

**PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY SENIOR SAUDI OFFICIALS AND
RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS CONDEMNING EXTREMISM AND
PROMOTING MODERATION**

April 2007

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia condemns all forms of extremism. Islam is a religion of peace, understanding and tolerance, not violence or hatred. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia strongly believes that those who resort to violence and extremism in the name of religion are deviants and criminals. Following are some of the public statements made by leading officials and religious scholars in this regard.

Comment by the Council of Ministers during a Cabinet meeting, Saudi Press Agency (SPA), April 9, 2007:

“The media and cultural agencies must do more in confronting the phenomenon of terrorism, by rooting out terrorist ideology and addressing social and international factors that promote terrorism.”

Excerpt from the final statement issued by the Arab leaders attending the 19th Summit of the League of Arab States in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, March 29, 2007:

“We therefore decide: ...To spread the culture of moderation, tolerance, dialogue, and openness; to reject all forms of terrorism and extremism, as well as all exclusionary racist trends, hatred campaigns and endeavors.”

Prince Turki Al-Faisal, Saudi Ambassador to the United States, Princeton University in New Jersey, December 7, 2006:

“...intolerance, violence and extremism are not a part of our Islamic faith or Saudi culture, and heritage and traditions. There is no place for intolerance in a world where cooperation is the only key to success.”

Statement of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the 61st Session of the United Nations General Debate, delivered by Ambassador Fawzi Shobokshi on behalf of Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Saud Al-Faisal in New York, September 22, 2006:

“The phenomenon of global terrorism is a threat to us all ... Achieving decisive victory against terrorism requires not only denying terrorists all financial support, but also addressing the origins of extremist thought and the environment in which they prosper.”

Prince Khaled Al-Faisal, Governor of Asir, Arab News, June 12, 2006:

“You should try to spread love, peace and patriotism among the people and encourage them to participate in the development process and protect the country’s security and stability.”

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, address to the Shura Council, Saudi Arabia, April 1, 2006:

“Development can only be achieved in a climate of security and safety. So, we reiterate our resolve to annihilate the deviant group of murderous terrorists and fight the deviant thought with a sound one ... There is no room in the country of the Two Holy Mosques for extremism.”

Prince Turki Al-Faisal, Land Forces Symposium in Atlanta, Georgia, February 28, 2006:

“ ... Victory [in the war on terrorism] also depends on eliminating the mentality of extremism and violence that perverts religion; on raising the level of global consciousness about different faiths and cultures; and on solving the political problems that enflame passions.”

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Organization of the Islamic Conference summit in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, December 7, 2005:

“Fanaticism and extremism cannot grow on an earth whose soil is embedded in the spirit of tolerance, moderation, and balance ... I also look forward to the spread of moderation that embodies the Islamic concept of tolerance.”

Prince Turki Al-Faisal, Middle East Institute’s 59th annual conference, November 8, 2005:

“They [terrorists] wrongly attempt to use Islam to bolster and proselytize their extremism. They wrongly pervert Islamic texts in order to support their political agendas. They wrongly issue politically motivated fatwas permitting suicide bombings and the taking of innocent lives. They are totally and utterly wrong and they are absolutely in violation of the basic teachings of Islam. This is not Islam and these acts are absolutely not the work of God.”

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, ABC, “Nightline,” October 14, 2005:

“ ...we will fight the terrorists and those who support them or condone their actions for 10, 20 or 30 years if we have to until we eliminate this scourge... We are fighting terrorism and extremism in our midst... We have also regulated our charities and we have closed offices around the world, and we have withdrawn support for institutions that we found to be extremist.”

Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, Minister of Interior, Arab News, July 25, 2005:

“We are now looking forward as an Arab and Islamic world to think and unite in fighting terrorism. These terrorist activities are targeting Islam and peace between people and countries of the world. If we do not move together, then terrorism will continue.”

Prince Turki Al-Faisal, Saudi Ambassador to the United Kingdom and Ireland and Ambassador Designate to the United States, CNN, “Late Edition,” July 24, 2005:

“ ... Islam is a religion of peace and harmony, and understanding, and, therefore, if there is anybody who is misusing Islam for any purpose whatsoever, we cannot accept that. And we do not accept that.”

