

Terror Nation: Lies, Injustice, and the American Empire's Way

PEJ News - Jason Miller - Remember, good patriots, we are at war with Islam, Socialism, Communism, drugs, crime, illegal immigration, Gays, labor unions, liberal university professors, peace activists, environmentalists, Anti-Semites, secular humanists, and all those who pose a threat to the United States. Each of these groups shares culpability for the terrorism which has killed several thousand of US, British, Spanish, and Israeli citizens since 2001. They are a cancer upon the American Way and must be excised. Freedom and liberty will prevail despite their onslaught of evil.

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Suspension of civil liberties, concentration of power into the hands of the Executive branch, slaughtering hundreds of thousands of innocents civilians, collective punishment of millions through wanton destruction of infrastructure, widespread dissemination of depleted uranium, reduction of wasteful spending on ?useless eaters? via massive cuts in entitlement spending, ongoing ethnic

cleansing in Gaza and the West Bank, torture, denial of justice to ?enemy combatants?, massive tax cuts to the wealthy, obscene increases in defense spending, propaganda blitzes to keep the public believing horrendous lies, preemptive war, reduced government restriction of corporate exploitation of humans and the environment, and continued neocolonial expansion are all essential to the United States fulfilling its Manifest Destiny and ending the terrorist threat. Remember, they hate our freedom.

A pleasant fiction indeed for the United States? ruling elite and their loyal supporters who violently reject challenges to their hubristic and fanatical devotion to American Exceptionalism and entitlement.

Yet for those of us who prefer reality, the burning question arises. Who are the real terrorists?

Are they the relative handful of militants (amongst the billions of oppressed people around the globe) who are ready to sacrifice their lives to strike at the deeply corrupt machinations of the socioeconomic system which supports a few wealthy elites ruling the United States, Israel and their sycophants (i.e. Great Britain, Saudi Arabia)? Osama bin Laden, the face of ?terrorism? in the minds of many Westerners, has repeatedly stated that Al Qaeda will end its violent actions if the United States withdraws its military from the Middle East and ends its support of Israel. Reasonable demands, actually, when one considers the millions of Arabs, Persians, and others indigenous to that region who have suffered or died as a result of Western intervention in the Middle East.

That is not to say that the murder of civilians by groups opposing the United States and Israel are justified. They are heinous war

crimes. The perpetrators deserve to be punished to the extent of international law. When they target the military of their oppressors and occupiers, these groups are waging a just cause, but killing innocent human beings is despicable and evil. Ideally Middle Eastern resistance would take the form of non-violence in the tradition of Gandhi, but the "coalition of the willing" has given their victims little choice but to fight or die.

To recognize the terror with which the human race needs to be more concerned, we need to shed the corporate media propaganda and look beyond the fairly small groups of determined, enraged individuals who have only demonstrated the capacity to kill relatively small numbers of the "good guys" in the West. Real terror emanates from the power wielded by Western ruling elites by virtue of their wealth, potent militaries, and indoctrinated citizenry.

Can you say economic terrorism?

Consider the staggering fact that the United States its fellow Western powers represent 25% of the world's population yet consume 75% of the world's resources. Thanks to this gross disproportionality, three billion human beings survive on less than \$2 per day. And 1.3 billion subsist on less than **ONE DOLLAR**. The income of the wealthiest 1% of the world's population equals that of the poorest 57%. 3 billion people lack access to sanitation while 2 billion have no electricity. Free trade agreements, multinational corporate exploitation, oppressive lending terms imposed by the World Bank, and support of corporate friendly authoritarian leaders who defy the interests of their own people ensure that these conditions persist.

Half of the planet exists on \$730 per year and Western

economic analysts were wringing their hands over the economic impact the recent alleged terror plot in London would have on the airline industry.

How about nuclear terrorism?

The same oligarchs, corporate elite, dictators, and plutocrats who hoard the Earth's bounty (to the extreme detriment of billions of human beings) also have their fingers poised to activate the ultimate weapons of mass destruction. Possessing enough nuclear firepower to destroy the world thousands of times over the ?benevolent? United States is the only nation to have deployed nuclear weapons against human beings. Nearly 200,000 Japanese died as a result of US nuclear terror. (And I personally almost vomited when I recently visited the Truman Library and saw the marble placard thanking Harry Truman for making the decision to drop the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.) What more profound terror could an individual or group have at their disposal than the power to destroy the world multiple times?

And what about the terrorism inherent in imperial expansion?

