

by M.J. Rosenberg reposted with permission from Global Agency

**There is one change the U.S. could make in response to terrorism that is never discussed. We could consider the part U.S. policies play in creating and sustaining it. I understand that we are not supposed to say this, as if discussing why we are hated justifies the unjustifiable.**

But nothing justifies terrorism. Period. That does not mean that nothing causes it.

Acts of terror do not come at us out of the blue. Nor are they directed at us, as President George W. Bush famously said, because terrorists “hate our freedom.” If that were the case, terrorists would be equally or more inclined to hit countries at least as free as the United States, like Finland.

No, terrorists target the United States because they perceive us as their enemy. And with good reason. We have been at war with the people of various Muslim countries for decades, since perhaps as early as 1953 when we engineered Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh’s overthrow in Iran.

Since then, the United States invaded Iraq in 2003 at a cost of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi lives. That war came after over a decade of U.S.-sponsored sanctions that resulted in the deaths of over a million Iraqis, including more than a half million children due to malnutrition and diseases.

Then there are the current sanctions against Iran, ostensibly to deter its government from developing nuclear weapons but, in practice, punishing the Iranian people by degrading quality of life and health.

## Time to Admit US Policies Can Cause Terrorism

Posted by Joan Russow  
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Then there are the drone attacks. U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said in February that, as of then, U.S. drone attacks had killed 4,700 men, women and children (including, he notes, “innocent people”) in Afghanistan, Yemen and Pakistan. And, of course, our Israel policy is based on the premise, so often stated by Vice President Joe Biden, that there must be “no daylight, no daylight” between Israeli policies and our own.

That statement has proven true on matters large and small—from Congressional promises to join Israel if it decides to attack Iran to destroy its nuclear reactor, to supporting Israel’s policies on the West Bank and Gaza, to opposing any form of Palestinian representation at the United Nations. Muslims do not imagine that we view the Middle East almost entirely through Israeli eyes. We do.

In short, the aphorism often used to describe the effect of drone attacks can be applied to U.S. policy in the Muslim world in general: For every enemy we kill, we create dozens or hundreds more.

And some of those enemies turn up here as terrorists.

Obviously the United States is not going to consider this factor as it decides on policies unambiguously affecting the fundamental security of the American people. No one would argue that we should not take out a terrorist cell poised to attack American targets out of fear of inflaming its members’ friends or sympathizers.

But few of the actions that so enrage (and radicalize) people in the Middle East are directly connected to the security of Americans at all. Looking back at the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, it is difficult to argue that they did more to enhance the security of Americans than they did to damage it.

This is not to say that the United States should not have responded with force to the heinous 9/11 attacks. The successful effort to degrade the capabilities of Al Qaeda has, no doubt, made us safer.

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And some of our enemies hate us not because of anything we do but because they are driven by religious or political zealotry. Some are just monsters. But not all, and not most.

If this is what we are going to be, we are going to feel it here, not only in the form of terrorism but in lost freedoms. The restrictions we have become accustomed to when boarding an airplane will become a metaphor for the loss of the freedom we once thought of as the American way of life.

The next threat to that freedom looms as the Obama administration considers whether it will permit (or even back) an Israeli attack on Iran. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel told the Israelis this week that the United States believes that "in dealing with Iran, every option must be on the table."

That means the possibility of war. Is that something we want?

With the Boston Marathon horror still fresh in our memory, I think it is safe to say we don't. Pursuing policies that enrage much of the world endangers Americans here.

In Boston, New York, Washington and elsewhere.

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