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Editorial

Welcome To A Special Edition Of ON THE ROAD

Late Tuesday evening we turned on the radio to get some news before we went to bed. The first hijacked airplane had just hit the World Trade Center. We quickly turned on the TV and watched in horror as the second tower was hit and the other shocking events now known to us all took place. We did not get much sleep that night as we sat glued to the TV.

Over the next few days a number of people here in Australia phoned us to let us know that they were praying for us and the people in the United States. They also asked about responses from Anabaptists in the USA. We discovered that many people in the USA dealt with their shock and grief through the Internet. We received over two hundred messages about the terrorist attack and its aftermath. In this special edition of ON THE ROAD we want to share some of what we have been reading.

We are presently working on the next regular issue of the newsletter but felt this information was too important not to pass on. Much of the following will be straight off our email accounts with little editing by us. Some of it you may have seen. There will be repetition. We do not agree with all of the viewpoints expressed but here it is.

Mark and Mary Hurst 3/653 Princes Hwy.
Sutherland, NSW 2232
Australia
phone: 61-2-9545-0301
email: m5hurst@hotmail.com

This Week on Compass

For Australians, tune in to ABC TV's Compass program at 9.25pm over the next three Sunday nights for the following documentary on non-violence. Familiar to us all are the images of wars and other violent events that were milestones of the last hundred years. Yet the world of today has been shaped equally by a different, less visible kind of conflict: The non-violent resistance that has toppled dictators, foiled military invaders and overcome oppression everywhere. A Force More Powerful probes six decisive chapters in the story of non-violent conflict.

23rd September 2001

A Force More Powerful

A Century of Non-Violent Conflict Pt.1

India

By 1930, the people of India are growing more restless under British rule, and Indian nationalists turn to Gandhi to lead a campaign for full independence. Having successfully employed non-violent sanctions while fighting for suppressed Indians in South Africa, and then again in India in the 1920's, Gandhi moves to confront the colonial rulers in ways that average Indians can understand and be part of.

Nashville

Reverend James Lawson and the young men and women who followed him are the touchstones of this pivotal chapter of the American civil rights struggle. Inspired by his studies in India of Gandhi's work, as well as the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Lawson begins in 1960 to train black and white college students in non-violent methods to desegregate downtown Nashville, Tennessee.

30th September 2001

A Force More Powerful

A Century of Non-Violent Conflict Pt.2 (PBS, USA)

Part Two: How the Nazis in Denmark, the Russians in Poland, and the military in Chile were overthrown by underground resistance or democratic protest.

7th October 2001

A Force More Powerful

A Century of Non-Violent Conflict Pt.3 Final (PBS, USA) Part Three

Worship Resources

Many responded to the tragedy by putting together worship and devotional resources. Here is a sampling:

The Day of Terror

Today even as I write we have heard about the destruction of World Trade Center in New York City and the attack on the Pentagon as well. All airlines have been grounded because of these apparent terrorists' attacks on our business, economic, and military structures. How secure are we?

We weep for the wounded and broken individuals and families resulting from these tragedies. At the same time we realize how vulnerable we are to the feelings of insecurity which these events bring. Perhaps the insecurity in this nation has helped us yearn even more for the Solid Rock.

In the Message we read Psalm 62:

"God, the one and only-
I'll wait as long as he says.
Everything I need comes from him, so why not?
He's solid rock under my feet, breathing room for my soul.
An impregnable castle: I'm set for life."

And in Psalm 61 we read:

"You've always given me breathing room,
a place to get away from it all,
A lifetime pass to your safe-house,
an open invitation as your guest.
You've always taken me seriously, God,
made me welcome among those who know and love you."

Take a moment to reflect on what has been shaken in your life and perhaps your situation. How do you identify with some of these metaphors in your relationship to God? (solid rock, breathing room, impregnable castle, safe-house) Take one of these images of God and allow Him to speak into your life and situation with it right now.

-Darrel M. Hostetter, Eastern Mennonite Missions

A Litany For September 11, 2001 From Doug Krehbiel, Director of Peace and Justice Resources, General Conference Mennonite Church, USA

Peace to you my sisters and brothers on this tragic day of violence
The clouds of smoke, the pillars of fire,
the descending rubble
Like a mini-Hiroshima
Is etched upon my brain
With unthinkable carnage yet to come

Peace to you stricken with shock and grief
Peace to you laughing over what you feel is victory
Peace to you planning revenge
I weep for America who oppresses the innocent, hides behind
democracy, and reaps what it sows
I weep for the persecuted who in utter desperation resort to violence
I weep for the lives lost--
By slow tortuous subjugation,
By explosion and flame
May we strengthen our resolve to spread Jesus' Gospel of peace
and love of enemies
May we strengthen our resolve to engage the powers of hate and
greed--no matter what the cost
May we strengthen our resolve to work for justice around the world
God be with us
God save us
God redeem us
Peace on earth,

Some resources for reflection and prayer

1. A time of silence

2. A time of reflection

Romans 12:15 (Mourn with those who mourn)
Psalm 46 (God is our refuge and strength)
Matthew 5:1-12 (The Beatitudes)
Psalm 121 (God our help)

3. Time of confession

Invite participants to confess their fears, their anger, their sorrow

4. A time of prayer

God, our refuge and strength,
we feel afraid and vulnerable.
The daily patterns of our life
have been interrupted by violence and tragedy.

We mourn with those who have lost love ones.
We lament all acts of violence in the human family.
We pray for those who have perpetrated this horrible act.
We pray for our brothers and sisters around the world
Who may be now be afraid of acts of retaliation.

In our confusion, grant us your guidance.
In our sorrow, grant us your comfort.
In our despair, fill us with your hope.
In our brokenness, make us whole.

We pray for the day when all the human family
will know your peace and justice.
We commit ourselves anew to be channels of your peace
and builders of your justice.
In the name of Christ, Amen.

Resources From: <http://www.MennoLink.org/peace>

From Sue Steiner, of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Ontario

1) Light a candle as a way of bringing ourselves and the events of the day into God's

presence.

- 2) Read together Scriptures such as: Psalm 46:1-3 - Romans 8:35,38
- 3) Pray simple sentence prayers together
 - for the families of those who died today
 - for rescue workers and cleanup crews
 - for ourselves, what we may not be overcome by fear
 - for government decisionmakers in the U.S. and Canada, that good judgment may prevail
 - for persons in the U.S. and Canada who might be targets of reprisal because of their ethnic background or racial characteristics
 - for the people who planned these terrorist attacks
 - for all around the globe who live daily in the kind of fear we have tasted
- 4) Conclude by praying the Lord's Prayer together.
- 5) Keep a candle lit throughout the evening.

For Your Spiritual Sustenance (following the events of September 11, 2001) By Chaplain Clair Hochstetler

Acknowledgment:

This is a time to come together as a community for prayer, to cry out to God in these days of grief even as events continue to unfold and the social disruption and unimaginable loss of life begins to sink in. "When I heard these words I sat down and wept, and mourned for days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven..." Nehemiah 1:4

Scripture: (Psalm 46:1-11)

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble.

Therefore we will not fear,

Though the earth should change,

Though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;

Though its waters roar and foam,

Though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. The

nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.

"Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth."

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Prayers:

O Lord, our Shepherd, you who walk among us to heal our hurts and confusion, we seek your grace for the broken people and places of our world.

We bring to you the horror of the bombings this week:

--We pray for all the passengers on the airplanes and for their families and friends.

--We pray for the thousands of victims and the countless injured from this senseless violence and for their family members and friends, whose lives have been forever changed.

--We pray for the emergency response workers, and the fatigued and overwhelmed hospital and medical staff in the New York City, Washington D.C., and western PA areas.

--We pray for safety and comfort for the traumatized residents who live and work in the areas that have been struck, and whose lives are disrupted for the weeks and months to come.

--We pray for all the children, for people with disabilities and the elderly who cannot fend for themselves and who may be overwhelmed with fear and anxiety.

--We bring to you, O Lord, ourselves, with our own feelings and sense of disruption, shock, fear, anger, and unfathomable loss, yet carrying unavoidable responsibility to others in the midst of it all.

O, Lord hear our prayer.

We bring to you our nation:

- Knowing that hate and retaliation will only breed more violence, we pray that you will bind up our wounds and give us strength and courage in these difficult and challenging days.
- We pray for our government leaders--for President Bush, Secretary Powell, Secretary Rumsfeld and our other leaders, that they will exercise restraint and seek Your wisdom in their responses.
- We pray for our nation's relationship with other peoples of the world -- that we will appreciate the implications of being an inter-connected globe.
- We pray for more innocent persons in the midst of our own communities who might be targets of reprisal because of their ethnic background or racial characteristics.

O, Lord hear our prayer.

We bring to you those who committed these immense tragedies: -- Though we find it hard to do so, we acknowledge that you want us to pray for our enemies, the terrorists.

---We pray for the family members of the terrorists, whose lives are also disrupted.

--We pray for extremist groups, hate groups, and others whose passions turn them to violence as a solution to problems in this world.

O, Lord hear our prayer.

We pray for the nations of the world:

- We pray for all persons around the globe who have daily been living the fears we have tasted.
- We bring to you ourselves, that we may be the bearers of the peace and grace of God in our own neighborhoods and relationships:
- We pray for spiritual resolve, to resist the powers of hate and greed, no matter what the cost.
- We pray for the courage and energy to work for justice around the world.
- We invite you, O God to pour forth on us spirit and transforming power, that all people may come to know, honor, and serve their Creator.

O, Lord hear our prayer.

Amen

Words for encouragement, rooted in the hope of our faith(s):

I still believe that God is continually at work in our world turning hopeless and evil situations into good, and that God wants us to be a part of that good work. I still believe that goodness and justice and love will triumph in the end and that tyranny and oppression cannot last forever. I still believe that one day all tears will be wiped away; the lamb will lie down with the wolf, and justice will roll down like a mighty stream.

(These assurances come from the Old Testament, and they are convictions shared by all Jews, Christians, and Muslims, true to the central teachings of their faith. Unfortunately, the world now has to contend with radical fundamentalists on the fringes of each of these faith groups who choose to respond with the fury and passion of violence rather than the wisdom portrayed by the central teachings of each of these faiths.) What we are dealing with now is not only political and social, but is at its core, a spiritual battle with forces of darkness and evil, requiring our best spiritual resources to restore order, confidence, and hope. The Bible also tells us that true peace and true reconciliation are not only desired, they are assured and guaranteed for those who place their ultimate trust in the Spirit of God. (In my case, as a Christian, I understand and experience the Spirit of God through the life and experience of Jesus Christ.) So exercise your faith! This is our hope for the future, for our children, and the generations to come.

May God bless us with rest, vision, and calmness in our souls this day, this night, and the long nights to come. Amen.

Call to Worship from Jane Yoder-Short - Kalona, IA

Leader: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, and the mountains shake.

People: God is our refuge and strength.

Leader: Though the waters roar and foam and our nation's peace is disturbed we are not shaken.

People: God is our refuge and strength.

Leader: We come to worship distracted by the horrors of the week. Like a heavy blanket covering us, we feel smothered, unable to breathe.

People: God is our refuge and strength.

Leader: We come to worship burdened with sadness. We mourn with those who have lost family and friends. We weep with victims of violence throughout the world.

People: God is our refuge and strength.

Leader: We come to worship with fears and hopes.

We fear further violence.

We hope for peace and justice.

People: God is our refuge and strength.

Leader: We come to worship longing to make sense of senseless acts.

We long for your presence.

We long for your calm spirit to surround us.

People: God is our refuge and strength.

Leader: The God who breaks the bow and shatters the spear

The God who makes wars to cease is among us.

We wait in silence for your healing.

(Silence)

Leader: God of Peace, pour out your power of transformation upon us.

Create in us a new people.

God of Peace, send down your healing waters upon this land.

Let us continue in worship as we sing O healing River -- Page 372

A litany from Leo Hartshorn, Bethel Mennonite Church, Lancaster, PA based on Psalm 46.

Our minds are preoccupied with death and destruction. Our nation mourns for those who have suffered loss. God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in times of trouble. The world quakes and quivers. City buildings crumble and collapse. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God. Everything seems to have changed. People tremble for fear of war. God makes wars to cease to the ends of the earth. Be still, and know that God is with us. God will be exalted among the nations.

Prayers from Esther Epp-Tiessen, PJC member and MCC Canada Peace and Justice staff

1. God of Love and of Life,

Our hearts are heavy with the events of this past week. For most of us, the death and destruction that we have witnessed is much closer than we have ever known before. We remember our American sisters and brothers in their time of suffering. We name those things that lie on our hearts.

We grieve:

* for individuals killed or wounded in the attacks

* for people who have lost family members, friends, co-workers, neighbours

* for those whose loved ones are as yet unaccounted for

* for those who will live with ongoing emotional trauma

* for emergency workers and all others whose energies will have been taxed to the extreme

All: In your mercy, hear our prayers.

We are angered:

* by those who planned and carried out these devastating attacks

* by those who hold such low regard for the human life that you have created

All: In your mercy, hear our prayers.

We are fearful:

- * that there may be further violence and counter-violence
- * that whole groups of people may be scapegoated for the actions of a few
- * that suddenly the world seems a much less safe place

All: In your mercy, hear our prayers.

We remember:

- * that for many people around the world, terror and violence are daily fare
- * that all people are your children and our brothers and sisters
- * that you call us to special concern for the poor, the oppressed, the exploited
- * that you call us to love even our enemies

All: In your mercy, hear our prayers.

We pray:

- * that U.S. leaders may exercise restraint and caution in any response
- * that all groups who resort to violent means may turn from their ways
- * that we ourselves may witness more faithfully and boldly to your way of peace, both near and far

All: In your mercy, hear our prayers.

We affirm

- * our trust in you, the God of Love, and Jesus, the Prince of Peace
- * our commitment to Your way of peace and nonviolence

All: We pray this in the name of your son, Jesus. Amen.

2. God, our refuge and strength,

We call upon you at this time of great tragedy and suffering.

We lift up to you our American sisters and brothers in their time of grief. We pray for those whose loved ones have died or are missing -- that they may be comforted in their mourning.

We pray for those who plan and carry out such acts of violence -- that they may repent and turn from their ways.

We pray for government leaders -- that they may exercise caution and restraint in responding to acts of terror.

We pray for brothers and sisters around the world who may fear retaliation -- that they might be safe and secure.

We pray for ourselves -- that we may more boldly and faithfully proclaim your peace, justice and reconciliation to the world.

In the name of your son, Jesus, the Prince of Peace,
Amen.

Scriptures

Psalm 46; Matthew 5:1-11; John 14: 27; Romans 12:15, 18

In the valley of the shadow A September 11, 2001, reflection

By Ken Sehested, with Kyle Childress

"How lonely sits the city that was full of people! How like a widow has she become, she that was great among the nations! . . . She weeps bitterly in the night. . . ." (Lam. 1:1)

Late yesterday morning--midway through a long car trip to visit my Mom and several mentors--I awoke in the home of a good friend, in the oldest city in Texas, to the news repeatedly described in media accounts as the “horrific” events in New York City and Washington, D.C. Parties yet unnamed and unknown (though suspected) hijacked our own agents of affluence to attack the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, twin symbols of global economic and military dominance.

As the details and graphic visual images flood our ears and eyes, “horrific” seems an understated refrain, and we are left repeating it, over and again, to underscore that which is too terrible for words. Knowing that my first-born and my beloved sister-in-law lived less than a mile from Manhattan’s southern shore made the shock all the more poignant.

Here I sit, in the oldest city in Texas, reflecting via one of the oldest Scriptures in print on the oldest drama of human savagery. The shedding of blood begun by Cain--against his brother Abel, early in Genesis 4--was geometrically escalated, by chapter’s end, in Lamech’s threat to avenge his personal honor seventy-times-seven. God’s refusal of revenge—indeed, the Divine prohibition against human vengeance—was ignored with impunity then no less than now. It is an old story. But there is another story, indeed a counter-story, which can and must be told by the believing community.

What may we say, dare we say, in the face of such horror? Is there any hope, any healing, any harvest of mercy to be had?

There are, of course, reminders both of pastoral insight and prophetic challenge demanding our attention.

Pastoral insight

At a moment like this, the first engagement of the Body of Christ is to engage in the ministry of grieving—grieving for the yet-uncounted individuals and families whose lives have been crushed or crumbled by this catastrophe. We weep with those who weep.

Holy grief, the practice of lament, is not a form of self-centered pity but the willingness to crouch with those forced to their knees in the face of devastation. The billowing grief rising from this trauma is very real and will not be disposed of with the power of positive thinking. We have no quick answers or explanations—or even plans of action.

Among other things, the ministry of grieving is important because it implies that the community of faith has not lost touch with the pulse of God’s intent in creation, an intent confirmed in the rainbow promise of Genesis 6 (following the flood), ratified in cruciform career of Jesus and dramatically broadcast in John’s concluding Revelation promising the new heaven and the new earth, when all tears will be dried and death itself shall be defeated (21:1-4).

