

POINT OF VIEW

Our View

Home-grown terror

As the nation's leaders brainstorm the best way to counter foreign terrorist offensives that felled the World Trade Center, bulldozed a portion of the Pentagon and downed a civilian flight in Pennsylvania last week, America should also consider a crackdown on home-grown zealots.

Since segregation's crippling and the onset of civil rights in the 50s and 60s, fringe groups, most hewn from a faux Christian ideal of white supremacy and de-escalation of government oversight, have grown in numbers and clout.

They proffer Timothy McVeigh as an idol, his martyrdom for their so-called cause of American sanctity more poignant and depressing to them than the 168 lives lost when McVeigh, a former soldier, parked an explosives-laden rental truck in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

The first reaction was to blame foreigners. In fact, several media outlets did just that, finger-pointing at Saddam Hussein, Hezbollah and other groups who decry America as "The Great Satan" for its support of Israel.

Those journalists were forced to eat their words and America was forced, once again, to look smack dab into its bias.

As a result of the attacks, Arab-Americans and Muslims are being subjected to virulent hate, including one man in Arizona killed by "patriotic" Americans. Despite calls for tolerance by national leaders and religious leaders' prayers, the bigotry continues.

However, no crackdown on government-hating white men followed McVeigh's terrorism, then the most devastating attack on U.S. soil. No gun-owning white men were harassed, beaten or killed. In fact, membership in militia groups jumped.

Although anti-hate watchdog groups can't pinpoint the number of members in these organizations, they say most of the groups have a wellspring of sympathizers—those who profess tolerance and respect in public but denigrate other races in private.

And, much as the religious radicals who orchestrated last week's terrorist attack—the worst ever inside the U.S.—these home-grown terrorists are becoming increasingly more sophisticated.

Not that television images of white men in combat fatigues, holed up in wilderness reserves, firing automatic weapons and practicing military maneuvers doesn't encapsulate what the militia movement is about, but more and more people—especially disaffected white youth, observers say—are appearing in hateful music and the Internet.

Dozens of hate-based web sites exist, most issuing a call to arms for White Americans. Much of the web site rhetoric warns of the white man's impending doom—in the face of racial preferences, growing minority economic and political clout, interracial marriage and so on—and calls for radical action to be taken. Authors of some sites call for a separation of the races; others, like the White Aryan Resistance, mandate all-out war.

Aiding the cause are at least two independent record labels that specialize in hate music, giving outlets to musicians singing songs of intolerance and bands churning out hate-filled harmonies advocating armed resistance and violence.

Race crimes have certainly touched Las Vegas. Several years ago, two anti-racist Skinheads were slain by White supremacist skinheads. And Buford Furrow, whose shooting rampage in Los Angeles left dead and wounded, was headed to Las Vegas to attack a synagogue before being nabbed.

As such, it's doubly important for political, military and law enforcement leaders to address animosities stewing in the hearts of red-blooded Americans as well as foreign terrorism. McVeigh's attack showed that terrorism looks like US. Either we heed that lesson, or we can prepare for more home-grown carnage.



Terrorism and American values

By Louie Overstreet
Special to Sentinel-Voice

We as a nation did not learn our history lessons. The following is a verbatim reprint of a column I wrote for the *Anchorage Times* up in Alaska on June 30, 1985.

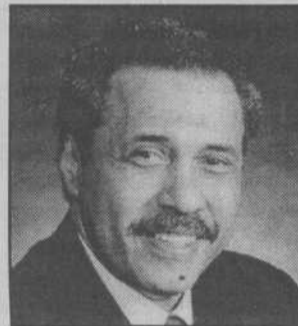
In the intervening 16 years, which is the time it takes a student to complete 12 years of public education and 4 years of college, our nation did not learn the history lesson of what motivates "fanatical fools" to commit crimes against humanity.

Here goes your boy, "the modern day Nostradamus," with observations from many moons ago.

"American governmental institutions, private investment interests and individuals will continue to fall prey to terrorist acts carried out by different loosely organized yet strongly motivated groups of men and women. As a strategy, these groups are bent on provoking America into taking retaliatory or first strike actions that are in direct conflict with the doctrines that govern our country and the values that sustain and give positive meaning to our lives.

While not purporting to have any special understanding of the rationale or the motivation that provides the justification for persons to carry out terrorist attacks, I do understand that traditional Western thought and the application of our value system to the situation of terrorism, as articulated by a succession of ideologues controlling our federal government, are incapable of defining the problem, much less providing any answers.

However, I am fearful that our leaders will continue to



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define the problem in terms of a threat to our national security, and not in terms of why our foreign policy initiatives are being rejected by the masses in foreign countries that witness firsthand the power associated with these initiatives.

If the increasing frequency with which America is viewed as siding with competing interests that do not enjoy the support of the masses is any indication, then it should be obvious why our institutions, economic interests and citizens have become targets in different regions of the world.

Further, our policies far too often demonstrate arrogance, ignorance, or more benignly, a gross insensitivity to the historical significance that politics, religion and social class have on the internal affairs of under-industrialized, much less automated, non-democratic nations.

Ironically, our open democratic election process can provide unwitting aid to terrorism. Most people remember the Iranian hostage crisis was the major contributing factor in the defeat of President Carter. Strategists in the Reagan campaign used this situation to their maximum advantage by portraying Carter as a helpless and inef-

fective leader.

Assuming terrorists read the newspapers (we know they watch television), and even if their acts are irrational, they are still capable of deducing that Americans are deeply troubled and divided over what to do in response to embarrassing, humiliating or destructive acts taken against our nation, its values and citizens.

Thus, once a new and perceived stronger leader took charge of our affairs of state, it was predictable that acts of terrorism would be increased to, in time, render, in the eyes of the public, the new leader as helpless and ineffectual as the one he replaced. If there is any doubt to this assertion, just recall the attacks on our embassies, loss of lives of our military personnel and the kidnapping of journalists, businesspersons and private citizens that have taken place under the Reagan Administration.

This statement is not made to suggest that President Reagan is to blame, but we must conclude that political posturing with an image of a strong leader is not an effective way to combat terrorism.

Finally, watching the tube

and reading the papers, I have concluded, probably like a number of you, that there are at least two don'ts and dos in dealing with terrorism.

Don't define every act of terrorism in terms of a threat to our national security. Don't let guilt feelings over Vietnam continue to make our nation hesitant to exercise our world leadership responsibilities and options. Do attempt to first determine what are the popular issues with the masses in countries where we are providing foreign aid before rushing in and propping up leaders. Do follow up with actions, any expressions in words that such is forthcoming."

The only thing that has changed between the mid-eighties and now is that terrorism is taking place within our nation's borders. Our national leaders should have prepared us for this possibility many moons ago, when other options may have been available to us to deal with international terrorists. Now, the only option we have available to us is to take the lives of barbarians at the cost of many of the values and freedoms we hold dear as a civilized nation.

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