Shaikh Abdulaziz Bin Abdullah Al-Ashaikh, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Council of Senior *Ulema* [religious scholars], in a statement issued following the terrorist attacks in London, July 8, 2005:

“Killing and terrorizing innocent people and the destruction of property are not condoned by Islam. Attributing all these horrific incidents to Islam is unjust. Muslims should tell the truth and unveil falseness, and inform all people that Islam is a religion of righteousness, betterment and progress ... The unjust killing of a human being in Islam is forbidden.”

Prince Bandar bin Sultan, Saudi Ambassador to the United States, in a statement issued following the terrorist attacks in London, July 7, 2005:

“As victims of terrorism, the people of Saudi Arabia express their deepest sympathies to the families of the victims, as well the British people and government, and pray to Almighty God to bring those who carried out this barbaric act to justice.”

Prince Turki Al-Faisal, in a statement issued following the terrorist attacks in London, July 7, 2005:

“In Saudi Arabia we have suffered at the hands of terrorists and we stand by the UK in every effort to bring the perpetrators of terrorism to justice. Saudi Arabia has always and continues to condemn all terrorism wherever it may be and whatever its cause.”

Shaikh Saleh Al-Luheidan, Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council, SPA, May 2, 2005:

“Shedding the blood of the innocents is prohibited everywhere, and whoever does not believe in its prohibition is a sacrilegious deviant.”

SPA, April 12, 2005:

Addressing the opening of the first year of the Shura Council's fourth four-year term, King Fahd ... reminded his audience that Islam is a religion that encourages benevolence and rejects evil; calls for peaceful co-existence among nations and civilizations; and prohibits aggression and corruption. Vowing that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will never allow the deviant group to destabilize the country, he declared that in Islam there is no room for violence, extremism, fanaticism, oppression, or terrorism; or for assault against people or confiscation of the property of others. The Saudi authorities, he said, are sparing no effort to confront all forms of terrorism, and pointed out that the Kingdom has been carrying out a fierce fight against terrorism within its borders, and is committed to the relevant resolutions of the United Nations in combating the phenomenon.

Adel Al-Jubeir, Foreign Affairs Advisor to Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard, Speech, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, March 7, 2005:

“ ... Saudi Arabia has taken steps to combat the mindset that instills and justifies acts of terror, hatred and violence. Islam is a religion of peace, benevolence and tolerance, and we will not allow deviants to corrupt our faith. ...

“ ... violence and extremism are not part of our Islamic faith or Saudi culture or traditions.”

Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Counter-Terrorism International Conference, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, February 5, 2005:

“The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was one of the first countries to suffer from terrorism and warn of its dangers. It has dealt with it vigilantly on the local, regional and international levels. We are fighting terrorism, those who support it and those who condone it. We will continue to do so until we eliminate, with the help of God, this evil...It is our hope that this conference will usher in a new era of international cooperation in the war against terrorism that will enable us to rid our world of this threat.”

Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, Counter-Terrorism International Conference, February 5, 2005:

“In fact, terrorism is not just an act, but the product of an aberrant ideology that must be fought. That is why the onus of the responsibility lies with all societies, with all their institutions, to confront and combat terrorism since, just as the security institutions have their obligations, cultural - academic, mass media, and educational - institutions have a great responsibility to inculcate the right ideals and sound human values and to immunize societies against any delinquent ideas or evil deeds.”

SPA, February 4, 2005:

On the eve of the Counter-Terrorism International Conference that opens tomorrow in Riyadh, the Kingdom’s Grand Mufti Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh has issued a statement condemning the “ugly acts of terrorism” and declaring that they must be confronted at all levels. In this context, he cited several verses of the Holy Qur’an and elaborated on sayings of the Prophet. The malicious acts of the terrorists, he said, include killing non-Muslims who are living in the Kingdom, accusing Muslims of being “infidels”, and calling for them to be attacked. Such ugly crimes are in contravention of Islam. All Muslims should therefore cooperate to eradicate extremism and make young people aware of its dangers.

