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REFLECTIONS ON THE MAKING OF A TERRORIST

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“Listen children, your father is dead. From his old coats I will make you little jackets. I’ll make you little trousers from his old pants. There’ll be in his pockets, things he used to put there. Keys and pennies covered with tobacco. Dan shall have the pennies to save in his bank. Ann shall have the keys to make a pretty noise with. Life must go on and the dead be forgotten. Life must go on, though good men die. Ann eat your breakfast, Dan take your medicine. Life must go on. I forgot just why.”

“Lament” Edna St. Vincent Millay

INTRODUCTION

Keeping life going on somehow preoccupies the minds of virtually every American since September 11\textsuperscript{th}, when more people died in a single incident than in any other non-wartime period in U.S. history and still countless others continue to lament the loss of loved ones. In this paper, we will outline an approach to an evolving understanding of social activism, fanaticism and its potential progression to martyrdom and terrorism. In the necessary painful self-examination that is being undertaken by Americans, we offer some thoughts on social context as a crucible for the making of a terrorist.

What is obvious from a review of the scholarly literature is that not a lot is known about terrorists as individuals but there are many theories. One can speculate that particular social factors are important to the incubation of the nascent terrorist. This paper will outline a tentative “life history” of terrorism in a way that suggests how all of us can become more aware of how we unwittingly encourage terrorism, and can instead make other choices which offer a theoretical direction toward an “antidote.”

We begin with observations that we Americans have been impaired by the trauma of September 11\textsuperscript{th} with damage to our collective self-esteem and narcissism like that of Goliath brought to his knees by a tiny, almost invisible, human being with a well placed slingshot
made from Goliath’s loincloth. In the chapter we examine a few, certainly not all, of the irrational reactions to this serious narcissistic injury to a powerful nation, including the decision to “declare war” on Osama bin Laden.

More specifically, we wish to focus on how terrorism develops in its social context. Our view is that often terrorists began their idealism during adolescent years since adolescents experience a normative crisis in which all aspects of their being and values are questioned. We hypothesize that while some adolescents align themselves with the mores of what Spiro Agnew called the “silent majority”, others may become committed social activists. A culture such as America’s, with its democratic freedoms protected through the Constitution, is a potential breeding ground for terrorism if certain conditions are not met. Our speculation is that if a culture does not accept, or more actively rejects, the ideals of the committed social activist, then a nascent fanatic could emerge. The issue is how social aggression is directed, controlled, and modulated. This chapter gives an example of the social impact of committed social activists who are not marginalized and do find a place within their culture.

The primary energy that drives the terrorist and fanatic is aggression; we refer in a later section of this paper to work we have done with homicidal children in school settings in the USA with analogous fanatical and terrorist mindsets and actions. In these instances, the coercive power dynamics that seem to motivate such killers seem to be mainly a product of a social context in which human relationships have become devalued. Such dynamics involve a complicated dialectical relationship between the victim of coercion, the victimizer, and the audience of bystanders, resulting in collusive murderousness.

We finish with a tentative antidote for terrorism; a set of suggestions for a social context that will enable a committed social activist to collaborate with the existing system to

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1 Edna St. Vincent Millay in “Second April,” 1921, New York, Mitchell Kennedy, pp 64-65
create a safe, caring, and responsive social context within which people can actualize their wishes, goals, and desires without infringing upon the freedoms of others. Such a proposal if successful, could answer Aristotle’s fear that in a democracy the workers could suffer from an excess of freedom and elect a tyrant as leader who would act out their vengeful fantasies against preceding oligarchs and monarchs. Could such an antidote possibly work?

**Shattered Mindsets: People Process September 11th**

Immediately after the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, there was outrage. Irrational fears, rituals, and poorly thought through reactions became rampant. Americans became afraid of traveling, of investing, and of strangers; to name only three major and obvious fears in our culture. A memo distributed in October, 2001, by the administration of Stuyvesant High School in New York City to students, parents and staff exemplified these responses in stark terms. This school is located a few blocks from the World Trade Center.²

**Q:** Why do we need to wear ID cards in school?

**A:** Because every fanatic and every nut in North America has seen/heard/read about Stuyvesant since the WTC attack. We are THE high-profile school in America. We need to be able to identify who does not belong here at a glance.

**Q:** But we are students. We don’t look like terrorists. Why do you have to wear ID cards in school?

**A:** All terrorists do not look like Osama bin Laden. Let me repeat, every nut and fanatic has heard of Stuyvesant. Everyone who didn’t make the cutoff on the test, everyone who is angry at his teacher, everyone who hates. Everyone. There are about a quarter of a billion people in this country alone. *(Comment: so now every angry rebel fits into the category of potential terrorist).*

**Q:** You fascist pigs with your Big Brother mentality are just trying to scare us. There’s no real danger.

**A:** Are you for real? There are bad people out there who believe that they will spend all eternity in heaven with seventy-two virgins if they can kill some of us while killing themselves. They really believe that. There are nuts who see Satan, there are an

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infinite variety of other kinds of nuts and wackos, and you think that you are above wearing an ID card while in school? We are in a war and this is a potential front.

This outraged sarcasm and defensive-aggressive posturing contrasts with the helpful efforts of many psychoanalytically trained individuals in the immediate New York area who volunteered their services free of charge, initially, to all citizens and then, specifically, to fire and police department personnel who had suffered a high loss of life during rescue attempts. A number of national associations of psychoanalysts, psychologists, and psychiatrists created volunteer service organizations, which were also joined by professionals from all over the country who traveled to New York City, some closing their practices to volunteer their services to the needy. It became apparent in working with survivors and rescuers that, along with the individual reactions to trauma and loss, there was a destruction of the invulnerable, omnipotent American cultural identity that was felt as a pervasive “existential” depression difficult to process. It became clear that the experience of September 11th had been a major narcissistic injury to the U.S. “cultural identity”.

