
CONTAGIOUS JIHAD

THE NEW AGE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL TERRORISTS

BY JAY B GASKILL

The San Francisco Chronicle has opined:

“What we know right now is that the suspects are ethnic Chechens who moved to the United States with their family in 2002. Former classmates have described Dzhokhar Tsarnaev as "quiet," "sweet" and "normal." The elder brother, Tamerlan, seems to have had more problems adjusting: He once said that he had no American friends, and that he didn't "understand" Americans.

“There's little evidence that their parents held radical beliefs, but the brothers left a trail of clues on social media about their interest in Islam and Chechnya's long struggle with Russia. Still, it's far too early to say what their motive might have been.”

<http://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/editorials/article/Boston-madness-aftermath-requires-calm-4449411.php#ixzz2R1ZWwhp2>

It's far too early to say? The Chronicle's recent editorial peroration was an exercise in politically-correct fantasy. The jihad motivation of the Brothers Tsarnaev was blatantly clear from the contours of the bombing event itself, even before these two jihad warriors were brought to ground. This was a cause-motivated killing, aimed at symbols of American accomplishment and patriotism, coordinated and designed for maximum horror and highest publicity. There is no other ideological motivation afoot at the moment that could come close to explaining the behavior of the Boston Massacre bombers. The jihadist signature was so clear that one retired CIA expert told media outlets that the perpetrators were either al Qaeda or *faithfully copying the al Qaeda playbook*. Please take note: the enemy of liberal Western civilization is not just the damaged organization called al Qaeda, but the larger jihadist ideology that links to a whole range of terrorist attacks on our homeland, diplomats, friends and allies.

In the Boston case, there may or may not ever be any solid trail of money, direction and support that our anti-terrorist experts can ever trace back to some central network, whether al Qaeda or other jihad group. Yes, the older brother Tsarnaev probably received some terror training from radical Chechnyans when he was in Russia. But whether that was the case, we can be confident

that there was a common jihad-source of ideological inspiration, instigation and ‘religious’ validation for the planned bombings.

THE NEW THREAT CATEGORY

*We face a new trend in terrorist attacks on the US: the outsourcing of jihad mayhem operations to inspired/activated amateurs/volunteers operating with minimal or no foreign support outside of the spread of a toxic **ideological** package.*

The toxicity and persuasive power of the jihad recruitment model poses an entirely new threat category. We need to adjust our thinking at a fundamental level. The therapeutic mindset that seethes through the soft humanitarians who write editorials like the one I’ve just quoted cannot be allowed to affect policy makers. The stakes are too high.

We should not worry too much about “hasty” condemnations of aberrant religious beliefs, or to shy away from too “aggressive” inquiries, investigations and deep vetting of “victim” categories that are also potential threat categories. If we do, our humanitarian hesitations will just get more innocent people killed.

We need to adapt our responses to the new threat profile very quickly. The US has been on notice since 2010. The jihad support trail in the notorious Fort Hood murders by Sgt. Hasan effectively began and ended at the web address of a bloody-minded mullah named Awlaki, who – in the minds of some apologists - was just exercising free speech

“In an interview published on Al Jazeera's Web site, radical Muslim cleric Anwar al says that Maj. Nidal Hasan, charged with killing 13 in last month's Fort Hood massacre , asked for guidance about killing American military personnel in his very first e-mail.” ABC News

To his credit, President Obama put placed al-Awlaki on the CIA kill list in April of 2010. The American drone attack in Yemen on September 30, 2011 silenced Awlaki for good. Meantime, Maj. Nidal Hasan is facing the death penalty in a military court.

Hasan was an entrepreneurial jihad murderer who – as far as we know – got no material support from terrorist leaders. He was self-recruited in the sense that the impulse to do mayhem for the cause gestated in his own experience before it was nurtured, fanned and validated by a radical Muslim cleric.

