

10 August 2006

Dr Julian Lewis MP
c/o New Forest East The Conservative Association
The Parade, Southampton Road
Cadnam
Hampshire SO40 2NG

Dear Dr Lewis

INNOCENCE ABROAD

Thoughts du jour — no need to reply

This morning we hear of the threat to explode aeroplanes over the Atlantic. Several MPs come on The World at One to say more or less: “There may be reasons why they [extremists/Muslims/Palestinians/...] feel angry with us [the West/Bush/Blair/...] but that does not justify killing innocent civilians”.

I’d like to put before you two thoughts about those last three words, *killing innocent civilians*.

1. We are a democracy. We elected this government. We are responsible through you and our other elected MPs for this Government’s actions, for its foreign policy, for its support of US foreign policy, for its leader’s over-riding conviction that President Bush is right come what may. So HMG’s action, foreign policy, support for the US and so on is ours. More particularly it is mine: I am responsible for those actions, that foreign policy, and so on. I along with you and the rest of us are accessories to this ‘war on terror’; we have to bear the heavy burden of that war. We have to suffer the effects of that war. One effect is quite naturally that the enemy we attack — in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Lebanon by proxy, in Iran perhaps — is likely to retaliate upon us. We had to put up with Hitler’s bombs during the blitz, in that war you and I hope never to have repeated. We shall have to put up with bombs and disruption in this ‘war on terror’ until we have a ceasefire, an armistice, a truce, a negotiated settlement. And so I, we, are not ‘innocent civilians’; we sowed the wind and we shall reap the whirlwind.
2. We are a democracy. (You see I rejoice in the democracy you so strongly believe our best defence against war). So when this Government sends men and women into battle, we are responsible. I am responsible, through you and your colleagues. How can I claim innocence? By what logic must I be protected from the effects of war? By what right do I send my brothers and sisters into war and expect them to be the only ones in the firing line? They are sent to be bored and terrified by turns, to kill and be killed on the field of battle against a strange enemy, whilst I am to be kept comfortable at home? We elected you and others like you to think for us, to choose for us. It is on our behalf that you collectively have chosen to send brave men and women into battle. No, I am just as much a legitimate target for the enemy as are those soldiers. No, I am not an ‘innocent civilian’.

Parliament must be recalled; you and our other representatives must speak as you feel right about the war on terror, where it has got us so far and where it is taking us. I earnestly hope that one of your conclusions will be that enough is enough. I ask you to propose in the House of Commons a motion of No Confidence in Her Majesty’s Government, for the man Blair must go, and “when ‘tis done, then ‘twere well it were done quickly” [*Macbeth Act I Scene 7*]