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*Freedom Rider  
Bin Laden's Wasted Warning  
by Margaret Kimberley*

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The most recent message from Osama bin Laden spoke directly to us, the American people. Most Americans either hate or fear bin Laden and with good reason. Like all New Yorkers, I take a very personal interest when bin Laden issues a threat. I think the next attack may have my name on it. Even if fate spares me, I dread living through a repeat of September 11, 2001.

I have another reason for being interested. If Osama is trying to kill me and my fellow citizens, I would like to know why. Few people share my feelings of curiosity. Because we have a primal urge to stay alive, other concerns take a back seat.

America has a very difficult task ahead. We must listen to bin Laden, partly because we want to live, but also to answer that often asked question: Why do they hate us? A combination of factors prevents most Americans from ever getting a straight answer.

Bin Laden's latest message went out to a nation that is overwhelmingly deaf and blind. It is not altogether the fault of individuals. We are encouraged to be stupid. The corporate media is just that, corporate. It has been a long time since they were interested in telling their readers, viewers, and listeners anything resembling the truth.

With the help of the media, the Bush administration managed to avoid all blame and responsibility for the attacks of September 11th that took place on their watch. If a Democrat had been president on that day Republicans would not have pretended to be supportive. They would have issued calls for impeachment and the media would have joined in the witch hunt.

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The co-opted press are in the process of helping the Bushmen wage a new war. We are on the verge of attacking Iran, a nation that has not and cannot harm us, because Israel and its American right wing allies demand it.

Israel is already a nuclear power, a fact that is rarely mentioned in the media. Despite the recent comments of Iran's president, it is Israel that has the power to wipe Iran off the map, not the other way around.

The wimpy opposition, the Democrats, and the press are of no use at this moment in history. Other institutions are also afflicted with co-opted and complicit leadership.

Preachers say nothing about the thousands of people killed by the U.S. military. They reserve their outrage for movies that depict gay cowboys or boy wizards. Instead of stepping up to the empire they wait in line for a Faith Based Initiative hand out. Speaking truth to the powerful is not on their agenda.

Millions of Americans truly believe they live in the greatest country in the world. They don't just believe it is the most powerful or the richest, they believe it is the best and most moral. You can't listen to criticism if you think there is nothing to criticize.

The press, the clergy and political leadership should help us understand humanity in every part of the world. Instead they make us more ignorant. As a result, Americans are living in a bubble that grows thicker and more obscure by the day. It would be difficult for even the most enlightened nation to listen to the man who killed 3,000 of their fellow citizens. It is impossible for most Americans.

In his latest message Bin Laden did more than taunt us and tell us we are all sitting ducks. He makes simple and reasonable requests of our country. Get the U.S. military out of the Arab and Muslim world, stop torture in Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib and stop killing his people.

It is wrong for America to occupy Iraq. It was wrong to kill the citizens of Afghanistan because it was Osama's hideout and it isn't wrong to say so just because Osama bin Laden says the same thing.

It was wrong to kill in New York and Washington on 9/11, but it was also wrong to kill in Fallujah. Dead is dead. Death is no better or worse in one part of the world than it is in another. My life is not more valuable than an Iraqi's. That is why I ask my leaders to stop killing Osama's people. That is the message Americans need to hear.

If self preservation is a motivator, then Osama's words should be taken seriously.

"On the other hand, the mujahideen, praise be to God, have managed to breach all the security measures adopted by the unjust nations of the coalition time and again.

"The evidence of this is the bombings you have seen in the capitals of the most important European countries of this aggressive coalition.

"As for the delay in carrying out similar operations in America, this was not due to failure to breach your security measures.

"Operations are under preparation, and you will see them on your own ground once they are finished, God willing."

The book *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Super Power* shot to the top of bestseller lists after the Osama book club endorsement. It is proof that there are Americans who want to know how the rest of the

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world sees our country. It is tragic that they will have no one to turn to when bin Laden carries out "similar operations in America" in the future.

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