Social Activists, Fanatics, Martyrs & Terrorists: A progression

Scholars like Haynal (2000), Haldane (1932), and Haynal et al. (1983) take an historical perspective on fanaticism and its role in human cultures. It certainly has not always been a pejorative term: the soothsayers in ancient Rome were called fanatics, a word derived from “fanum”; a temple where the oracles were pronounced. The mystical and more gentle, and committed qualities of fanaticism do not linger as clearly today. Over the centuries since the age of enlightenment, fanatics became distinguishable from the reasonable man, soothsayer, and priest by their destructiveness, although some (Haynal et al. p. 243) note that the fanatic’s refusal of “what is” in society, by no means always implies illness or
immaturity, but can stem from an individual’s stand against the inadmissible perversion of a whole society.

It is our observation that the emergence of the “fanatical man” is the potential outcome of any intensely held human belief and that there is a continuum from normal intense conviction to highly destructive fanaticism. It is also our opinion that social pathologizing of fanaticism results from a failure to recognize the potential for such behavior in all human beings, and especially, for the responsibility of all of us for the social context and conditions, which we suggest, can sometimes convert intense social commitment into martyrdom and destructive terrorism. Writers like Colvard (2002), suggest similarly that terrorists are not inherently violent, but are victims of a network of psychological and ideological legitimacy.

The Greek root Martyrs\(^3\) defines a martyr as a witness, perhaps related to the Greek gk; “mermera”, which means a thoughtful witness who voluntarily suffers death as the penalty for knowing. Further, to be martyred means to renounce one’s religion, tenet, practice or principle, extended later to one’s sacrifice of a life station or what is of great value for the sake of a principle or to sustain a cause. This more idealistic definition has evolved in the 20\(^{th}\) century to include one who adopts “a specious air of suffering or deprivation, especially as a means of attracting sympathy or attention.” Terrorism, the systematic use of terror as a means of coercion, has been adapted by a number including Corrado (1983) to include activities with an exhibitionistic quality used for political objectives with “publicity as a goal” (page 294).

From this social perspective, there is a continuum that ranges from fanaticism, primarily an internal state, to martyrdom, where there is a willingness to sacrifice oneself for

a cause, and finally to terrorism, where the rage is more homicidally directed towards others in the name of a cause. This can be destruction by an individual like Jim Jones or political, like the suicide bombers being trained by the Hamas group in Palestine. This destructiveness seems based on a buildup of aggressive impulses in a variety of social context ranges from dismissive houses/schools (school shooter), to oppressed or closed cultures or groups (suicide bomber).

In summary, fanaticism is characterized by:

1) **A coercive narcissism:** where the fanatic is intolerant of differences from his or her opinions and in which there is a denial of personhood with cause taking precedence over person. Envy is prominent since what belongs to others is felt to be “mine.”

2) **Pathological certainty:** impervious to reason and for which there is irrational zeal and commitment thought by many to cover a deeper seated fear of annihilation.

3) **Contempt for the enemy or for non-believers:** with humiliation being used as the primary tool to coerce compliance.

4) **Oversimplified theories and causal chains:** the fanatical mindset leads to simplified cognitive processes and exaggerated cathexis of certain ideas. Often, religion creates a fertile medium for fanatical beliefs, with sometimes an implied fanatical adherence to a non-human entity, for example, Saint Augustine’s suggestion that one should only love God. Simplified conditioning techniques used to train suicide bombers in Palestine included that there would be sexual and other favors in heaven as rewards. Thus, if the social context accepts and validates some elements of the nascent fanatic’s belief, or rejects them, then distinctly different outcomes are possible. Figure 1 lists these possible outcomes.

[Figure 1 about here]

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4 USA Today, 07-05-01
Although the transition from committed social activist to fanatic is not a straightforward one, the socially committed altruistic and politically tough and resilient activist can be a potent agent for social change. (Twemlow & Sacco, 1996, Twemlow, 2001). However, the social context must be receptive and respectful of the activist mission, at least in allowing its exploration and expression. Democracies like the USA, in theory provide an accepting, although skeptical, incubator for activist ideas. Social activists often emerge from adolescent identity diffusion, although true social activists consistently find outlets for their beliefs in their cultures and in their social mores over a lifetime. The cause usually becomes less narrowly political and more generally altruistic as the activist grows older.

In another context (Twemlow & Sacco, 1996, Twemlow & Sacco, 1999), we have examined the attributes of committed social activists. Although our researches occurred in Jamaica, the colonial influences suggest some comparability with the USA. The attributes of a peacemaker were derived from a variety of psychological tests and self-report inventories as well as behavioral observation of the effectiveness of the peacemaker. These qualities included being:

1. More altruistic than egoistic;
2. Aware of and takes responsibility for community problems;
3. Willing to take physical risks for peace and not easily frightened;
4. Relationship-oriented and humanistic;
5. Self-motivated and a motivator of others;
6. Alert, strong, and positive;
7. Self-rewarding with low need for praise;
8. Personally well organized;
9. Advocate and protector of the vulnerable and disempowered;
10. Able to see potential in all people;

11. Low in sadism;

12. An enthusiastic advocate, committed and understanding of the “cause.”

A social case study also illustrate some of these principles.\(^5\)

The Great Peace March for Global Nuclear Disarmament in 1986 (Folsom & Fledderjohan, 1988) was an example of the impact of the social context for the budding social activist – turned harmless fanatic. It began as PRO Peace; People Reaching Out For Peace with fundraising under the guidance of David Mixner, a public relations consultant and 70’s peace activist with strong political connections. The march to Washington, DC, from California was a carefully planned affair with camping, medical assistance, food and protection organized in meticulous detail along the route. Even before the march began, the venture bankrupted. By then, the followers were “socially committed.” They marched anyway using what had been previously arranged and making do for the rest. Some 400 people of all ages completed the course from March to November, finishing with a peace rally and march, which spawned others including a march in the Soviet Union.