Furthermore, the ministry of grieving reminds us that we are not engineers of the coming Reign of Peace, but witnesses, pointing to where this Promise is breaking out even in our midst (and, conversely, where it is being opposed). Grieving is also a powerful antidote to the arrogance of self-sufficiency, to confidence in wishful thinking and human control. There is a sustaining force in the universe that we can trust, which is available but not manageable.

The second engagement for the Body of Christ is to intercede in prayer for the casualties of this catastrophe. Intercessory prayer is not a form of spiritual hocus-pocus; we have no magical wand to wave, to make the hurt go away. “The effective, fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much,” according to the King James rendering of the Apostle Paul’s advice. We may debate exactly how this is so, but this much is clear: intercessory prayer keeps us in a heightened state of readiness to intervene with compassion when the moment arises, which is the third call to the Body of Christ.

The third engagement for the church in the face of this catastrophe—and surely this moment feels like an apocalypse to those of us in the U.S.—is to remind our congregations that the root meaning of “apocalypse” is not the advent of destruction but the occasion for uncovering. While God is certainly not the author of this pain, there is the possibility that, out of the grief,

an unveiling may occur; and we must prepare to ask and respond to the question, "What is God saying to us?"

Prophetic challenge

Grieving and intercession make us available for the ministry of mercy and comfort. This, of course, is what U.S. President George W. Bush attempted in his speech to the nation Tuesday evening when he referenced the psalmist's affirmation of hard-won hope: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4). It is very appropriate for the nation's leader to speak words of succor to the people. And the believing community should stand ready and willing to echo and amplify those words whenever possible.

Nevertheless, the Body of Christ must remain alert when Caesar quotes Scripture. The text of Holy Writ is forever threatened with being co-opted, is always in danger of being robed in the garments of empire, of being mobilized to endorse injustice, of being segregated from intended conclusion. And in Tuesday night's episode, President Bush neglected to note that the text he quoted pushes forward to the point of table fellowship with enemies.

Which brings me to the parallel, if less comfortable, work of prophetic challenge to which the Body of Christ has been ordained. An essential work of Gospel proclamation is theological interrogation of political propaganda. In short, the Body of Christ is called to ask the questions currently being disguised by newspaper headlines.

For instance: Not so long ago, following the bombing of the Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City, state authorities, news media and common mobs alike began harassing people of Arab descent living in the U.S., only to discover that responsibility actually lay with one of our own decorated war veterans of European lineage.

Even if someone the caliber of Osama bin Laden, whose name has frequently been mentioned as a suspect behind the simultaneous, bloody attacks on the market-military monuments, is found to be responsible, the believing community needs to recall an embarrassing bit of history. It was the U.S. who originally recruited, trained and supplied bin Laden and his colleagues for guerilla warfare. Back then, his services were as a "hot" proxy agent in our "cold" war with the Soviet Union. He has since found a more lucrative offer on the "free market" of global political violence.

And of course there's the recent demonization of Saddam Hussein, whose original chemical weapons arsenal was supplied by the U.S. back when he was still our ally against the Iranian Ayatollah.

To our shame, and our peril, we have little knowledge of a millennium of Western meddling in Arab affairs, deposing this ruler, propping up that one, with no criteria other than cost/benefit calculations. Few in the U.S. realize that our nation, aided by Great Britain, has waged the longest bombing campaign in human history against Iraq. Since the formal end of the Gulf War—and without even the semblance of United Nations' authority—we have over the past decade, on a weekly, sometimes daily basis, continued to rain death from the skies.

UNICEF, the U.N.'s own child-welfare agency, has indicated that at least a half-million Iraqi children have died since the end of Desert Storm from causes directly related to the international economic sanctions. When former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Madeleine Albright was asked point-blank on national television if the death of half a million children was worth the price of opposing Hussein, she said yes. We say no. The competition of loyalty is that stark. Choose this day whom you will serve.

Elisha's transforming initiative

There is another way, an option other than flight (in the face of genuine evil) or fight (violent resistance to injustice). It is a common, though grossly unattended, melody in Gospels—repeatedly echoed by Paul—the most insistent note of which is the stress on loving enemies. For the Body of Christ, the failure to love enemies is to hedge on Jesus.

Yet this theme is woven into the fabric of Scripture. Take for example the story of the Prophet Elisha's transforming initiative recorded in 2 Kings.

In the sixth chapter we are told that the King of Aram (Syria) is menacing Israel, sending raiding parties across the border to steal crops, livestock, even young people for sale as slaves. It was a conscious policy designed to effect Israel's submission to Aramean political, economic and military control, to make it a "client" state.

Political intrigue enters the story when the King of Aram notices that Israel seems to know in advance of all the King's military strategies. He suspects a "mole" in his security and intelligence apparatus. After extensive investigation, his trusted aides return with this shocking news: No, there's no spy in our camp. The problem is that Israelite prophet, Elisha, who somehow divines the King's most highly-guarded orders.

So the King of Aram orders that Elisha be "neutralized." Troops are assembled; they undertake a cross-border raid on the prophet's home; and under the stealth of night, surround Elisha's headquarters.

As dawn breaks, the prophet's student intern arises to fetch the newspaper. When he steps outside in the cool morning air, the sight of an Aramean army startles the residual slumber from his eyes. Panicked, he rouses his mentor.

When Elisha finally calms his protégé enough to get a coherent story, the prophet seems curiously unimpressed. "But we're surrounded by an army!" the intern exclaims. Elisha then initiates a prayer meeting. "Oh, Lord, please open his eyes that he may see." After the "amen," Elisha urges the young man to take another peak out the window. And he was dumbfounded by what he saw. The Aramean army was still there, armed and eager; yet surrounding their ranks was an even larger, encircling army of angels astride flaming chariots and horses.

At that moment the Aramean army advanced on the prophet. Elisha prayed again: "Close their eyes so they cannot see." And the entire army of Aram is struck blind. As the chaos ensues, Elisha steps out of the house, calls to the commanding general, saying, "I hear you're looking for the Prophet Elisha?" "Yes," comes the stuttered response from a confused and frightened voice.

"Well, he's not here," Elisha nonchalantly responds. "But I can take you to where he is." So this massive army, in comical, stumbling formation, meekly fall in line behind Elisha. Whereupon they are led straight to Israel's capital, to the king of Israel, inside the walled city—delivered into the waiting hands of their enemies!

The Israelite king is overjoyed and immediately sets about to order a slaughter. But Elisha has something else in mind. He prays again, this time to have the Aramean soldiers' eyesight restored. All present are then further confounded by Elisha's next directive. "There will be no killing here today. Put away your weapons; gather food and drink. Today we feast!"

And the mortal enemies sit down at common tables for a grand meal. When everyone is satisfied, Elisha instructs the Arameans to return to their home. And the story ends with these brief words, "And the Arameans no longer troubled the land of Israel" (6:8-23).

Part of our prophetic calling is to insist that there are rival, realistic and spiritually-informed political strategies which suggest an alternative to those policies which depend on superior fire-power and assume the need for political domination. We lift them up and, together with all who share this common vision, recommend them to our nation's leaders.

The Lamb of God

For the Body of Christ, the pivot point of the vision sustaining such political alternatives is portrayed in the symbolically-elaborate narrative of John's Revelation. In the fifth chapter, there is a picture of the end of history, the ultimate horizon. As the sacred book of life is revealed, an angel asks, "Who is worthy to open the scroll?" The text concludes that none is

able, no one in heaven or on earth. Neither kings nor presidents, generals nor multinational magnates is able. And the narrator weeps at this admission.

Yet a member of the heavenly hosts exclaims that there is one and only one capable of opening the scroll: the conquering Lion of Judah.

But suddenly, without warning, explanation or transition, the image shifts and the text turns. Instead of a lion standing ready between the throne and heavenly hosts, the narrator identifies a lamb: "I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain. . ." Indeed, the Lion of Judah has been transposed as the Lamb of God. The Lion of Judah has conquered by being the Lamb slain. And as the Lamb opens the book, countless creatures and angels sing hymns of praise. "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing . . . for ever and ever!"

Overcoming the world's enmity will indeed come at the cost of much blood. But in the end only the power to relinquish life, rather than require it or remand it, results in a reconciled, restored community.

It is possible to fearlessly traverse the valley of the shadow of death; but not because we are the meanest S.O.B. in sight. No, because we have learned, as Jesus taught, that only those willing to lose life, for his sake—that is to say, for the sake of the promised Peaceable Reign of God—will find it.

P.S. (especially to pastoral leaders): Facing this tragedy will obviously require a season rather than a Sunday. There are multiple layers to this trauma, including the festering question, "Why do these people hate us so much?" When the time comes for this latter question, I urge you to have this dialogue, at least in part, in conversation with those who will likely become targets for racial/religious violence. They may very well need us to help fend off sporadic or calculated acts of vengeance. We also need them to help us comprehend the history that has prompted such hatred.

Ken Sehested is executive director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America. Kyle Childress is pastor of Austin Heights Baptist Church, Nacogdoches, Texas. PFNA, 4800 Wedgewood Dr., Charlotte, NC 28210; 704/521-6051; bpfna@bpfna.org; www.bpfna.org

Children's Issues

Children's Times - From Esther Epp Tiessen, PJC member and MCC Canada Peace and Justice staff

Conversation with Children.

Children will have heard much about the attacks this past week, perhaps a good deal of it untrue. They may be upset and afraid. The following suggestions may help you to shape a conversation with children of your church.

This past week, some very sad events happened in the United States. (Children may wish to say what they know. Allow for some comments, but continue quite soon.) Some airplanes were used to destroy some important buildings in New York and Washington. Many people in the airplanes and the buildings were hurt or killed. Many people in the United States and around the world are very concerned about family and friends that live in those cities. We don't know who did these terrible things or why they did them.

What do you think of all of this? Allow the children to say whatever they want. Don't judge their comments. Acknowledge the feelings that are expressed: worry, fear, sadness, confusion. Acknowledge that many adults are feeling all of these feelings too.

What do you think we could do? If some children express a desire to catch the "bad guys," explore what our hopes might be for them. Some people are saying that the United States

should attack those people who planned these attacks. They are saying, the U.S. needs to retaliate. But doing that would probably just be hurting and killing more people, and it might not even be the guilty ones. Jesus taught us that we should love our enemies and pray for those who hurt us -- we should not retaliate because that just makes for more violence.

We can't undo what happened, but we can show love. Love helps when people are sad or hurt or angry or scared. Love can help.

We can show love by praying. Who should we pray for? For people in the United States, for people whose family members died or were hurt, for government leaders, for airplane pilots and flight attendants, for people who travel on airplanes or who work in tall buildings.

We can show love by writing a letter to a child or a family in Washington or New York, letting them know we are thinking of them. In many place, people can show love by giving blood to help those who are hurt.

We can also show love by remembering that enemies are people too, people that God loves. We can remember to pray for people who hurt others. We can pray that they stop their hurtful ways.

Above all, we can remember that God loves each of us and is with us at all times.

Books for Children's Times

From Anne Meyer Byler, librarian and PJC proofreader and web site helper:

CHILDREN'S TIME IDEAS, OR FOR READING WITH CHILDREN, (POST-September 11 ATTACKS):

1. It's "ok" to be angry and afraid at times like this, but we don't want to hurt people in our anger. What are good ways to deal with our feelings?

Feelings, by Aliki. 32p. 1984. (4-8)

This is a classic, re anger and various other feelings.

I Was So Mad!, by Norma Simon. 1974. 32p. (4-7)

Text and pictures relate situations that sometimes result in such reactions as frustration, anxiety, humiliation and loss of control. A good discussion starter. Can move into: What would Jesus do?

2. We may feel like "getting back" when we're afraid or angry. But that usually doesn't make things better, and can make things much worse. (Tie in with comments on bullies often being very angry and unhappy and feeling bad about themselves...)

I'm Glad I Tried, by Judith Vigna. 32p. 1978. (5-8) "Oldie but very good." How to treat people "no matter what." A child (with Mom's support) treats a disagreeable classmate with kindness and is glad--even though she feels her effort is in vain. Surprising ending.

3. Why are there bad things in the world? (You answer!!) (Sometimes it's consequences from things we do, sometimes from things others do or have done, sometimes weather, etc....) Can bad things--that we may even had nothing to do with--help bring about good things? How? This is a fable. Where is God in this?

Dora's Box, by Ann-Jeanette-Campbell. 32p. 1998 (4-8).

A witch grants protective parents their wish to spare their daughter from pain by allowing them to put tokens of everything evil in a (Pandora-like) box. Dora eventually opens it, learning compassion that comes with knowledge of evil as well as goodness.

Book Description (from Amazon....)

What would it be like to live in a perfect world? A world without pain or sorrow? Dora, the child of a goodhearted man and woman, knows such a world. She is protected by the wishes her parents made before her birth—wishes granted by a grateful witch. Her parents first asked for a child, next for her to be protected from all evil, sadness, and pain in the world, and lastly for her to be loved by all. The witch gives Dora's parents a box in which to put everything they want to protect her from, as well as a warning that Dora must never open the box, or the wish will come undone. The last wish is up to Dora to complete. As the years go by, Dora's box is filled and Dora never feels pain, or fear, or grief--until the day a boy persuades Dora to open the box. As Dora feels sadness for the first time, the third wish finally comes true, for to be loved by all, she must know pain and sorrow as well as happiness and joy. Inspired by the myth of Pandora's box, this mesmerizing tale, paired with the spectacular paintings of debut illustrator Fabian Negrin, has the depth and beauty of a classic.

Fairness, by Sandra Ziegler. 31p. 1989. (5-7).

(Haven't seen--hopefully addresses how things can't always be fair. Tragedies just aren't "fair.")

4. Images are powerful. What kind of images are in our heads from recent events? Here are many images of what most of the people in the world value and what we want to work for.... (The second one may have some from kids in situations of conflict. But there, the vision is for no more soldiers and guns, but for people to get along. A good segue into the situation of many in this world for whom similar events have been a part of their everyday lives for some time....)

A Million Visions of Peace: Wisdom from the Friends of the Old Turtle, by Jennifer Garrison. 1995 160 p. (5-8)

A dramatic collection of children's visions of peace.

My Wish for Tomorrow : Words and Pictures from Children Around the World

(Introduction by Nelson Mandela) 1995. 48p. (4-8)

An anthology of children's writing and artwork in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The contributors are from every inhabited continent and range in anniversary of the United Nations. The contributors are from every inhabited continent and range in age from four to fourteen... Inside, two or three "wishes," set off by ample white space, face a full-page complementary illustration. The genuine vignettes, many about peace and the environment, give a sense of the various living conditions and experiences of children around the world. "I wish that parents who have children would not throw them away"; "I want the sugar, flour to become cheap" ; "My wish is house." The introductory comments by Nelson Mandela and Boutros Boutros-Ghali are simple and accessible. Julie Corsaro

5. Not directly in response to our situation, but good to get in touch with kids in other ongoing situations of conflict is:

Sami and the Time of Troubles, by Florence Perry Heide. 1992. (6-10)

A 10-year-old Lebanese boy describes his life in the midst of a civil war. Rich illustrations. At the end, there is a "children's march for peace."....

Children Experiencing Disasters

Friends,

While I'm not a psychologist, I am a concerned and involved parent. I've gotten a few words from friends about helping children with this crisis. Please don't quote this anywhere since I'm not an authority, although you're welcome to tell others what resonates with your own experience.

More complete information is available from the links below. I've not been able to find anything from a Christian or pacifist tradition,however. Please send any additional

suggestions you have.

1. Deal with fears. Listen. Tell children we adults will do all we can to keep them safe. Do not belittle feelings. Stay close by.
2. Turn off the TV and radio and internet and do other things together. Limit media exposure in normal life, the younger the child, and severely limit during crisis. (I never really saw images of the Persian Gulf War. My children were 6 and 3.)
3. Lead by adult example: in your calmness, in your care for folks who might be retaliated against, in your prayer times, in organizing and attending local witnesses for peace.
4. If your kids don't bring it up, do. They may be afraid that if they talk about it, you won't be able to handle it. And THAT's a really scary thought.
5. Talk about how some bullies are that way because they have experienced great injustice in their lives. Point out how important it is to not perpetuate the cycle of violence. There are parallels here to the typical bully on the playground and the children who bring guns to school.
6. Take action together. This is what gives hope to kids: DOING something visible. (Take photos and save for your child's draft folder.)

Here are links. May God keep you and your children safe.

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/parents/advice/article/0,4125,49560,00.html>
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/violence.cfm>
<http://www.nasponline.org/NEAT/terrorism.html>
<http://www.mentalhealth.org/cmhs/emergencyservices/after.htm>
<http://www.mentalhealth.org/schoolviolence/parents.htm>

Peace,
Susan Mark Landis
Minister of Peace and Justice for the Mennonite Church
PO Box 173, Orrville OH 44667-0173 USA
phone/fax 330-683-6844

Terrorism and Children

Purdue News:
Purdue takes steps to confront terrorist threat

Talking with Children About Terrorism

Judith Myers-Walls, a Purdue University Extension specialist in child development and family studies, has researched children's reactions to wars and disasters and offers advice for helping children cope with the recent terrorist attacks.
The terrorist attack on America has captured the attention of the nation, and it should. Children, however, have a hard time putting these emotionally charged events into perspective. They need the help of the adults around them.

