

VISIT OF JASWANT SINGH, INDIA'S MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 2, 2001

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to note that Jaswant Singh, who serves as both Minister of External Affairs and Minister of Defense of India, is visiting the United States. He arrived on Sunday, September 30th and will depart on Tuesday, October 2nd.

During Minister Singh's visit, he met with New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to show support to the U.S. in the fight against terrorism on the global level. Minister Singh is also visiting Washington, DC to meet with top officials at the White House, the State Department and the Defense Department, as well as House and Senate leaders.

Minister Singh's visit to the U.S. is symbolic of India's unconditional support for the U.S. This support is based on shared democratic principles and common interests. Additionally, from the very day that the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington occurred, India has come forward in strong support of the United States, offering its unwavering support for the war against terrorism.

India's prompt and bold action in coming forth to stand united with the U.S. stems from the fact that this country has been on the front lines in the fight against international terrorism for the years. Over the past 10 to 15 years, more than 53,000 civilians in India have been killed as a result of cross-border terrorism. These victims have suffered at the hands of many of the same terrorist networks believed to be behind the attack on the U.S.

India continues to be subject to the ravages of cross-border terrorism to this very day. Just yesterday afternoon, Monday, October 1st, a massive explosion near the main entrance of the State Assembly in India's state of Jammu and Kashmir left at least 29 persons dead and 40 injured. In addition, two militants firing from automatics later stormed the heavily-guarded assembly complex. The state assembly was in session when the blast occurred.

Those killed included five policemen, two from the Central Reserve Police Force, a schoolgirl and six state assembly employees. Eyewitnesses said a suicide bomber drove a jeep laden with explosives up to the main entrance of the state assembly and shortly after, the jeep exploded into a massive ball of fire leaving behind a trail of death and destruction. Jaish-e-Mohammad, a Pakistan-based militant group, has claimed responsibility for the blast. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher has condemned the bombing, stating: "I would say, first of all, that we very strongly condemn the attack today in Kashmir, as we have previous attacks. We think that no cause can justify the deliberate targeting of civilians in this manner. We extend our sympathies to the victims of the attack, we extend our condolences to India, a country that's suffered many terrorist attacks over the years. India is a key partner in the global coalition against terrorism, and we do believe that terrorism must be ended everywhere."

In statements from top Government officials, India has expressed its condolences for the

terrible losses, its solidarity with the American people, and its pledge of cooperation with the Administration. We have learned in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, the number of missing Indian nationals and persons of Indian origin is estimated at about 250.

Cooperation between India and the United States, the world's two largest democracies, extends beyond the current international campaign against terrorism, and has been steadily developing for the past few years. During the U.S.-India Summits in New Delhi in March 2000 and Washington in September 2000, the two countries established frameworks for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, preserving stability and growth in the global economy, protecting the environment, combating infectious diseases and expanding trade, especially in emerging knowledge-based industries and high technology areas.

However, at this time of crisis and tragedy for the American people, India has shown itself to be a good friend and a reliable and valued partner. India, with its strategic location and its excellent intelligence data, represents a vital resource and a logical partner for cooperation with the U.S. At this time of crisis, India has been recognized and appreciated in public statements from President Bush, Secretary of State Colin Powell and other top officials in the Administration and the visit to Washington of Minister Singh allows U.S. leaders to demonstrate the importance that the U.S. attaches to our growing relations with India.

**INDIAN GOVERNMENT BARS
VIEWING OF BURNING PUNJAB**

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 2, 2001

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, for quite a while, people interested in South Asian issues have had a valuable resource in the website Burning Punjab, located at <http://www.burningpunjab.com>. This website has reported many stories about the Indian government's tyranny against Sikhs and other minorities. Now the Indian government has banned the viewing of Burning Punjab in the northwest part of India, where Punjab, the Sikh homeland, is. Punjab, of course, declared its independence on October 7, 1987, calling itself Khalistan. The website has been blocked in Punjab and in the state of Haryana, which has a substantial Sikh population, and Delhi.

Suppressing information is not the way that democratic countries do things. This ban shows that India is a deficient democracy. It has about as much freedom of the press as Communist China. Burning Punjab was founded on September 15, 1997. On March 29, 2000, the site's founder, Sukhbir Singh Osan, was reportedly threatened with murder, apparently by the Indian government. Are these the acts of a democracy?

The massive human-rights violations of the Indian government have been well documented. Over 250,000 Sikhs, more than 200,000 Christians, over 75,000 Kashmiri Muslims, and tens of thousands of Dalits and other minorities have been killed by the gov-

ernment. It holds over 52,000 Sikhs and tens of thousands of others as political prisoners with no charges and no trial. Some have been in custody for 17 years. There have been rapes of nuns, murders of priests, the burning death of a Christian missionary, attacks on Christian prayer halls, schools, and churches, on mosques, on the Golden Temple. A group of Indian soldiers were caught trying to burn down a Gurdwara (a Sikh temple) but were stopped by villagers.