However, integration of the fanatic’s ideas into the culture does not ensure that he/she will become happy, grateful, and part of that culture. It partly depends on history and how that integration occurs. The French Revolution is an example of revolutionary ideas that created martyrs whose ideas were ultimately integrated into a political transformation for the culture. For example, Robespierre was a classic martyr/fanatic who, from his writings, seemed to enjoy and glorify in the role of victim. He insisted on spilling his blood for the good of the revolution saying: “We shall trace the road to immortality with our blood. Oh, sublime people! Receive the sacrifice of my entire being: happy is he who is born in your midst! Even happier is he who can die for your happiness!”\(^6\) Undoubtedly, individual psychopathology can make a difference. Charisma, whose etymology means an immediate relationship with the divine without intermediary, may inspire an omnipotently disposed fanatic to behave like God, The Father. However, if the fanatic becomes a revered figure, there is always ambivalence. Jim Jones, responsible for the mass suicide of nine hundred

\(^5\) A documentary was made of the march: “People Reaching Out” by Cathy Zeutlin.

\(^6\) Speech given Session Septidi, 7. Prairial, Year II of the One and Indivisible French Republic
individuals in Ghana, insisted that all followers call him “The Father.” Any questioning of his judgment, he said, implied betrayal. In his long sermons he berated his followers in a contemptuous way. Some leaders, such as Robespierre, Churchill, and perhaps Ralph Nader, are eventually vindicated by history. Others, like Hitler and the Bolsheviks, are instead eternally damned, while yet others are held more ambivalently, like Napoleon.

Clearly, for an in-depth understanding of the complex interaction between the social activist, fanatic, martyr, terrorist, and the social context, whether individual psychopathology plays a part is an important issue. By its very nature, there are difficulties in answering this question, for even though valiant attempts have been made to collect information about fanatics and terrorists, often that information is scanty, grossly biased, and even if a psychiatrist has performed the examination, is fettered by the demand characteristics of the situation making the findings highly suspect. Shaw, (1986), in a telling critique of the psychopathology model of political terrorism, summarizes the scant psychiatric literature, noting that terrorists have been regularly diagnosed with Antisocial Personality Disorder and Narcissistic Personality Disorder. He criticizes these pathologizing approaches as plagued with fundamental attribution errors, ie vilifying personalities we don’t like. Although fanaticism may result in behaviors that are pathological, there is clearly no gross disorganization of the capacity to think nor personality distortions that make an individual incapable of perceiving a consensual reality and attempting to destroy that reality. Certain social traumata may be central. For example, Dr. Eyad Sarraj, a psychiatrist and founder of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen’s Rights, reflects that, “What propels (Palestinian) people into such action is a long history of humiliation and a desire for revenge that every Arab harbors. Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, and the resultant uprooting of Palestinians, a deep-seated feeling of shame has taken root in the Arab

7 Personal Communication, Peter Olsson, MD, 2001
psyche, producing the feeling that one is unworthy to live. The honorable Arab is the one who refuses to suffer shame and dies in dignity. The thirty-five years of Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza strip has served as a continuous reminder of Arab weakness.” He points out that Palestinians feel that they are restoring their honor by fighting the aggressor and not just being helpless victims. Facing a well-equipped army with stones and suicide bombers, reinforces Palestinians’ feelings of strength, courage, and defiance.8

Heatherton et al (2000), in a landmark summary of the literature on stigma, provides a clue to some features of the social context from several research perspectives: Evidence suggests that stigma has three primary functions for the stigmatizer: the control of self-esteem, the establishment of control over others, and the buffering of anxiety, all can be seen as socially mediated mechanisms to control and stabilize the psyche of the stigmatizer.

In the social crucible for terrorism, the bystander role is also pivotal. What a community does with the fanatic’s ideas has a critical impact on his/her psychopathology, especially if the social rejection from “felt important” peer groups is sufficiently disturbing. It is not always necessary for the bystanding social group to be external. By that we mean that a bystanding social group can be entertained in fantasy only, although the historical roots may have been in a real social group. The internet offers instant global access to bystanding groups around the world. Our work with fanatical children (Twemlow et al. in Press, 2002) and in harassing and bullying workplace settings (Twemlow 1999) indicates that such social trauma can create a cast of characters in the internal object field that keeps the pressure of fantasy building in dream-life, daydreams, and in hypnagogic and hypnopompic states.

Individuals and groups with linked interests can become clusters of bully bystanders (groups or individuals who vicariously enjoy victimization), thus gaining an advantage through projection of their own disavowed fantasies into the fanaticizer, while building the

8 Time Magazine, April 8, 2002, p. 39
pressure of fantasy and avoiding actual danger themselves. Several Australian colleagues commented that America often appears to take on the worries of the world, being more than willing to step into the rescuer role. Although it may well be that this role is appropriate and even necessary, group processes of this type can potentiate serious misjudgments.