The anti-terrorist measures initiated by the former Bush administration, starting with the Patriot Act and carried forward by President Obama, *especially the banking restrictions*, have effectively dried up funding and logistics support for major terrorist attacks like those on September 11th, 2001. Our enemies since have adapted by adopting the entrepreneurial model, and we need to adapt accordingly.

But that requires a discussion the current media mavens and leadership cliques are very reluctant to have. And time is running out. Do we have to endure another mass killing before we “get it”?

THE DISCUSSION MINEFIELD

Ideas have consequences, and bad ideas sometimes have fatal ones. This insight has never been more relevant, but rarely has it been more marginalized. Why? Urgently needed discussion about new security measures that address bad ideas is being curtailed.

Consider the politically correct emphasis on individual moral autonomy and the resulting hypersensitivity to criticism of other cultures. *Aren't all cultures equal? How dare we in the privileged West think otherwise!* These sensitivities operate as a censor of any open and honest discussions of certain 'hot' topics, such as the existence of specific toxic religious elements in radical Islam. As result we a politically correct paralysis in security policy. This is an unacceptably high price to pay for cultural sensitivity, especially when a new mutation in terror had emerged that can get around our defenses.

Here is an irony for you: An atheist like the late Christopher Hitchens can fire a broadside against all religion (God is Not Great) without a whimper, but heaven help those who single out dangerous aspects of radical Islam in the public square. Leaders can issue fog-ball statements about how radical jihadists have hijacked a major religion let them dare to take it to the next step - concretely useful discussions and they are quickly shut down. Questions like, "What civil rights do you propose to destroy?" are given weight among the "use a bomb and get psychiatric help" school.

Major media outlets are still using a tip-toe approach to the deadly reality confronting us. I was struck by a piece in the New York Times, under the heading – **“Investigators Dig for Roots of Bomb Suspects’ Radicalization:**

“As scrutiny increased on how the brothers had been radicalized... [it was learned that] Agents had questioned [the older brother] in 2011 in response to a request from the Russian government, a year before he traveled to Chechnya and Dagestan, predominantly Muslim republics in the North Caucasus region of Russia. Both have been ‘hotbeds of militant separatists’.”

...

“Tensions also escalated Sunday over how to handle the case of the surviving suspect. ...[T]he administration has said terrorism suspects arrested inside the United States should be handled exclusively in the criminal justice system, and gave no sign it intends to do otherwise in Mr. Tsarnaev’s case. Moreover, there is no evidence suggesting that he is part of Al Qaeda; the United States is engaged in an armed conflict with Al Qaeda, not all Muslim extremists.”

April 21, 2013, in the New York Times

One might have written, “scrutiny increased on how the brothers became active jihadists” adding that the older brother had spent time among militant Chechnya and Dagestan jihadists” Among the *tells* in this article were the use of the term “radicalization”, the blithe assertion that “ the United States is engaged in an armed conflict with Al Qaeda, not all Muslim extremists,” and the mincing reference to Chechnya and Dagestan as “hotbeds of militant separatists”. It seems that

even in the face of compelling evidence of a jihadi attack on Americans, maiming, killing and wounding innocent people in ways so terrible that the media felt compelled to hide the graphic pictures, the New York Times was still NOT willing or able to call out the enemy.

Our “enemy” is at war with Western Civilization in general and the USA in particular. The questions of the day are whether we understand that is in fact the case and whether we are prepared to act accordingly.

Like the Hydra monster of Greek myth the enemy has many heads, ***each one of which was formed by contact with a dangerously toxic mutation of Islam.***

If we do not fully recognize that we are actually at war, pretending that we are coping with a series of violent crimes; if we seem unwilling to openly identify the nature and source of threat that is attacking us and killing our citizens; if we allow ourselves to appear timorous, like the intimidated characters in Harry Potter who were afraid to name Voldemort, then we might as well put a banner across Old Glory: WE CAN BE INTIMIDATED: KEEP IT UP; IT IS WORKING.