So what is a parent, teacher, or other caring adult to do when terrorist violence fills the airwaves and the consciousness of America?

Assume the kids know about it. They probably know more than you think. The reality of today's world is that news travels far and wide. Adults and children learn about disasters and tragedies shortly after they occur, and live video footage with close-ups and interviews are part of the report. Children and youth are exposed to the events as soon as they can watch TV or interact with others who are consumers of the news. Not talking about it does not

protect children. In fact, you may communicate that the subject is taboo and that you are unavailable if you remain silent.

Purdue Extension Ag News extension@aes.purdue.edu

Statements, Press Releases

Pastoral letter to Lancaster Mennonite Conference leaders and congregations

My eyes fail from weeping, I am in torment within, my heart is poured out on the ground because my people are destroyed, because children and infants faint in the streets of the city. (Lam. 2:11 NIV)

We are shocked and grieved at the terrorist attacks on September 11 in New York City, Washington, DC, and southwestern Pennsylvania that have left hundreds dead and thousands missing. We have been grateful to witness the many prayer gatherings that spontaneously emerged in the churches of our communities that same evening and in the days that have followed this immense tragedy for our nation. We continue to pray for God's comfort and healing for the families and communities who have suffered loss.

As a people of faith we bow before God, asking for forgiveness for our silent complicity with sin in our broken world. Too often we have pursued our own narrow interests, brushing aside the needs and anguish of neighbors at home and abroad. Too often we have rested our security in our wealth and our national power rather than trusting God.

We urge our people and congregations to respond with any help and support that may be needed by the victims of this tragedy. And we encourage our pastors and leaders to be sensitive to the continuing needs of our members and our neighbors for spiritual guidance in the aftermath of events whose continuing impact we can hardly begin to anticipate.

1) Christian Reflection. There will be ways in which we will find ourselves speaking into people's lives and hearts and spirits as we reflect on this tragedy and what it means for our nation, our communities, our churches, and for us as individuals. We will lead our people in repenting for the pride and arrogance that have led us to depend on ourselves, our wealth, and our power, rather than depending on God. We will reflect biblically on the tragedy and bring God's Word to bear on issues such as suffering, loss, grief, enmity, war, fear, anger, rage, revenge, forgiveness, security, justice, punishment, healing and hope. We encourage pastors and congregations to share their reflections and their creative acts of ministry with one another in district settings and other gatherings of pastors and leaders in our communities. We ask our nation to examine and correct policies that have led to oppression, injustice, and violence.

2) Outreach. Some of our neighbors may look to Christians for guidance as to how they respond to their feelings of fear, anger, grief, etc. They may ask for help to answer the question, "How could God allow this to happen?" Some of our unchurched friends and neighbors may come to church to help them deal with questions their children are asking. They may want to join with us in reflecting on our nation's political and military responses to this act of terrorism. It is possible that we may have the opportunity to counsel with individuals and with families--to listen, to pray, to share scripture. We want to "be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks us to explain the hope we have in us, and to do it with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15 paraphrased).

3) Justice and Peace. Especially at this moment when many are filled with rage and are calling for revenge, we witness to the need for thoughtful reflection on the requirements of justice and the long-term consequences of our political and military responses as a nation. We acknowledge the government's God-ordained role of maintaining peace, punishing terrorist violence, and helping to provide conditions that nourish justice and peace. We accept the formidable challenge of loving our enemies and praying for their salvation. We will

encourage our government to respond to the continuing threat of terrorism in ways that will build international relationships of justice and peace, and provide a context for all peoples everywhere to hear the Good News that Jesus offers to the nations a way of healing and hope, even in situations of deeply entrenched hatred and violence. We will model relationships of love and respect for our Muslim and Middle Eastern neighbors, both at home and abroad. Christ invites us to sacrificial peacemaking, even though it may cost us our lives.

4) Passing the Peace. We ask parents and other mentors to reflect together with young people on our commitment to Christ's call to love our enemies at a time when military options seem especially attractive. At this moment of national crisis we as U.S. citizens respect our government, but affirm that our primary citizenship is in the Kingdom of God. We encourage young people to articulate their beliefs by filing a Christian Peacemaker Form with the Lancaster Conference Center or MCC.

We believe that even in these circumstances God is at work, and we will continue to trust His justice, wisdom and love to bring good out of the ashes of this tragedy. We are praying that in this time of national grief, many will come to encounter the God who has suffered and died for us in Jesus Christ.

The bishops of Lancaster Mennonite Conference, September 14, 2001

War vs Crime: Just Because You are Attacked, Do Not Assume You are At War

As we watch with horror and grief the rescue and recovery efforts in New York and Washington, we mourn with the victims. We also watch with deep concern as the "rhetorical space" for talking and thinking about this crisis narrows in a manner that will prevent decision-makers from considering the full range of possible responses.

We have seen this narrowing of rhetorical space in prior crisis situations. Within days of the 1993 standoff in Waco, Texas, the Branch Davidians had been labeled as a cult and the public rhetoric helped drive their confrontation with federal agents to its tragic end. Language has real power to shape our world, and we urge everyone concerned about responding to the horror of September 11, 2001 to think carefully before using the language of war to describe the current crisis.

Here are five reasons not to describe the current crisis as a war:

If we describe this as a war, we grant the perpetrators of these unspeakable acts a dignity they do not deserve. These are criminal acts. We have no evidence that those who perpetrated them are legitimate rulers of a state or nation. They may not even be legitimate representatives of a disenfranchised identity group seeking representation within a state or nation.

If we describe this as a war, we assume that we are dealing with an identifiable enemy, located in a clear space and subject to military attack. The perpetrators of this horror are not clearly identifiable, cannot be located easily, and probably cannot be attacked successfully using military means. Any military-style response that might target some of these persons effectively is likely to violate the rules of war, making the world a much more dangerous place for everyone.

If we describe this as a war, we imply that war can bring our enemies to their knees and keep them from ever harming us again. We have yet to fight successfully a "war to end all wars" and this will be no exception. Military attacks on any nation that harbours the criminals responsible for these atrocities will create thousands of refugees; refugee camps have been the breeding ground for suicide bombers. Thus, we will only perpetuate the cycle of fear and terror for our children and grandchildren.

If we describe this as a war, we avoid asking why anyone would hate us enough to kill oneself, in order to seek vengeance upon us. We fail to examine and address the conditions and policies that have given rise to the cycles of unrest, violence, and terror that have been

escalating around the world and that on September 11, 2001 entered the previously "safe space" of the most powerful nation on earth.

If we describe this as a war, we betray our own highest values of due process, justice and fairness. Criminals are granted rights that enemies in war are denied.

If we fail to invoke the national and international laws that apply to criminal acts, we undercut the rule of law and weaken the sources of our own long-term protection.

A Crime, not an Act of War

How do we name this unspeakable atrocity? An act of war is the language that increasingly comes from public commentators.

No this is not an act of war, it is a crime against humanity. To name it otherwise dignifies the perpetrators, belittles ourselves, and threatens the possibility of causing genuine war. War in today's world is conducted by nation-states, guided by leaders who speak for whole societies. To equate these debased criminals with recognized leaders implies a level of legitimacy and widespread support they do not deserve.

The language of war increases our chances of ending up in war. It encourages us to act urgently, absent the deliberation and application of principle and collective values that criminal processes employ. It wrongly implies an easily identifiable and targetable enemy. It encourages a short-term focus rather than a long-term perspective. It legitimizes acts that will punish far more than the perpetrators, and blind us to the consequences of creating large numbers of innocent victims. The result is sure to be conflict with people or nations capable of instigating true war. Perhaps worse, the suffering of warring responses is likely to create a new and bigger generation of terrorists among the innocent victims.

The language of criminality reflects a commitment to a larger framework of law and decency which America has always stood for. No American will be safe in the future if the world becomes a place in which that larger framework is no longer the norm. Let us name this act as a crime and respond to it in the reasoned measures of collective response which we have learned are essential to maintaining the rule of law within societies. By so doing we would offer moral leadership in a world moving rapidly towards amorality. At a time when every nation waits breathlessly for our response, in a moment when the basest acts of pure retaliation are expected, let us surprise the world with unexpected decency. Let our response be guided by the principled language and collective measures appropriate to crime. In so doing we could move the entire world towards the rule of law between nations.

By Ron Kraybill, PhD
Conflict Transformation Program
Eastern Mennonite University
Harrisonburg, VA

Other similar resources can be found at <http://www.MennoLink.org/peace/>.

"We are at war" – Secretary Of State Powell

The Secretary of State of the USA (a retired 4-star general) is quoted in the New York Times of Sept. 13, saying that the "American people" have decided that "We are at war." The article says the current administration's staff is using similar language, including the President.

First of all, the executive branch should realize that neither it nor "the people" decide whether the USA is at war. This nation has not been in a declared war since 1945. We are a constitutional democracy, and only Congress can declare war. And how, pray tell, does one declare war against a small group of terrorists who surely have passports from somewhere, and necessarily have some socio-ethnic-political background?

Second, waging war since 1917 has been a failure, even for multi-star generals and admirals.

Modern warfare kills 8 or 9 innocent noncombatant civilians for every combat military person it kills, and most soldiers are drafted by force or recruited by lies and propaganda.

Third, war is the most expensive thing ever committed by civilization. No other vice comes close to the cost of the heinous crime of waging war; not illegal drugs, prostitution, pornography, gambling, theft, adultery, alcohol, tobacco, etc.

Last and most important to every human being who believes that some actions are of value and are accountable to God, war is a sin which God condemns (damns). Even if one believes in the heresy of the "Just War theory.". That theory requires an unbelievable and untested list of impossible demands:

A) war must be declared by a just (righteous or proper) authority, which in this case would be a formal declaration of war under the U.S. constitution;

B) war must be declared for a just cause - not just 'cause you say so, but by a rigorous exercise of higher logic and ethics;

C) the war must be conducted IN LOVE FOR THE ENEMY, not for revenge or retaliation.
This never happens.

D) the war must be conducted using just or appropriate proportion of force, only enough to accomplish the goal. Yet, in conventional and nuclear warfare, we have always used disproportionate force.

E) the war must minimize civilian casualties; this hasn't happened for over a century.

F) ...on and on, common sense and secular logic and fairly saintly wisdom require things which war can never satisfy.

War is the greatest insanity of so-called "civilization."

Seek first the kingdom of God and God's righteousness. Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you, SO THAT YOU BE THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

We all need to go out and smell the flowers, pray for forgiveness, and start working on that "Love Your Enemy" thing with God's help.

Frank Moore, in Texas or Mexico

Mennonite Central Committee Statement

Sept. 11, 2001 New York and Washington, D.C. Tragedy

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) expresses great horror and sadness for events in New York and Washington, D.C., Tuesday, Sept. 11. We grieve at the loss of life and the sorrow of families and friends of those injured and killed, and encourage all people to pray for them.

These senseless tragedies can lead a nation and its leaders to react out of frustration and anger, and to make decisions and actions while in a state of trauma. We encourage our leaders to make decisions with wisdom, reflection and deliberation, and encourage all people to resist the upward spiraling of more violence. We call on our leaders to exercise restraint in their response.

We encourage churches to reach out to those within their communities who might become innocent scapegoats and the object of anger and hasty retribution. If need be, we ask that these people be offered support and protection.

We encourage church members to donate blood through their local Red Cross or other local blood donation banks in their area as there is a shortage of blood for those wounded.

As a church rooted in a theology of non-violence and reconciliation, we call on Christians and others to remain prayerful and take positive steps toward healing a nation contorted by such senseless acts of violence.

Even in these most painful moments we urge people to remember that Christ calls us to seek forgiveness. Only through reconciliation will peace with justice be found, and the humanity of all people be affirmed.

Mennonite Central Committee
Akron, PA U.S.A.

A Call for Thoughtful Response: Conflict Transformation Staff Thoughts On Trauma and Healing, Sept. 12, 2001

We are professionals who have worked with the victims of violence during post-conflict reconciliation and trauma healing processes and on developing processes of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. Consequently, we know that the earliest responses from the media and opinion shapers to the events of September 11, 2001 will be critically important for creating space for long-term personal and cultural recovery. Thus far, we have been impressed by the generally restrained and cautious responses we have heard from the media. However, we have not seen clearly articulated options outside of the model of "revenge" responses. While revenge is an understandable human response, we also know that long-term peace will require us to find other ways of responding to these attacks.

As we shape our public responses to these events, we thought it might be helpful to consider the following issues, which are raised by our work in conflict transformation. First, there are numerous potential sources of threat to the United States -- both foreign and domestic. In a moment of crisis it is incumbent upon all of us to refrain from jumping to conclusions about responsibility for these horrific events. Second, moderation in discussing the identity of actual or potential responsible parties is critical in a diverse society. After the Oklahoma City bombing, Arab-Americans and residents of the United States of Middle Eastern descent experienced harassment, intimidation, and fear. We need to ensure that all members of our national community feel safe during this difficult time. Even when the perpetrators are identified, we urge journalists and officials to remind the public that the vast majority of people who may resemble the attackers have no connection to these events and are as shocked as everyone else. People of good will may want to take the initiative to reassure those who may be vulnerable to prejudice that we will not stand by idly if they are targeted by hatemongers. Third, violence is interactive and it is incumbent upon all Americans to ponder seriously the question, "What has the United States done, deliberately or inadvertently, in its role as the 'one remaining superpower' to inspire such hatred and anger?" This in no way implies that we excuse or condone the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001. It simply recognizes that we can understand the emergence of such fury and hatred only if we are willing and able to critique our own activities as well as those of others. Fourth, this attack points to the extreme complexity of security issues and demonstrates that there is no technological defenses -- however simple or complex -- that can create and maintain more than a modest amount of security against a determined attacker. Our real source of security will ultimately rest on development of positive, collaborative relations with peoples and nations around the world and at home. Finally, as the full magnitude of the horror of these events becomes apparent, the repercussions are going to be personal as well as political, social, and cultural. We will each experience this trauma in our own way and our responses will be shaped by our past experiences with war, violence, and terror. It is important that we each find places where we can process our personal horror. We also need to be particularly mindful of the impact of these events on those persons whose lives have already included violence and terror in the United States and around the world. Please feel free to email one of us, if you have any questions.

Jayne Seminare Docherty, associate professor of conflict studies;
Ron Kraybill, associate professor of conflict studies;
Howard Zehr, professor of sociology and restorative justice.

<http://www.emu.edu/ctp/> Conflict Transformation Program

Mennonite Church USA Executive Board FAX To President Bush

September 14, 2001

President George W. Bush
The White House
Washington DC 20500
Fax 202-456-2461

Dear Mr. President,

In these days of sadness and fear, we are asking our congregations to pray for you and other leaders in this country, that you will find God's grace, wisdom, and restraint.

We are profoundly saddened by the terrible tragedy that has come to us and horrified that other human beings could premeditate and commit such dreadful acts of violence. And we are fearful that others could suffer similarly if the United States should seek to use violent means to retaliate.

We have heard these calls for retaliation, but we wonder how retaliation could possibly bring safety to more Americans. Our tradition of nonviolence teaches us that more violence will only continue the spiral of violence, placing more and more lives in danger.

Surely a Christian understanding of history has taught us that Jesus expressed the desire of God in such situations. "An eye for an eye" escalates violence for everyone and does not work. We urge you to seek Jesus' new way of security rooted in our trust in God and our concern for all, including those who make us feel afraid.

Like others, we are angry that planes with innocent human beings on board were turned into missiles of death. Like others, we feel vulnerable and unsafe. But if we do not want to be the targets of such attacks, we should not prepare, threaten or support attacks on others. Military retaliation will not make our nation more secure.

We ask that you take the lead among world leaders to use civilized and just means to find the terrorists behind these acts of mass destruction. We ask you to use the world court system to seek justice.

Mennonites have served in Israel and Palestine for many years and we have observed the results of "eye for an eye" violence. We lament this futile cycle of violence, retaliation and counter-retaliation. Neither Israelis nor Palestinians feel more secure as a result. A more hopeful path forward is based on justice for all parties and a strong commitment to nonviolence.

We have feared for years that the projection of U.S. military power and domination of global economic relationships could lead to a day like September 11. We pray that our country will not use this tragedy as an opportunity for retaliation, but as an occasion for peaceful action that can truly contribute to global security. Let us recommit ourselves to act justly in our global relationships to build a secure future.

May you find a calm that listens to the voice of God calling you. We implore you to help end the cycle of violence, for as someone has said, "an eye for an eye only makes everyone blind."

Prayerfully,

James Schrag
Executive Director
Mennonite Church USA

To Retaliate In Love

Subject: Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir, If the Taleban or Mr Bin Laden are indeed implicated in the barbaric terrorist atrocity in America last week then Britain and America must retaliate disproportionately. The most powerful way we can repay those who have done this evil deed is to feed their hungry and care for their sick and shame them for what they have done. Jesus said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew 5:44) and the Apostle Paul wrote "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." (Romans 12:20).