**The Absence of Enemies**

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 there has since been a frantic search for enemies. Biesel 1994, in an informative article, summarizes the news media reaction to super power politics: the *New York Times* commented on March 4, 1990, “Democracy is winning, the arms race is over. Villains are friendly now. . . the jackpot so long desired was America’s. So then, why doesn’t it feel better?” Psychoanalysts like Volkan (1999) have postulated the value of a familiar enemy in containing and holding disavowed self and object representations. He has pointed out the dangers when the enemy is no longer familiar; since there is less hope for diplomatic solutions. One reporter for *Newsweek* (Meg Greenfred) said, “Conducting this nation’s business overseas has become more difficult with the disappearance of the unifying, clearly defined and universally understood threat (the Soviet Union). Whose side are we on? And how many sides are there?”—reflecting, somewhat nostalgically, that things were simpler during the cold war. A Paris intellectual, Bernard-Henri Levi, noted that the western world is having great trouble getting used to the death of communism, which another writer half jokingly called “Communostalgia!” Newscasters and politicians who have never been near a psychoanalytic couch seem to be missing the familiar enemy. As we make Osama bin Laden into a less familiar enemy, we are unconsciously more controlled by him and enactments abound. In 1994, *Newsweek* reported how the U.S. and the west were
“building an Islamic enemy” and that there was a Muslim sect with a dirty agenda preparing for a holy war.⁹

In contrast with this demonic depiction of the unfamiliar enemy, Russell and Miller (1983) compiled a demographic profile of 350 known terrorists deriving information from many news sources. The profile of a terrorist is a single male, 22-24 years of age with a university education. Backgrounds include doctors, lawyers, journalists, and teachers except in the Middle East where technical training prevails. Terrorists generally have come from affluent middle to upper middle class families who have had enjoyed social prestige. Osama bin Laden left his wealthy, politically influential family as a young man to fight against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan with the assistance of the CIA and the blessing of several governments including those of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. It was only after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan that he turned against the U.S. and its allies. He never lost his revolutionary interests in spite of a brief attempt to return to the family construction business. His university and family background included early idealistic religious interests from when he was quite young.

**School Terrorists and Suicide Bombers**

Young people are prone to fanatical beliefs. Adolescence with its social and physiological demands for unprecedented growth and separation from the “nuclear” family is a natural incubator for extremism, as many parents and therapists have experienced. International terrorism may also have its roots in separation/individuation dynamics, since it is during adolescence that idealistic/altruistic/fanatical beliefs often first emerge. We speculate that an understanding of extremist children, exemplified in

the “school shooters” in the U.S.A, may provide understanding both of a developmental perspective on terrorism, and the unique vulnerabilities of growing adolescents to unscrupulous military strategists, and extremism in all its forms. Even in US, with arguable more freedoms than in any other democracy, this form of fanaticism usually emerges in its own closed peer-focused culture felt by the adolescent to be of prime importance, and preferable to any other social norms.

Eissler (2000), elegantly outlines a theory of hatred as a force for social change. The cause can be subjugated to destructive impulses and personal vendettas as is seen in school shooters, or personal motives and impulses can be suppressed and manipulated by the cause as in the case of Palestinian suicide bombers\(^{10}\) and Japanese kamikaze pilots\(^{11}\) (Taylor & Ryan, 1988), where the fanatic/terrorist is created and used by political forces in the name of a cause.

Terror, from the Latin *terrere*, to induce intense fear, apprehension, or dread, often renders the targets overwhelmed and under-prepared, such as were schools in the homicides in the USA.\(^{12}\) In Jonesboro, Arkansas, an eleven and a thirteen year-old team turned into snipers firing on students exiting a school building, killing and wounding children they did not know. The local community experienced this as a terrorist act against the school. There is a process propelling these children to act like extremists rather than to act out their adolescent angst in less violent ways. In some ways they are like suicide bombers who instead kill themselves at school as a symbolic act of revenge and retaliation for what is perceived as a source of great personal humiliation and shame.

\(^{10}\) Jack Kelly, USA Today, 7/5/01
\(^{12}\) The word terrorist first appeared in English in 1795, in reference to the Jacobins of France, who ruled France from 1793 till 1794 in what was called the Reign of Terror. www.wordorigins.org
Unlike idealist Palestinian teens exploding themselves for a political cause, these young school shooters end their lives to end their psychological pain, in a megalomaniacal spree of revenge.\(^\text{13}\)

Dylan Klebold, voDKa to his friends, a 17 year-old boy who on April 20, 1999, with his 18 year-old colleague and friend, Eric Harris, close to the anniversary of Adolf Hilter’s birthday and that of the David Koresh cult shootout in Waco, Texas, actualized a carefully engineered, premeditated plot with the ultimate goal to destroy their high school as well as the community of Littleton, CO around it. There had been detailed planning for more than a year with maps and notes being made not only on weaponry used but also on strategies to maximize the kill. By chance, SWT happened to be treating a man whose son had gone to stay with his mother in Littleton and had spent some three months at Columbine High School, six months before the shootings occurred. Although the boy wanted to stay with his mother, he found the school climate intolerable, indicating that the bullying was overt; any children who were not sexually active and strong members of the athletic teams were overtly and regularly, physically bullied and sexually humiliated in front of girls. My patient’s son would be classified as a nerd, American idiom for children who are bookish, not gifted athletically, and who are somewhat sexually and socially shy.

