

## **If Gore Had Been President**

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In my reading of the Sunday issue of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer (April 23, 2006) I managed to stumble across something that perked my interest. The short article was entitled “Would we be better off with Gore?” (F5) and then went on to describe a few consequences of an Al Gore presidency that “seem certain”, including a world where Osama bin Ladin would have been the primary target (and presumably caught), where there would have been no “invasion of Iraq, no quagmire, no rupture of traditional alliances and, perhaps, a bit of sympathy rather than pathological hatred for Americans among the Muslim masses.” It then goes on to accuse the Bush administration of massive deficits (due to tax cuts), and claims that Gore would have taken the lead in defeating that most malicious of environmental foes, namely, global warming.

All of this is, of course, mere speculation, but I have a secret that may shed some light onto what would have really happened. You see, I have a special little machine called an “alt-o-time-o-later” which I invented in my basement a few years ago. It allows me to bend the fabric of time and space, and I can peer into worlds that are parallel to ours but different due to slight changes in history. I was toying with it one day and managed to discover a world where Gore had won the presidency. I arrived on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2001, the day that Bush made an address to the nation in response to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, but in this parallel world it was Gore who was speaking to the nation instead. I managed to have a tape recorder with me as I viewed this curious spectacle and I recorded his speech. The following is the transcript of Gore’s response to the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, in this alternate universe:

1:00 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT AL GORE: “Good afternoon. After long and careful discussion with my top advisors, I have now realized all the terrible atrocities that this great nation has inflicted upon the many smaller nations of this world. It is hard for one to imagine a people who hate America so much, and thus it is a gut instinct of ours to react with horror

and a desire for presumed justice upon those whom we think have attacked us without provocation. But I have just recently learned that they were indeed provoked, and the attack on our nation was just as much our fault as theirs.

You see, America has existed for merely a couple hundred years, and in that time we have done so much hurt to the nations around us, especially in the Middle East. We have running water, clean and fresh food, and schools in which to raise our children. Why do we have these things? Because we have taken from those countries that are weaker than us, exploited their resources, killed their children and generally been just nasty people. I like to think of the world as a pie. America started as a small sliver of the pie, but as of late we have gone on to consume a great quantity of that pie. We can only do this by taking from those nations around us, and only now do I see how great a wretch we really are!

And so as I stand here in the White House, I want to make a public apology on behalf of America to the whole world, but particularly to those Islamic nations of the Middle East who have suffered so much under our tyranny. We are sorry. We are sorry for living in this beautiful land. We are sorry for having nice things and eating three times a day. We are sorry that we have the freedom to say whatever we want, even if it is something that you don't like. We are sorry for our religious freedom, even if that means that people can worship religions other than Islam. We are sorry that we brought you to the point where your only option was to send planes at our buildings, killing thousands of our pampered citizens. We now understand the reasons behind your attack, and can hardly blame you. Do accept our apology.

In an act of good faith towards those Islamic fundamentalists that have so opened our eyes to our own evil ways, I am now declaring September 11<sup>th</sup> a national holiday. Every year on this day we will dress our women in burkas and play the Muslim call to prayer from our street corners. Three times a day we will stop what we are doing and lie prostrate, facing the east, where the terrorists—er, freedom fighters came from who so alerted us to our inferior morality. In an act of celebration of the Islamic culture, we will round up all Christians and Jews and imprison them, only for the day. We will ban all movies from Hollywood and declare it a day of celebrity hunting, since we certainly can't have any idols before Allah. All movies and books that are not the Koran will be burned,

and we will sing and dance around the fires. On the following day we will put away our costumes and resume our daily lives, being content in our own great diversity, patting ourselves on the back for being so culturally aware. I am sure the victims of the attack would want it this way.

Thank you, O radical Islam, for opening our eyes. As a nation we again apologize, and hope you can find it in your hearts to forgive us. If you will excuse me, I now have an appointment to go sailing with my friend George Clooney on his private yacht. Unless, of course, George Clooney offends Muslims, in which case I do not know him, nor have I ever met him.

Thank you all. May God or Allah or Buddha or the fuzzy bunnies continue to bless America. But not any more than they bless Pakistan.”

END 1:03 P.M., EDT

There, I believe that answers the question as to what the world would be like with a Gore presidency. I found many other interesting alternate universes with my “alt-o-time-o-later”, including a world with Al Sharpton as president, Ted Kennedy as president and Alec Baldwin as president, but those are far too horrible to recount here.