
A Nonviolent Response to September 11

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*Darkness cannot drive out darkness
Only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate;
Only love can do that.
Hate multiplies violence,
And toughness multiplies toughness
In a descending spiral of destruction...
The chain reaction of evil—
Hate begetting hate,
Wars producing more wars—
Must be broken,
Or we shall be plunged into
The darkness of annihilation.*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

What happened on Sept 11 to the American people, and especially to New Yorkers and their foreign visitors, was a crime of ineffable proportions. No moral code or religious teaching, including the prescripts of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet (the Hadith), allows for the wanton slaughter of innocent people. Such acts of terror rightly deserve universal condemnation, whether committed deliberately and directly as happened in America, or perpetrated indirectly through means known to be causing death and terror disproportionate to a just end — for example, what has happened in the case of the economic sanctions against Iraq. One act of terror, as the above words of Martin Luther King, Jr. remind us, does not justify the retaliation of another act of terror. Not only is such a response immoral but it does not make good political sense. In the words of UN Secretary General Koffi Annan, 'Cool reason and judgement are more necessary now than ever' (SBS, 2001, 26 Oct).

It has become a cliché to declare that a new type of security threat confronts the United States and other western powers, and that the world will never be the same again. Dramatic as it is, like all clichés, this sentiment contains some elements of truth worth exploring. Since the citizenry of the US and other nation-states, including Australia, are very likely to find themselves targets of future terrorist attacks, it is important that they open up a wide discussion of what might constitute an intelligent response.

The question presented to the United States (and

the rest of the world) is how to respond without committing more terror and exacerbating the problem. The US Administration has been right to demand of its critics how they would have reacted differently. To only denounce the US response may help to shed light on the problem but it provides little in the way of an enlightened solution. For valid criticism to gain substantive meaning it needs to be followed up with a proposal for an alternative course of action.

Thus within a framework of criticism and counter proposal, this article attempts to explore a nonviolent strategy that offers a more humane and arguably more successful outcome than the action hitherto taken by President George W. Bush and his aides and followed by satraps like Australia's John Howard. After pointing out the mistakes compounded by US policymakers, the article suggests how a short term and long term strategy might have been woven together and successfully implemented to counter the threat of terrorism and usher in the prospect of security for everyone. But before critically analysing the Bush response and prescribing an alternative strategy, some background observations, overlooked or buried in media reports, are presented that may help to put this highly charged subject in sharper focus.

Some factors arising out of the Sept 11 and anthrax attacks

The factors for consideration centre on the asymmetrical relationship that exists between the nation-state (the

dominant political actor of the past 350 years) and its newly acquired non-state opponent (that challenges it at its most purposeful level — the ability to guarantee the safety of its citizens).

- *A new type of threat.* While the nation-state has previously had to face numerous revolutionary challenges from within and revolutionary armies from without, it has never had to cope with a foreign force — operating inside but organised outside its territory — whose aim is punitively directed at terrorising its citizenry and destabilising the government without seeking to replace its right to rule within the territory. The implications of this unique type of enemy (well-funded, technologically skilled, organisationally decentralised, geographically dispersed and elusive, zealously dedicated, prepared for martyrdom, and potentially armed with weapons of mass destruction) mean that conventional military and undercover operations may be highly inappropriate. Effective new modes of strategic thinking to deal with the immediate security risk and to remove the deep-rooted sources of the conflict may need to be explored. Responding with heavy armour and extremely high-tech weaponry suggests the analogy of blasting a disease-bearing mosquito with a 16 inch shell. Not only does the shell fail to solve the mosquito problem — as breeding becomes more prolific — but the unfortunate choice of weaponry backfires, wreaking death and havoc on the attacker's own people.
- *Asymmetry of political power.* The West's great strength and affluence turns into weakness (as in the martial art of *jiu-jitsu*). Nuclear power plants, multi-storied buildings, shopping malls, and institutional icons like the Pentagon and the Washington Monument, present easy and vulnerable stationary targets in contrast to the shadowy swiftness, surprise and indestructibility with which the terrorist can strike. To protect its vulnerable targets the West may not only have to introduce security procedures that inconvenience citizens, but also — if it is not careful — resort to measures that undermine the very liberal heritage it is attempting to defend. The Patriots Act in the US, in conjunction with some of the Attorney General's actions, can be seen as first steps down this slippery slope. Hence what the al-Qa'ida terrorists want to do — destroy the power of Western modernism that resides in its democratic norms — may ironically be assisted by the West's excessive zeal without the ter-

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rorists firing another shot.