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Sizer
Revd Stephen R. Sizer
Christ Church Vicarage
Virginia Water England

NONVIOLENT RESPONSE TO SEPTEMBER 11 TERRORIST ATTACKS

by John K. Stoner <http://www.ecapc.org> (Every Church A Peace Church)

There is nothing dramatic or theatrical in pointing out that the production and use of nuclear weapons is terroristic. And so we, as nuclear Americans, know what terrorism is, because we have inflicted it on others.

Yes, it is embarrassing to say this, as an American. Yes, it is difficult to say this, as an American. Yes, it would be far, far easier to say something else today, in the wake of the horrific terroristic attacks on the World Trade buildings and the Pentagon.

But there are people who have been saying for the past 50 years that the production and use of nuclear weapons is terroristic. And I am one of them. Some of us have spent years in jail for saying so. All of us have been marginalized by the prevailing ideology of America.

Tens of thousands of people, civilians, men, women and children, grandparents and grandchildren, died in Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. And three days later, on August 9, 1945, tens of thousands more died in Nagasaki in a second nuclear attack, an act which has never been and could never be, justified by an rational or moral argument.

It needs to be said, because it is true, that the production and use of nuclear weapons is terroristic. It needs to be said now, because the forces in our nation which have produced and justified these weapons of nuclear terrorism will be tempted now, in special and frightening ways, to propose once again the use of nuclear weapons. It needs to be said clearly, because it clarifies the fact that the moral distance between those guilty of today's attacks and those guilty of the use and continued stockpiling of nuclear weapons is not so great as to justify self-righteous pronouncements or acts of violent retaliation. Now, not some other time and place, is the time to turn to another way.

Short of proposing the use of nuclear weapons, the voices which routinely justify the stockpiling and threatened use of nuclear weapons, can be absolutely expected to propose acts of retaliatory violence which will ignore the lives of the innocent, escalate the cycle of violence and multiply the forces of hatred and fear in our world.

And so, if we are humbled, and terrified, and left speechless by the evil which we have witnessed today in New York and Washington, as we should be, let us also be humbled,

terrified and left speechless by the fact that our nation has unleashed the violence of war on civilian populations in Japan, with nuclear weapons, and let us meditate on the fact that we have not repented of these acts. We witness, instead of repentance, the justification on every hand of continuing policies of nuclear terrorism, overwhelming military might, and the use of violence around the world to protect the privilege of the rich. We witness plans to escalate America's reliance on violence into outer space, into the very heavens, with new weapons systems designed to enforce the will of America's rich on the world, no protest permitted.

Since I speak as a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, I will go ahead and speak as a disciple of Jesus. This is not a time to say that Christ's gospel of love, and his teaching that we shall "love our enemies"; is irrelevant to a world of harsh realities, evil powers and wicked people. It is a time to say just the opposite, namely, that the way of Jesus is the only way which can lead us out of this morass of escalating violence. This is what it means to say that Jesus is the only way. This is what it means to say that Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life."

Jesus has been thought, by conservative Christians especially, to be the only way to heaven, the only way beyond this world. The truth is, Jesus is the only way through this world. His way of love, his practice of compassion and his call to love our enemies is the only way which will work in human affairs, including the relationships of families, communities, tribes, and nations.

And so we, in the church, have a challenge as never before, to speak the truth which we've been privileged to see. Every church is called to be a peace church. Jesus was right. The way of suffering love is the way to respond to enemies. The way to overcome evil is to overcome it with good. It is the only thing that works. And yes, of course, it is the way that is right-- because it finds resonance in the deepest realities of human soul and conscience, and is a reflection of the heart of God. 9/11/01

May God Touch All Of Humanity With His Infinite Grace by Susan Abulhawa

I am a Palestinian and I am an American. But today, the title I cherish most is that of a human being. Yesterday, I was supposed to be in NY for a meeting. Instead, I sat red-eyed in front of my TV screen in disbelieving horror. Treachery was engulfing innocent and unsuspecting mothers, fathers, sons and daughters before my eyes. Menacing clouds hovered above screaming souls desperately reaching out of the windows of the World Trade Center. Some jumped.

It was too much to bear. I didn't even realize that my four-year-old daughter was behind me watching a symbol of our privilege collapse upon itself. "Why did that building fall down?" she asked. Then the phone rang. Six hang ups in a row. Another one: "die" said the voice at the other end. Shortly after, the local newspaper called for a "reaction," the reporter wanted to know whom did I think did it. Reactions on TV from people across the country were similar.

Many echoed the sentiment of graffiti written in dust on a NY street: "Kill Arabs." One C-SPAN caller recommended that we seek out Arabs and Muslims wherever they are and bomb them. The outcry is for vengeance. That is normal. I have seen and heard similar sentiments from Palestinians whose sons and daughters are shelled, shot or caught inside their homes while Israeli bulldozer rip through them. And I have heard it from Israelis whose loved ones were killed in acts of violence by Palestinians.

I have read calls to vengeance from Iraqis who have watched millions of their children die of starvation, diseases of the dark ages and strange cancers from radiation of bullet cases. The lifeless people, airports and malls with which we are now faced have lasted ten years in Iraq. These feelings of rage, despair, vulnerability, I think, are the very feelings that helped create the rancid act we witnessed yesterday. I was appalled to see Palestinian children celebrating in the streets, but I also know how deep and enduring has been their suffering at the hands of Israel, the chief recipient of our money and arms. I remember Qana, and how the world fell silent to protect Israel and left them to sort through body parts for their loved ones.

Yet despite the escalating aggression against them and the fingers wagging in their faces,

hundreds of Palestinians crammed into Gaza hospital to donate blood for American victims. It seems cynical that CNN did not show those images. Most of those people are refugees and all of them have at one point or another been the victims of aggression from weapons made in and supplied by the USA. Most Palestinians interviewed reached through their pain to condemn the act and expressed sorrow for the victims. "We know how they feel," said one Palestinian, "we bury our dead day by day."

Today we are suffering the fear, insecurity and bloodshed that many nations have been experiencing for decades. We can lash out indeed. We can destroy Afghanistan. We can round up all Arabs and Muslims in this country. We can follow Israel's example of extrajudicial killings, as my local TV announcer hinted, or collective imprisonment and aerial bombardment.

Perhaps we can step outside of our labels and pull together as human beings, all of us, for the victims, whom I'm sure are as diverse as America. Awful gut-wrenching stories are emerging. The little girl who hasn't heard from either of her parents yet. The man who lost his brother but isn't sure on which plane. The woman sifting through rubble and tears looking for her fiancé. The wife who pledged her love to her husband on a cell phone moments before crashing into the Pentagon. The valiant fire fighters who gave their lives to save others. We are all touched, indeed shaken. We are all horrified by our collective nightmare that came true.

Perhaps we can use our pain to understand the suffering of the world around us, be it in Palestine, Rowanda, Vieques, Puerto Rico, Iraq or Bosnia. I pray that we will reach beyond the pain to find the stuff that will make us stronger and wiser. I pray that our leaders will find the courage to reexamine our foreign policies and the use of our weapons that shed innocent blood all over the world, in corners where there are no cameras to capture the horror, which we now know.

As I look to answer my daughter, I know we can make no sense of this. But I pray that we can breathe reason through ominous clouds of rage. "Something bad has happened," I say to her. "But you needn't worry because you're perfectly safe." I pray that I am correct and I pray for the parents and children who lost each other yesterday. This day of endless grief will live until eternity. May God touch all of humanity with his infinite Grace to come together and not turn on one another.

This is a discussion list run by the Campaign Against Sanctions on Iraq CASI's website - www.casi.org.uk - includes an archive of all postings .

MCC workers in New York grieve, pray following tragic events

NEW YORK -- One day after the attacks that shook this city and Washington, D.C., John Rempel walked to work down the middle of empty streets in an eerily quiet upper Manhattan.

As a Palestrina Mass played in the background, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) liaison at the United Nations could see from his office window smoke still billowing from the World Trade Center, where rescuers continued to dig out victims.

Rempel and other Mennonites in New York are grieving, praying and seeking God's will for an appropriate response to the tragedy. The previous evening, he and other members of Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship gathered for a prayer service.

"It was like people were under an anesthetic," Rempel said. "The conversation was slow, and people didn't finish sentences. At the end, most people just sat there."

One member of the church was at work in a building adjacent to the Trade Center towers. He and others escaped and walked north over corpses and debris, Rempel said.

Rempel, a trained pastor, has offered to give blood and provide trauma counseling. So many people were donating blood, however, that he and others were turned away because the

collection site had run out of storage equipment.

In the midst of the personal pain, Rempel is concerned that the tragedies will spiral into more violence and that inflammatory language will hurt Arabs and others presumed to be involved.

Sandra Perez, an MCC Church Community Worker in Brooklyn, was voting at her local precinct when a worker told her that an airplane had hit the World Trade Center. With the train system closed, she took a bus into Manhattan to find her grandson, whose school is near the towers. Fortunately, he was not injured in the attacks.

"He said he saw people jumping out of the [World Trade Center] building," Perez said. "He just ran."

Downtown Brooklyn, meanwhile, was filled with people pouring into the borough from Manhattan.

"There were people with bandages or missing their shirts, people walking around in a daze or sitting along the street, just stunned," she said."

Perez sought comfort at United Revival Mennonite Church, which was open throughout the day for prayer and counseling. The Brooklyn congregations contacted Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship to see if they could offer assistance.

The situation is still chaotic, however, and so much of the disaster site has been closed off to those without official roles.

"You feel helpless," Rempel said. "It's a major tragedy and the effects are within eyesight."

As events unfold in the next few days, the churches will have a clearer understanding of what their role may be in seeking healing and hope.

When Will We Learn? by Harry Browne, September 12, 2001

The terrorist attacks against America comprise a horrible tragedy. But they shouldn't be a surprise.

It is well known that in war, the first casualty is truth - that during any war truth is forsaken for propaganda. But sanity was a prior casualty: it was the loss of sanity that led to war in the first place.

Our foreign policy has been insane for decades. It was only a matter of time until Americans would have to suffer personally for it. It is a terrible tragedy of life that the innocent so often have to suffer for the sins of the guilty.

When will we learn that we can't allow our politicians to bully the world without someone bullying back eventually?

President Bush has authorized continued bombing of innocent people in Iraq. President Clinton bombed innocent people in the Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Serbia. President Bush Senior invaded Iraq and Panama. President Reagan bombed innocent people in Libya and invaded Grenada. And on and on it goes.

Did we think the people who lost their families and friends and property in all that destruction would love America for what happened?

When will we learn that violence always begets violence?

Teaching Lessons

Supposedly, Reagan bombed Libya to teach Muammar al-Qaddafi a lesson about terrorism.

But shortly thereafter a PanAm plane was destroyed over Scotland, and our government tried to convince the world it was Libyans who did it.

When will we learn that "teaching someone a lesson" never teaches anything but resentment - that it only inspires the recipient to greater acts of defiance.

How many times on Tuesday did we hear someone describe the terrorist attacks as "cowardly acts"? But as misguided and despicable as they were, they were anything but cowardly. The people who committed them knowingly gave their lives for whatever stupid beliefs they held.

But what about the American presidents who order bombings of innocent people - while the presidents remain completely insulated from any danger? What would you call their acts?

When will we learn that forsaking truth and reason in the heat of battle almost always assures that we will lose the battle?

Losing our Last Freedoms

And now, as sure as night follows day, we will be told we must give up more of our freedoms to avenge what never should have happened in the first place.

When will we learn that it makes no sense to give up our freedoms in the name of freedom?

What to Do

What should be done?

First of all, stop the hysteria. Stand back and ask how this could have happened. Ask how a prosperous country isolated by two oceans could have so embroiled itself in other people's business that someone would want to do us harm. Even sitting in the middle of Europe, Switzerland isn't beset by terrorist attacks, because the Swiss mind their own business.

Second, resolve that we won't let our leaders use this occasion to commit their own terrorist acts upon more innocent people, foreign and domestic, that will inspire more terrorist attacks in the future.

Third, find a way, with enforceable constitutional limits, to prevent our leaders from ever again provoking this kind of anger against America.

Patriotism?

There are those who will say this article is unpatriotic and un-American - that this is not a time to question our country or our leaders. When will we learn that without freedom and sanity, there is no reason to be patriotic?

Harry Browne was the 2000 Libertarian Party candidate for President.

You can read more of his articles at www.HarryBrowne.org, his books are available at www.HBBooks.com.

[Antiwar.com Home Page](http://Antiwar.com)

Dancing in the Street - Images of Palestinians

The pictures you saw on television were of a handful of young children, many of which have not reached their teen age years. Yet the cameras focused on that unfortunately. There were no mass demonstrations in the streets, no adult leadership, no political speeches, and not even flags larger than a palm size. These children were driven by the existence of the camera more than the events which they have no understanding of. These children were interpreting the events in a wrong manner. Yet they are thinking that this represents their nation's resentments of America's support of Israel. This is not an accurate representation of the Palestinian feelings.

The Palestinians, who themselves have suffered the most in terms of lost lives, discrimination, occupation and injustice for over 53 years, are capable of understanding and sympathizing with human suffering. However, as their years of suffering have mounted without any relief in sight, many began to see hope in any new effort, misguided or rightfully, only to have more disappointment later. Many now believe that perhaps a major event, as the US has seen, might be the catalyst to finally turn their situation around. This because of the US, in their eyes, is the power preventing the turn around, and because it is the one power that can make it happen. So, somehow, in a perfectly human (perhaps masochistic) manner, they want the US to feel what they are feeling and which it has refused to even acknowledge for so long. The United States' pull out of the recent Conference on Racism is a perfect example on that.

While the cameras give us the wrong impression that the Palestinians are joyful at America's suffering, in their eyes, being too busy with their own suffering to consider America's, they are joyful because they are hopeful that this could be the beginning of the end for them - then end of their own suffering. In other words, they are ignoring the pain of cutting their legs because they hope that this could save their lives from cancer.

I do not know of any Palestinian who is or would be joyful at the death of anyone, particularly American citizens. Yes, Palestinians see America's policy towards them and Israel as being very biased towards Israel, unfair and highly damaging to their just cause. Further, many Palestinians view America's unquestionable support and protection of Israel regardless of their level of suffering as being the accessory to their murder and suffering. On the other hand, Palestinians do truly appreciate, admire and respect Americans. There are more Americans working with and assisting the Palestinians in their struggle for freedom and democracy, in medical relief, education, urban renewal and political activism than any other nationals.

Sam Makhlof, Media Director,
American-Arab Anti Discrimination Committee, Georgia

Intelligence Reports

The following articles are from STRATFOR, The Global Intelligence Company
<http://www.stratfor.com>

Global Intelligence Cooperation Comes With Risks, 13 September 2001

The United States is now building coalition support for its response to Sept. 11 terror attacks. The chief benefit of cooperation with the international community will be intelligence. The ease with which the terrorists struck demonstrates a gaping hole in U.S. intelligence capabilities that allies may help to fill. A host of nations have jumped at the chance to build cooperation with the United States, but such collaboration comes with a price.

Analysis

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said Sept. 13 that the United States would seek to build a coalition response to terror attacks in Washington, D.C., and New York City. A host of countries -- including China, India, Israel, Pakistan, Russia and Saudi Arabia -- have offered to help the United States track down those responsible.

The offers come when the United States has dire need for intelligence on the activities, operations, networks and funding of foreign terrorist organizations based in Africa, the Middle East and central and southeast Asia. But global counterterrorism cooperation among a group of nations could be a catch-22 for the United States. Other nations will seek to shape the United States' coming war against terrorism to suit their own interests.

For Washington, this presents a strategic dilemma. Cooperation is necessary and invaluable, but the benefits must be weighed against the motivations of the many actors involved. This will hamper counterterrorism efforts. The United States is also inclined to act unilaterally.

Dependence upon foreign sources for intelligence would make this impossible. But the United States cannot decline all foreign support. The radical Islamic groups most likely involved -- although organized into a loose network -- act in concert. Fighting them will require cooperation.

Washington needs the intelligence capabilities of other nations. For example, India, Israel and Russia can provide significant human intelligence sources and foreign language skills. Both are vital to exposing the terrorist network involved in the recent attacks. Other nations can also provide intelligence on terrorism networks within their own countries, as well as the groups' sources of funding, likely sponsors, and intelligence-gathering and other capabilities.

Many of these nations have a wealth of information on counterterrorism methodology and decades of experience fighting militant groups. These countries and others -- especially cooperative moderate Arab nations -- can help U.S. intelligence officials penetrate countries where spying is normally difficult.

From a logistical and technical perspective, such cooperation could give Washington a competitive advantage for a war in which intelligence will be the most valuable weapon.

But accepting such assistance comes with a price. The trap is simple: By pinpointing groups like Palestinians and Chechens, nations such as Israel and Russia could seek to manipulate the U.S. response in order to combat their own enemies.