Dating back to its founding and contradicting to its self-professed devotion to truth, justice, democracy, and so on, the United States has followed the examples of the Western European colonial powers from which it sprang. Eradicating 90% of the Native American population to ?acquire? their land; enslaving the Black race; annexing Hawaii; taking half of Mexico by force; slaughtering 600,000 ?heathen? Filipinos; subjugating Cuba; killing three million Vietnamese; extinguishing the lives of hundreds of thousands of

civilians in various Latin American nations; enabling Israel's imperial conquest of Palestine; and annihilating millions of Iraqis via the Gulf War, UN sanctions throughout the 90's, and the current illegal occupation have made the United States the empire it is today.

Click the link below to see examples of profound human suffering stemming from United States sponsored terrorism:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOpB1x5Qzyg>

In contrasting the moral calculus of the Western ruling elite (led by the United States) with that of the 'terrorists', it is critical to remember two other crucial points:

1. Groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah have successfully provided life-sustaining social services to Palestinians and Lebanese citizens who were wallowing in the misery of abject poverty caused by Israel and the United States. In the United States, the Bush Regime has significantly diminished social services in favor of increased militarization. To add a bit of perspective, the wealthiest country in the world has the largest wealth gap amongst industrialized nations, 13% of its population lives in poverty, and 3 million of its people are homeless. (And that is with some of the federal safety net still intact).
2. Militants waging attacks on Western civilians emerged as reactionary forces in the face of Western oppression and imperialism. United States and Western military aggression existed long before the so-called 'terrorists' came to be.

Consider an excerpt from an **ABC Television** interview with University of Chicago Professor Robert Pape, who has engaged in

in-depth studies of 462 separate suicide bombings occurring around the world. Pape stated:

There's a faulty premise in the current strategy on the war on terrorism. That faulty premise is that suicide terrorism and al-Qaida suicide terrorism in particular is mainly driven by an evil ideology Islamic fundamentalism independent of other circumstances.

However, the facts are that since 1980, suicide terrorist attacks from around the world over half have been secular. What over 95% of suicide attacks around the world [are about] is not religion, but a specific strategic purpose - to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from the territory that the terrorists view as their homeland or prize greatly and this is, in fact, a centrepiece of al-Qaida's strategic logic, which is to compel the United States and western countries to abandon military commitments on the Arabian peninsula.

Terror nation? Here?

Yes ladies and gentlemen of the United States, it has happened here. We live in a fascist state that inflicts terror on billions of human beings. [**Terror Nation?.Notes from the Perimeter**](#) , the latest book by

Mike Palecek

, offers us a glimpse of the future potentially awaiting those of us in the United States who pose a threat to corporate and plutocratic hegemony.

And Mr. Palecek would know. He experienced a first-hand blow from the velvet-gloved iron fist of the ruling elite of the United

States. As a home-grown ?terrorist?, he was remanded to the prison industrial complex for his activism against nuclear weapons in the 1980?s.

In **Terror Nation**, Palecek weaves a fascinating and frightening tale of Charles Johnson, a retired Iowa journalist placed in a psychiatric hospital converted into a federal holding facility for dissidents. His ?crime?? Writing "seditious" letters to the editor of the local newspaper.

Through the course of the novel, one learns that an underground resistance called the White Sox has emerged to engage government loyalists (called Red Sox) in civil war. Torn between believing the lie that he is a mentally unstable psychiatric patient and the reality that he is a political prisoner, Johnson ultimately learns that the White Sox view him as their intellectual inspiration and intend to rescue him.

Fraught with ironic twists, interestingly unique characters, drama and action, **Terror Nation** is both entertaining and thought-provoking. Palecek reminds us that the United States is not the historical anomaly we US Americans have been programmed to believe it is. Like it or not, we are an empire. Empires are built and maintained through rape, pillage, and plunder. And those holding the wealth, power, and prestige in our nation are as capable of ruthless abuses against their own citizens as they have proven themselves to be against the wretched victims of their foreign policy.

Many dismiss predictions of concentration camps in the United States as wild conspiracy theories. However, if the buffer of the middle class essentially disappears (as it appears to be doing),

?entitlement? programs are jettisoned, and the ?sacred? lie that US Americans live in a ?classless? society with unlimited potential for economic mobility finally falls prey to the truth, We the People will feel enough pain that the seeds of revolution will germinate. And when they do, the ruling elite will protect their interests by any means necessary.

Let?s hope humanity and reason prevail before the elite get the opportunity to employ their ruthless means to a greater extent than they already have. **Terror Nation** is an excellent tale, but would be an ugly prognostication.

Jason Miller is a 39 year old sociopolitical essayist with a degree in liberal arts and an extensive self-education (derived from an insatiable appetite for reading). He is a member of Amnesty International and an avid supporter of Oxfam International and Human Rights Watch. He welcomes responses at willpowerful@hotmail.com or comments on his blog, Thomas Paine's Corner, at <http://civillibertarian.blogspot.com/>