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Abdullah, excerpt from address to Hajj pilgrims, January 21, 2005:

“The world has witnessed acts of terrorism that aim at undermining the pillars of stability and security as well as intimidating innocent people. Unfortunately these acts have been perpetrated by people who claim they belong to Islam. We would like to make it clear that these terrorist acts in fact run counter to the teachings of Islam, and have been carried out by individuals whose ideas are deviant. Terrorism leads to corruption on earth and to destruction; the Kingdom has therefore been confronting it in its various forms, and working to uproot it, refuting the deviant ideas believed in by terrorists, and clarifying Islam’s position on terrorism.

“Saudi Arabia has called on all peace-loving countries to work together to combat the phenomenon of terrorism through a comprehensive plan based on the United Nations. It is essential to cooperate in the fight against terrorism. No country in the world should ever provide shelter to terrorists, nor should any country ever enable them to practice their subversive acts from its territory. In line with this policy, the Kingdom has called for an international conference on combating terrorism to be convened in Riyadh on February 5, 2005.”

Shaikh Abdulrahman Al-Sudais, imam at the Grand Mosque in Makkah, Arab News, January 21, 2005:

“Islam is a religion of moderation. There is no room for extremism in Islam ... Islam is a religion of peace that abhors attacks on innocent people.”

SPA, December 31, 2004:

At a Friday sermon in the Grand Mosque in Makkah, Shaikh Abdulrahman Al-Sudais said Saudi Arabia has no place for terrorists and criminals and condemned those who kill innocent people.

SPA, December 8, 2004:

The Kingdom's Grand Mufti Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, in a statement published today in *Al-Madinah* newspaper, condemned and deplored Monday's act of terrorism that targeted the U.S. consulate in Jeddah. Attacking a building, he said, and throwing explosives, killing innocent people, frightening the populace, and undermining the stability of society, run counter to the teachings of Islam. No Muslim scholar, he reiterated, has ever approved such shameful and criminal acts. He moreover affirmed the right of all those who have legally entered the Kingdom with the permission of its rulers, to live in a secure and peaceful environment.

SPA, July 10, 2004:

In his sermon at the Grand Mosque in Makkah yesterday, Imam Shaikh Saud Al-Sheraim called on members of the deviant group to surrender under a month-long amnesty announced by the government in late June, affirming the sincerity of the Saudi authorities in forgiving those who voluntarily surrender. Repentance, he said, is a praiseworthy Islamic principle, and urged all those who have deviated from the right path to return to the fold. He went on to stress the need for Muslims to seek advice in searching for the truth, and to embrace cooperation and reconciliation. The killing and terrorizing of the innocent that is taking place in Muslim countries, he stated, is something evil and a sign of great danger, saying: "Such acts must never be ignored or justified but confronted and stopped by all available means."

King Fahd, addressing the Shura Council, June 20, 2004:

"We will not allow a wicked group driven by a deviant ideology to destabilize the Kingdom's security."

SPA, June 19, 2004:

Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz today received citizens expressing condemnation of terrorist acts. Crown Prince Abdullah, thanking them for their stance, urged all citizens to report abnormal behavior to the security authorities. He confirmed that leaders of the deviant group had been killed, and called on others involved to turn themselves in before they are annihilated, declaring that they are followers of Satan and enemies of religion and their country.

SPA, June 18, 2004:

Shaikh Dr. Salih bin Abdullah bin Humaid, imam at the Grand Mosque in Makkah, spoke out against terrorism at Friday prayer today, reiterating that any terrorist act is criminal and contrary to religion. The recent criminal acts in the Kingdom, he said, have targeted Muslims who thought themselves safe as well as non-Muslims, who are under protection through agreements with Muslims. The perpetrators of these acts, members of a deviant group, have killed and intimidated people, destroyed property, and wreaked havoc on earth; and therefore they will surely be punished in hell in the hereafter.

Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, June 15, 2004:

Both abroad and at home, Saudi religious scholars are condemning acts of terrorism and promoting the Islamic principles of peace and tolerance.

At an Embassy press conference in London, U.K., Minister of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Call and Guidance Shaikh Salih bin Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh stated that Saudi Arabia has achieved a great deal of success in combating terrorism, with many perpetrators killed or arrested. The Kingdom, he said, enjoys political, economic and social stability in spite of the terrorist incidents that have recently occurred. Islam, he reiterated, is a religion of love and tolerance that calls for dialogue with others.