Israel immediately offered intelligence and military assistance to the United States following the Sept. 11 attacks. Israel is eager for the United States to identify a common enemy and to gain U.S. support in its own problem with Palestinian militants. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, in conversations with U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, compared Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat to Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden -- the United States' prime suspect, Israeli radio reported Sept. 13.

Collaborating with Israel could put the United States in a difficult position. Already, the attacks in the United States have granted Israel virtual carte blanche in dealing with suspected Palestinian militants. Sharing intelligence about insurgent groups in the Middle East with Washington will once again position Israel as an indispensable U.S. ally, ensuring continued support in its war against the Palestinians and possibly future conflicts with Arab neighbors.

Many other nations could benefit in the same way. For example, India has already offered to help the United States if investigators link the Sept. 11 attacks to bin Laden and his operations in Pakistan, the Times of India reported Sept. 13. India would gladly use U.S. resources to stamp out radical Islamic groups in Pakistan as these groups are fighting in Kashmir, territory over which India and Pakistan have fought three wars.

Similarly, Russia stands to gain from helping America. The Russian Federal Security Service has already identified the Pakistan-based radical Islamic group Jaamat e-Islami as the likely suspect in the suicide hijackings. The group has been tied to Chechen rebels and a spate of bombings in Russia in 1999, according to ITAR-TASS. Moscow has its own reasons, however, to finger a group connected to the Chechens and targeted by India: By condemning these groups, the United States will be forced to drop its own criticism of Russia's operations in Chechnya.

Other countries can use a global intelligence coalition to their own benefit. Even if they are not directly threatened by Islamic fundamentalist groups, by sharing intelligence and collaborating with the United States in a global war against terrorism, they would have a plethora of opportunities to gather intelligence on potential rivals or stretch their own military reach.

For instance, the head of the Japanese Defense Agency announced Sept. 11 that Japan would fully support the United States and act with it to deal with terrorist attacks, The Associated Press reported. If Japan can frame its military restructuring as an international counterterrorism effort, that would go a long way to help Tokyo avoid many problems associated with the legacy of its World War II militarism and with domestic and foreign

opposition.

European countries will seek to strengthen their own counterterrorism measures and benefit from American financial resources. Though Spain, for instance, is not likely to claim that Basque separatists were involved in the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks, cooperation with the United States can advance Madrid's efforts to end its problem with separatist rebels.

People the world over see the attack on the United States as a tragedy. But foreign governments will look to turn it into an opportunity to solve many of their own national security problems. The United States will accept help to a limited degree although ultimately it is more likely to implement policy on a unilateral basis. But with a united enemy, a disunited coalition puts the United States at a disadvantage not easily overcome.

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No Easy Battle, 13 September 2001

Summary

In the wake of this week's terrorist attacks in the United States, the U.S. government is trying to decide how it can defeat its new style of enemy. The key to victory is finding the enemy's center of gravity, or what enables it to operate, and destroying it. But what has worked for the U.S. military in the past may not be enough this time around.

Analysis

The foundation of any successful military operation is defining and attacking the enemy's center of gravity: the capacity that enables it to operate. A war effort that does not successfully define the enemy's center of gravity, or lacks the ability to decisively incapacitate it, is doomed to failure.

The center of gravity can be relatively easy to define, as was the Iraqi command and control system, or relatively difficult to define, as was Vietnam's discovery of America's unwillingness to indefinitely absorb casualties. In either case, identifying the adversary's center of gravity is the key to victory.

In the wake of this week's terrorist attacks in the United States, this question is now being discussed in the highest reaches of the American government. The issue, from a military standpoint, is not one of moral responsibility or legal culpability. Rather, it is what will be required to render the enemy incapable of functioning as an effective force. Put differently, what is the most efficient means of destroying the enemy's will to resist?

This is an extraordinarily difficult process in this case because it is not clear who the enemy is. Two schools of thought are emerging though.

One argues that the attackers are essentially agents of some foreign government that enables them to operate. Therefore, by either defeating or dissuading this government from continuing to support the attackers, they will be rendered ineffective and the threat will end.

Such a scenario is extremely attractive for the United States. Posing the conflict as one between nation-states plays to American strength in waging conventional war. A nation-state can be negotiated with, bombed or invaded. If a nation-state is identified as the attackers' center of gravity, then it can by some level of exertion be destroyed. There is now an inherent interest within the U.S. government to define the center of gravity as Iraq or Afghanistan or both. The United States knows how to wage such wars.

The second school of thought argues that the entity we are facing is instead an amorphous, shifting collection of small groups, controlled in a dynamic and unpredictable manner and

deliberately without a clear geographical locus. The components of the organization can be in Afghanistan or Boston, in Beirut or Paris. Its fundamental character is that it moves with near invisibility around the globe, forming ad hoc groups with exquisite patience and care for strikes against its enemies.

This is a group, therefore, that has been deliberately constructed not to provide its enemies with a center of gravity. Its diffusion is designed to make it difficult to kill with any certainty. The founders of this group studied the history of underground movements and determined that their greatest weakness is what was thought to be their strength: tight control from the center.

That central control, the key to the Leninist model, provided decisive guidance but presented enemies with a focal point that, if smashed, rendered the organization helpless. This model of underground movement accepts inefficiency -- there are long pauses between actions -- in return for both security, as penetration is difficult, and survivability, as it does not provide its enemies with a definable point against which to strike.

This model is much less attractive to American military planners because it does not play to American capabilities. It is impervious to the type of warfare the United States prefers, which is what one might call wholesale warfare. It instead demands a retail sort of warfare, in which the fighting level comprises very small unit operations, the geographic scale is potentially global and the time frame is extensive and indeterminate. It is a conflict that does lend itself to intelligence technology, but it ultimately turns on patience, subtlety and secrecy, none of which are America's strong suits.

It is therefore completely understandable that the United States is trying to redefine the conflict in terms of nation-states, and there is also substantial precedent for it as well. The precursor terrorist movements of the 1970s and 1980s were far from self-contained entities. All received support in various ways from Soviet and Eastern European intelligence services, as well as from North Korea, Libya, Syria and others. From training to false passports, they were highly dependent on nation-states for their operation.

It is therefore reasonable to assume the case is the same with these new attackers. It would follow that if their source of operational support were destroyed, they would cease to function. A bombing campaign or invasion would then solve the problem. The issue is to determine which country is supplying the support and act.

There is no doubt the entity that attacked the United States got support from state intelligence services. Some of that support might well have been officially sanctioned while some might have been provided by a political faction or sympathetic individuals. But although for the attackers state support is necessary and desirable, it is not clear that destroying involved states would disable the perpetrators.

One of the principles of the attackers appears to be redundancy, not in the sense of backup systems, but in the sense that each group contains all support systems. In the same sense, it appears possible that they have constructed relationships in such a way that although they depend on state backing, they are not dependent on the support of any particular state.

An interesting development arising in the aftermath is the multitude of states accused of providing support to the attackers: Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Algeria and Syria, among others, have all been suggested. All of them could have been involved in some way or another, with the result being dozens of nations providing intentional or unintentional support. The attackers even appear to have drawn support from the United States itself, as some of the suspected hijackers reportedly received flight training from U.S. schools.

The attackers have organized themselves to be parasitic. They are able to attach themselves to virtually any country that has a large enough Arab or Islamic community for them to disappear into or at least go unnoticed within. Drawing on funds acquired from one or many sources, they are able to extract resources wherever they are and continue operating.

If such is the case, then even if Iraq or Afghanistan gave assistance, they are still not necessarily the attackers' center of gravity. Destroying the government or military might of these countries may be morally just or even required, but it will not render the enemy incapable of continuing operations against the United States.

It is therefore not clear that a conventional war with countries that deliberately aided the culprits will achieve military victory. The ability of the attackers to draw sustenance from a wide array of willing and unwilling hosts may render them impervious to the defeat of a supporting country.

The military must systematically attack an organization that tries very hard not to have a systematic structure that can be attacked. In order for this war to succeed, the key capability will not be primarily military force but highly refined, real-time intelligence about the behavior of a small number of individuals. But as the events of the last few days have shown, this is not a strength of the American intelligence community.

And that is the ultimate dilemma for policymakers. If the kind of war we can wage well won't do the job, and we lack the confidence in our expertise to wage the kind of war we need to conduct, then what is to be done? The easy answer -- to fight the battle we fight best -- may not be the right answer, or it may be only part of the solution.

U.S. Faces Islamic Radical Network

Summary

This week's terrorist attacks demonstrate clearly for the first time the existence of a multi-national, global network of Islamic radicals and their sympathizers. The United States is gearing up for war against an enemy that may span half the globe and is comprised of thousands individuals and different organizations.

Analysis

The United States has declared war on international terrorism. In his weekly radio address Sept. 15 U.S. President George W. Bush warned Americans to brace themselves for "a conflict without battlefields or beachheads," and called on U.S. military personnel to get ready for battle. The president earlier met with his top security advisors at Camp David in order to hammer out a U.S. military response to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

Identifying the enemy, however, will be neither simple nor straightforward. A number of officials including U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell have named Saudi exile Osama bin Laden as the chief suspect. But evidence suggests that while his umbrella organization Al-Qaida was involved at some point, bin Laden himself isn't likely the mastermind behind the attacks. The skill and scope of the operation indicates that more than one base of support was necessary.

The operational resources required to pull off this week's attacks indicate the existence of a much larger threat, a multi-national radical Islamic network with operatives and sympathizers all across the globe. Such a network likely connects a variety of Islamic radical and terrorist groups.

Understanding this is the key to Washington's war-fighting strategy. In aiming to dismantle the infrastructure supporting terrorist groups, the United States will now begin focusing efforts on identifying members and supporters of this global network. Bin Laden and Al-Qaida will likely be only the first targets.

As the world's most notorious terrorist leader bin Laden has provided training, logistics and support to a host of Islamic radicals including Algerian, Egyptian, Jordanian, Pakistani, Sudanese, Syrian and Yemeni nationals. His training camps in Afghanistan provide a basis for learning the tools and techniques of terrorism. In a way bin Laden could be thought of as the president of a university devoted to the education of radical Islamic terrorists.

But taking out bin Laden won't end the threat of more terrorist attacks against the United States, since logic dictates that Al-Qaida could not have been the only organization involved in the Sept. 11 strikes.

Like any business venture, no one group would be able to supply all the resources. Instead, various aspects of the operation would be farmed out to different groups or individuals within the network. Al-Qaida as an umbrella organization is but one group within a network of radical Islamic organizations that stretches from Cairo to Manila, from Kabul to Algiers.

The sheer scope and skill with which the operations were carried out required several levels of planning, organizing, intelligence and operational experience and capabilities.

The masterminds behind this week's operation began forming their attack plan years ago. They then needed to locate funding and likely turned to sympathetic financiers who could arrange for aid from even more sympathetic donors. The planners also set up separate departments with directors to handle counterintelligence, logistics, training, diplomatic covers and passports, finances and recruitment. At the same time, security is maintained by isolating each department from the others so that the organization is not compromised.

Each division required support from a variety of sources, which neither bin Laden nor his network could provide. In fact, to say bin Laden himself masterminded the assault overlooks some important limitations under which he is currently operating.

For one he is trapped in Afghanistan and is limited in what he can do. The Saudi dissident cannot even make phone calls and has had to resort to courier services in order to communicate with his associates.

For years, the United States tracked communications in country and listened in on his phone conversations made over the Immarsat-3 satellite telephone network. Directing an operation like the one that took place Sept. 11 would require flexible management that could adapt to a variety of situations, necessitating quick and reliable means of communication.

Even financing the operation would have required resources beyond bin Laden and Al-Qaida's ability. According to U.S. officials quoted by United Press International, Washington had bin Laden's financial and operational networks almost "completely mapped" out in detail by mid-1997.

This suggest that bin Laden's finances have been at most severely limited and at least under constant surveillance. It would have been impossible for his bankers to wire money to operatives in the United States without tipping off U.S. intelligence agencies. Clearly, bin Laden could not have financed this week's operation alone.

Al-Qaida could have easily provided training and perhaps even recruits. But there are several other organizations that could also be tapped for intelligence, logistical assistance, operational planning and financing. For example, the Egyptian group al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya orchestrated the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 and has experience operating in the United States. It also has links to Egyptian intelligence and business leaders who travel frequently and could provide information on airline security standards in the United States.

Another example can be seen in the bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen last October. The group blamed for that attack has been linked to bin Laden, but there is no evidence that it acted directly under his command. That group, like the recent attackers, employed crude tactics and weapons in a sophisticated manner to cause massive damage. It managed to severely damage a U.S. destroyer, not to mention the U.S. sense of dominance, with a rubber inflatable boat.

Indeed, there are hundreds of radical Islamic organizations operating around the world, all individual and distinct from each other, that could have provided support. Although in the past a majority focused on local issues and did not operate beyond their national borders, a new

picture is now emerging.

This picture is one of a global network tying all Islamic groups together in a loose coalition. Like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, this network is comprised of organizations and sympathetic individuals from all over the Muslim world, including financiers and aid donors, government officials and diplomats, former and possibly current military officers, intelligence agents, former and current guerrilla and militant groups, information technology specialists and operational commanders and their lieutenants.

It is then quite possible that the group that masterminded the Sept. 11 terror attacks is comprised of a collection of individuals from several different countries. Indeed, the FBI's list of suspects reads like a student roster from the renowned Al-Ahzar University in Cairo. The operatives who carried out the attack came from countries across the Middle East, including possibly Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. There was no local issue tying them all together.

The United States thinks it is going to war with bin Laden, Al-Qaida or the unnamed group directly responsible for this week's attacks. But taking down the infrastructure supporting these groups will require the U.S. to identify and dismantle the larger, global network. That, like dismantling the drug trafficking networks in Latin America, West Africa or Europe, will be a monumental task.

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Articles

The Nonviolence Web occasionally highlights some of the more interesting posts to the Discussion Board. This one is from November 13, 1997.

How Come the U.S. Trains All the Terrorists? By Martin Kelley

I've just been reading today's New York Times article about the conviction of the New York City World Trade Center bombers. With it is a companion piece about the plot leader, Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, who hoped to kill 250,000 people when the towers collapsed onto the city below. Born in Kuwait to a Pakistani mother and Palestinian father, his life began as an allegory for the social displacements of the Middle East, and he grew up with anger towards the Israelis-and by extensions the Americans-who had forced his father from his homeland. Even so, Yousef came to school in the West, to Wales, where he studied engineering. But in 1989 he left it for another education, fueled by his anger and leading to the death of six in the heat and smoke of the massive underground explosion in downtown Manhattan. Yousef traveled to Afghanistan to join the Mujahedeen rebels in their fight against Soviet occupiers, and there learned the guerrilla techniques he would later employ in New York. Who supported the Mujahedeen and paid for Yousef's training in terrorism? The United States Central Intelligence Agency, who funneled the Afghan rebels millions of U.S. taxpayers dollars.

It would seem a simple case of U.S. militarism coming home to roost, but it is not so simple and it is not uncommon. Follow most trails of terrorism and you'll find United States government funding somewhere in the recent past.

Timothy McVeigh was another angry young man, one who had to drop out of college, couldn't find a steady job, and moved from trailer park to trailer park as an adult, wondering if the American Dream included him. He did what a lot of economically-disadvantaged young kids do, and enlisted in the U.S. Army (this has been described by some as "the poverty draft").

In 1988, he met Michael Fortier and Terry Nichols at the U.S. Army base at Ft. Benning, Georgia (coincidentally home of the infamous School of the Americas). There he was taught how to turn his anger into killing and was quickly promoted, getting good reviews and being awarded with the Bronze Star and Combat Infantry Badge for his service in the Gulf War.

Later he came back to the U.S. with his Ft. Benning friends and turned his anger against the

U.S. government. He used his military skills to build a bomb (allegedly with Nichols, now at trial, with the knowledge of Fortier, who turned state's witness). On a spring day in 1995, he drove the bomb to Oklahoma City's federal building and set it off, killing 168 people. McVeigh's mother said, "It was like he traded one Army for another one." (Washington Post, 7/2/95)

Another terrorist trained by the United States government.

But it doesn't end there either. This same dynamic happens on the nation-state level as well. Today's headlines also include stories about the standoff between Iraq's Saddam Hussein and United Nations arms inspectors, a situation which threatens to renew military fighting in the region. Who funded Hussein and gave him millions of dollars worth of weapons to fight the Iranians during the 80s? Why, it's the U.S. government again. How come the United States is directly involved in training some of the biggest terrorists of the decade? Haven't we learned that militarism only leads to more militarism? Would Ramzi Ahmed Yousef and Timothy McVeigh just be political unknowns if the United States hadn't taught them to kill with their anger? Would Saddam Hussein be just another ex-dictator if the U.S. hadn't funded his military during the 1980s?

We can never know these answers. But we can stop training the next generation of terrorists. Let's stop funding war, let's stop solving problems with guns and explosives. Let today's angry twenty year olds cut people off in traffic and do no more. Let's stop these undeclared wars.

