

## ***The Terror that Terror Produces***

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Avoiding the crisis in the Middle East is as impossible as peace finding its way there. In fact, this author cannot help but find the recent events in Palestine appear in his dreams. Perhaps in a type of therapeutic gesture, I will relay my take on the bombardment of propaganda and rhetoric that the media has released upon the people of the world regarding concepts of peace and terror. Perhaps, when I write this or you read this, a possible relation can be made between the similarities of the conflict in the Middle East and our struggle here in North America.

On the subject of terrorism, which is certainly a buzzword these days, the people of world should be clear on what exactly it is; so that resistance and freedom fighters can be distinguished apart from the terrorist label. Israel has merely capitalized on the United States' play on words and labelled all Palestinian resistance as terrorism. Therefore, let us identify terrorism as the act of inflicting fear and panic amongst a population through a deadly campaign where civilians are targets of violent aggression. This concept must be completely understood and appreciated so that other people involved in resisting oppression cannot be mislabelled as terrorists as opposed to revolutionaries. Another absolute element of terrorism is that the act of such can never achieve peace.

Surely the act of suicide bombings, given the definition above, are acts of terrorism and must be stopped in order for peace to even be contemplated by Israel. However, it will cease to be terrorism when extremist groups like Hamas begin to attack military targets as opposed to civilians. Whether someone pulls the trigger of an American made M-16 or uses their body as a walking bomb, death is death and no distinction should be made between either instruments of killing between two armies. All oppressed peoples have the right to defend themselves through armed resistance if necessary.

Ariel Sharon continuously states that his recent military expeditions into Palestinian occupied territories is solely to annihilate the so-called terrorist insurgents that hide among them, but what Sharon fails to realize is that by leaning its military might upon the Palestinian people creates an atmosphere of desperation among those who fail to see any hope left in their cause. It is this desperation that breeds suicide bombers and Israel's recent offensives will only inspire a whole new generation of suicide bombers with dreams of becoming martyrs.

Another unrealistic maneuver demanded by Sharon, and even by US Secretary of State Powell, is for Chairman Arafat to "stop" terrorist attacks upon Israelis. Because US media have portrayed the Palestinian leader as a surreal symbol of terror, they have now created an expectant TV audience who believe that if he chose to do so, Arafat could snap his fingers and stop all terrorist attacks instantly. The truth is that Arafat has no real influence over the extremist elements who actually commit these terrorist acts. In fact, most of these extremist groups resent Arafat and what they view as a lenient vision of Palestinian resistance.

Let us suppose for a second that Arafat had the influence to stop terrorism, how can this man have the ability to accomplish such a feat with his apparent lack of resources? Since Sharon sent in his troops and laid medieval siege to Arafat's headquarters, Arafat has neither the ability nor the resources to command anything; leaving his desperate supporters alone to realize that perhaps the extremist view is the only option left.

Criticism is also due towards the United States for their impotence in this matter, combined with their reputation that has been known to sponsor regimes in many countries that use terrorism as its primary means to consolidate power. Now we see a similar US relationship with Israel. The Israeli Defence Forces do not target only what they believe are terrorists, but have ravaged villages and killed many civilians in this recent campaign, which given the definition at the beginning of this commentary; is simply terrorism. In a sense they fight terror with terror; a scenario equivalent with the eye for an eye analogy.

Surely if present conceptions of terrorism are considered the definitive example, then the United States would be guilty of terrorism as well. In the Revolutionary War between Britain and her colonies, which aside from popular belief was more about greed than liberty, terrorism was utilized against the superior military might of Britain as well as her allies. For example, George Washington ordered General Sullivan to launch a surprise raid on the non-partisan capital of the Iroquois Confederacy at Onondaga; no doubt an effort to inflict fear and panic in those who contemplated an alliance with Britain. The town was destroyed, its food supply burned, its people killed; leaving many Onondagas forced to side with Britain.

Here is something to contemplate; the United States gives Israel roughly 3 billion dollars annually to develop their Zionist state. After the massacre at Jenin, the United States is now contemplating providing relief aid to devastated Palestinian villages like Jenin. The irony here is that American taxpayers give Israel all of this money to build its military industry and arm its men and women with US made M-16 assault rifles used to level Palestinian villages and cities which will be then rebuilt with money from the American taxpayer once again. This is what taxpayers should be questioning their government about, and not why Arafat hasn't denounced terrorism, which mind he has done times before his medieval siege.

The indigenous peoples of the Americas have endured their own holocaust at the hands of American terrorism, yet when indigenous people began to resist they were labelled as terrorists or hostile. President George Bush calls his war on terrorism "Infinite Justice", but like Sharon has failed to provide justice in his own backyard; leaving only a desperate people with few options.