Shaikh Abdulrahman Al-Sudais, one of the imams at the Grand Mosque in Makkah, led Friday prayers on June 11 with over 55,000 worshippers gathered in and around the East London Mosque. Calling for interfaith peace and harmony, he urged Muslims to be united in setting an example of "the true image of Islam" in their interactions with other communities. "The history of Islam," he declared, "is the best testament to how different communities can live together in peace and harmony."

In Saudi Arabia, a number of well-known Muslim scholars issued a statement on June 13 strongly condemning the recent incidents that led to the killing of people and the damaging of property as outrageous crimes forbidden by the Islamic religion.

According to Ambassador to the United States Prince Bandar bin Sultan: "Senior religious scholars in Saudi Arabia have continually and unequivocally condemned terrorism. In our war against terrorism, these condemnations are a powerful weapon."

SPA, April 26, 2004:

The Council of Call and Guidance, in its meeting yesterday, condemned the explosion [at the General Department of Traffic in Riyadh on April 21, 2004], and urged confrontation of the deviant ideas that lead to such criminal acts. The Council, which comprises representatives from various areas of jurisprudence including the Islamic Affairs Ministry, the Presidency of the Two Holy Mosques, and the Islamic universities, called for fortifying young people against destructive ideas that run counter to the teachings of Islam.

SPA, April 22, 2004, the day after a suicide bombing in Riyadh:

Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz paid a visit yesterday to some of those injured in the blast, and reiterated that such acts of terrorism do not have anything to do with Islam, and appealed to those who are contemplating them to come to their senses and surrender, because they will be caught, and the resolve of the security forces has only deepened...

[Meanwhile] Saudi Arabia's Grand Mufti Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh issued a statement today citing verses from the Holy Qur'an and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad that clearly stipulate such an act as "forbidden and highly sinful." He also declared that it is forbidden to cover up such acts, or to express justification for them, and whoever does so, is an accomplice to the crime.

King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah, excerpt from address to Hajj pilgrims, February 2, 2004:

"The entire world, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has been harmed by many acts of terror intended to undermine stability, and spread fear and evil. Some of these events have been perpetrated by individuals unfortunately claiming to be Muslims. It is necessary to clarify the position of Islam concerning these events and their perpetrators. These acts, and those who carry

them out, are deviant. It is important to oppose them. These acts are a function of false ideas, contrived by individuals who have strayed from the truth, and contradict the teachings of religion.

"The Kingdom opposes all forms of terrorism, and is fighting it locally and condemning it internationally, and is working to uproot it and expose its negative impact on society.

"The Kingdom urges the international community to vigorously confront the menace of terrorism, and supports all peace-loving countries in fighting and uprooting it. A comprehensive plan for combating terrorism by all countries must be implemented so that terrorists will not be allowed to conduct their subversive activities from any territory.

"Islam is a noble faith. It does not tolerate hatred and malice."

Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, February 2, 2004:

Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Council of Senior Religious Scholars, delivered the sermon to almost two million pilgrims at the peak of the Hajj. As Saudi Arabia's highest religious authority, he used this important occasion to denounce terrorism and those who perpetrate it in the name of religion.

During his sermon he highlighted the importance of educating others about Islam, so that terrorists will not be able to claim that their reprehensible actions have anything to do with the true faith: "You must know Islam's firm position against all these terrible crimes. The world must know that Islam is a religion of peace and mercy and goodness; it is a religion of justice and guidance ... Islam has forbidden violence in all its forms. It forbids the hijacking airplanes, ships and other means of transport, and it forbids all acts that undermine the security of the innocent."

Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, January 28, 2004:

Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, Saudi Arabia's Grand Mufti and Chairman of the Council of Senior Religious Scholars, reaffirmed that Islam does not tolerate bloodshed and absolutely prohibits acts of terrorism against Muslims and non-Muslims.

During a lecture in Makkah, Shaikh Al-Ashaikh warned his listeners of the destabilizing effect that terrorism can have on society. Acknowledging that terrorism results from deviant ideas, Shaikh Al-Ashaikh emphasized the importance of educating and protecting the younger generation from such misguided thoughts. He remarked that terrorism is an aberration in a country like the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, because the country lives under Islamic law which forbids violence and terrorism. Shaikh Al-Ashaikh added: "The terror acts which earlier took place in Makkah, Madinah and Riyadh run counter to the teachings of Islam."

