the inability to modernize their countries, and a medieval interpretation of Islam.

Virtually all of the political, economic, and social policies implemented by Arab rulers over the last 30 years have failed. The result is ineffective and inefficient governments where opposition parties are rarely tolerated, public dissent is rapidly stamped out, and bureaucratic greed runs deep. As the people of the Middle East were formally educated

over the past 40 years they became cognizant of the freedoms afforded the western world and were often met with high unemployment. Saudi Arabia is an unyielding monarchy with almost no private industry, strict laws, unfair courts, and no free press, free speech, or free religion. While Egypt's population has doubled over the past 30 years its unemployment rate has climbed to 25%. Almost all those looking for work have a college degree. Since the revolution in 1979 Iran has become one of the most repressive nations in the world as religious zealots run the military and provide no freedoms and little opportunity. In Syria thousands disappear at the hands of the government every year. Iraq has quite simply become Saddam Hussein's playpen in which he develops weapons of mass destruction. Virtually every Arab nation is less free today than it was 30 years ago and while the rest of the world has advanced, the Gulf States have regressed. The Arab rulers have failed to improve the standard of living for their citizens and have instead created a super rich, corrupt, weak class of rulers who have formed a close relationship with America and are despised by the average Arab. While Americans think we saved Kuwait and Saudi Arabia during the gulf war, most Arabs believe we saved the Kuwaiti and Saudi royal families. Additionally, the Arab nations feel humiliated by the success of Israel, which out of the same desert and with relatively few natural resources, is second only to the Silicon Valley in high tech development. Israel produces 4000 books a year while Egypt, once the heart of Arab intellect, produces only 375. The hypocrisy of the Arabs becomes obvious as they rage at the treatment of Palestinians in Israel, yet will not welcome them to resettle in any Arab state other than Jordan. For as bad as Israel treats its Palestinian citizens, it still accords them more political rights and dignities than most Arab nations give their own people.

The attempts of Arab states to modernize have been hollow and insignificant. Efforts to buy modernization with oil money by importing Chevrolets, McDonalds, and Hollywood movies may be easy, but they are meaningless without providing for free markets, political parties, accountability, and fair laws. Realizing their failures, the gulf state governments eventually made a deal with their people: we'll bribe you with wealth — provided you let us stay in power. No taxation with no representation became the model for many. The result has been that the Arab societies are open enough to be disrupted by modernization, but not open enough to partake in the benefits. Ironically, the only Middle Eastern organizations to truly take advantage of globalization are the fundamental Muslim terrorist groups. The majority of the population in Arab states is under the age of 25. Young men, often better educated than their parents, leave their villages to find work in Cairo, Beirut, Damascus, or the oil states and discover great disparities of wealth, poor ethics, and are susceptible to fundamental religious influences and anti-American propaganda.

Inevitably, religion and the Mosque have become the only place to discuss politics and dissent against inequity. Radical religious organizations gained the respect of the masses as they began to offer those social services, medical assistance, counseling, and temporary housing that the government failed to provide. Saudi Arabia has epitomized the failure of the Arab states to make social progress (of the 19 hijackers, 15 were Saudi citizens). The government has deflected attention from its poor record at home by funding religious schools (madrasas) and centers that spread rigid, puritanical brands of Islam. Over the past 30 years, Saudi funded schools have turned out tens of thousands of half-educated, fanatical Muslims who view the modern world and non-Muslims with contempt and suspicion. They have encouraged extremists like Osama bin Laden and the state controlled press as they rant lies about America in an effort to avert anger from themselves. The Saudi monarchy has essentially told its subjects to direct anger anywhere

but at the royal family. If there is one great cause of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism it is the total failure of political institutions in the Arab world. Consequently, Islam is being taken over by a poisonous element, people who advocate cruel attitudes toward women, education, the economy, and modern life in general. If Muslims do not take it upon themselves to stop their religion from falling prey to medievalists, nothing any outsider can do will save them.

The next attack can come from so many sources that we cannot possibly prepare for them all. And I for one do not consider minimizing the fallout of a chemical, biological, or nuclear attack to be a success by many measures. Furthermore, preventing attacks and eliminating the hostility that breeds such attacks are two entirely different challenges. Never the less we have no choice but to deal with both.