Any country and any leadership set that remains unwilling and even afraid, in face of compelling evidence, to identify and condemn the concerted and repeated attacks against the homeland for what they really are - an evil perversion of Islam - will never quite be able to stop those attacks.

The gravamen of the quasi-religious ideology that drives this bloody jihad, no matter where its immediate geographical origin, is the same: **murderous envy.**

This is an envy of truly epic proportions: envy of our material successes; envy made worse by shame at the comparative material failure of the Islamic societies; envy made insufferable because the successes of Americans were accomplished by decadent infidels. This is envy that cries out for a *leveling war*, a just war (for the jihadi fanatics), because a just God would surely never allow such an unfair success as America to survive unpunished.

We are being attacked by the fervent followers of a deeply perverse ideology, wrapped in religious jargon and trappings, sold to susceptible minds. The ideology is based on a lie, the false promise of eternal glory for those warriors who martyr themselves by killing and maiming men, women and children engaged in peaceful pursuits in places and at times where, as fellow Americans and our law-abiding guests, they have the right to peace and security. The jihad exists to deny Americans the right to peace and security. No amount of appeasement or cultural sensitivity will change that.

But just to have this conversation in the public square, let alone to work out its concrete policy implications, is like walking over a minefield of politically correct sensibilities. We are crippled by the moral ambivalence of our leaders and our media, a generation-in-power that could well have lost WWII.

Fortunately that discussion has now begun. Michael Gerson in the 4-22 edition of the **Washington Post** has written—

“As the circumstances surrounding the Boston bombings have clarified, some of the reactions have been ideologically reflexive and counterproductive. Portions of the left turned to any artifice, including an attack on ‘white privilege,’ to avoid a serious discussion of radicalism and terrorism. Even the use of the word terrorism is viewed as a threat to multiculturalism or the prelude to a new round of civil rights abuses in the war on

terrorism. Elements of the right suffer their own form of ideological impairment. Their tendency is to regard terrorism and Islam as interchangeable. ... Terrorism is the expression of a violent ideology that has, disturbingly, taken root among some Muslims. ... Debates over the meaning of terms such as 'jihad' and 'sharia' are at least as complex as Christian debates over 'just war' and "social justice." *{Tied in knots by radical Islam - http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/michael-gerson-tied-in-knots-by-radical-islam/2013/04/22/168a2066-ab76-11e2-b6fd-ba6f5f26d70e_story.html}*

We may yet stumble our way to the necessary clarity.

But the jihad will not wait.

PROTECTIVE, PREEMPTIVE PROFILING

Because of the prevalent moral anonymity in our hip, postmodern culture, more and more of our character judgments come from surface impressions, a smile, a style, a sense of "normal" activities, the very notion of getting "an education", any or all of which often are just masks. We assume that a conventional, peace-loving internal life goes with a conventional exterior life; we assume that formal education imputes formal moral values; we assume that, in effect, we can safely presume that the "nice kid" across the street has absorbed and inculcated the value and moral foundation that supports modern civilized behavior.

But these assumptions are false. The reality may be – and often is – radically different. Morality, as it was traditionally understood, is no longer universally taught. When moral and value lessons are taught they often are not particularly coherent with the great moral traditions that uphold Western civilization. The values and aspirations that we assume in a casual meeting with someone often sharply diverge from those values and aspirations secretly vented online; and they may diverge still further from someone's actual behavior. I can't count the number of times I've seen an interview of a neighbor about the bloody monster who lived next door, "He was such a nice person. I can't believe he did this horrible thing." Translation: I never knew him...really.