Shaikh Al-Ashaikh has always taken a strong stand against extremism, warning Muslims that extremism and fanaticism lead only to violence and the death of innocent people. "Islam is not a religion of violence. It is a religion of mercy for everyone," stated Shaikh Al-Ashaikh.

SPA, January 27, 2004:

In a lecture he gave yesterday in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's Grand Mufti Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh reiterated his condemnation of terrorism, declaring that Islam does not tolerate the shedding of blood and absolutely prohibits random killing of people, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. The terrorist acts that have taken place in Makkah and Madinah as well as Riyadh, he said, are contrary to the teachings of Islam, and can only have an adverse impact on society. He repeated that Islam repudiates terrorism, which is, he said, an alien phenomenon in a country like Saudi Arabia that unwaveringly implements Shariah [Islamic Law]. Terrorism, he declared, is a

result of deviant ideas that destabilize society, and called for enlightenment of young people to protect them from such deviant ideas.

Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, January 8, 2004:

The King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue recently concluded its Second National Forum for Intellectual Dialogue. The forum was entitled "Extremism and Moderation: A Comprehensive Approach." Some 60 participants, both men and women, discussed fifteen academic papers prepared by researchers on topics such as "Characteristics of the Extremist Personality" and "The Relationship Between Ruler and Ruled, Rights and Duties of Citizens and Their Relationship with Extremism."

Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard Crown Prince Abdullah emphasized the importance of dialogue when he stated: "I have no doubt that the establishment of the Center and the continuation of dialogue within its boundaries will become a historic achievement that contributes to the creation of a channel for objective expression that would have an effective impact in combating extremism and fostering a pure atmosphere that could give birth to wise positions and illuminating ideas that reject terrorism and terrorist thought."

Following the event, Crown Prince Abdullah hosted a reception on January 3 in honor of the participants, where he stressed the importance of tolerance and moderation in both public and private lives, stating: "Islam advocates moderation." Crown Prince Abdullah has repeatedly emphasized the need to address the underlying causes of terrorism. He has stated: "The bullets that kill women and children, terrorize those secure in their safety, and destroy innocent communities, come not only from rifles, but from deviant thoughts and misguided interpretations of our great religion and its noble message." One of the goals of the Kingdom's initiative to promote open dialogue and national debate is the ultimate rejection of extremist ideology.

Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, November 25, 2003:

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard, in a joint statement issued today, congratulated Muslims on the occasion of the blessed Eid Al-Fitr, and called upon them to "work for the stability and security of Islamic countries and the whole world and overcome the obstacles to world peace."

King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah said that the recent bombings in Riyadh had nothing to do with Islam and that Muslims should "work together to combat the roots of extremism." In their message, they stated: "We must intensify our efforts and stand united to rectify defects and distortions, correct erroneous understanding and lead delinquents to the right path." King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah also said that "a true Muslim does not spread corruption nor does he seek destruction," and urged Muslims to follow the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who was an example of tolerance and mercy.

Arab News, November 8, 2003:

Shaikh Abdulrahman Al-Sudais, the imam of the Grand Mosque in Makkah, yesterday denounced plans by militants to destabilize the Kingdom and undermine its security. ...

"They have violated the sanctity of time and place and committed terrorism, violence, bombings, crime and corruption," the Makkah imam said while delivering his Friday sermon. ...

In his sermon, Shaikh Al-Sudais advised the faithful to make use of Ramadan to win God's forgiveness and mercy. He stressed the need to teach moderation to the youth. "This is the joint duty of mosque, family, school, university and the media," he explained.

Excerpts from Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, August 30, 2003:

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd bin Abdulaziz, in a message to the nineteenth session of the World Supreme Council for Mosques August 30, emphasized the important mission of the mosque in Islam, which is to promote peace, tolerance, moderation and wisdom. King Fahd added that fulfillment of this mission will help show the youth the correct path of Islam, distancing them from grievance, aggression and evil.

