

February 5, 2014

## **"An Open Letter On Al-Qaeda's American Hostage Warren Weinstein"**

Only days away from returning home, Warren Weinstein was abducted in August 2011 from his residence in Lahore, Pakistan where he had worked for seven years on a US AID project teaching Pakistanis how to start or improve their businesses. He has been held by al-Qaida for over two years, and his family appears to have given up hope that the Obama Administration is doing anything useful to get him home. The last video of him released in December shows him emaciated and missing a tooth.

Warren and I were students together at Columbia University in the International Relations Ph.D. program, and our families have been friends ever since.

Warren is a strong advocate for sustainable global development, and has spent a good part of his career working in the development field helping to improve the lives of men, women, and children in developing countries.

He was a Peace Corps director in Togo and the Ivory Coast, and later helped to develop the tourist industry in Ghana.

But the culmination of his career as a development specialist came in Pakistan. He worked with local dairies bringing refrigeration to rural farms, improved methods of milk purification, and taught breeding to improve the milk output of cows.

He taught horticulture by emphasizing the standards that are required to improve tree fruits.

He taught producers of furniture how to improve the quality of their products for export.

He persuaded Nike to keep their soccer ball factory in Pakistan by helping to modernize production, and worked with other sporting goods entrepreneurs, like those producing boxing equipment.

He helped the leather goods industry by teaching better tanning methods and the production of softer leather.

He helped the producers of surgical instruments to improve the quality of their finished products for export so that half-finished instruments would not have to be shipped to Europe to be finished for sale in other countries, with the Europeans getting most of the profits.

He helped jewelry manufacturers to make their products more appealing to the world market by emphasizing design and workmanship, and promoted the creation of jewelry shows.

He also helped to improve the quality of granite and marble mine production.

Warren is fluent in a variety of languages and was able to bring in experts from the United States and various other countries who excel in their fields or send Pakistanis on study tours to achieve the results noted above.

Warren made no secret of the fact that he is Jewish. Indeed, he had studied as a child at a yeshiva, and his wife taught at a Jewish school. Yet, in the Pakistani English language newspapers that reported on his abduction in August 2011 the Pakistanis he worked with praised him without exception. And according to ABC News, colleagues described him as “a diligent worker dedicated to helping Pakistani people.” Added a Pakistani journalist: “He's a short, funny man with a quick wit," who “could speak a fair amount of Urdu.”

And during the seven years Warren lived and worked in Pakistan, exports rose.

I have spoken with Warren's wife Elaine, who told me of an interview about Warren that was carried by the BBC in Europe I believe on August 22<sup>nd</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup>. I found the interview on the internet and watched it.

In this interview, Elaine declares that after two years of Warren's captivity she is “frantic.” The interviewer, Brajesh Upadhyah of the BBC comments that she finds it hard to sleep at night. Asked by Mr. Upadhyah what the Obama Administration is doing for Warren, Warren's older daughter Jennifer responds: “We're on our own. They're aware of the situation, but we're very much alone.” A State Department spokesperson offers a

formulaic answer: We're "extremely concerned." We "work with the Pakistani authorities" and provide "consular assistance as appropriate." Mr. Upadhyah comments: "The family finds itself helpless."

At this point Warren's family would welcome proof that he is still alive, as a first step to getting him home.

No words can adequately express how grateful his family and friends would be to have Warren home swiftly and safely in good health.

Please contact anyone you know who is close to or has influence with the Administration to promote Warren's swift and safe return home to his family.

Thank you so very much for whatever you can do to help.

Best wishes.

Harris