

The end of terrorism

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Las Vegas Mercury
September 28, 2001

This is the beginning of the end of terrorism. Whoever supported, planned and carried out the attack on America made a huge mistake. America the bully has suddenly become America the martyr. Despite everything the present administration has done to retreat this great country into its old isolationist cave, one horrendous act of terrorism has united the entire world, north and south, east and west, in sympathy and solidarity behind us. We rejected the Kyoto accords on the environment, ripped up the anti-ballistic-missile treaty and walked out of the world conference on racism, only to have the whole world offer us unsolicited and undiluted support at this hour. The cause behind the terror, whatever it may have been, righteous or not, just died. There is one cause today and that is to put an end to terrorism. The five thousand who died in our two capitol cities on the D-day of terrorism, September 11, 2001, gave their lives for a great cause no less than those who stormed the pill boxes on Omaha Beach.

But we must not make the same mistake as the terrorists and kill innocent people. We must not commit terrorism ourselves, or *we* will be the murderers of those five thousand. We must seek justice, not revenge, or we will squander a great opportunity.

Let's hope that when the President mobilizes the armed forces, it's a diversionary tactic. There are few, if any, targets that may be shelled or bombed with tanks and planes. With the entire world out looking for the creatures who murdered five thousand innocent people, we will find them. For the first time in our history, the entire world is on our side. We can prove that we're different from our enemies or we can throw it all away in one more precipitous act of terror. That last option is exactly what the terrorists want us to do.

We must destroy the terrorists. Once that's done, we must reevaluate our role in the world. We have fought good wars and bad wars, supported democrats and dictators, freed people all over the globe and enslaved others, in the name of our national interests. Because we can't allow terrorism to succeed, the cause that inspired this infamous act of mayhem cannot divert us. But if we are to end terrorism, if the New York Six Thousand are not to have died in vain, we must never again turn our backs to the oppressed, or support their oppressors, as we have done so often in our checkered history. We no longer have purely national interests. We never really did, anyway.

These events have confirmed that the world fabric is tightly knit and that the United States is in the center of the weave. Every war and act of oppression anywhere affects us, and we affect just about everything everywhere. Remove one building from downtown New York City and lines of communication are cut all over the world. Kill the people in one building in downtown New York City and their loved ones mourn from San Francisco to Moscow. What is known today as

“globalization” is a continuation of the process of humans working closer together for increased efficiency that began ten thousand years ago. Increased dependency is not the only side effect. Multinational corporate power over individuals and their governments threatens world order. Of the 100 largest economic powers in the world today, 49 are governments and 51 are corporations. In 1970, the incomes of the richest 20% of the world were 28 times higher than the incomes of the poorest 20%. Today they are 78 times higher. At the center of world capitalism, the United States is frequently seen as primarily responsible for the growing disparity between the rich and the poor everywhere. The perception is not far from the truth. Like war and oppression, poverty and disease anywhere affect us more than we may want to think. It would be futile to make the world safe for democracy only to hand everything over to multinational corporations. The problems of the 21st century won't be over when we capture a cadre of terrorists. They will be just beginning.

Any conversation in America today that doesn't start with this subject ends with it. We haven't been this united since World War II. New Yorkers say that their city has never been so friendly. People everywhere need each other more than ever before and are suddenly less concerned with all that other stuff that doesn't really matter that much, after all. Above all, everyone wants to help. In the words of John F. Kennedy, we're finally asking what we can do for our country.

What we need now is an answer. It's extraordinary that our national leadership has not tapped this enormous national will to help. It's more than a will, it's a need. One thing we can do to convince our friends in the Middle East to help smoke out terrorists in their midst is stop buying their oil. Their hold on us is our dependence on – or addiction to – our automobiles. Our hold on them is their dependence on our addiction. To park the Lincoln or SUV in the garage tonight and next weekend would be no sacrifice. It would be therapy. Come on, George. Your friends at Texaco will understand. This “dead or alive” cowboy stuff is not the only thing we can do.

What happens next is critical. The worst thing this country can do now is bomb the wrong targets, sacrificing more innocent civilians. We should never again make a martyr out of an enemy by killing his young daughter in her crib because we're afraid to get too close. A cause worth killing for is worth dying for. If we do this right, more Americans will be killed. If we don't do it right, we'll sacrifice far more.

Scattered across a dozen countries with cells in many more, dedicated, patient, well-trained, well-organized, with sanctuaries in rugged mountain terrain, and willing to die in suicide missions, this enemy will not be defeated quickly. Maybe not even before the next election. There will be pressure to do something rash. We must resist it.

If we do it right, we will unite the world behind us for a long time to come. If we don't do it right, we'll be right where we started or worse. Minus the New York Six Thousand.