The fanatical hatred of these two boys flourished in a strange dehumanized bond based on alienation and a common external enemy, revealed in their numerous notes and diaries. In one of them, Dylan Klebold, said simply, “The lonely man strikes with

\(^{13}\) In July 1999, the FBI, and US Attorney General Janet Reno convened a think tank with the authors and other experts on violence from around the world, together with staff from 18 school districts where there had been killings or killings avoided and police, district attorneys, and FBI profilers. A publication summarized the findings; O’Toole (2000).
absolute rage.” Although many of their writings and videotapes explaining their crimes are still not available to the general public, what is available reflects an uncontrolled chaotic hatred. On the tapes they spoke of how easy it was to make other people believe what they wanted them to, how evolved they felt, and how dying was something they looked forward to. Harris said, “I’m full of hate and I love it. God, I can’t wait till they die. I can taste the blood now,” calling themselves NBK’s (natural born killers). “You know what I hate?” Klebold said, “Mankind. Kill everything. Kill everything.” The fragments of their diaries are full of vitriol but it is not discriminatory; the railing is against almost every conceivable group. Harris said, “We hate Niggers, Spics, let’s not forget you white POS (pieces of shit) also.” Included also were; the rich, the white, the poor, all races and racism, and with what Harris called “fitness fuckheads,” martial arts experts, and people who try to impress others by bragging about their cars, Star Wars fans, people who mispronounce words, and people who drive slow in a fast lane, along with several named television channels. Hatred was a common bond inspiring, energizing and invigorating these boys with the attendant mindset, making the world simple enough to cope with, and with an end in sight for their misery and alienation.

The school shooter unlike the political fanatic is not bred to be part of a larger political movement. Hamas begins training young Palestinian minds from pre-school and there is community and family involvement in the “growth” of a political fanatic. In contrast, the school shooter evolves in isolation from his family, although goes through many of the same steps: He becomes zealous about personal grievances, while the political fanatic fights for a collective cause. He may be part of a cult, as was the case in
Pearl, Mississippi, where the shooter was trained by a group of peers called “Kroth.”\textsuperscript{14} Retaliation is the school shooter’s motive, whereas the political terrorist is sending somebody else’s message about perceived collective oppression. The fantasy of future reward or vindication creates part of the necessary mindset to carry out the political act. Both the bombers and the shooters fantasize some relief for themselves or their culture after the completion of their lethal rampage with suicide. Klebold and Harris felt like revolutionaries fighting for the socially oppressed at Columbine High in the same way as a suicide bomber is engulfed in the promised reward of an afterlife full of status and sensual reward.

Adolescents, who are suicidal from other causes, experience a very similar transition in their mindsets before they take lethal actions. A key element of this self-destructive mindset is a narrowing of perspective creating a feeling of intolerable mental pressure and need to act. The suicidal adolescent and the school shooter both despair that their humiliated existence will ever change and that their future consists only of unendurable psychological pain. The suicide bomber in contrast is selected for a mission and thinks of being a religious hero. Both begin their lethal countdown isolated from the reality-based social supports that could offer another perspective on life.

A Secret Service study (Vossekuil et al, 2000) found that in 75% of the 37 school shooting incidents they studied; the children communicated their lethal plans indirectly, mostly to peers in the immediate 72 hours before the actual attack. In contrast, when Hamas chooses a young Palestinian martyr, they do not tell the parents or friends, instead

when the mission is to occur, they take the young person into seclusion.\textsuperscript{15} The 72-hour period before the school shooter attack is a critical point in this cycle for potential intervention. The targets of school shooters are selected based on a personal grievance, while the young martyrs’ targets are selected for them for a strategic political purpose. Both school shooters and suicide bombers seek public places of significance for their lethal attacks. The school shooter’s mindset shifts to a “ready” mode that sets the stage for the final act, while the suicide bombers see themselves as one in a series of chosen martyrs in a holy war.

There was clearly a strong copycat effect noticed by the FBI in school shootings;\textsuperscript{16} many of the school shooters had a morbid fascination with prior school shootings. Both the school shooters and the suicide bombers appear to be looking at themselves as messengers seeking a form of redemption or justice. Whether the style is symbolic or political, there is a contagious element to these lethal acts. Suicide bombers are viewed as heroes in their oppressed and wounded cultures. School shooters are reviled and either commit suicide after the attack or spend their lives in prison, and the families of school shooters are often sued and viciously criticized\textsuperscript{17} In contrast, suicide bombers’ families are often held in great esteem and are compensated financially after the attack.

The critical role of shame (Gilligan, 2001) for these young USA school terrorists is cited by the FBI (O’Toole, 2000) and Secret Service (Vossekuiil, et al. 2000) as being rooted in bullying or the repeated use of shaming, exclusion, rumors, targeted dirty tricks,

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\textsuperscript{15} Suicide Terrorism: a An Overview: Boaz Ganor, ICT Executive Director – 2-15-2000
\textsuperscript{16} Personal communication, SSA Dr. Mary Ellen O’Toole, Critical Incident Response Group, Federal Bureau of Investigation
\end{flushright}
and other language-based, social aggression. There are many opportunities for the world powers to be aware of social injustices leading to shame in various ethnic and religious groups. Just like school shooters who cannot refrain from telling their friends about their plan, fanatical groups also send signals to any containing authority that a group of people is being oppressed and on the road to terrorism. For example, it is reported in *Jane’s Terrorism & Security Monitor* (Sept. 17, 2001), that Abdel-Bari Atwan, editor of London’s *al-Quds-al-Arabi* newspaper, told Reuters that bin Ladin warned three weeks prior to September 11th, that he would attack American interests in an unprecedented way.

In summary, there are several clues that can perhaps inform prevention strategies; shaming and a dismissive home and social environment promotes social isolation and disconnection from peer and community group objectives. As these factors percolate, the dialogue between the container (school or nation) and the oppressed (child or political factions) stops and fantasy takes over. Fantasy is made easier by modern technology. The anonymity of the Internet allows a violent retaliatory fantasy to be fueled. Many of the school shooters attached themselves to cyber images masquerading as aggression containing father figures, e.g., Adolph Hitler and Stalin. (Twemlow et al., in Press 2002) The Internet provides information and connections to hate or similarly oppressed views, international news, and plans and ingredients for making destructive devices, together with oversimplified formulae for success that reinforces enraged grandiose fantasies. Ichimura et al (2001) describes an excellent example: a young man who hijacked a plane, and then tried to fly the plane after years of practice on a homemade flight simulator designed from Internet information. He had failed in a competitive university and in spite

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of fanatical interest in flying planes, was never accepted for pilot training. In tape recordings of conversations in the cockpit of the plane with the captain, the cyber criminal found it quite perplexing that he was unable to really fly the plane, commenting that it surprised him since he was so good on his home flight simulator!