- *Imperialist on the receiving end.* For the first time since the 16th century, when European powers commenced their imperialist conquest of the non-European world, a group in the name of the exploited has been able to strike back with devastating effect on the exploiter's homeland. Previously all fighting had been conducted on the soil of imperialism's and neo-imperialism's victims. This being the case, it is not too surprising that the Less Developed Countries (LDCs), while having, for the most part, reservations about the means employed on September 11, have shown some ambivalence when it comes to supporting a counter campaign. A number of Muslims, notably in Pakistan and throughout the Middle East, have not concealed their delight that the West is having a small measure of its own violence brought home. The daily terror and insecurity endured for centuries by an impoverished majority living on imperialism's periphery is now being felt in the metropole of the affluent. This may mean that unless the West is prepared to acknowledge and rectify the suffering it has perpetrated, it will never again enjoy immunity from the threat of retaliatory violence.
- *Immortal vs mortal.* The new threat to Western societies and their putative allies comes not from ordinary mortals dedicated to the preservation of life and the joy of living. It comes from desperate men (and a few women) who have adopted a fundamentalist creed to explain their plight and the need to confront Western modernism, reified most sharply in America's support for Israel. They see themselves in the vanguard of a holy defensive war (*jihād*) to preserve Islamic culture and its traditions (and in the case of the Palestinians, their land) against the incursions of the infidel. In conducting suicide attacks against infidels they expect to be rewarded with martyrdom and the blessing of the Almighty. Their personal death is perceived as the victory of the immortal entering into the next world with its infinite rewards. Taking on the immortal attributes of gods or demi-gods, the terrorists attain in the minds of their followers and themselves the heroic stature of Greek gods like those portrayed in Homer's *The Iliad* and *Odyssey* — creatures divinely ordained to rise above their mere mortal adversaries. How does a worldly mortal cope with this kind of other-worldly fanatic for whom there is no death? An over-reaction that wipes out the innocent along with the guilty and undermines civil lib-

erties in the name of security, can only reward a crazed enemy with more recruits destined for paradise.

General critique

The US Government's reaction of unilaterally declaring war against Osama bin Laden, his al-Qa'ida network and any nation-state abetting terrorism, while understandable on one level as a knee-jerk catharsis for releasing pent-up national pain and anger, is on sober reflection little more than an expression of base and barbaric vengeance rooted in a national glorification of the macho tough guy. Clint Eastwood, the cowboy, moves to the centre stage of American foreign policy 'to hunt the villains down', to 'cough him (Osama bin Laden) up', to 'smoke'em out' 'dead or alive'. Tragically, engaging in acts of violent retribution by the 'goodies' against the 'baddies' — metamorphosing the Hollywood cowboy onto the big screen of world politics — is going to do little to enhance the civilised reputation of a nation with pretensions to greatness. Nor is it going to achieve the stated goal of defeating terrorism.

Notwithstanding the obvious futility of countering "bad-guy" terror with "good-guy" terror, an American tradition is being upheld that resonates with the American public (at least in the initial stage). The history of white America abounds with incidents of unbridled violence against proclaimed evil doers (Hofstadter & Wallace, 1971). Thus the puerile cowboy behaviour of a simpleton President taps into a well-defined tradition of messianic zeal. When combined with the myths of invincibility, manifest destiny, innocence, and moral superiority that permeate American culture (Commager, 1972; Summy, 1973), a heady brew of rallying around the flag is relatively easy to mobilise. Fanatical patriotism is often the initial reaction. However, for the long haul Americans have another, more sober and noble, tradition on which they can draw and which the rest of the world can help nourish — one that articulates nonviolence, decency and compassion for 'the other' (Lynd, 1966; True, 1995; Paige, 2002).

Unfortunately, many months after the September 11th tragedy, there is not even a glimmer of sagacity emanating from the White House and only the embryo of a massive peace movement has thus far emerged to effectively challenge its assumptions and actions.¹ Rational assessment has yet to replace mindless patriot-

ism. Indeed, the war of 'infinite justice' has been extended to threats against an 'axis of evil' — first confined to three countries, but subsequently doubled to six (*New York Times*, 2002, 7 May). What prevails is the same biblical 'eye for eye, tooth for tooth' mentality (Leviticus, chap. 24, ver. 20) that continues to define the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. One would think political leaders who resort repeatedly to acts of terror would see the strategic sterility of their thinking — how crass and self-

defeating it is in the long run. The US leadership is well aware of the dead-end nature of the spiralling violence *cum* terror in the Middle East. Yet while it cautions the Israelis and condemns the Palestinians for their short-sightedness, it fails to see the mote in its own eye.

The administration continues to go out of its way to stoke the fires of hatred in the American people. Its imagery, as already noted, appeals to ingrained values. A cynical observer might say that this was done for reasons of crude political expediency. My own assessment is that the situation is grimmer than that, for while the administration has certainly reaped immediate domestic political benefits, the real tragedy is that the

policymakers sincerely believe in what they are doing. These are the 'true believers' who subscribe uncritically to the doctrine that successful policymaking comes from a position of military strength, and, more significantly, from a willingness to use it long before exhausting all the available nonviolent options. They take pride in a military whose slogan reads, 'Persuasive in peace, Invincible in war.' It is as if these two conditions merge into one. Therefore, depicting the aftermath of September 11 in terms of good versus evil, with righteous America embarking on a 'crusade' to effect 'infinite justice', was not some opportunistic exercise but a frightening indication of the quality of intellectual perspicacity and moral sensitivity — or lack thereof — that prevails at the highest echelon of the most lethal state in the history of humankind. The 'rogue state' that endangers us all — including the victimised — turns out in the end to be the American colossus itself. The recently self-proclaimed Bush doctrine gives the US the exclusive right in its 'war against terrorism' to unilaterally take pre-emptive action anywhere in the world with whatever means are necessary. A classified Pentagon report, provided to Congress in January 2002, disclosed that the President has ordered the preparation of plans for nuclear attacks on at least seven countries and the building of smaller nuclear weap-