King Fahd condemned all forms of terrorism and warned that terror networks were using misguided Muslim youths to further their cause. King Fahd added: "By playing into the hands of terror networks, these youths have tarnished the image of Islam and Muslims."

Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, August 21, 2003:

Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Council of Senior *Ulema* [religious scholars], issued a statement today warning Muslims that extremism and fanaticism lead only to violence and the death of innocent people. Shaikh Al-Ashaikh emphasized that "Muslims must understand that the path of reform never comes through violence. Islam is not a religion of violence. It is a religion of mercy for everyone."

Shaikh Al-Ashaikh stated: "One of the fall-outs from extremism in understanding Islam is that some people call for jihad for the sake of God without justification... These people, who call for jihad, want to raise the banner of jihad to draw the youth into their ranks, and not to fight for the Almighty God."

Saudi Arabia's religious leaders have repeatedly and unequivocally condemned terrorism in all its forms. Following the Riyadh bombings on May 12, Shaikh Al-Ashaikh stated: "Terrorism has nothing to do with Islam... Islam should not be blamed for the acts of other people. People should be held responsible individually for their own acts."

Crown Prince Abdullah, Arab News, July 22, 2003:

"These misguided groups, whose members' minds have been possessed by the devil, will be punished and defeated, God willing, along with those who support them", he said.

Arab News, July 1, 2003:

Crown Prince Abdullah ... yesterday said Saudi citizens faced a huge responsibility to work together to stem terrorism, adding that the threat of extremist thought and ideology must be firmly resisted. "Our youth must be inoculated against alien ideas. Families, schools and mosques as well as the country's ulema and intellectuals and the media and every sincere person must contribute to this effort in order to expose alien thoughts and show the truth," Prince Abdullah told the weekly Cabinet session.

King Fahd, addressing the Shura Council, May 17, 2003:

“The people of Saudi Arabia oppose all forms of terrorism, and will never allow any faction of deviant terrorists to harm the country and undermine the safety of its citizens and residents. We will not allow any deviant ideology that encourages and feeds terrorism. This nation is determined to eradicate all forms of terrorism. ...

“It is the responsibility of our religious leaders to save our youth from the evil of destructive thoughts that propagate extremism and hatred and only result in devastation and ruin.

“No one can ignore the seriousness of our move toward reform. And I say to every citizen that each one of us has a role and a responsibility in this endeavor. I say to each government official that public service is an honor, which has obligations to the public good, but does not convey any special privileges. I say to every businessman that our economy is not just a source of capital and profit, but it is an investment in national security and safety. I say to every woman that this nation is for all and you will be a partner in making its future. And I say to officials in education that they are shapers of future generations. Good education promotes character and instills values in the young for the benefit of this nation.

“And I say to every citizen that one of the most important obligations is to confront narrow mindedness, regionalism and social division. Confronting these ills is a requirement of our faith and contributes to national unity.

“The world we live in is at a crossroads. We are part of this world and we cannot be disconnected from it. We cannot be mere spectators while the rest of the world is progressing towards a new global system. This country is the heart of the Muslim World, and the cradle of Arab identity. Therefore, we should rise to the challenges...and support each other in carrying out responsibilities and duties.”

Crown Prince Abdullah, in an address to the nation, May 13, 2003:

“The tragic, bloody and painful events that took place in the heart of our dear capital, Riyadh, last night, in which innocent citizens and residents were killed or injured, prove once again that terrorists are criminals and murderers with total disregard for any Islamic and human values or decency. They are no different from vicious animals whose only concern is to shed blood and bring terror to those innocents under God’s protection.

“These tragic events should serve as a warning to the unwary, and should restore sanity to the deluded. The perpetrators are but a small group of deviants whose objective is to do harm to our society by doing damage to its security.

“On the other hand, the whole Saudi nation, old and young, men and women, stand shoulder-to-shoulder in condemning this heinous act and expressing their rejection of those who perpetrated it. We will be steadfast in defending our homeland, the cradle of Islam, and the heart of the Arab world.