Why does a country like that receive U.S. aid? Do we support them so they can suppress the information their citizens need? Do we support them so they can maintain bloody repression against the minorities within their borders? We should stop all aid to India until basic human rights like the free flow of information are allowed for all citizens. Furthermore, we should put this Congress on record in support of self-determination for the people of Khalistan, Kashmir, Nagaland, and the 14 other countries seeking their freedom from India. This should take the form of an internationally-monitored, free and fair plebiscite on the question of independence. That is the democratic way and the way of major world powers. We owe it to the principles that gave birth to America to take these measures to promote the principles of freedom in South Asia and around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to place the article on the banning of Burning Punjab into the RECORD at this time.

[From Burning Punjab News, Sept. 23, 2001]

**VIEWING WEB SITE "BURNING PUNJAB"
BANNED IN NORTH INDIA**

NEW DELHI.—The Indian Intelligence Agencies have banned the viewing of World Wide Web site 'Burning Punjab' (www.burningpunjab.com). The site was not accessible in Punjab, Haryana and Delhi for the past four days. It is reliably learnt that the Research Analysis Wing (RAW) of the Indian Hindu Regime ordered ban. The 'Burning Punjab' has now decided to change its IP identity and servers.

Here it is pertinent to mention that web site 'Burning Punjab' was launched on September 15, 1997 by a Chandigarh based journalist and lawyer, Sukhbir Singh Osan. The staff and manager of the site were threatened number of time by the Indian Police. On 29 March 2000, France based organization Reporters sans Frontiers (RSF) also objected to various restrictions imposed by the Indian Government on the staff and manager of the web site 'Burning Punjab'. RSF General Secretary Robert Menard issued a letter to the Indian authorities opposing unwarranted 'censorship'.

It's worth mentioning that 'Burning Punjab'—www.burningpunjab.com is an endeavor of IHRF. International Human Rights Forum (IHRF) is engaged in propagating the cause of Human Rights worldwide. Organization is taking special care for the welfare of state victims and is lending a helping hand to hapless and helpless to mitigate their sufferings. The activities of the IHRF have been appreciated by one and all irrespective of politico-religious affiliations. During the cult of violence in Punjab, Kashmir, Delhi, Assam, Bengal and elsewhere, the IHRF played a significant role in exposing inhuman & barbaric treatment and excesses committed by the State against the innocent & law abiding citizens.

About web site Burning Punjab: Burning Punjab is Punjab's first ever media site on Sikh Holocaust. It deals with the situation in East Punjab. Site contains news & views,

political scenario, human rights values and holocaust of Sikhs. Sukhbir Singh Osan has created site. S.S.Osan is a Law Graduate from Punjab University, Chandigarh. He is a prolific writer and a born journalist. The International Human Rights Forum is operating this site.

GOOD GOVERNMENT

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 2, 2001

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring this great chamber's attention to another sermon I recently heard. People across the United States of America are still trying to figure out why these men carried out their terrorist attacks on September 11th. I believe this sermon may help those people deal with this tragedy. I recommend everyone to take a moment and read the sermon below.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to place a copy of this sermon into the RECORD.

“PAUL’S ADVICE”

(By Pastor Carol Custead, Zion Lutheran Church, Hollidaysburg, PA)

I can't imagine a more well timed lesson for this week than this second lesson which was appointed for the 16th Sunday after Pentecost, from St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy. Here we find scriptural affirmation of what I said last Sunday was Luther's understanding of the role of government in this world—"It is the God-given vocation of good government to maintain order, peace, and safety so that civilization can function."

We also find here a scriptural calling, issued by St. Paul, to prayer for our governmental leaders—something that we have seen much of in these last twelve days. People all over our nation & all over the world, of varying religions, have been flocking into churches, synagogues and mosques to pray—and especially to pray for God to guide the leaders of the nations in wisdom and discernment in this time of crisis following the terrorist attacks on September 11.

So let's start this morning by having a look at this scriptural passage. Here in 1 Timothy, Paul commends intercessory prayers for everyone, but most especially for "kings and all who are in high positions". Why does he single them out? It is "so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity," St. Paul explains. In his context, we might expect that Paul is trying, by using these words, to assure the civil authorities that the Christian movement does not subvert or cause trouble for civic stability. Roman officials worried about that, especially since it became clear that the Christian movement was no longer a sect within Judaism, and that some Christians were refusing to sign the annual loyalty oath affirming the divinity of the Roman Emperor.

But there is more reassurance in these words of Paul—reassurance which pertains to our world situation today. As biblical commentators have frequently attested, across the centuries, the Christian movement, except in its most radical fanatic fringe branches, values a stable political

order where justice is enforced, and injustice is appropriately restrained—a political order where people can expect to lead a quiet and peaceful life.