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ons for use on the battlefield. Three contingencies are cited that justify the US taking these steps: (1) the selected targets are capable of withstanding non-atomic attacks; (2) retaliation is needed because the enemy has launched a nuclear, chemical or biological attack in a critical area; and (3) surprise military developments have arisen (US lists, 2002).

While it may be difficult to be humble when one is so powerful, other colossi have preceded America. And history records their inevitable decline and fall. Nothing exists to suggest that America will somehow escape a similar fate. The myth of American 'exceptionalism' — that a nation was conceived that transcends history (McKay, 1994, pp. 42-46; Shannon, 1982) — is exactly that...a myth (Bell, 1975). Indeed, the Americans are doing their best at the moment to accelerate the demise of their global empire. They are alienating themselves from much of the world, not only the impoverished of the so-called 'Third World' but the disenchanted of the 'First World' who reject a simplistic binary definition of world politics, and the US right to define the parameters. If the leadership persists in its willingness to act alone against an 'axis of evil', it will soon discover the shock lesson that a colossus also needs an axis of its own.

The US rulers are failing to observe a cardinal political maxim: No empire can long survive — not even one that is militarily and economically the most powerful the world has ever seen — if the people whom it dominates and exploits refuse to remain compliant and servile. While there are factors that sometimes militate against people exercising their intrinsic collective power, the basic principle can be postulated that the American empire theoretically depends more on the rest of the world than the world on it. Thus for pragmatic reasons alone, its leaders can ill afford to ignore the interests and sensibilities of the outside world. For the President to position himself as world CEO and expound the doctrine 'if you are not with us, you are with the terrorists,' destines the nation for more humiliation, the shock of political impotence, and ultimately defeat.

Specific criticisms

Point no. 1: A strategy that fights terror with greater terror (the UN reports that more innocent Afghans have died from American bombing than Americans on September 11) is not going to gain the high moral ground. Nor is it going to create a more secure world. As one of the latest songs of the rap group Spearhead proclaims: 'You can bomb the world to pieces, but you can't bomb

it into peace.'

Point no. 2 follows on: Bombing a wide section of people in order to wipe out a select band of outlaws who are scattered throughout the general population, plays directly into the hands of the terrorists. Indeed, what America's leaders have done is exactly the best response that bin Laden could have hoped for. They have taken his bait. By arrogantly and unilaterally (except for consulting Britain) exercising their military and political power, they have brought to the surface some of the structural violence that previously had been concealed. The family closet has now been opened, exposing skeletons of brutal violence. In the process the terrorists' potential supporters, the dispossessed, begin to clearly see the nature of the colossus that has been suppressing them — its ignorance, egotism and cruelty, and how these qualities can be transformed into vulnerability

when confronted by a consciously united opposition.

Point no. 3 is another corollary: The unilateral over-reaction of the US giant has created a no-lose situation for bin Laden, Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar, and the al-Qa'ida network. If they elude their "Great Satan" and survive, they have foiled the greatest war machine of all time. If they are captured or killed, they triumph through martyrdom. In either case they have become symbols for the mobilisation of more suicide terrorists.

Point no. 4: The arrogance of unilateralism deprives the surviving superpower of support from its potential allies. If it wants to eradicate terrorism, then it must engage in extensive coalition-building of partners that it treats with respect and equality. Armed police support is helpful, but arguably most beneficial is the extensive sharing of intelligence and cooperation in opening up the banking system. The US must gain the collaboration of countries that empathise with the pain it has suffered but stop short of endorsing the self-righteousness and egocentricism associated with its outbursts of *hubris*. The blind hatred and unbridled desire for vengeance may be explainable but it lacks justification to those outside the immediate experience who are more attuned to complexity and subtlety than drawn to the reductionism of a black/white dichotomy. Simple-mindedness, when mixed with *hubris*, has been the undoing of many political figures long before the younger Bush stepped into the spotlight.

His administration needs to retreat from the long litany of unilateralist messages it has been delivering ever since it gained office — for instance, its rejection of the Kyoto climatic treaty, its willingness to violate the bio-

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logical treaty, its decision to 'unsign' former President Clinton's signing of the 1998 Treaty of Rome establishing a permanent International Criminal Court, its determination to dispense with the 1972 ABM Treaty in order to proceed with an anti-missile defence system, its request of Congress to put the nation on a war footing by increasing the defence budget 12%, its support for heavy domestic farm subsidies in contravention of its own call for international free trade and in violation of the World Trade Organisation's founding principles — all reflections of a bullying posture doomed to haunt the nation in its long-term need for durable and dependable allies.