At home the school shooters were allowed a great deal of freedom to plan and to prepare attacks; this dismissive and permissive environment may have also been a fundamental ingredient in the evolution of this cycle of violence. None of the school shooters were ever stopped at the source (in their own homes and at school), since their containers of aggression were not functional. If a school container (teachers, administration and peer group) dismisses the social pressure and pain experienced by the prospective school shooter, the young shooter is cut off from sources of acceptance and protection, and the psychological pain is no longer endurable. Adults in a dismissive social environment not only themselves dismiss human relationships as a viable means of problem solving, but are dismissed by the budding terrorist as being a source of support.

**Antidotes to Terrorism: I Lessons from the Martial Arts**

The deeply held convictions of fanatics are frightening. Aside from the unconscious reasons for war, there are consequences of declaring war that can oversimplify both the enemy and the social context. When training blackbelts in his martial arts school, SWT would pose the following conundrum: “Who would win a fight between the reigning world heavyweight boxing champion and a homeless person in a street setting?” The intense commitment of someone with nothing to lose is clear for all to see in the war on Afghanistan. In one recent incident, half a dozen Taliban hospitalized prisoners held hundreds of other
soldiers including American Special Forces at bay before finally being routed. It is a cliché of martial arts, and common sense, that one would never fight anyone with nothing to lose.

It is our hypothesis that before war is declared, the following issues should be considered:

I. **Contempt Fuels The Enemies’ Outrage**

   For every fanatic destroyed there are a thousand waiting to take their place with the possibility of becoming martyrs. Bodansky (1999) in a detailed analysis of Osama bin Laden and his strategies states, “Perhaps the most important and lasting legacy of bin Laden is his impact on Muslim youth all over the world, for whom he is a source of inspiration” (pg. 405). Bodansky reports that one Pakistani newspaper said, “No matter wherever he is and wherever he decides to live, the number of people who love him will never lessen,” noting also that the giving of the name Osama to babies throughout the Muslim world has dramatically increased. A recent news release noted that Taliban prisoners incarcerated at the American base at Guatanamo Bay in Cuba cover many religions including Christianity with 26 countries represented. While the last word has not been said about vicious propaganda, one effect of it is by stereotyping and distorting, it adds to the potential for underestimation of the enemy in the guise of trying to mobilize feeling against that enemy. A Japanese colleague of SWT who was a small child during World War II remembers his parents telling him that they had heard that American soldiers killed and ate their own children. We believe that belittling Osama bin Laden as “the evil one,” and wanting him dead or alive as in Wild West posters, has hurt, not helped efforts to unite other nations against an otherwise highly supportable worldwide mission against terrorism.
II. Declaration Of War Inflates The Status And Grandiosity Of The Enemy, and the Resulting Corporatism Degrades Altruism

Sir Michael Howard\textsuperscript{19} noted that America had made a “natural but terrible and irrevocable error” (in declaring war on Al Quaida). He points out that the British prefer to consider such situations not as war but the mobilization of valuable resources against dangerous antisocial activity. Such “situations” can never be entirely eliminated but can be reduced to and kept at a level that does not threaten social stability. These should instead be “emergencies” fought within civil authority in a peacetime framework using espionage and without interrupting the normal tenor of civilian life. If not dignified with the status of enemy, Howard declares, “Enemies instead become criminals whose lesser status makes them easier to fight.” Benito Mussolini once said that fascism should be more properly called corporatism since it is the merger of state and corporate power; profitable wars encourage defensive narcissistic absorption when helping others becomes a secondary concern.

III. Declaration Of War Can Lead To An Oversimplified Mindset To The Enemy

Declaring a war in an atmosphere of contempt can lead to incorrect assumptions about the enemy, that the adversary is identifiable and containable and that the action will lead to decisive results. While the political impact of showing respect for the enemy may be undesirable, wars must be conducted with such respect. Expecting Osama bin Laden to be holed up in a cave waiting for martyrdom is clearly a gross underestimation. War should be concluded as quickly and decisively as possible, setting the scene after it for peace in a culture that has not been devastated physically or psychologically. After all, if genocide does

\textsuperscript{18} Berkshire Eagle 2-13-02
occur, the conquering army has an expensive, time consuming, and very difficult task before it.

Since we have now elevated Osama bin Laden and his network of Al Quaida to the status of enemy, how then would it be possible to convert this war into one that could be won? Our point is that it is necessary to adopt a code of respectful conduct for a constructive outcome. One young Vietnam Veteran told me he had the job of digging up Vietnamese graveyards to bury...American trash. The contempt implied in such actions is undoubtedly not consciously intended. It can be seen as part of a “war psychosis;” the outcome of the fantasy that the enemy can only be defeated only if every last one is destroyed.

Victoriano Crillio, a famous Secoya Chief who SWT met while exploring in the upper Amazon Valley of Ecuador, was known for his gentleness, legendary strength, and agility. He represented six tribes of the upper Amazon Valley in the Ecuadorian Parliament. A quiet and gentle voice boomed from this man of immense power and strength. He responded to my question, “What are the qualities needed to be a chief and to win a war?” He felt there were three: First is knowledge. Knowledge must be culturally relevant, based on experience, capable of being translated into common sense terms understandable to all, and useable with effective and predictable results, since in war he said that the culture of both sides must be preserved at all costs. Second is diplomacy, which he dismissed with a twinkle in his eye as the ability to get along with people you don’t like. And third and finally, is the capacity to wield a big stick with a soft voice, pointing out that the softness of the voice tempers the destructiveness and perceived justness of the stick. The stick, he said, should only be used out of love (respect in our terms). Can the compassionate gentle philosophy of this powerful
Amazon Chief whom Nietzsche would likely have called, a “Roman Caesar with Christ’s soul,” teach us something? Only if the enemy is not dehumanized.