“If these murderers believe that their criminal and bloody act will shake our nation or its unity, they are mistaken. And if they believe they can disrupt the security and tranquility of our nation, they are dreaming. This is because the Saudi people, who have embraced the Holy Book as their guide and the Shari’ah as their way of life, and who have rallied behind their leaders, who in turn embraced them, will not permit a deviant few to shed the blood of the innocent which God Almighty, in His infinite wisdom and justice, has sanctified. The entire Saudi nation, and not just its valiant security forces, will not hesitate to confront the murderous criminals.

“There can be no acceptance or justification for terrorism. Nor is there a place for any ideology which promotes it, or beliefs which condone it. We specifically warn anyone who tries to justify these crimes in the name of religion. And we say that anyone who tries to do so will be

considered a full partner to the terrorists and will share their fate. As revealed in the Holy Qur'an: 'If a man kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell, to abide therein (forever); and the wrath and the curse of God are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him.'

"Further, as revealed in the Holy Qur'an, the taking of an innocent life is a crime against all of humanity. In the words of the Prophet (God's peace and mercy be upon him): 'He who kills a resident living in peace among you, will never breathe the air of heaven.'

"I vow to my fellow citizens and to the friends who reside among us, that the State will be vigilant about their security and well-being. Our nation is capable, by the Grace of God Almighty and the unity of its citizens, to confront and destroy the threat posed by a deviant few and those who endorse or support them. With the help of God Almighty, we shall prevail."

Prince Bandar bin Sultan, Saudi Ambassador to the United States, in a statement issued following the terrorist attacks in Riyadh, May 13, 2003:

"The terrorist attacks on Saudi Arabia May 12 are evil and unforgivable crimes. I send my deepest condolences on behalf of the people of Saudi Arabia to all of the American victims and their families and to the Saudi, European, Arab and Asian families. My government promises that we will not rest until, together, we hunt down these criminals and bring them to justice. And when we do, their punishment will be swift and severe.

"No words can express our feelings for the loss of the innocent people who were murdered and injured. Those victims were Arabs, Americans, Europeans, and Asians. They were Muslims as well as Christians. The attack was an attack on humanity. We reject the terrorists who express their hatred for our people and our friends through such cowardly actions. These terrorists have turned their backs on our people and they have perverted our faith; they do not in any way represent Islam. They only represent hatred towards all of humanity. As a nation of peace, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will work to protect our citizens and our friends who live and work in our country, American, Arab, European, African or Asian, Muslim or non-Muslim; and we are determined to eradicate the terrorists who bring violence and hatred to the whole world, as Crown Prince Abdullah declared today.

"The target of the Al-Qaeda terrorists is Saudi Arabia and the United States and the 70-year relationship that has benefited both our peoples; and at a time when we are working together to bring peace and stability to the people of the Middle East, their aim is to destroy our alliance through violence. But they will not succeed. We say to the people of the United States, as your friend and ally, you can rely on us to do our part as we have done in critical times in the past. We will continue to hunt down the criminals, we will continue to cut off their finances and we will bring them to justice.

"On this day, grief and pain weigh on our hearts. I pray that God Almighty continues to give us the wisdom and courage that will lead our nations and the world into a new era of peace and prosperity for all mankind, of all faiths."

Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, February 11, 2003:

Saudi Arabia's Council of Senior Ulema (religious scholars) has issued an edict condemning attacks and other violence against innocence. The edict also conveys that it is a crime to randomly judge people as "infidels" and target them for violence.

The Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Council of Senior Ulema Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh said that this is a very serious matter as it relates to the shedding of innocent blood, the bombing of buildings, and the destruction of public and private installations. The edict issued by the Council on this matter is as follows:

“The acts of shedding the blood of innocent people, the bombing of buildings and ships, and the destruction of public and private installations are criminal acts and against Islam. Those who carry out such acts have deviant beliefs and misguided ideologies and are to be held responsible for their crimes. Islam and Muslims should not be accountable for the actions of such people. Islamic Law clearly prohibits leveling such charges against non-Muslims, warns against following those who carry such deviant beliefs, and stresses that it is the duty of all Muslims all over the world to consult truthfully, share advice, and cooperate in piety and righteousness.”

King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah, excerpts from a statement from the Holy Site of Mina on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha, February 10, 2003:

“This religion [Islam] is a religion of peace and tolerance, ease in the implementation of religious teachings, duties and rites; and tolerance in day-to-day dealings with people. ...
“The government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has often condemned terror in all its forms. It has taken a leading role in urging the international community to challenge this sinister world phenomenon.”