Point No. 5: Gaining the support of the leadership in Muslim states poses a dilemma for both the Muslim rulers and the US government. If the rulers of states with large Muslim majorities whole-heartedly endorse the Bush anti-terrorism campaign, their action may disaffect large sections of their population and destabilise or even bring down their governments; on the other hand, if they demonstrate non-cooperation, it is likely to evoke a hostile reaction from the US that would endanger their regime. They may be unrewarded or punished economically, ignored in world economic fora, diplomatically ostracised, and/or they may be relegated to the pariah status of belonging to the 'axis of evil.' The case of the relatively liberal Iranian government stands out in this respect. The assertion 'you're either with us or against us' leaves little room for the subtle manoeuvring of Muslim states to protect their genuine political interests.

However, the dilemma of the Muslim regime does not end there, because many see themselves as having a vested interest in suppressing terrorism. Their adoption of Western life styles has made them prime targets of the fundamentalists. Their problems are further compounded due to the mounting Israeli/Palestinian crisis. Some sort of response is required, yet it is difficult to placate both the Americans and the aroused militants within one's own borders. In all probability it is the Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, who is most favourably placed to endorse the Bush approach to eradicating terrorism. Defining terrorism as any armed attack on civilians, Mahathir insists that 'Muslims everywhere must condemn terrorism once it is clearly defined' (Quoted in Sheridan, 2002, p. 15). He can voice such a stand, which promises to reap rich rewards from the US, only because extreme fundamentalism is relatively dormant within Malaysia. Most Muslim politicians do not enjoy the same luxury — a limitation the US needs to fully appreciate before alienating beyond rectification the leadership in critical countries like Saudi Arabia and

Egypt.

At the same time the US should refrain from indiscriminately handing out largesse to regimes, simply because they cooperate in the 'war against terrorism'. Their definition of terrorism may extend to any form of dissent raised against their regime, as is happening in Uzbekistan.² In this unfortunate country brutal suppression and torture are meted out to anyone daring to voice a criticism of the government's actions. Yet the US (and the rest of the world) choose to ignore Uzbekistan's gross violations of human rights, ostensibly because its airfields and supply bases are needed for the conduct of the war in Afghanistan. Moreover, the regime's harsh treatment of its Islamic fundamentalists is easily overlooked as a necessary tactic in the greater war against terrorism. (Unreported, 2002).

'You can bomb the world to pieces, but you can't bomb it into peace'

Short term response of nonviolence

To develop a coalition that will endure and have substance, it must be built on a firm foundation that is both nonviolent in rhetoric and in action. On the negative side of the rhetorical, it does **not** unilaterally proclaim a declaration of war against terrorism; it does **not** even seek a joint declaration of war from the rest of the world. Legally war can only be declared by one putative state or concert of states against another putative state or concert of states. An individual or group without credible pretensions to statehood cannot be a party to war. Instead, it engages in violent conflict which is usually regarded by the state against which it is directed as an act of criminality. This, in effect, is what happened to the United States; it was the victim of a most vile crime, and to dignify it with a declaration of war is tantamount to bestowing the credibility of state legitimacy upon the criminals.³

There is only one course of politically prudent action to pursue: acknowledge the deed as the worse **crime** ever committed in the US, and then aggregate all one's resources to rally the support of the international community in tracking down the suspect or suspects until they are legally apprehended. This entails collecting evidence (or intelligence to put it in the vernacular of the state), and since the crime has international dimensions, working within the framework of international law and its recognised procedures. Due to the special nature of this crime and the extent to which international cooperation is required, the police action in capturing and rounding-up the suspects should be conducted through the United Nations. In short, a law enforcement issue with national security implications should be addressed through international institutions.

To initiate the process the first diplomatic step should be to enlist the concrete (in contrast to the rhetorical) support of the world community. To act as a unipolar power, declaring a war in which 'you are either with us or against us' and then embarking on a military operation, may serve as a cathartic outlet for national frustration, but it will not gain many allies, even in a highly worthy cause. And a fundamental objective must be to secure universal or at least widespread backing for the police action.

The Dean of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Joseph Nye, stresses the point that America cannot go it alone against terrorism; nor can it act as an economic hegemon or control the growing transnational relations of non-governmental bodies. 'Any retreat,' he notes, 'to a traditional focus on unipolarity, hegemony, sovereignty and unilateralism will fail to produce the right outcomes' (2002a, p. 4). The problem with terrorism is that it operates outside the conventional sphere of military power. To put it in Nye's words:

(T)he metaphor of war should not blind us to the fact that suppressing terrorism will take years of patient, unspectacular civilian co-operation with other countries. The military success in Afghanistan dealt with the easiest part of the problem, and al-Qu'aida retains cells in some 50 countries. Rather than proving the unilateralists' point, the partial nature of the success in Afghanistan illustrates the continuing need for cooperation (2002b, p. 24).