In a project to reduce violence in a Jamaican city (Twemlow & Sacco, 1996), after two lessons in the principles and philosophy of the martial arts, one police officer while on patrol, was attacked by a man wielding a machete. His usual practice would have been to shoot the individual. He remembered, however, what he had been taught and so instead disarmed him and brought him under control utilizing talk down and joint locks. The officer determined that the man had found his wife in bed with someone else and had begun to drink rum and run amok. The policeman was proud that he had not killed this man whom he did not consider a bad person, and instead, he had been able to be helpful to him in understanding his rage and jealousy. The policeman later became a natural helper in the community in which he lived, his work being very much facilitated both by his strength, his gentleness, and by then, this legendary act of benevolent compassion.

In our dojo “there is no enemy,” is a conundrum to be understood by all black belts. The enemy from this perspective is potentially understandable rather than a monstrous subhuman species created by propaganda and oversimplification. Once the possibility of human contact with the enemy is resurrected, negotiation can begin. Since the real object of war is no fighting embodied in the Kanji—Bushido, meaning both fighting (Bushi) and not fighting (do: the way). Paradoxically, the Bushido code of conduct for war was an integral part of the training of the Samurai during the several hundred years of war in Japan with not only the goal of teaching ethical behavior and values to soldiers, we feel, but were also taught as clever strategies to handle the enemy
and win the war. This code includes “values” like: **respect, courtesy, honor, rectitude, benevolence, veracity, self-control, courage, and loyalty**. Figure 2 is a summary of how these principles can be translated into fighting strategies.

[Figure 2 about here]

In summary, from the point of view of martial arts, the role of victim and victimizer are psychological postures that necessitate a code or set of rules that involves deep knowing of your enemy and respect for the cause of the enemy. Thus, there is a mutual implied agreement with the enemy that the war is winnable and with minimal “collateral damage”. Modern warfare, mainly fought at great distances with machines, has unfortunately enabled the human element and compassion to be largely dissociated from combat.

**Antidotes to Terrorism: II A Framework for Creating Safe Connected Communities**

It is our working hypothesis that for communities to become safe havens instead of breeding grounds for fanaticism and terrorism, several conditions must be met:\(^20\):

- The presence of satisfying connections between people which in turn depend upon:
  - The quality of the leadership.
  - Shared interests, experiences and values.
  - A relatively low level of unacknowledged conflict.
  - Stable, non-threatening external conditions.

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\(^20\) Gerard Fromm, Ph.D, Erik Erikson Institute for Education and Research, Austen Riggs Center, Stockbridge, MA, assisted in these conceptualizations.
• Work connections between people depend on all of the above and a shared task considered to be worthwhile.

• A safe connected community recognizes the authority and responsibility of all as members of the community and draws upon the various strengths of community members.

• Within this space members can connect spontaneously according to their interests, but to accomplish a work task, this space must be structured into a forum for wide ranging discussion.

• Respectful, non-blaming discussion, which has a number of good outcomes:
  ▪ People develop the capacity to see the other’s point of view.
  ▪ People develop their individual voices and learn about personal responsibility.
  ▪ People learn about inter-dependence: that is, each member or sub-group can best achieve its goals by collaboration and helping to solve the problems of other individuals/sub-groups; and altruism and compassion develop hand in hand with enlightened self-interest.

• Dysfunctional communities tend to develop pathologic power dynamics among individuals and sub-groups:
  ▪ The phenomenon of “pseudospeciation,” (Erikson,E 1985, Erikson,K 1996), the tendency to view others as alien, inferior, and not-fully-human, licenses cruelty to others.
  ▪ A community fragmented by pathologic power dynamics does not develop a collective knowledge or spirit through which to address its problems.
  ▪ Unhealthy forms of escapism (drugs, perverse sexuality, etc.) occur.
- A working hypothesis about pathologic power dynamics that can be applied to communities includes the following:
  - Pathologic power dynamics are reflected in communities through the living out of complex, dysfunctional Bully-Victim-Bystander roles.
  - These three roles can be seen as representing a dissociating process; the Victim is dissociated from the community (as not-us) by the Bully on behalf of the bystanding community.
  - The Bully-Victim relationship represents a dyadic structure and the Bystanders are an abdicating Third.
  - The focus of work is with the Bystanders and the desired transformation is from Bystander to involved and committed community member/witness.
  - The intervention aims at the recognition within the large group of the dissociated element (represented by the Victim) as a part of themselves about which they are anxious, and the recognition of the dissociating process (represented by the Bully), as a defensive action for which they are responsible.

- Connected people make safe communities. These connections are restored when the fragmenting effects of dissociation processes are interrupted by grasping the meaning of this action as an effort to deal with anxiety felt by all.
  - Dissociation is a violent process and often produces violence. The goal is the transformation of brute power into passionate statement and respectful communication; this requires the survival of the container and of the task.
• In a larger sense, the cohesiveness of a community depends upon its “stabilizing systems.” Each of these systems takes up a basic aspect of the community’s developmental task (for example, health, learning, order, spirituality).

  ▪ Each stabilizing system represents a primary authorized role in the community.

  ▪ This opens the field to an examination of the community’s relationship to authority and vice versa.

  ▪ The power dynamics within a subsystem (for example, the student body of a school) are greatly affected by the power dynamics of the larger system, which contains it (for example, the power dynamics among teachers and between teachers and students).