Moreover, when the stability of political order is threatened, Christians must participate in efforts to regain that stability. Otherwise we are left in a Darwinian jungle where the survival of the fittest is the rule, and that means sheer power with both the threat and practice of violence. Therefore, Paul's advice about intercessory prayer for those in authority is more than a formality. It is a persistent reminder in our liturgies and life of prayer that a just political order is a necessity if individual rights are to be secured and opportunities for fulfillment accessible to all.

In a society that has been increasingly cynical about government, about all institutions and people in authority, where professional wrestlers or entertainers are excessively admired and voted into office because they are not politicians, it is especially important for churches and individual Christians to keep up a lively intercessory prayer life for those who hold political positions of authority. It will not only keep us a bit less tainted by that cynicism; it might also lead us into greater participation in public life. It is also the case that when we pray for everyone, especially those in authority, our lives become more quiet and peaceable not just because the effect of our prayer is that the state will be governed in greater justice, but also because we will be more quiet and peaceable in spirit if we have prayed truly. As we have so greatly seen these past twelve days, intercessory prayer has that effect. It calms us down. It delivers us from the agitation of not being able to control events. It enables us to live and act with the conviction that this is God's world, to be guided according to God's purpose, not according to our own purposes. To pray with all our might, and to trust—that is the good advice we have from Paul.

We have seen all of this at work in recent days. Never before in recent history have those in high positions asked us to pray so straightforwardly. We have seen how prayer can also be a unifying force in our nation and world. It has united Christians in an unprecedented way. Last Sunday evening we hosted a community-wide Prayer Service here at Zion. Approximately 320 people were packed tightly into these pews—people from many different congregations. There were Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Baptists, United Church of Christ, Methodist, and of course, Lutherans. It was a feeling of great comfort to know that in such a time of crisis we can come together in unity of purpose in prayer, for it is the same God that we pray to.

It is also an amazing feeling to know that people all over the world are praying for America in this time of great need—to see that also Jews and Muslims are praying the same prayers we are praying. While they do not pray in Jesus' name as we do, it is still the same God to whom they pray. These three great monotheistic religions have come together in unity of purpose in an unprecedented way. The terrorist actions of a fanatic fringe group of Muslims have been the shame of so many Muslims worldwide. We should remember that we also have been shamed in the past by our own fanatic fringe groups such as the incident in Waco, Texas

and mass suicide of Jim Jones and his followers. Therefore we can treat our good Muslim brothers and sisters with grace and we can pray with them and for them. We can pray with them for deliverance from the threat of militant Muslims, that those who have used violence as a means to grasp control in places such as Afghanistan might amend their ways or be ousted from their tyranny and murderous fanaticism.

When we pray we dare not do so with an attitude that God is on our side as the fanatics have done. How presumptuous! Rather, let us pray that we may be given the wisdom and strength and insight to discern God's way in all that lies before us so that we may properly be on God's side in His ongoing war on evil.

And when we pray, "God bless America" we dare not do so with an attitude of superiority to other nations of this world. For we believe that God does bless America—indeed that is our annual theme in this Harvest Home celebration. But that does not mean that God does not bless other nations and peoples also. As we pray for God to bless America today in this crisis let us remember that good people all around the world join us in that prayer.

When we pray we dare not forget Jesus' teaching to pray for our enemies. Perhaps that is most difficult in this crisis. But this prayer is so important because it helps us to keep our focus and perspective. As President Bush said in his speech Thursday night, our enemy is not Islam. Our enemy is not the Arabs. It is not even the majority of Afghan people. But our enemy is all those, wherever and whoever they are throughout this world, who would inflict terror and violence on innocent people. To pray for these enemies means neither to cover up the conflict we have with them nor to downplay its enormous seriousness, but rather to endure the tension of our conflict with them without succumbing to their level of hatred—indeed without succumbing to hatred at all. We do not need to hate the person but only the terrible evil acts that they commit. To pray for one's enemy in this way means that despite our conflict with them we recognize this enemy as a creature of God who has had a right to live—but not the right to commit an unjust act! So we earnestly pray for them to turn from their evil ways for the sake of the whole civilized world. Our purpose, then, for bringing them to justice, is not for the sake of vengeance, but for the sake of restoring order to our world so that people everywhere may once again expect to live in peace, quiet, safety and dignity.

Finally, when we pray for our President, our government leaders, our military personnel—and those of all the nations who join us in our cause in this time of crisis, we ask God to give them insight, wisdom, and guidance in all that lies before them—in each decision they will need to make—especially the difficult ones where the lives of poor, innocent people may be at stake. While it is inevitable that in our efforts to root out terrorism from this world some innocent people will likely be harmed, let us pray that that number be minimal and that the actions we must take will be effective in meeting the overall strategic goal. In the words of President Bush, "In all that lies before us, may God grant us wisdom, and may God watch over [us]." Amen.