Author Salmon Rushdie argues along the same lines. He is reported to have warned the US that now 'is not the time to go it alone.' Its unilateral military response breeds anti-Americanism, especially amongst Arabs and Muslims who in the face of Western dominance are experiencing a great sense of impotence (Kelly, 2002).

Hence the first parts of a nonviolence strategy are to see September 11 as a criminal act (not calling for a declaration of war) and from there to commence the process of coalition-building to capture the criminals and bring them to justice. The collection of shared evidence that points toward certain suspects should be brought before the UN and disclosed to the entire world. The next step is to have an international tribunal set up to deal with any suspects charged by the UN; and it is before this tribunal that appeals for extradition can be lodged, compelling countries that are harbouring the suspects to turn them over to the special terrorism tribunal for a fair trial. Failure of a country to comply for what-

ever reason would effect a UN police action not only to apprehend the criminals but to bring to justice anyone acting in the role of an accessory, including governmental leaders.

Admittedly, achieving the unity for such a strategy will not be easy. There are many constituencies that either openly or silently applaud what happened to the US. This has already been noted in a preceding passage. Unfortunately, the course of action that has been taken has given impetus to the growth of these constituencies. While the Taliban has been deposed, its heirs and the dispossessed of the world are building up pressures of greater anger that are likely to be released in future attacks on American cities resulting in casualties, not in thousands but in hundreds of thousands, perhaps even in millions. This is the scenario laid out at a recent security forum at Harvard (Kelly, 2002) and later confirmed by Vice-President Dick Cheney on a US Sunday talkshow (Eccleston, 2002). Therefore, everything possible should be done to lessen the cultivating of so much hatred.

When the UN police force captures accused suspects (some persons will be killed, including the police, as happens in domestic police raids), the accused will be handed over for prosecution before the previously designated International Court of Justice. None of this will be easy, and critics can no doubt raise numerous objections. Nonetheless, in response it can be said that the alternative, which we are currently witnessing, augurs a far worse prospect.

Another criticism — in this case one which the nonviolent purist might raise — is that the use of violent police work does not constitute a nonviolent action. To this I can only respond that while generically they may be correct, in order to maintain a peaceful world (like a peaceful nation) criminals (who lamentably do exist) must be brought to justice, and sometimes violence becomes the instrument of last resort. The violent action, however, is always undertaken with the proviso that it is confined to defence when physically attacked or clearly threatened with a menacing attack. Thus only when the suspect violently resists arrest can there be a physical transgression of the nonviolent ethic. Otherwise the exercise is conducted nonviolently in deed, as well as in spirit, at all times.

In conjunction with the forging of a nonviolent strategy featuring police and court actions whose effectiveness depends on the creation of a wide coalition, there

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are paradoxically some unilateral actions that the US should be encouraged to initiate. They all take the form of restraints. The US should cutback on its military subsidies for Israel until that state returns the occupied territories and no longer enforces its aggression with terror against the Palestinians. The US can support Israel's legitimate security concerns by acting as its ultimate guarantor.

Still in the Middle East, the US should withdraw its military forces based in Saudi Arabia. They do not stabilise the region. They even pose a threat to the House of Saud which could suddenly disintegrate from internal protests, as so often happens to highly armed authoritarian regimes — to wit, the shah of Iran, President Marcos of the Philippines, President Milosovic of Serbia, and the communist governments in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (all of which primarily succumbed to the power of nonviolence). There are also cutbacks to be made to the US military budget, to existing stockpiles of weapons and to the development of new high tech instruments of warfare. A special emphasis should be placed on controlling, with a view to abolishing, the very profitable trade in armaments. However, as Paul Rogers argues:

None of the major arms exporting countries has seriously addressed...the conversion of defence industries to civil production. Until this begins to get under way, efforts to erect ethical foreign policies towards arms sales will have little effect (2000, p. 121).

If a strategy of US armament restraint, combined with the initiation of an international law enforcement agency to capture terrorist suspects for questioning and then arraigning them for possible prosecution, still seems highly untenable (given the prevailing paradigm of preserving national sovereignty at all costs), certainly there can be no objection to trying the following minimalist, first step, proposed by Majid Tehranian, head of the TODA Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research. He suggests:

At this historical juncture, what the world needs is not another state-centered alliance to promote particular national or regional interests. What the world desperately needs now is a transnational civil-society movement for global peace and democracy vis-a-vis the polarized world politics of state and non-state terrorism. To address the current crisis, world political and moral leaders should get together. To name only a few, such leaders may include Kofi Anan, Nelson Mandela, Mary Robinson, Vaclav Havel, Abdul Rahman Wahid, Mohammad Khatami, Desmond Tutu, Daisaku Ikeda, Hans Kung, Mikhail Gorbachev, Jose Ramos-Horta, Aung Sun Suu Kyi, Dalai Lama, Jody Williams, Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Joseph Rotblat, Elie Wiesel, and Oscar Arias (mostly

Nobel Peace Laureates). Unless such leaders can propose alternative voices and policies to the shrill voices on the extreme right or the left, the world will have no moral and political center on which to rely (Tehranian, 2002).