The following articles are from **The American Prospect** <http://www.prospect.org/>

Bush Is Playing With Religious Fire by Robert Kuttner September 10, 2001

Does George W. Bush appreciate what fire he is playing with when he stirs up the religious right? It is almost as if we are on the road to religious war.

In so many corners of the globe, people are brutalizing their neighbors because each is convinced that he has a direct pipeline to the true deity, while the outsider is a dangerous infidel.

Whether in the Middle East, or Ireland, Iran or Afghanistan, state-fomented religious intolerance is the great blight on the right of ordinary people to live as they choose, as well as a grave threat to the peace.

Colleague James Carroll's recent best-selling book, "Constantine's Sword," recounted the appalling history of how militant Christians slaughtered millions of outsiders, in the name of the healing word of Jesus of Nazareth.

As we see from the seemingly insoluble conflicts in Ireland and Israel, religious difference quickly degenerates into tribalism. The conflicts have long since ceased to be about the correct form of worship, but about which group dominates which other group, and which accumulated hatreds need to be avenged.

In the United States of America, we have been largely spared religious warfare, despite a proliferation of different forms of worship.

The genius of the Founders was to appreciate that the state should stay far away from religion - not to suppress faith but to let its diverse forms flourish.

This radical breakthrough of religious tolerance as official government policy came after three centuries of religious war. In 1648, the Treaty of Westphalia had produced an uneasy truce by giving the sovereign the right to determine the official religion of each country in Europe. If you happened to be a Catholic in a Protestant country, or vice versa, you converted or you got out. If you were a Jew, you wandered the earth in search of a benign protector. It was Jonathan Swift who declared that "we have just religion enough to make us hate, but not enough to make us love each other."

Ours was the first nation to make religious tolerance and state neutrality the national creed. America has had its share of religious crusades and great awakenings, and they are protected by the Constitution. They ebb and they flow; and mercifully they have never turned into religious warfare so far.

Government neutrality has historically been a calming influence. But this administration has now put the power of the federal government in the camp of religious absolutists.

The so-called faith-based initiative was bad enough. It tried to put the government in the business of subsidizing social services provided by churches with taxpayer dollars, with the religion mixed in. (Churches already provide subsidized services, like day care, but can't proselytize.)

Bush soon bumped into Jefferson. Congress balked at providing the money unless their churches wouldn't use the funds to preach religion. But as leaders of the religious right indignantly pointed out, that's what churches are all about. Bush also stumbled on where to draw the line. If our taxpayer dollars support services sponsored by Christian fundamentalists, why not Muslim fundamentalists? How about pagan fundamentalists? Jefferson had it right. Government should stay far away.

Bush's pandering to groups who equate a fertilized embryo with a human being is even worse. His bizarre compromise - embryos donated to science before Aug. 9 are ethical, those used after Aug. 9 are not - was pure pandering. It will deny millions of people a fuller life by delaying the development of life-enhancing therapies.

Until the stem-cell controversy arose, antiabortion groups were picketing clinics, but nobody was protesting the murder of tiny fertilized embryos discarded in the course of fertility efforts. The only logic of Bush's decision was to rescue the religious right from the wrath of the broad public, once the logic of its position was widely understood.

Americans are justifiably ambivalent about abortion. A majority supports abortion rights, but most of us think abortions should be a rare last resort. At the same time, very few of us think stem-cell advances should be halted because cells in a petri dish are people.

Now the religious right is on the march because some religious radicals think Bush's limit was not stringent enough. (One thing about absolutists - you can't please them unless you are with them 100 percent, because they know God is on their side.)

Let us each give thanks to whatever divinity we worship for America's religious tolerance - and tell George W. Bush to stop messing with it. There will be hell to pay.

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Don't Rush to Judgment by John Prados September 12.2001

Eyes are red and tempers hot in the wake of the September 11, 2001, strike on America. Many are the voices that cry out for instant retaliation; many are those of people who should know better. Within hours of the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., the consensus culprit was already selected -- the Islamic fundamentalist Osama bin Laden. With the fires barely out, the dust still settling and rescue efforts just beginning, demands for retaliation are numerous and supported by upwards of ninety percent of Americans, more than eighty percent even if it involved going to war, according to the instant poll taken on the day of the disaster by the Washington Post and ABC News.

While detonating waves of cruise missiles in the hills of Afghanistan, not to say even stronger military responses, may convey a degree of emotional satisfaction, there are good reasons for the United States to exercise great care in this situation. Military action will be overwhelming but, as demonstrated most recently by all those smart bombs in Kosovo, not surgical. The American action would leave a core of furious, fatalistic survivors whose favorite tactic is the suicide attack, and it would mobilize fresh legions of recruits. If the attack were to be executed

against another state, those legions could be regulars, not novices. Those who merely sympathized with the struggle against American, before a powerful and destructive U.S. strike, would do more than replace the cadres lost in this American riposte.

Equally important is the question of America's ability to identify the enemy. Unfortunately, the record on immediately fingering perpetrators was not that good in previous terrorist incidents. In the Oklahoma City bombing, Palestinians, not Timothy McVeigh, were first held responsible. A 1996 truck bombing at Khobar Barracks, a U.S. installation in Saudi Arabia, was traced to Saudi domestic opposition groups only after the preferred attribution to foreigners like Bin Laden could not be demonstrated. An Egyptian Islamic group was at first blamed in the 1993 truck bombing of the World Trade Center. The Pan Am 103 bombing remains controversial because, while Libya is blamed for the action, threads that lead to Iran and to Palestinian groups based in Syria have not been completely followed. The 1984 bombing of the LaBelle discotheque in Berlin, also attributed to Libya, had important links to Palestinian groups that were obscured by the drive for instant retaliation. In short, the immediate guesses often prove wrong or at least misleading.

Consider now the specific requirements for the terrorist acts that destroyed the World Trade Center and part of the Pentagon. Terrorists boarded four different aircraft at four terminals in three airports. So far only knives have been mentioned as weapons, though smoke mentioned in a cell phone call from United Airlines Flight 93 suggests the possibility of an explosive, probably a grenade. The use of knives indicates multiple persons involved because of the necessity to keep at bay both the passengers and the full flight crews of all these aircraft. Those weapons had to get aboard the aircraft, and had they been carried separately by individual hijackers, the probability is considerable that one would have been detected, leading to the detection of others. It is more likely that weapons were placed aboard the aircraft by someone other than the hijackers themselves. That means cooperation on the ground at the airports.

In addition, the way the planes were flown after being commandeered indicates the use of experienced pilots. American Airlines Flight 77 executed a tight three-quarter turn and reportedly changed targets before it hit the Pentagon. United Airlines Flight 175 made a steady bank into the South Tower of the Trade Center. There was no wavering or any of the jerky motion of a neophyte taking a plane's controls for the first time. Hostage pilots would never have executed these maneuvers at the command of hijackers ; the terrorists themselves had to be at the controls. But the Boeing 757 and 767 aircraft are multiengine planes with advanced control systems. Control here was something that had to have been practiced hundreds of times, not with some computer game but with true aircraft simulators. Whoever carried out these attacks must possess a real air capability.

Thus, the events of September 11, 2001, amount to a carefully planned, long prepared, precision operation carried out with determination -- something akin to a commando raid. September 11 has more in common with the (abortive) U.S. rescue mission during the Iranian Hostage Crisis of the 1970s, or the Israeli raid on Entebbe of 1977, than with the truck bombings of Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998. Who are the suspects and who has the capacity for this kind of action?

We should begin with Osama bin Laden. The coincidence in time between the assassination attempt against Afghan enemy Ahmed Shah Massoud on September 9, just days before the strikes in the U.S., is suspicious. Bin Laden also demonstrated simultaneity in the Nairobi and Dar es Salaam truck bombings, for which his Al Qaeda group is widely held to be responsible, and for which he is under indictment in the United States. Bin Laden is also linked to the bombing of the U.S. destroyer Cole in the port of Aden last year, in which the instrument was an explosive motorboat. There are reports that Al Qaeda communications networks carried exultatory messages in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks as if marking an achievement.

But the previous Bin Laden incidents featured relatively crude bombs. Here we have the sophisticated use of an aircraft as a kinetic energy weapon, and the deliberate choice of large aircraft with maximum fuel loads crashed early in their flights. Post-attack communications can be misleading as well, as in the LaBelle discotheque incident, in which Libyan embassy

cables from East Berlin were arguably a source of U.S. confusion, reinforcing pre-existing beliefs about Libya. Most important, bin Laden has no air force or air capability, or any obvious way to acquire the skills evidenced on Tuesday. This past summer a bin Laden videotape circulated in the Middle East that promised new and much stronger actions against the United States, again arousing suspicion. But since the September 11 attacks bin Laden has been quoted in the Pakistani press as denying any involvement, and the Afghan government that shelters him also denies any bin Laden responsibility. On balance, Al Qaeda may have participated in the September 11 attacks, but if so, bin Laden must have been in alliance with someone else, someone who could provide pilots.

Potential suspects among Palestinian groups include Islamic Jihad and Hamas, in Lebanon, Gaza, the occupied territories and Israel. Suicide bombings have tragically become routine in the new intifada, but neither group possesses the kind of precision and sophistication shown in the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks. Both groups have deplored the attacks and denied having anything to do with them, as has the Fatah movement of Yasir Arafat. For all of them, the struggle is on the West Bank, and despite Palestinian ire with the U.S. for its support of Israel (and the celebration of some Palestinian citizens after the attack), none of these groups has reason to rouse the anger of the U.S. with acts like these. A special case is the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, whose top leader was recently murdered by the Israeli military, using U.S. weapons, as part of its systematic program of eliminating enemy leaders. That group promised retaliation, through presumably against Israel, not the U.S.; its anti-American animus may be significant but not of this magnitude. A splinter group of this organization, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, briefly claimed credit on the day of the attacks, but that statement came from a subordinate representative and was disavowed within hours by the leadership.

The elephant hiding in the closet in all this is Iraq. Saddam Hussein has pilots and an air force, a sophistical one with advanced aircraft. Iraq has an intelligence agency capable of advance planning, one whose headquarters the United States specifically attacked in 1993 following an abortive plot against former president George H. W. Bush. Saddam is also the target of an ongoing U.S. covert operation funding his opposition; his country is periodically bombed in enforcement of the no-fly zones set up after the Gulf War, and Iraq is hobbled by United Nations sanctions on its economy. True, the sanctions regimen seem to be weakening, but Iraqi air force pilots have to be angry at their lot since the Gulf War. Moreover, Bush Junior is the son of Saddam's nemesis, Bush Senior. It is suggestive that the Iraqi press is calling the World Trade Center/Pentagon attacks "the operation of the century."

Again, there is nothing more than suspicion on the Iraqi angle, as on any of the others -- and that is precisely the problem. There are at least two candidates for culprit, which makes immediate attacks on either one of them a potential error. There has to be a better understanding of just what happened and who did it before America rushes off on a military adventure with stakes as high as this one. If there is to be a war on terrorism, we need to make sure we are fighting the real enemy, not making new ones.

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The Other Terror by Chris Mooney, September 12, 2001

Terrorism is effective, and so like probably every Washington, D.C. resident -- to say nothing of New Yorkers -- I was terrified on the morning of September 11. First, we heard rumors of hijacked jets ready to dive-bomb us. Then people were saying the PLO had slammed passenger jets into the World Trade Center, which I thought didn't make sense (but what did?). And then came hysterical claims that a bomb had been left on the eighth floor of The American Prospect's downtown D.C. office building. When we frantically evacuated, I managed to leave my laptop behind in the building.

Yet my fears, at least of bodily harm, dwindled over the course of the day, as rumor became news and the world gradually stabilized. This led to a strange paradox. When I finally retrieved my computer and checked e-mail, I realized that even as my terror became increasingly manageable, an escalating horror had gripped America's Muslim and Arab population.

You could read it in the press releases sent out by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). "MUSLIMS OFFER HELP FOR VICTIMS OF TERRORIST ATTACKS." "MUSLIM LEADERS TO DONATE BLOOD FOR ATTACK VICTIMS." The subtext of these e-mails was the following: CAIR was trying to head off the kind of stereotyping and backlash against Muslim and Arab Americans that followed the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, when the media jumped to the conclusion that Arab terrorists simply had to be responsible. That backlash, erroneous though it was, led to the passage by Congress of a "secret evidence" law that, to this day, allows foreign suspects to be detained or even deported by federal authorities without ever being informed of the crime of which they are suspected. The law has affected Arabs and Muslims almost exclusively.

Ibrahim Hooper, CAIR's spokesman, told me that he felt that generally the media was being much more responsible during the current crisis. For example, ABC's Peter Jennings did mention Oklahoma City yesterday in stressing that we shouldn't jump to conclusions about the perpetrators of yesterday's horrible events. But still, Hooper said, "Unfortunately, we're getting reports of bricks through a Muslim bookstore in Alexandria, shots fired at an Islamic center in Texas. We don't usually get reports like this in one day."

As of this writing these are unconfirmed reports. But Hooper's sentiments are shared by Mauri Saalakhan, director of the Peace and Justice Foundation, a Muslim-led human rights organization. "Those who are reasonable, they're going to remember Oklahoma city. But unfortunately, we have many in our society who are not," he says. "We also have very irresponsible members of media organizations in this country that fan the flames of this kind of bigotry in the way they report and speculate about who might be responsible."

Saalakhan fears a repeat of the secret evidence law, which has made easier the racial profiling and unjustified detention of Arabs and Muslims. "Legislation is going to come out of this that will be targeted against Muslims and others who come from that part of the world," he says. Already the conservative columnist Cal Thomas has called for the rounding up and expulsion of "the people and organizations tied to radical terrorist groups in the Middle East." But the "ties" of which Thomas speaks can be extremely vague and fungible. At a time of national grief and rage, can we really trust ourselves to act judiciously while conducting a witch hunt?

After yesterday, I imagine that most, if not all of us are willing to concede that the U.S. has to take decisive action to keep its people safe and pre-empt further terrorist attacks. But we must act calmly and upon sound evidence. Implementing a reign of terror against Muslim and Arab Americans would be a poor way to prove ourselves morally superior to terrorists.

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Terror, Not War by Robert Dreyfuss, September 14,2001

Now is not the time to rally around the President of the United States. Now is the time to build fragile alliances with reasoned people of peaceful mind around the world, people who realize that no country is at war with America. Yet President Bush, seeming less like a national leader than a fate-driven overactor in a psychodrama, melodramatically warns that the events were "acts of war." They were not; they were criminal acts of terrorism. But acts of war are sure to follow.

At the core of the White House psychodrama is a president whose ill-fitting presidential garments are tailored from the rags of his father's shattered, war-plagued presidency. Indeed, perhaps it is true that the boy president's very campaign, launched in 1999, was a quest to redeem the Bush family's tarred legacy, a legacy that is mocked every day by Saddam Hussein's simple existence. Addressing the nation Tuesday night, after scurrying most unleaderlike from bunker to bunker, Bush II looked for all the world like a lost child behind a desk two sizes too large. Yet in his hands he holds the power to wreak untold destruction. And it is scary indeed to contemplate that he might be motivated as much by desire to restore his father's luster as by any rational attempt to punish the perpetrators of a crime.

And it is too much to say that he holds the power in his hands. Surrounded by Persian Gulf war veteran commanders--Vice President Cheney, Secretary of State Powell and others--Bush is clearly not the decision maker. The one-memo that Bush signs off on soon will be prepared by a coterie of militarists whose own stake in re-fighting the Gulf war, and the Vietnamese one to boot, is clear. And though they are likely, but not certain, to ignore the hotheads calling for America to "nuke" its enemies, whoever they are, virtually no other option can be ruled out--including a systematic World War II-style attack to overthrow the governments of and occupy one or more countries, including Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya and Sudan.

No one needs Karl Rove's pollsters to realize the Americans want revenge. But it is precisely the job of a true national leader not to act precipitously or emotionally, to assuage the grief and rage of a stricken population, and above all to act in accordance with the national and international law and the moral precepts that ought to guide our foreign policy--by an order of magnitude, impulsively attacked targets in Afghanistan and Sudan in response to an earlier outrage allegedly masterminded by Osama bin Laden, serving only to embarrass the nation when one of the targets turned out not to be a chemical warfare factory but a simple pharmaceutical facility. This time, with the shadow of thousands of deaths darkening his decision-making, Bush is far more likely to repeat Clinton's miscalculation a thousand-fold. And, then, America truly will be at war.

Who will stand in his way? Not the bipartisan Democrats, rallying around Bush as if he were a latter-day Franklin Roosevelt. Senator Bob Graham, Democrat of Florida and chairman of the Senate intelligence committee, has helpfully suggested lifting the decades-old ban on assassinations by America's spies and soldiers. Not the media, whose panoply of rabid columnists seem deranged in their bloodthirsty sabre-rattling. (Thank goodness the pen is not, in fact, mightier than the sword.) And not the foreign policy establishment, whose leading eminences--led by Henry Kissinger and his mini-me, Lawrence Eagleburger--are calling for war. Eagleburger: "There is only one way to begin to deal with people like this, and that is you have to kill some of them even if they are not immediately directly involved in this thing."