  ▪ Symptomatic behavior within any sub-group system can be seen as a consultation-in-action to the authority structure of that stabilizing system. Symptomatic behavior is not simply a problem to be solved, but rather a dysfunctional solution, which keeps a larger, potentially more painful and more meaningful problem unseen.

 Is it possible for strangers in a community to become connected in these ways? Indeed it is. Americans pulled together dramatically in response to September 11th. There was a 30% drop in crime rate in the Bronx, although within two to three months that had returned to “normal.” People in New York City were and still are, more than usually helpful to each other and tolerant of other’s mood swings and demandingness. Stories abound about the bravery of individuals and strangers who would help each other in self-sacrificing altruistic ways: *United We Stand, God Bless*
America is still seen decorating many buildings, billboards and homes. The connected attitude of Americans is typified in an airline pilot’s September 15, 2001, preflight announcement for flight 564 bound from Denver, Colorado, to Washington, DC. He said:  

“First I want to thank you for being brave enough to fly today. The doors are now closed and we have no help from the outside for any problems that might occur inside this plane. As you could tell when you checked in, the government has made some changes to increase security in the airports. They have not, however, made any rules about what happens after those doors close. Until they do that, we have made our own rules and I want to share them with you. . . . Here is our plan and our rules. If someone or several people stand up and say they are hijacking this place, I want you all to stand up together. Then take whatever you have available to you and throw it at them. Throw it at their faces and heads so they will have to raise their hands to protect themselves. The very best protection you have against knives are the pillows and blankets. Whoever is close to these people should then try to get a blanket over their heads. Then they won’t be able to see. Once that is done, get them down and keep them there. Do not let them up. I will then land the plane at the closest place and we will take care of them. After all, there are usually only a few of them and we are two-hundred-plus strong. We will not allow them to take over this plane. I find it interesting that the U.S. Constitution begins with the words “We the people.” That’s who we are, the people, and we will not be defeated.”

The passengers were then asked to turn and introduce themselves to any strangers around them. The pilot said “For today we will consider you family. We will treat you as such and ask that you do the same with us.” Safe communities require connected and tolerant people. Figure 3 summarizes the model:

(Figure 3 about here)

Conclusions

If one accepts that the etiology of fanaticism is primarily social and on a continuum with normality, we believe a deeper psychological and psychoanalytic understanding of

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21 New Yorker, October 15, 2001, P.53
fanaticism, the fear it produces, and the difficulties in controlling it become possible. Perhaps with the exception of killing that results from primarily an internal motivation, violence is always dialectically determined. The fanaticized-fanaticizer relationships are co-created roles always embedded in a participating bystanding social context, i.e. fanaticism as we have hypothesized it, is a state of consciousness, the flames of which are fanned by the bystanding audience, i.e. the culture and context in which the battle rages. A deeper understanding of the preconscious and unconscious roots of the desire for war other than as a biological given of predatory animals is to see it resulting from group pressures and social customs. Thus, the fanaticizer and the fanaticized are mirror images of each other, each seeing the other as a victimizer and each feeling the victim of that victimization. These co-created roles create behaviors that are grossly irrational, both in developed as well as developing countries, and leaders in both worlds can unwittingly get caught up in the process. Leaders with a deeper understanding and respect for the enemy and of the implications of conflict are more likely to fight a war that can be ended and that will be minimally destructive. If it is as Barber (1995) suggests Jihad vs. McWorld, then the Bystander is the abdicating social democracy, the necessary and basic antidote, urgently needed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fanatical ideas integrated into the culture</th>
<th>Fanatical ideas not integrated into the culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purity of the believer</td>
<td>Sickness of the believer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charisma</td>
<td>Insanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God inspired wisdom</td>
<td>Satanic beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vindication of the just</td>
<td>Judgment of the damned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiring or revolutionary idea</td>
<td>Omnipotent self-inflation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen as honest and committed</td>
<td>A hypocrite and criminal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social acceptance</td>
<td>Social isolation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Figure 2

**The Bushido Approach to Winning A War**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Lesson of the Martial Way (Do)</th>
<th>Value as a Battle Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Consider all types of attackers as skilled masters</td>
<td>Better assessment and judgment of the enemy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtesy</td>
<td>“Even when you are quietly seated, not the roughest ruffian can dare make onset on your person” Ogasawara</td>
<td>Keeping a reserve of energy, maintaining strength, controlling fear and anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honor</td>
<td>Allowing the enemy to save face</td>
<td>Not provoking to the enemy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectitude (justice)</td>
<td>“To die when it is right to die, to strike when to strike is right”</td>
<td>Conveying a sense of irresistible, intent and strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>“Bushi no Nasaki” the tenderness of a warrior</td>
<td>Paradoxical surprise of the enemy, avoiding a “nothing to lose” mentality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veracity and loyalty</td>
<td>“Bushi-no-Ichi-gon” the word of the Samurai is guarantee of truthfulness</td>
<td>Allow preservation of strength and energy, courage, intense commitment of the fighter to the goal, avoidance of cognitive dissonance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-control</td>
<td>Absorbing the strike without complaint and with intelligence (giving way)</td>
<td>Stoicim, relentlessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courage</td>
<td>Endurance in the course of righteousness</td>
<td>Intense commitment to the battle, willing to die for the cause</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Isolation & Disconnection

- Corporatism
- Violent Fragmented Communities
- Cyberculture

MARTYR

- Intolerance of Diversity
- Coercive Humiliating Power Dynamics
- Dismissive Home & Social Environments

FANATIC

Social Activist

- Non-Coercive Respectful Power Dynamics

Social Acceptance: “Connected People Make Safe Communities”