Despite the fact that the Bush administration is most unlikely to change freely the basics of its strategy, the Tehranian proposal has much to offer as an initial step for putting the world back on a sane track. The group of highly respected persons he has nominated would command the international attention to open up an earnest debate. Afterwards, the short-to-medium nonviolent strategy set out above, if accepted by such a conclave, would enjoy the credibility to represent a truly viable alternative for an international movement to adopt.

Long term response of nonviolence

A long term strategy must be directed, to the fullest extent possible, at the root causes of the terrorism. By removing the causes, it vitiates the constituency from which Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qu'aida forces, as well as other terrorist groups, recruit members into the network. The potential new members constitute the upper and middle classes in the Arab and Muslim world and the *declassé* of the Third World. The former are attracted to Islamic fundamentalism because they see it as an antidote to the crass materialism and secularism associated with Western modernism. The evil of the 'Great Satan' has been diffused throughout the world. It threatens to destroy a rich historic culture and specifically to deprive them of their sense of identity. The 'Great Satan's work is most flagitiously exhibited in the expulsion of the Palestinians from their Homeland. Therefore any country that sides with the Jews and Americans becomes an immediate target of Islamic terrorism. As bin Laden trumpeted on a recent video clip:

The war is between us and the Jews. Any country that steps into the same trench as the Jews has only herself to blame....I wish I would go to jihad and die (Gadher & Eccleston, 2002, p. 5).

The US administration may be reluctant to grasp the implication of such fanatical *hubris*, but it points to a truth they need to acknowledge. That same truth was expressed — but without the same insolence and enmity — by a Saudi prince when he presented Mayor Giuliani of New York City with a cheque for over one million US dollars to help relieve the suffering that followed the September 11 attack. While the two men gazed out over the rubble where once the Twin Towers stood, the prince added (perhaps not judiciously but sincerely) that he hoped the US would soon come to have a more even-handed approach to the Palestinian question. The remark so enraged Mayor Giuliani that he publicly re-

jected the donation on the spot. Not only was his reaction, in my opinion, an extremely rude and most ungracious response to what was intended to be a genuine expression of sympathy, but it indicates the long way the American elite have to go before they come to appreciate that other people have different perspectives from which some Americans, if they showed some tolerance, might be able to learn something.

The second category of new recruits for terrorism — the two billion victims of globalisation living on \$2 a day or less (Henderson, 2001) — share the same economic fate as the Palestinians. In addition, some share the religious affinity. The world's dispossessed constitute a force that not only can be tapped into for an unlimited supply of suicidal bombers but those that do not become terrorists, for whatever reason, represent a sizeable body of sympathisers and sideline spectators ready to offer moral and logistical support. If the UN member-states, on the other hand, were able to come together and seriously commit themselves to ending world poverty, the dispossessed could conceivably even become a positive force in the struggle against terrorism. Metaphorically, the head or terrorist leadership would be severed from its body, the world's poor.

Far greater crimes against humanity are committed EVERY DAY than what occurred on that ONE DAY of September 11, but the principal culprits, the elites of America and Europe, go virtually unchallenged. Yet they put in place policies that lead to the deaths from malnutrition of 40,000 babies every day in the Third World (Barash, 1991, p. 528). The gap between rich and poor is growing every year, and with it comes the destruction of peoples lives, their land, and their culture. Most of this violence falls upon those living in the LDCs. For the West to reverse the human dysfunctionality of globalisation and focus on the human needs of all the world's people, a nonviolent movement of massive global proportions will have to come from the grassroots. Re-structuring of the global system will not self-generate from the transnational corporations (TNCs). Nor is it likely that governments will be in the forefront of radical change.

The first actions will probably depend on the concerned people in the affluent nations because they have the human and material resources necessary to ignite

such a movement. But eventually it will have to be activated throughout the world, and the leadership ultimately

emanate from the victims. What the nonviolent activists of the First World can do is pressure their governments to skew their budgets away from excessive military outlays and the granting of tax benefits and outright subsidies to the privileged class. From the savings obtained in this manner a national tithe could be allocated for UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. The latter would, among other things, concentrate on the eradication of poverty, developing programs that are planned and controlled by the poor themselves. Besides the role of providing monies and technical assistance for sustainable development, the First World can greatly assist the Third to become self-sufficient by genuinely opening up free trade around the globe, a policy long advocated by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Devel-

opment (UNCTAD) (Chomsky, 1999; Adams, 1993; Coote, 1992; Watkins, 1998).

All of this is far removed from what the US leadership is currently thinking. Indeed, as Jan Oberg commented about the president's State of the Union address in January, not a word was mentioned,

that the US is willing to help alleviate world poverty, AIDS, and health and sanitation problems for the world's underprivileged. Expressions such as "basic human needs", "global development", "global environment problems" are not mentioned once.... There is no mention of the economic power concentration in Multinational Corporations (MNCs), or of the military-industrial complex which President Eisenhower once upon a time had the courage to mention as a problem. Finally, the word democracy is absent (2002).

