

Terrorism is Killing or Instilling Fear – No Matter Who Does It

We watch proliferating terror and violence. . . Mourning and fear come too. What's the remedy? More of the same?!

Peacemakers on retreat were playing a game where the caller, standing in the middle of a circle of seated people says, "The Big Wind Blows on anyone who . ." All for whom it's true – including the caller – must find another seat. The person left standing is the next caller.

My friend said, "The Big Wind Blows on anyone who has ever been part of a Terrorist Organization." I was shocked. Why did he ask that? And was the room bugged? Would the FBI, who bugs peace groups, think that meant we're terrorists? Why would he ask that?

Since I wasn't the only confused-looking person, he said, "Well, I was part of a terrorist organization: the U.S. military."

The Buffalo News said in its December 4 headline story "Massacre again raises question of when to define it as terrorism,"

Federal law defines terrorism as dangerous acts intended to intimidate a civilian population, influence government policy or affect government conduct "by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping."

Some examples are

- our weaponized drone program, where, per Intercept based on leaked U.S. internal documents, nearly 90% of those killed were not the intended targets (assassination,

- mass destruction and community intimidation included);
- night raids in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, which terrify surprised families and whole communities. War is state terrorism.
- “policing” murders, especially of black people. People of color, activists, and innocents know and are highly intimidated because even moving (Amadou Diallo); questioning (Sandra Bland); or failing immediate obedience (12-year-old Tamir Rice) – could result in one’s getting killed.

Terrorism is killing and/or instilling fear. Let’s kill the people who are killing people? Which causes more people to kill? How can that work? It doesn’t make sense. (Don’t hit your sister. *Whap!!*) Restraining and preventing aggression is necessary. Instilling fear and Islamophobia promote a police state.

The U.S. treatment of whistle blowers confirms governmental intimidation. Hero Edward Snowden caused policy improvements, yet he faces espionage charges. Drone pilots revealing program truths have had their bank accounts and credit cards frozen. Police have generally been protected from charges of murder, wrongful death, or brutality until quite recently. State violence is excused.

State terrorism is still terrorism, and like violence, Terrorism begets more Terrorism. In fact, besides our government’s above-described intimidation of civilian populations, the U.S. efforts to influence other governments’ policies and/or affect their conduct are well known worldwide. The Project for the New American Century espoused our challenging policies or conduct of other governments that are not aligned with our interests and prominence.

Do we need more or less violence? Hope we can agree we need less.

We need faith, courage, and resolute adherence to principle. Let's work cooperatively, fearlessly, to mainstream nonviolence, including petitioning our government. You can join organizations like the WNY Peace Center and allies on specific campaigns.

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