



Terrorism

“Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists”

George Bush, 21 September 2001 ¹

Background Information:

Since September 11th 2001 the ‘war on terror’ has dominated international news and influenced foreign policy including the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Many European countries have been affected by the ‘war on terror’ and the culture of fear that has grown up as a result of it. The Quaker Peace Testimony sets out our commitment to a peaceful world. In light of the change in the US administration and the upcoming European Parliament elections, what can Friends do to ensure terrorism is addressed in a way that prioritises peace?

QCEA’s view on Effective Counter-Terrorism:

QCEA’s report on counter terrorism suggests that a debate around the definition of terrorism is needed to ensure greater emphasis is placed on human rights, common humanity and civil liberties. The culture of fear that has developed needs to be scrutinised. Fears must be understood and engaged with if we are to understand what is behind them. An awareness of how the language of fear can be used politically and threats understood disproportionately is also important.

Current approaches to counter terrorism not only reinforce a culture of fear, but they are also ineffective. Aggressive counter-insurgency, invasions and attacks on Islamic nations and the use of ‘extraordinary rendition’ have not only marginalised Muslims but may also have strengthened extremism and terrorism. Too much emphasis has been placed on traditional counter-terrorism. Addressing the reasons that people turn to militancy is a more effective method of tackling terrorism.

QCEA Publications

- ‘Effective Counter-Terrorism - A Critical Assessment of the European Union responses’
<http://www.quaker.org/qcea/peace.htm#terrorism>
- QCEA Briefing papers on Terrorism <http://www.quaker.org/qcea/briefings/terrorism/terrorismbp11.pdf>

¹ ‘Blair pledges solidarity with US’, *BBC News*, 21 Sept 2001,
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/1555590.stm, accessed 09/02/09

QCEA recommendations to the European Parliament

The European Parliament is only consulted and informed on EU counter-terrorism policies, all decisions are made by the Council of the EU (made up of governments of the Member States). The European Parliament can, however, table questions to the Council of the EU and make recommendations. A strong message from the European Parliament can therefore have an impact on counter-terrorism and its implementation.

1. The EU's Counter-Terrorism strategy is built around four strands of work: 'prevent, protect, pursue and respond' but in EU implementation pursuit of terrorists has been prioritised over prevention of terrorism. In January 2009 the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Mr Gilles de Kerchove, reported to the European Parliament that 'much remains to be done...The aim is to stop people turning to terrorism by tackling the factors which radicalise them and lead them to resort to violence.'² QCEA welcomes this statement but calls on the European Parliament to monitor the European Council, Commission and Member States to ensure that *prevention* of terrorism is part of the *implementation* of the counter-terrorism strategy.

Questions for MEP candidates:

- How will you work towards ensuring that the EU counter-terrorism strategy includes work on the prevention and root causes of terrorism?
 - How will you monitor the implementation of this at an EU level and within your Nation State?
2. Extraordinary rendition involves terrorist suspects being abducted and transferred between countries for interrogation, allegedly including torture, without any judicial or administrative process³. In 2007 the European Parliament condemned the CIA's use of Extraordinary Rendition and the complicity of 14 EU Member States. Despite President Obama's promises to dismantle the 'war on terror' apparatus, it appears that he has allowed the CIA to maintain its authority to carry out renditions⁴. QCEA calls on the European Parliament to reaffirm that rendition and diplomatic assurances are unacceptable. The European Parliament should put pressure on the European Council and Member state governments to do the same.

Questions for MEP candidate:

- How will you work to ensure that extraordinary rendition is condemned by the European Parliament and the whole of the EU?
- How will you put pressure on your national government to outlaw rendition and diplomatic assurances?

² Mr Giles de Kerchove, 'Three questions to the new EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator' in 'Subcommittee on Security and Defense - Meeting Thursday 29th January 2009'

³ "'Rendition' and secret detention', *Amnesty International UK*, 25th March 2008

<http://www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=10563&ArticleID=2633>, accessed 09/02/09

⁴ 'Barak Obama grants CIA permission to retain right to carry out rendition', *The Times*, 2nd February 2009,

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article5636297.ece, accessed 09/02/09