Excerpt from Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, February 4, 2003:

Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Abdullah recently urged a gathering in Riyadh of young people from around the world to shun extremism, saying: “Ours is a tolerant and temperate faith and we must conduct ourselves accordingly. There is no room for extremism or compulsion in Islam. In fact, it violates the tenets of our faith and the traditions of our Prophet.”

Press Release, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC, December 7, 2002:

In an official letter to Saudi religious leaders, Shaikh Saleh Al-Ashaikh, Minister of Islamic Affairs, said restrictions have been put in place to prohibit unauthorized persons from making speeches at mosques. The order, distributed as part of a new program for the care of mosques and their workers, warned speakers at mosques against making provocative speeches and inciting people. The letter said that mosques are meant only for prayer, guidance and other pious activities and should not be used as political platforms.

Al-Ashaikh warned speakers against misusing mosques to make provocative speeches or incite people or exploit mosques by reciting poems in praise of some misguided people. Violators of the order can be subject to severe punishment, including removal from office. Al-Ashaikh also commended the efforts of the imams and khuttab in fulfilling their religious duties by leading people in prayers and providing advice and guidance. He also called upon the imams and khuttab to serve as models for others by spreading love and brotherhood.

Crown Prince Abdullah, excerpts from a letter to President George W. Bush, September 10, 2002:

“On the eve of the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks against the American people, I take the opportunity to renew to you and the families of the victims and indeed the entire American nation, the sincere condolences and sympathy of the Saudi people and myself. ...

“The target of the terrorists who engineered this crime was humanity at large. They hoped that this outrageous act would incite and ignite bloody strife among different faiths and civilizations. But their evil was turned against them, for all humanity united to fight terrorism, and wise voices

from all corners of the world arose to echo your declaration that terrorism has no religion or nationality; that it is pure evil, condemned and abhorred by all religions and cultures.

"We in Saudi Arabia felt an especially great pain at the realization that a number of young Saudi citizens had been enticed and deluded and their reasoning subverted to the degree of denying the tolerance that their religion embraced, and turning their backs on their homeland, which always stood for understanding and moderation. They allowed themselves to be used as a tool to do great damage to Islam, a religion they espoused, and to all Muslims. They also aimed at causing considerable harm to the historic and strong relationship between the American people and the people of Saudi Arabia. I would like to make it clear that true Muslims all over the world will never allow a minority of deviant extremists to speak in the name of Islam and distort its spirit of tolerance. Your friends in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia denounced and condemned the September 11 attacks as strongly as did the American people. We, like you, are convinced that nothing can ever justify the shedding of innocent blood or the taking of lives and the terrorizing of people, regardless of whatever cause or motive. Therefore, we do not simply reiterate sincere and true condolences to the relatives of the victims, but assure all of our continued will and determination to do our utmost to combat this malignant evil and uproot it from our world."

SPA, March 24, 2002:

Deputy Prime Minister and Commander of the National Guard Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz received in Jeddah yesterday the participants of the seminar 'Islam and dialogue among civilizations' organized by the King Abdulaziz Public Library. ... In his address to the gathering, Crown Prince Abdullah stated: "Islam, as you know, does not advocate terrorism; and the hurting or killing of human beings is not acceptable by anyone whether he is a Muslim or not."

SPA, December 4, 2001:

"Any attack on innocent people is unlawful and contrary to Shariah," [Shaikh Muhammad bin Abdullah Al-Subail, imam of the Grand Mosque of Makkah and member of the Council of Senior Islamic Scholars] said in a statement to the Saudi Press Agency today. "Muslims must safeguard the lives, honor and property of non-Muslims who are under their protection and with whom they have concluded peace agreements."

Shaikh Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, in a statement issued September 15, 2001:

"The recent developments in the United States constitute a form of injustice that is not tolerated by Islam, which views them as gross crimes and sinful acts."

Shaikh Salih Al-Luheidan, Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council, in a televised statement on September 14, 2001:

"As a human community we must be vigilant and careful to oppose these pernicious and shameless evils, which are not justified by any sane logic, nor by the religion of Islam."



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