In order to remove the conditions that breed success for terrorism, the nonviolent movement needs to galvanise its efforts behind NGOs already committed to overcoming poverty and repression. It should support groups whose aim is to remove the divide that sees one-fifth of the world's population living in wealth and material splendour (surpassing the opulence of any Eastern potentate of old) while two-fifths of the world are submerged in abject poverty and another two-fifths are strug-

The first parts of a nonviolence strategy are to see September 11 as a criminal act (not calling for a declaration of war) and from there to commence the process of coalition-building to capture the criminals and bring them to justice before an international court

gling desperately to barely maintain a decent life above the poverty line (Hurrell & Woods, 1999; Gorringer, 1999; George, 1999).

The type of program that the nonviolent movement wants to support is that recently launched by OXFAM International to make trade fair to all nations. According to a report released by OXFAM in early April, only one country, New Zealand, has fully opened its markets to all products exported by the LDCs. The report claims:

When developing countries export to rich country markets, they face tariff barriers that are four times higher than those encountered by rich countries.

Those barriers cost them \$100 billion a year — twice as much as they receive in aid (OXFAM, 2002, p. 5). The World Trade Organisation is seen as a big part of the problem because of its ‘bias in favour of the self-interest of rich countries and big corporations’ (p. 6). If Africa, East Asia, South Asia and Latin America were able to increase their share of world exports by a mere one per cent, 128 million people would be lifted out of poverty. A five per cent raise would decrease poverty by almost a billion people. The biggest irony is that while the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are constantly pressuring the poor countries to open their markets, the US, Canada, Japan and the EU are either subsidising or imposing tariff barriers on their agricultural and textile products that shut down their markets to outside trade. OXFAM’s remedy is to apply pressure on First World governments to honour their free trade principles. It also wants to create international commodity institutions to promote diversification and end oversupply in order to raise the price of commodities.

Opening up trade is only one way that concerned NGOs are campaigning to close the wealth/poverty divide. Many are also calling for debt cancellation free of conditions. Setting good governance and socially just conditions for the LDCs to meet before receiving relief is hardly justified when the creditor nations have themselves for decades been restricting development opportunities.

Among the threats LDCs constantly face is a sudden economic downturn from speculation in the currency and bond markets. Trading can reach as high as \$1.5 trillion dollars a day. To control the excesses of such short-term speculation and provide funds that could be used to reduce poverty and assist in development, the Tobin tax — named after the late James Tobin, a Nobel Laureate — has been proposed. It would be levied on each transaction. A rate of one-quarter of one per cent

it is estimated would bring in revenues of well over US\$100 billion annually (Rogers, 2000, p. 122).

Nuclear activity between 1943 and 1990 has or will cause 9.6 million deaths and 20.9 million serious casualties

Other groups in the affluent countries to whom nonviolent support can be rendered include labour unions that are attempting to raise the appalling working conditions and low wages paid in most of the LDCs. In particular, efforts need to be directed toward helping the International Labor Office strengthen its programme of protecting workers’ rights and ending the wage slavery of children.

Beyond its strategy of pressuring governments and supporting NGOs engaged in reducing the gross inequalities

of wealth, the nonviolent movement should focus its attention on directly educating the public in both the First and Third Worlds about the full impact of neoliberalism’s structural violence. Through social activism — such as recently occurred in Seattle, Quebec, Genoa and Melbourne — people not only inform others. In the process they also reclaim their own rights as citizens rather than as consumers. They begin a redefinition of democracy as a global movement meeting everyone’s human needs, not a global market confined to serving an elite’s greed. But experimenting with new possibilities and creating a people-oriented paradigm for all demands that the old paradigm is first understood and discarded. That task becomes one of overcoming the corporate control of public opinion and bringing to light the latent terrorism that has been going on for decades against the poor.

It is information like the following that the movement needs to make known and have discussed:

- US economic projection abroad, accompanied by political and military strong-arm measures, led the International Court of Justice to condemn ‘the US for “unlawful use of force” (against Nicaragua), ordering Washington to cease its international terrorism, violation of treaties, and illegal economic warfare, and to pay substantial reparations’ (Chomsky, 2000, p. 73). Needless to say, the US refused to recognise the Court’s legitimacy, roundly denouncing it as a ‘hostile forum.’ Indeed, in defiance the US reacted by accelerating its campaign of terror.
- Since March 1960, the US has been engaged in a covert and sometimes open attempt to overthrow the government of Cuba and assassinate its president, but ‘in such a manner,’ cites Chomsky, ‘as to avoid any appearance of US intervention’ (2000, p. 80). Incredibly, Washington now has the gall to refer to Cuba as part of an ‘axis of evil.’
- It is widely acknowledged today that the US government, through the surreptitious initiatives of its Sec-

retary of State Henry Kissinger and the clandestine operations of the CIA, was deeply involved in the 1973 bloody overthrow of Chile's democratically elected socialist government of President Salvador Allende. What is not so well known is that the day of this fateful coup, which marked the beginning of the 17 year 'reign of terror' of self-proclaimed President Augusto Pinochet, was coincidentally the morning of September 11.