We first meet someone and his or her moral character is a question. Can we trust his "education"? It would be safer to have an honest conversation with parents and peers. Check out the actual formal education of someone in any technical field – engineering, information technology, the physical sciences, even the so called behavioral sciences. Something is almost always missing. The great Western philosophical and moral canon from Aristotle and Moses to the Buddha and Jesus, from Athens and Rome through the Enlightenment and the French and American revolutions, all this has been gradually dropped from the general curriculum in favor of diversity and sensitivity training...or in favor of no formal moral education at all

To the undereducated, morally clueless set, the closet jihadists who do mass murder might as well be from Mars. The jihad warriors from bloody Chechnya and elsewhere are an enigma to the sensitive souls without a formal moral education. For these naïve minds, Evil does not exist. Surface impressions deceive. The sensitivity and therapeutic models fail when the real moral questions present themselves. That pierced, green haired kid might be a Gandhi. That smiling, clean cut kid with curly hair and soft eyes might be capable of blowing up a nursery.

In a different context, I have written about the cultural carriers of nihilism, the rejection of all moral restraints, by elements in the popular entertainment culture. I've called these internet and media

transmitted images and narratives by the term *malogens* (malevolent psychological pathogens, expressed in the glorification of death images, and so on), a term developed in the study of a particularly chilling murder case – See Malogens <http://jaygaskill.com/Malogens.htm>). The general pattern in jihad conversion / recruitment is very similar.

The toxic version of Islam closely tracks traditional forms but with some deadly variations. What follows is a sketch, designed to be a guide for profilers, not a definitive statement of belief, and certainly not as a guide for followers.

The jihadist's version of Islam begins with the tradition. The ideal template for the perfect society is achieved through submission to the will of the One Supreme Deity whose words were faithfully captured in the Quran. Those who reject the will of the One are infidels. The holy struggle to implement the will of the One against the forces of the infidels is a jihad. The 20th and 21st century version of this employs (what I believe to be) a profound theological error as a tool to recruit suicidal and risk-taking soldiers. The adherents of this variation assume that those faithful who submit to the will of the One will create and live in a successful, materially prosperous society, and assume further that an infidel society will fail. When this failure did not happen, the outcome was an offense to the One, made worse because the infidels of the Great Satan succeeded by demonically exploiting their faithlessness.

This single theological variation succeeds in motivating violence, because it brilliantly exploits the power of envy and revenge and harnesses the fantasy power lures felt by the powerless and confers moral validation on acts that would otherwise be reprehensible in any culture.

The ideal target is a male who was inculcated with Islam, who is longing for purpose and power. The appeal to grievance and powerlessness by offering grandiose deeds that are pleasing to the ruler of the universe and will be rewarded postmortem can always gain traction with certain individuals in certain times of their lives under certain circumstances.

Profiles need to start with these individuals, times and circumstances, knowing that there will be false positives. The first task of the profiler is to identify possible targets for jihad conversion, learning through experience, gaining insight and predictive clues from each case.

Because males are the primary recruits, the females in their lives and their putatively private messages to others (electronic and other) are source material for danger signs. Individuals who lead well balanced family lives, who are morally grounded in a Judeo-Christian framework (using the term to include both traditions and their secular iterations) and / or exhibit a well-founded classic secular allegiance to Western civilization, are essentially immune to the jihad conversion appeal. This puts the profilers in the uncomfortable, but necessary position, of seeming to concentrate on Muslims. But the target subset is much, much smaller than the Muslim population whose members are living ordinary lives in the West.

The problem to be confronted and solved is this: Superficial appearances are almost worthless. We need to get to the otherwise private level to uncover revealing communications, attitudes and other tells. No one advocates arrests or detentions for acts not done based only on a profile.

But there is a powerful deterrent effect by "interviewing" each target, explaining why he is "a person of interest and concern" and warning him that he is being closely followed.

A MATTER OF WILL, NOT CAPABILITY

When you add up the numbers of law enforcement, paramilitary and homeland security personnel detailed just for the Boston bombing investigation, post disaster, you begin to notice a possible massive misallocation of resources. *What if we had stopped this?*

Prevention and deterrence, accomplished through proactive, intelligent and individuated profiling, is a bargain, both in the civil liberties calculus, the human damage calculus and the national security calculus.

The missing elements are not talent and resources. It is purpose, coordination and the iron will to pursue this course against all obstacles for one simple and compelling reason. It is how we will win.

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