Most typical, but by no means most extreme, was the bloodcurdling rant by Robert Kagan, a right-wing Republican whose Washington Post Op-Ed on Wednesday was called, "We Must Fight This War." Presumably not volunteering himself to go to Afghanistan, Kagan says, "Go to war against those who have launched this awful war against us." Noting that some governments may be sheltering militants of all kinds, he adds: "We should now immediately begin building up our conventional military forces to prepare for what will inevitably and rapidly escalate into confrontation an quite possibly war with one or more of these powers." And incredibly, he urges Congress to declare war. "It does not have to name a country." Ironically, Kagan leads the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, an organization surely planning to change its name.

Of the two analogies most often made to the September 11 events--Pearl Harbor and the John F. Kennedy assassination--only one holds. Pearl Harbor was, indeed, an act of war, by a nation-state with clear geopolitical aims. The Kennedy assassination was, like this one, an awful yet amorphous event--yet one that, in 1963, might have led to an attack on Cuba had the hotheads prevailed. This time, too, the enemy is unclear--and no one thinks that killing Osama bin Laden will deal with the threat. Indeed, an unnamed Democratic senator, withholding his name presumably because he did not want to take on the burgeoning war consensus, told the New York Times that attacking bin Laden's camp could be counterproductive. "You're likely to bomb a city or a village and kill 100 terrorists and end up with 400 or 500 when the warplanes have flown away." That is what Israel seems unable to learn: Kill one terrorist, and create ten more.

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Finding Our Enemy by Robert B. Reich, September 13, 2001

This morning the cleanup and grieving continue, and America is getting back to work. Talk also continues about retribution and war. Some Americans are feeling impatient to strike back at those who participated in any way in these horrific events. There is mounting public pressure to retaliate against our enemies, to demonstrate our power and resolve. General Henry Shelton, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, says the American military stands ready.

But it's still not clear exactly what the military stands ready to do, or should do. We don't know for sure who was responsible, although evidence points to Osama bin Laden, apparently still headquartered in Afghanistan. We learn that a lost piece of luggage contains incriminating evidence in Arabic. There are accounts that the hijackers were Arab. Meanwhile, we're shown televised pictures of Palestinians celebrating in the streets. And we're told that federal officials are interviewing a number of suspects, also identified in the media as "Arabs."

When a nation wants so badly to identify and punish the people responsible for barbarism, there is a strong temptation -- politically and psychologically -- to find an enemy as quickly as possible. Some members of the military may want to strike at a number of suspected outposts within several Arabic countries. Some Americans will want to blame the entire Arab world. Already there are reports of anti-Arab rhetoric. Arab-Americans may find themselves under closer scrutiny by the FBI as well as by their neighbors.

And yet, in our rush for vengeance it is vitally important that America not demonize -- and not be seen to demonize -- the world's Islamic community or view what has happened as yet another stage in a holy war between the Islamic East and the Judeo-Christian West. This would only strengthen extremists who want nothing better than to revive that holy war.

The purpose of this kind of terrorism is not only to make us fearful, but also to make us hate-filled. Fanatics gain power when their targets retaliate against people who had not been fanatical but become angered by the retaliation. The political purpose of terrorism is to escalate mutual hate and distrust, until recrimination breeds ever more violent rounds of recrimination. This is what has happened between Israelis and Palestinians. Moderates in the middle have vanished.

America may be at war right now, but we must be careful about how we identify our enemy. If in our official acts of retribution, or even in our casual conversation, we are understood to be lashing out at the Arab world in general, we will be giving the terrorists exactly what they came here to get.

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Fighting Fanaticism With Fanaticism by Chris Mooney, September 13, 2001

"We know who the homicidal maniacs are. They are the ones cheering and dancing right now. We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity." -- Ann Coulter, on the National Review Online, September 13, 2001

More Guns, Less Terrorism *"It is scandalous that a few hijackers with knives were able to hold scores of airline passengers at bay. As a good first step towards making commercial airplanes dangerous for hijackers, pilots should be issued handguns....Cabin stewards who wish to carry concealed weapons should likewise be authorized to do so.... And passengers? Forty years ago, sportsmen routinely stowed their shotguns in overhead luggage compartments. There were no laws against bringing guns onto planes. Whatever the benefits that have resulted from the last three decades of laws against passengers carrying lawfully owned firearms onto planes, they have been far outweighed by a single day's deaths which are the direct result of turning planes into safe zones for terrorists."*

-- Dave Kopel, The National Review Online, September 12, 2001

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International Crime, Not War By Tom Barry and Martha Honey

America is living through a tragedy of unprecedented depth. Our might--military and economic--has been targeted, and our vulnerability exposed. We are shocked, outraged, determined to respond. Yet we awake to a new day sickened by the cruelty and insanity of this political violence--and uncertain if we, too, want blood on our hands.

Will vengeance, even when guided by the best of America's surgical strike technology, ease this tragedy and end the cycle of terror? Upon reflection and based on past experience, we know better.

The crime was horrific. Never have so many Americans died from violence on a single day. It felt and looked like war. Our national security came under direct attack, and the resulting carnage was comparable to the worst of war--Pearl Harbor, firebombing of Dresden, Cambodia, and Normandy. President Bush and Secretary of State Powell have called the crashes "acts of war." But having four commercial airliners commandeered by political fanatics is not war, it is international terrorism, albeit at its worst. No nation or peoples have declared war on the United States. In terms of intent and character, the political violence yesterday in Washington and New York bears more similarity to the terrorist bombing of the federal bombing in Oklahoma City than to Pearl Harbor. Yesterday certainly was a day of infamy, but it was not--and should not be--the beginning of war.

America and all nations concerned about peace, justice, and dignity will need to respond. But the response should be deliberate, just, and humane. In the past, the U.S. has responded to terrorist attacks with military strikes that were misdirected, mistakenly targeted, and counterproductive. The 1986 bombing raids on two Libyan cities, the bombing of a Baghdad neighborhood in 1993 in response to rumors of a planned assassination attempt on former President Bush, and most recently the air strike on a Sudanese pharmaceutical plant mistakenly believed to be chemical weapons factory associated with Osama bin Laden are three cases that should remind us of the folly--and terrorism--of vengeful retaliatory strikes.

Talk by our leaders of war and retribution, while possibly boosting our patriotic spirit, is dangerous and irresponsible. The politics of vengeance will do little to protect us, and will only fuel more terrorism. But neither can we passively accept our helplessness and vulnerability.

We need to mourn, bury our dead, and move on--but not to business and foreign policy as usual. What's needed now is a new U.S. resolve to address--and not simply react to--the causes of political violence in the post-cold war world. Our president's father promised at the onset of the Persian Gulf War to establish a "new world order" but it's a promise that has gone unfulfilled. Instead, over the past decade we have seen rising global disorder and conflict. Rather than gathering the world's nations together to address the scourges of international terrorism, ethnic and religious conflicts, and the polarization of poor and wealthy nations, the U.S. has relinquished its leadership role. Arrogance, unilateralism, isolationism, and imperialism are the terms now commonly used by the international press and scholars to describe the U.S. role in global affairs.

The attack on America's centers of power was an extremist reaction to what is perceived as a new world order where only the U.S. calls the shots. But it was, first and foremost, a crime against all humanity. If there is to be justice in this incident and if there is to be the rule of law in international affairs, the U.S. should seek the solace and support of the international community. Despite differences with U.S. foreign policy, especially in the conflicted Middle East, nations around the world have been quick to express their own outrage and willingness to join with America to fight and reduce the causes of international terrorism.

As Americans deliberate an effective response to this tragedy and crime, we must first reject the call for war. The gauntlet goading us to militaristic responses that treat human life as callously as the terrorists treated ours must be categorically rejected. As with any other crime,

the perpetrators and their accomplices must be brought to justice--in the courts of law, not according to the fundamentalist "eye-for-an-eye, tooth-for-a-tooth" precepts. In recent years, we have made encouraging progress in establishing and enforcing international norms for human rights and crimes against humanity. This is an opportunity to forge a broader international coalition--bringing disparate nations together in a common determination to fight against such crimes against humanity. A first principle, then, must be that we treat this as an international crime, not an act of war, and that the rules! of law should guide international response.

A second principle that should guide U.S. policy is that our investigation, pursuit, and prosecution should as much as possible count on consultation with and the cooperation of the world community of nations. Any government suspected of harboring or otherwise aiding these international terrorists should answer to concerted international pressure, not just American outrage. If indeed, military action is deemed necessary, it should carry the approval of the UN Security Council--otherwise the U.S. too will be violating the basic principles of international law.

While charting the appropriate response, the U.S. government must also begin the long-overdue task of formulating a security policy that truly protects Americans from new global threats. As critics have insisted, the Bush administration's promise that a national missile defense system would protect us looks increasingly hollow. If terrorists want to attack us, they can do so from our own soil and with our own aircraft. Our politicians would dishonor the dead, however, if they focused the new security debateolely on issues of intelligence reform and defense technology. More fundamentally, the U.S. needs to take a hard look at the policies and political structures that fan the flames of terrorism--to understand why such anger in the Middle East and elsewhere is directed at America. The task of forging a security policy not just on our response capability but also on addressing the new causal factors for war and terrorism is surely America's greatest challenge--and our success will be the true measure of our character

Terrorism is mainly the weapon of the politically weak, frustrated ideologues, and religious fanatics. The U.S. should not retaliate in kind--not allowing any compulsion for revenge or the affirmation of U.S. military might to divert America from its moral principles and global leadership responsibilities.

A Different Media Voice

Roberta De Boer, columnist for The Toledo Blade, interviewed me on a Mennonite response to the events of this week and she devoted her whole column today to our conversation. I was actually pleased with what she came up with, although the fact she quoted my question about the possibility of some kind of backlash against us because of our alternative response makes some of our people nervous; they wonder if it will put the idea into some crazed person's head. Since our church was burglarized 3 times this past year, it is not an idle worry. The column can be found at: <http://www.toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article>?

I do think the public hysteria does raise the question whether we will face the possibility of some kind of harassment as Christian pacifists, something like older generations of Mennonites have had to face, but those of us born since WW II haven't encountered. It also raises for me the question of how we express our convictions: seems to me there are peaceful, nonviolent ways of expressing our convictions, as well as some not particularly peaceful ways of articulating our peace convictions. Something to think about.

Richard A. Kauffman, pastor
Toledo Mennonite Church

Is principle for peace unpatriotic? by Roberta de Boer

It was past 10 at night when we finished talking.

I was already plenty tired - the kind of tired that always greets night, yes, but also weary right down to my marrow from this most surreal week - and no doubt Richard Kauffman was tired too.

Just one more thing, he said, after I'd peppered him with my many inarticulately phrased questions.

"Can I ask you something now? Do you think our church will be vandalized after you quote me on all this?"

Is this how it is now in America?

Can it be that to advocate for peace seems unpatriotic?

All-out assault vowed said the banner Page 1 headline in yesterday's Blade.

Inside, on Page 3, two headlines caught my eye: *Bush calls for our prayers today*, and *Bush says his goal now 'victory' in the '1st war of the 21st century.'*

"Americans like to think of America as a Christian nation," Mr. Kauffman told me Thursday. "But when push comes to shove, patriotism plays pretty strongly, and obviously we're seeing a lot of that right now."

I sought out Mr. Kauffman because I wanted to know how someone who is a pacifist as a matter of faith thinks about the events of this week, a time when multiple opinion polls report that almost all Americans support military retribution for Tuesday's terrorist attacks.

Mr. Kauffman has been pastor of Toledo Mennonite Church this past year and is a lifelong member of that denomination. He and the 110 members of his congregation "take Jesus very literally, and very seriously."

"Jesus talks about loving our enemies and praying for our enemies and doing good to those who do evil to us. We believe that Jesus on the cross was an example of how we should live in the face of violence and hostility. Jesus allowed himself to die, and absorbed in his own being the violence around him, rather than countering that violence. We believe we should pick up our cross and follow him," Mr. Kauffman said.

In Washington Thursday, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz said: "I think one thing is clear, that you don't [retaliate] with just a single military strike, no matter how dramatic. You don't do it with just military forces alone. You do it with the full resources of the U.S. government. It will be a campaign, not a single action. And we're going to keep after these people and the people who support them until this stops."

Forget religion for the moment.

"Just look at this from a strategic standpoint," Mr. Kauffman said. "OK, we strike back, and we carry on a sustained campaign, which is what they're talking about now. Isn't that just going to become the seedbed for a whole new generation of people to carry hostility toward us?"

Like all of us, Mr. Kauffman is glued to the TV. He saw the footage of Palestinian children "dancing in the streets of the West Bank in jubilation over this."

"I wish our leadership would probe beneath the surface, and not just [yield to] a knee-jerk response. That's not to say the people responsible for this dastardly deed shouldn't be held accountable. They should be."

I've lost count of how many times this week I heard TV talking heads cry out not for justice, but for bloody retribution. Richard Kauffman's seems the only voice I've heard to ask for

justice alone, and how many of his fellow Americans will think him weak because of it?

Just recently, preaching a sermon on peace-making, Mr. Kauffman said he "tried to tell the congregation that I don't necessarily think Jesus' way of peace is the most efficient or effective way to respond to violence.

"The most efficient and effective way, in the short term, is a show of force, of counter-violence," he said.

But for religious pacifists, there are no shortcuts around principles.

"I see Jesus calling us to a different way of peace, which is to not return violence. For me, that's a faith statement. It's not what's most efficient or effective, but it is the core value which I have chosen to take in my own life, this commitment to not want to take someone else's life and, as a matter of fact, being more willing to die than to kill someone."

Pollsters tell us few Americans have much patience for the pastor's principles. Maybe we think of ourselves at the moment as too - too what? Too pragmatic? Angry? Outraged? Too righteously American? - to settle for anything less than what has been described as a drastic pruning of both the branches and roots of terrorism.

Halfway through my conversation with Mr. Kauffman, I realized I sought him out not only to interview, but to draw strength from.

I want with all my heart to tamp down my blood-boiling desire to see destroyed those who have destroyed so many. I want with all my heart to nurture the small whisper within that warns how violence only begets violence, that warns against "taking out" an Osama bin Laden if for no other reason than this only leaves room for the next Osama bin Laden to take center stage.

"They're talking about war," the pastor said, and his has been the only voice I've heard so far this week utter that word with the fearfulness it deserves. "When you start talking that way, you let something loose that is hard to pull back."

Attacking the Root of Terrorism: Violence - An Interview with Satish Kumar

By Sara Buckwitz, Special to Utne Online

As a young man, Satish Kumar walked 8,000 miles for peace. Tuesday Satish, now in his mid sixties, found himself in New York, witness to the demolition of the World Trade Center by hijacked airliners. This man of peace shares with Utne Reader Online his unique perspective on the September 11 attack. He challenges Americans to retaliate with compassion and to end the spiral of violence.

"I think the whole world is filled with compassion and sympathy and sorrow," he says. Beyond the tragedy is an opportunity for America to rise above the West's tradition of violence.

"America should respond with wisdom and grace and statesmanship...America being the most powerful in terms of wealth and power and weapons, has the potential to be the flagship and lead [the world] in a different direction," he says quickly, emphatically. Because of America's status, he feels that it's the only country capable of responding differently. If it doesn't, he warns, there will be another World Trade Center and another Pentagon attacked, if not here, then elsewhere. He condemns the hijackers' use of innocent women, children and seniors as weapons of mass destruction.

However, instead of focusing on this one event, Satish emphasizes the need to look at the larger issue. He sees Tuesday's attack as evidence of a deeper trend of violence and injustice that can be connected to the protests in Seattle and Genoa, Satish says. This is part of that same problem.

As much as he recognizes the necessity of supporting the CIA, FBI and Secret Service, Satish says he hopes that America can somehow balance them with an equally powerful push to end the world of the root causes of violence: hunger and poverty. "I would propose that America lead the way and use the forum of the United Nations to bring together all nations... [to show that] not only will we suppress terrorism, but we'll not tolerate violence in any form." He challenges America to eradicate all violence. For 50 years he listened to countries speak of removing poverty. "Words, words, words," he says. "In the meantime, countries like us, become richer, richer, richer." This is one of the most overt acts of violence he sees today. He sees no reason why, with all the food, technology and science, we do not erase hunger and poverty from the earth. Ending violence, he argues, will bring about peace, "the ultimate security," he says.

As a follower of Gandhi and editor of the spiritual magazine Resurgence, he believes that violence will only beget more violence. He says: "If there is a fire you do not put more fire or wood or oil, you use water," he says. "You will overcome violence with compassion, with peace; that is a the missing element."

Sara Buckwitz is the online coordinator for Utne Reader

The American Prospect cover, December 4, 2000

Books in Review THE ROOTS OF RAGE By Karen M. Paget*

Blowback: The Cost and Consequences of American Empire, by Chalmers Johnson. Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 288 pages, \$ 15.00 (paper).