- Terrorism has long been an instrument for advancing the 'national interest' as defined by America's ruling class. While US laws provide severe penalties for the crime of terrorism, 'one will find no wording that exempts "the architects of power" from punishment for their exercises of state terror, not to speak of their monstrous clients....Suharto, Saddam Hussein, Mobutu, Noriega, and others great and small' (Chomsky, 2000, p. 146).
- The death toll from the collapse of the Trade Towers, the Pennsylvania plane crash and the strike on the Pentagon is reported at around 3,000, a ghastly tragedy by any reckoning. Yet, as already noted, it pales into insignificance when compared to the number of poor children that die every day from malnutrition and preventative diseases related primarily to the economic decisions of Western elites. These daily deaths, which number about 13 times more than the September 11 fatalities, raise barely a murmur of objection in the globally controlled media. Nor has the mass media seen fit to publish some startling figures released by the UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR). Its research, as Rosalie Bertell conservatively extrapolates, indicates that radiation traced to all nuclear activity between 1943 and 1990 has or will cause 9.6 million deaths and 20.9 million serious casualties. Putting this death toll statistic in perspective, Dr. Bertell notes it comes to more than 3,000 times the number of people who died on September 11 (2002). The nuclear powers, of course, are the wealthy nations. It is their rich and powerful elites who have been able to commit such an ineffable crime of terror against the vulnerable of the world with complete impunity.

The number of gross injustices that the West commits in the name of its citizens is almost endless — far, far too many to catalogue in this article. Suffice it to say the evidence of Western violence against the poor and vulnerable in pursuit of narrow political and economic interests is well recorded in countless books, films and documents. It is not restricted solely to the writings of assiduous researchers like Noam Chomsky and Rosalie Bertell.

The challenge for nonviolent activists is to make

this information available to the general public and have it take hold. Only when the world's consciousness reaches a critical mass will the gravity of the problem be transformed into effective mass action. Only then will the enormous hidden terror that breeds the visible suicide terror be contained or ended.

Acting on the measured reflection that a global society more just and more free is possible — one that will no longer nurture into adulthood suicide bombers in the same way the world no longer socialises human beings into becoming owners of chattel slaves — is a task reserved for the grassroots. To wait for such a society to be handed down by the privileged and powerful falls into the realm of fantasy. It will have to be claimed and struggled for nonviolently.

Conclusion

The alternative strategy adumbrated in this article contains within itself the kind of world worth striving for. It answers to life triumphing over death, rejecting the Bush path of my righteous sword⁴ overpowering your evil terror. It seeks to address the root causes of terror rather than limit its response to suppressing the manifest symptoms. It aims to avoid the pitfall of piling retributive justice upon retributive justice. Down that path, as Martin Luther King so eloquently proclaims in the passage leading into this article, lies 'a descending spiral of destruction...the chain reaction of evil...(which) must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the darkness of annihilation.' With weapons of ever increasing destruction available to an ever increasing number of groups and individuals, failure to heed King's warning can mean nothing less than the eventual extinction of the human race.

Without, however, wanting to sound too apocalyptic, it should be obvious that a strategy of compassion and nonviolence applied with the judgement of good sense offers the best prospects for the defeat of hate and its manifestation of terrorism. The broad contours of such a strategy have been attempted in this article. Now I welcome your critical and constructive comments. I can be reached by snail mail at School of Political Science and International Studies, University of Queensland 4072, or on email <r.summy@mailbox.uq.edu.au

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Endnotes

- 1 The demonstrations that greeted President Bush during his visits to Rome, Berlin and Paris are indicative of the genesis of a movement that may be sustained. It is also significant of an undercurrent of protest that Michael Moore's book, *Stupid White Men*, should have topped the *NY Times* non-fiction best sellers' list.
2. Uzbekistan was the only state besides Israel to support the US rejection of a November 1996 General Assembly resolution calling for an end to the American embargo on Cuba. Thus the debt of turning a blind eye to Uzbekistan atrocities goes back a number of years.
3. The word 'war' is often used in rhetorical discourse such as in 'war on poverty' and 'war on crime', but its usage in these cases does not conflict with a legal definition that carries enormous political significance. Thus when a sovereign state is challenged for sovereign control within its borders, it demeans its opponents with the epithet of 'rebel' or 'outlaw'.
4. The use of the metaphor 'righteous sword' does not fall outside the American idiom. It is given full rein in the stirring words of the ever popular Battle Hymn of the Republic: 'Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord; He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword; His truth is marching on.' And it concludes with the call that 'As He (Christ) died to make men holy, let us die to make men free.' In the great battle of freedom God's sword is on our side. But does this mean that the concept of 'His terrible swift sword' is just another expression for a Christian 'jihad'?

Author

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