

The Campaign of Fear

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The word terrorism, which sparks imagery and emotion throughout the world, has now become a buzzword that contemporary society has unfortunately inherited post 9/11; although I doubt that most who use the word so often give much thought to what actually constitutes terrorism. More dangerously however, it seems that to many, the word terror means opportunity. In our everyday life since the tragedy at New York, the audience of this pop culture is overwhelmed with information on terrorism that merely acts as a cloaked means to an ends.

Brilliant marketers, both in government and in corporate regimes, have learned how to benefit from a formula that relies on the fears of their populous. This formula of fear mongering is no different than that same strategy that was used in the era of the Cold War, but with this generation's extensive abilities and accessibility of so many various forms of communication and media makes the actual delivery of this propaganda so subtle that detection becomes more and more difficult. The truth must be sifted for, but in a society that is quite consumed by the spell of complicity; such truth searching would require some effort and independent thought. This is something we simply are not groomed for, unless of course you regularly read my columns (wink wink).

One of the more obvious of these campaigns that use a fear mongering rhetoric to achieve its objectives is this new anti-SUV campaign, which attempts to guilt SUV owners into believing that they are inadvertently sponsoring terrorism. I couldn't help but laugh at the campaign, which strongly resembles the also humorous Anti-Drug campaign, which also suggests that drug dealers and users are sponsoring terrorism. I find it so funny that no one puts out commercials on how weapons manufacturing is sponsoring terrorism. Surely the millions of guns that are sold all over the world by US companies find their way into terrorist hands. It's not like SUV's are bred for death, unlike an American made M-16, which is in fact an instrument of death.

While I strongly agree with the need to lower fuel emissions and the long awaited introduction of electric hybrid vehicles, portraying SUV owners as terror supporters to the masses in order to create some kind of popular backlash only makes things worse. Fortunately, the campaign wasn't so subtle and its absurdity was easily detectable. If anti-SUV folk or environmentalists want SUV's off the road because of their outrageous fuel emissions and consumption, perhaps they should contemplate a different campaign that actually addresses these concerns. Lest we see a new commercial that spotlights the evil relations between terrorism and hydro electricity, which by the way I'm sure is used at times by Al Queda operatives.

A more local example of the use of this campaign of fear through the media is the recent ink spent on Akwesasne in mainstream media. Some two weeks ago, an article ran in the New York Daily News, which insinuated that five Al Queda terrorist operatives possibly infiltrated the US/Canadian border at Akwesasne. Because of the smuggling

issue there, one automatically associates the two issues when reading this tabloid trash. Soon after its print circulation, even CNN ran a quick blurb on the story. It was soon discovered that the information of these 5 infiltrators entering the US was false, but the damage was already done.

Since 9/11 and the War on Terror, most Kanien'kehá:ka knew it would only be a matter of time before our Mohawk communities, particularly Akwesasne, would be targeted by the Government of Canada and the United States as potential hotspots. This one article not only painted all Mohawks with one incriminating brush in the eyes of the world, but more importantly it gives these colonial regimes the ammunition they need to pursue their plans for a new ultra-authoritarian border protocol; thoroughly affecting Akwesasne residents.

In George Orwell's classic novel *1984*, the author had painted a grim and horrifying picture of a possible future depicting a population controlled by fear. Using a fictitious nation and obvious metaphors, the book contemplated what the future could hold for communist nations in post-Stalin years. If campaigns using fear and panic, particularly those used by state agencies, a future resembling that of Orwell's vision is quite possible. In a sense such a society would be terrorist in nature, as they create a climate a fear, and conformity through that fear. I guess we'll wait and see.

Ever onward!