Militarily we must destroy all known al-Qaeda personnel. Do not bring them to court; do not bring them to their knees. Simply kill them. In order to achieve these objectives now and in the future we must re-tool our military for urban warfare with small, mobile high tech equipped forces, quickly placed in different environments. We must define our foreign policy so that we do not waste our resources in foreign lands unless they clearly serve a strategic purpose. Our defense policy is still to fight two conventional wars on two continents simultaneously and for the last 15 years our threats have been coming from everywhere but there. We need to give the CIA & FBI the proper mission statement, provide them the latitude and secrecy to do their job, rely more heavily on human intelligence, and fire directors that fail to perform (we can start with the current Director of the FBI, Robert Mueller).

Politically we must build our alliances and coalitions with the common goal of eliminating fundamental militant Muslims worldwide. We must improve relations with China and we can make quick progress if we stop forcing our personal values on them; China is after all a sovereign nation. We have to stop treating Russia like an enemy. The cold war is over – we won. We must scrap the ABM defense program and re-allocate that money elsewhere. We must provide economic support to Russia to expedite the destruction of their nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. We must also ensure that Russian scientists find employment in legitimate businesses so that they won't be tempted to work for the Osama bin Ladens and Saddam Husseins of the world. When projecting our power we should disguise our presence in international organizations such as the U.N. and NATO in order to preclude the perspective that America is imposing its ideology. We must defend and support Israel's right to exist but make the clear distinction that we do not support the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. All of this entails a long-term commitment and requires concessions to be made on our part, but to not do so will invite more attacks on Americans.

Culturally the U.S. must help Islam to enter the modern world. We must aid moderate Arab states provided that they embrace modernization. We must persuade Arab moderates to make the case to their people that Islam is compatible with modern society, that it does allow women to work, that it encourages education, and that it should welcome people of other faiths and creeds. The 4 million Muslims of America must be seen in the Arabic media making it clear that America is tolerant of Islam and that freedom and modernity do, in fact, co-exist with Islam. The populations of the Middle East will never believe a Texan, but they will definitely identify with another Muslim. Virtually every Muslim I've ever met, in both the U.S. and Middle East, admits that they grew up misunderstanding America and her citizens. This is partly our fault, but public

relations can repair the damage. Stable political development of the Gulf States is critical to reducing the single greatest security threat to the western world.

Ultimately, our greatest barrier to success may be those Americans who do not understand the depth of the problem or who do not feel directly affected by the attacks. People and organizations that don't appreciate the state of our union. Individuals and organizations who have well intentioned, but misguided, values and would like to see Osama bin Laden offered an OJ type trial and John Walker, the American Taliban, given the rights to a mini-series about his life. What is required of us now is to take the necessary steps to ensure our way of life and very survival, as we know it. To approach what must be done with any other attitude would be to disregard the magnitude of the events of September 11th and act in the isolationist, naïve manner that allowed them to occur. The cold war lasted fifty years. The current challenge handled improperly could last as long.

I often tell people that I respect their differing views simply because they may know something I do not. But, in this case I will not. If you have substantially different views about the enemy, the priority, our foreign policy, or the proper course of action – you're wrong. If you really think you know something I don't, I will sincerely listen. And, if you want more facts, let me know. I have a tremendous amount of information and it required a serious effort to keep this letter as short as I have.

As for us: I'm taking time off work until next spring and Monica's still at HP. Andrew's in 4th grade and pursuing a black belt. We had a baby in February: William Curtis Cottrell, IV. We're consistently "too busy," which seems to be a prerequisite to living in the Bay Area, but always enjoy hearing from our friends and family. Even if it's just to say "hi," get in touch anytime.

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Some of those who lost their lives on September 11th:

Zoe Falkenberg, 8, MD

David Brandhorst, 3, LA

Dana Falkenberg, 3, MD

Christine Hanson, 3, MD

Emerson Glick, 2 months, NJ

Asia Cottom, 11, DC

Rodney Dickens, 11, DC

Some of those who never knew you or me yet gave their lives in a remote land so that we would be safer in this world:

Johnny Michael Spann, 32, AL

Jefferson Donald Davis, 39, TN

Daniel Petithory, 32, MA

Brian Cody Prosser, 28, CA

*Merry Christmas
&
God Bless America
The Cottrell Family*

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." - Wendell Phillips (1811-1884)