Americans around the world are targets of terrorist attacks. Not just soldiers such as those killed on the USS Cole in Yemen this fall, but civilians, as well. Last year the State Department issued an unprecedented general warning for Americans abroad -- anyone, anywhere -- to be alert to the threat of anti-American violence. Yet citizens and commentators alike seemed to take the advisory in stride. No one asked, at the end of "the American Century," why we might be in such danger.

University of California political science professor (now emeritus) Chalmers Johnson has an explanation. United States government policies and practices begun during the Cold War, and continuing to this day, are largely responsible. And the American people are mostly unaware of what we are doing in the world, "since so much of this activity takes place either in relative secrecy or under comforting rubrics."

"Blowback" is a Central Intelligence Agency word for the unintended consequences of secret operations that come back to haunt the United States. An example is the violence traced to Osama bin Laden, today's leading terrorist. He previously was accused of blowing up two U.S. embassies in East Africa, and now is implicated in the recent attack in Yemen. But he used to be "ours." A Saudi Arabian, he assisted the Afghan "freedom fighters" armed by the United States during its proxy war with the Soviet Union. Another example is the 1988 sabotage of the Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, attributed to two Libyans. They were retaliating for President Ronald Reagan's 1986 bombing of Libya, which killed Muammar Qaddafi's stepdaughter.

Johnson's point is that we reap what we sow. His principle target, however, is not the CIA. He believes that the Pentagon is sowing the most dangerous seeds. Among his most serious charges: that the Pentagon is now running the bulk of U.S. covert operations through its Special Operations Division; that the U.S. role as the largest arms seller in the world is undermining our national security; that the Department of Defense (DOD) has slipped beyond civilian control.

Such charges are not new. What is noteworthy is that they come from an unlikely source. By Johnson's own description, he has spent his military and professional life as a "spear carrier" for American foreign policy. In the 1960s, as a professor of East Asian studies on the

University of California's Berkeley campus, Johnson vigorously supported U.S. policy in Vietnam. He thought the antiwar protestors were a "self-indulgent," "romantic," and "sanctimonious" lot, lazy students who had "failed to do their homework." (He even went so far as to determine whether any Berkeley campus library books on Vietnam had been checked out. None had been.)

In retirement, Johnson believes that his support for U.S. policy in Vietnam was "a disastrously wrong position." He writes now: "In retrospect, I wish I had stood with the antiwar protest movement. For all its naivete and unruliness, it was right and American policy wrong."

Johnson's circuitous route to this position (stunning to those who knew firsthand his hostility toward the 1960s demonstrators) began with a decade-long study of Japan's economic success. "I did not realize then that my research would inadvertently lead me to see clearly for the first time the shape of the empire which I had so long uncritically supported," he recounts. By empire, Johnson does not mean territorial acquisitions but those policies and practices that "normally lie concealed beneath some ideological or judicial concept -- commonwealth, alliance, free world, the West, the Communist bloc -- that disguises the actual relationships among its members."

His conclusions are sweeping: "I believe the profligate waste of our resources on irrelevant weapons systems and the Asia economic meltdown, as well as the continuous trail of military 'accidents' and of terrorist attacks on American installations and embassies, are all portents of a twenty-first-century crisis in America's informal empire, an empire based on the projection of military power to every corner of the world and on the use of American capital and markets to force global economic integration on our terms, at whatever costs to others."

In other words, "globalism" is just the newest euphemism, or ideological mask, for what others would call old-fashioned imperialism. Johnson asks us to view South Korea, Japan, and other Asian countries as American satellites, analogous to the Soviet Union's former client states in Eastern Europe. The United States not only exploits these countries economically, but, in his view, keeps an unnecessarily large military force in the region. The U.S. presence in South Korea consists of "37,000 combat troops occupying 65,500 acres of South Korean territory at 96 bases." Johnson devotes two chapters to explaining why South Korea has become a prime breeding ground for blowback.

He compares the 1980 uprising in Kwangju, South Korea, to the 1956 Hungarian uprising. South Korean protesters in Kwangju were put down with the help of the U.S. military, he says, in the "most notorious act of political violence in South Korea's history." The event is forever associated with the United States. What is worse, Johnson observes, everyone in Korea knows about the U.S. role, but the American people do not, since the Pentagon is still withholding information about its involvement.

For those who assume that American troops would come home if North and South Korea reunite, Johnson says, guess again. In 1998 Defense Secretary William Cohen told a Korean audience that the United States intends to keep troops in South Korea, even if North and South Korea become unified. Johnson asserts that both Japanese and Korean media viewed these remarks "as a barely veiled targeting of China as a future enemy and as a warning against the possibility that Japan might undertake a foreign policy independent of the United States."

Likewise, the U.S. military retains a significant presence in Japan. On Okinawa alone, the United States has 39 bases that occupy "20 percent of prime agricultural land." Johnson argues that the original rationale for these bases ended years, if not decades, ago. The new rationale is "stability," an amorphous concept that means little strategically.

Other <U.S-led> military plans in Asia are "as dangerous as the one the USSR planned in Cuba in 1962 -- which almost led to nuclear war." Pentagon officials, for instance, are busy convincing Japan that it needs a regional missile defense system. Johnson asks, against what enemy? Japan has significant relationships with China, does not recognize Taiwan, and is North Korea's second-largest trading partner. China would be perfectly justified in seeing

this as a provocative act. The United States, he argues, is "playing with fire" and destabilizing the region, all in the name of regional security.

To complicate matters, the Pentagon now has independent economic interests of its own. In the case of Japan, for example, the Japanese government annually pays 78 percent of the DOD's costs of keeping U.S. troops on its soil -- 647 billion yen in 1997 -- thus giving the Pentagon a monetary motivation for maintaining the status quo. Japan is also a market for Pentagon arms. Johnson charges that the Pentagon is saddling Japan and other Asian "satellites" with burdensome military purchases.

What if a country can't afford U.S. arms? The International Monetary Fund, which Johnson dubs the covert arm of the U.S. Treasury (but which is unaccountable to Congress), will grant credits to buy military goods. Even as the economies of Malaysia and Indonesia were collapsing in 1997, Secretary Cohen made a hurried trip to Southeast Asia to ensure that military arms deals were still in place, Johnson reports. Military spending necessarily squeezes out domestic programs in countries where such needs are critical.

Worse, the Pentagon has been involved in "state terrorism," Johnson says. The Joint Combined Exchange Training program, passed by Congress in 1991, permits the DOD to send forces overseas for joint exercises with military units "so long as the primary purpose of the mission was stated to be the training of our soldiers, not theirs." The Pentagon, as of 1998, has "trained" in 110 countries. And since few of these countries are at war, newly learned "lethal skills" will most likely be used internally, against a nation's own citizenry, Johnson argues. Indonesia and Guatemala are two examples. The most brutal acts against the East Timorese were committed by President Suharto's Red Berets, whom the United States helped to train. Their skills were used also against opposition leaders in Indonesia who helped bring down Suharto (many of them were "disappeared"). Johnson also cites a United Nations report on Guatemala in which investigators concluded that an elite officer corps trained by the United States in counterinsurgency techniques was a key factor in the genocide against Mayan Indians.

Johnson is not the first person to argue that after the Cold War ended, an entire apparatus -- laws, policies, programs, covert activities, even habits -- remained in place. New York Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, for example, who chaired the Commission on Protecting and Reducing Government Secrecy, concluded that the entire U.S. government is ridden with a "culture of secrecy" that threatens democratic accountability. What is notable is how far removed Johnson's arguments are from the current trend of triumphal books on the Cold War, works that celebrate "victory" and laud U.S. policy. In celebration, costs are not assessed.

Even if one assumes that Johnson's passion as an apostate has led him to construct a one-sided picture, the very secrecy he protests makes his argument both forceful and difficult to assess. For instance, if the Pentagon is running most covert operations with private contractors, placing them beyond the reach of congressional oversight, this is very serious indeed.

Secrets, and even covert operations, may be warranted to protect national security. But if secrets are held forever, no accounting ever takes place. Lessons cannot be learned. Perhaps the largest -- and largely unacknowledged -- cost of the Cold War was not the neglect of U.S. domestic needs but the squandering of trust between citizens and government.

It is not just Vietnam or Watergate that has made citizens wary of politicians and government, but evidence of other Cold War secrets long denied by government officials. Last winter, for example, a San Francisco Chronicle headline reported, "U.S. admits nuclear toll on workers :Radiation caused cancer at weapons plants." How many citizens have tried to find the truth about this? How many Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests have been made? How many people have suffered not only from cancer but from the acts of a government that for years refused any responsibility? Duplicate this experience by government agency, or by issue, and extend it over five decades. Aren't these deep and significant sources of distrust? They do not appear in the civil society literature (Putnam, Bellah, Sandel, and others); but is

not their cumulative effect as devastating as the loss of a sense of community? Are they not related to the loss of connection with government?

Implicit but neglected in Blowback is a hopeful aspect in all this. Whatever the United States might be doing abroad, a fierce tradition of liberty does exist within the American populace. It is probably not too far-fetched to say that it has been citizen action, and citizen action alone, that has forced the government to reveal what it has done in the name of its people. Most of what we know about government secrecy and covert matters, for instance, is the result of patient and tenacious use of the Freedom of Information Act. (Indeed, some of Johnson's most damning examples, including what we do know about the Kwangju uprising, were revealed through FOIA requests.) We may have a rare opportunity before us. Throughout the Cold War, critics of American foreign policy were dismissed as either communists, fellow travelers, or the "blame America first" crowd. A re-examination of the U.S. role in the world need not be derailed by loyalty questions in this era. The Pentagon's actions are as important to emerging discussions about globalization as labor and environmental concerns are.

In his desire to get our attention, Johnson may have overstated his case and relied on inflammatory analogies, as when he repeatedly compares the United States to the Soviets. He also conflates acts of hubris, individual criminal acts, policy choices, and covert actions, and tucks them all under the rubric of "blowback." But Johnson has thrown down enough red flags on the triumphalist field to give us pause. And the issues he raises are ignored at our own peril.

*Ms. Paget is completing a book on the Central Intelligence Agency's relationship with the U.S. National Student Association during the height of the Cold War.

Other useful resources on non-violent response to September 11.

<http://www.commondreams.org/>

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/>

Some Australian Responses

Below is a petition that is circulating initiated by Friends of the Earth.

Dear Organisation,

Statement on the attacks today in the US

The organisations signed below wish to express their sincere sorrow for the enormous loss of life in the United States today. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the families and friends of the victims throughout the world as well as to the American people.

We condemn all acts of terrorism, whether state sanctioned or the actions of individuals or small groups, as indefensible. Today's tragic events show us that our current strategies are not effective and do not promote peace. The US [with the assistance of Australia] has been attempting to construct artificial walls around its nation through schemes such as the National Missile Defence proposal. It is clear that no amount of military spending could have created a preventative solution to the attacks witnessed by the world today.

We call for a calm response in the face of this tragedy. The world needs to take a deep breath before taking rash and counterproductive steps in retaliation for these attacks. We call on the international community [and the Australian people] not to allow this atrocity to increase hatred, racial and religious intolerance. We encourage our leaders to view this as an opportunity [for Australia] to assist the US and the world in its search for peaceful solutions to conflicts.

We add our voices to those of colleagues around the world who recognise that true security can only be rooted in social and environmental justice.

Signed:

The Wilderness Society
Earth Worker
Friends of Palestine
Friends of the Earth Australia
Action for Peace
Canberra Program for Peace
Rev. Ray Richmond, Wayside Chapel, uniting Church in Australia
Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition
Campaign for International Cooperation and Disarmament (CICD)

The following meditation was sent to us by Eddie Ozols Alstonville NSW AUSTRALIA
ozols1@bigpond.com

Meditation prior to Communion - Morning Service Alstonville Baptist Church NSW Australia – Reflecting on the last week. 17 September 2001

Reverend Ivan Dehnert Psalm 50

There are times when we walk in darkness. There are times when we cannot see clearly what lies ahead. There are times when we can be fearful of what the future may hold. But we are told to trust in the Lord. That he has everything under control.

The events of the past week certainly didn't catch Him by surprise. Sometimes I think we have a view of God when something terrible happens and He is left shaking his head wondering what will I do now. They did not catch him by surprise.

As I mentioned a moment ago evil is evil. Evil is not simply the absence of what is good. We may describe darkness as the absence of light. Evil is something that has an existence of its own. It is real. It has substance and it seeks to destroy what God has done.

George Bush has declared that America is at war. For the Christian we have been at war for a very long time. We are involved in a spiritual war. And the weapons that win this war are not missiles or soldiers, not military power. Such things can have a tremendous impact in the physical world but on the spiritual level our greatest weapon is prayer. I heard someone in America say we have prayed; now it is time to fight. What on earth do they think prayer is?

Evil is evil. But when we come to this table... when we come to this table are we not again reminded of how God is well able to take that which is inherently evil and bring out of it the greatest good imaginable? And are we not reminded that the devil is defeated? Death has been defeated. Yes the devil can sometimes scare the pants off us. And the Devil is well able to use people to commit the most horrendous acts. But the devil is defeated. He is finished.

I suppose I don't know if just like me but sometimes we struggle. We saw the images that we saw didn't we and we try and relate them to the God of glory the God of majesty, the God of all power. The God who is in control. And it gets all a bit overwhelming at times. But I do come back to the book of Revelation. Not to make any great predictions I hasten to add. To make none exactly. But if you read through Revelation we have alternating throughout that book, marvellous praise to God. God on the throne. God in His Glory. God fulfilling his purposes. And we have alternating with that the most horrific scenes of evil on this earth.

And I think that God is telling us as he was telling the people who first received that letter. People who were facing the most terrible persecution. We may face evil in this world, we may face circumstances that are seemingly overwhelming to us, but we must never lose

perspective, we must never lose sight that the Lamb is in the centre of the Throne. The Lamb who appeared to be slain. Because on the cross evil appeared to have triumphed. The Son of God was put to death and yet three days later he rose from the dead and all of hell echoed with the howl of despair. For they knew that they had finally and completely and forever been defeated. We come here to this table in recognition of that fact. We come to this table to praise the God who has won the victory. It does not matter what man may do.

We read in Psalm 2 do we not – “Why do the nations conspire against the Lords anointed?” God on His throne laughs at them. Please as we come and as we wait upon God this morning, while there may be many things that disturb us let us hold on to the reality that God is very much in control. And each one of us who has placed their faith in the LORD Jesus Christ, we are His children. Our future, our life is secure in Him. Does not mean that terrible things don't happen. That's not what I'm saying. I am saying that whatever happens we are secure in Him. And nothing, nothing can ever separate us from the love of God that is ours in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing.

So I am going to ask that we might just bow together in prayer. I am going to ask that we have some silent prayer to begin with. Please come before God in silence. There may be things we need to confess, there may be things we need to admit to our God to seek His forgiveness for. Undoubtedly there are. But we also come with praise in our hearts and with thanksgiving and with joy because God is on the throne. We need to pray indeed for those who have been hurting and we have been. Let us pray quietly for a minute and remember our LORD and all he has done for us.

Silent prayer follows.

Dear Lord there are times when we can feel helpless; carried along by events out of our control. But Lord we thank you and praise you that no events are out of your control. We are not helpless for we are your children and we can bow before you. And you hear our voice.

Father we come this morning to this table in a world that is not the same. We come to this table to honour and acknowledge the one who is the same, the one who does not change. The one who is forever and ever Lord and sovereign ruler of this universe. We come to this table Lord to give you all the praise and thanksgiving for you have defeated the evil one. You appeared to undo the works of him. We give you the praise and glory this morning for you have defeated death; you have overcome the power of sin. We come here to this table to praise and give you the glory, for you are the living one. The Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

Dear Lord, we thank you that you were willing to come into this world as an act of love and grace. That you were willing to come into this world not to judge it but to save it. Dear Lord, through your body and through your shed blood, through suffering, through pain, through agony, through submission, you have won the greatest victory of all. Lord you came as a servant. Before you came as a servant you were Lord. While you were here as a servant you were still Lord. Now you have risen from the dead, you have been glorified and exalted, seated at the right hand of the majesty on high. Dear Lord, we look to you today as the living one as the almighty all powerful one. We do not look to the horrors that man performs. We do not look to those horrors as defining our futures, as defining what reality really is. We look to you. We look to you. And we pray Lord as we come to this table, as we share in these elements before us that you would strengthen our hearts. That you would grant peace to our hearts. That you would strengthen our faith. And that we might be instruments of your righteousness and peace in this world. O Lord how we have been shown how desperately the world needs you. That there is no other answer. Help us Lord to be part of the answer - not part of the problem.

So Lord we give you the praise and the glory. We thank you that you are here with us this morning as we eat and drink in faith may our hearts be lifted up And may we have the confidence that you alone can give us to continue in what you have called us to do and to be. That this world may see something of the reality of Jesus in us. We pray this in Jesus name AMEN.

**ANABAPTIST ASSOCIATION OF
AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND INC.**
www.anabaptist.asn.au
ontheroad@today.com.au