

# Chapter 10 - WAR

## The failure of Conflict Management

### Part 1

**"Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not sure about the universe." (Einstein)**

#### Quick Links to subsections

[Introduction](#)

[Why this chapter?](#)

[Whose Side Are You On?](#)

[The Threat of Fundamentalism](#)

[Consensus](#)

[The Proud Commission of \*Evil\*](#)

[Americas Fundamentalists](#)

[Close Links between the "enemy" Fundamentalists](#)

[Shared Opposition to Democracy](#)

[Leo Strauss](#)

[The Medieval Mindset](#)

[Manipulation of Public Opinion](#)

[The Office of Special Plans](#)

## [The Final War](#)

### Introduction

Unlike the previous chapters which have been re-written to take into account the years of feedback I have received, the views expressed in this chapter do not represent any kind of evolution from the original. Instead this chapter represents a complete change in my focus brought about by the events of 9-11. It may or may not attract your support. It is, therefore, appropriate for me to return to the use of the first person singular as I can only claim these views as my own. Hopefully the next rewrite will allow me to re-introduce the plural.

Note: This is an advanced draft of the rewrite of Chapter 10. The most glaring unfinished business are the missing links. Anything underlined which doesn't already have a hyperlink will eventually. If the underlined words are in *italics*, then a "portal" page is being prepared which will contain related narrative and, probably, several more links. To react or contribute to the draft, please email me at harrystottle at fullmoon.nu using the subject heading "RTP Response" (plus anything else as appropriate) (This format will ensure my antispam filters don't reject your efforts!)

Further note: What began as just another Chapter has grown almost into a book in its own right with mini chapters of its own - which I will try to keep as "sections" within the chapter. If it looks too unwieldy when I'm done, I might reconsider. For the time being at least I will try to keep it as a single chapter.

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### Why this chapter?

This is the closing section of an [insightful article](#) by Paul Berman from the New York Times..

*"It would be nice to think that, in the war against terror, our side, too, speaks of deep philosophical ideas -- it would be nice to think that someone is arguing with the terrorists and with the readers of Sayyid Qutb. But here I have my worries. The followers of Qutb speak, in their wild fashion, of enormous human problems, and they urge one another to death and to murder. But the enemies of these people speak of what? The political leaders speak of United Nations resolutions, of unilateralism, of multilateralism, of weapons inspectors, of coercion and noncoercion. This is no answer to the terrorists. The terrorists speak insanely of deep things. The antiterrorists had better speak sanely of equally deep things. Presidents will not do this. Presidents will dispatch armies, or decline to dispatch armies, for better and for worse.*

*But who will speak of the sacred and the secular, of the physical world and the spiritual world? Who will defend liberal ideas against the enemies of liberal ideas? Who will defend liberal principles in spite of liberal society's every failure? President George W. Bush, in his speech to Congress a few days after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, announced that he was going to wage a war of ideas. He has*

*done no such thing. He is not the man for that.*

*Philosophers and religious leaders will have to do this on their own. Are they doing so? Armies are in motion, but are the philosophers and religious leaders, the liberal thinkers, likewise in motion? There is something to worry about here, an aspect of the war that liberal society seems to have trouble understanding -- one more worry, on top of all the others, and possibly the greatest worry of all. "*

This rewritten chapter is my attempt to answer that call.

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## **Part 1 - Fundamentalism versus Consensus. Whose Side Are You On?**

Inevitably, if we want to explain how all human behaviour fits into the straightforward [survival paradigm](#), we must face the paradox of War. The Human Race devotes [enormous resources](#) to the means and practice of killing each other - with apparently obvious negative effects on survival including the very real and increasing risk of, eventually, destroying our entire species. What makes such obviously irrational behaviour possible?

The primary purpose of this chapter is to explore, in some depth, the ethics of mass slaughter and see how Survival Based Ethics (SBE) can illuminate the field. It is easy to argue that there is no rational basis on which to initiate a war and if all nations capable of fighting a war were governed by rational systems, then wars simply wouldn't happen. That, of course, isn't the world we live in. Few, if any, war-capable countries are governed rationally, which means they are nearly all capable of starting the hostilities. Even when countries are capable of acting rationally, they may well be attacked by one which isn't.

For a formal summary of the Causes of War you could do worse than study [this entry](#) in the [Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy](#). I have only marginal disagreements with it. It's conclusion is that we don't really understand the causes. I don't believe they are that difficult to understand. We might elaborate elsewhere, particularly by reference to Wrangham and Peterson's "Demonic Males" but here we'll keep it simple: Wars are generally initiated either by bullies or in response to bullies. They (the bullies) think they can get away with it. And often do. The specific illegitimate reasoning which is used by the bully to justify their actions (at least to themselves) may or may not be relevant or even particularly interesting. The only reason we would normally analyse the beliefs of the insane is to cast light on the extent of their disease and perhaps to assist in finding a cure for their illness. Other than for diagnostic purposes, we will learn little by studying the internal logic of their world view. Unfortunately, as we will see, such diagnosis in respect of warmongers is in fact often necessary if we are to have any hope of a favourable prognosis.

## The Threat of Fundamentalism

The hallmark of the warmonger is typically some form of fundamentalism. And since I contend that Fundamentalism is the greatest threat to the future of humanity, I'd better define how I intend to use the term. Typically (and originally) it is used to convey a religious mindset in which reality is dictated by a "holy" written text or tradition. The believer views any dissent as heresy and any deviation from prescribed practices or adherence to proscribed views or practices as a crime or "sin".

I need to use the term more widely. The traditional description of mindset and behaviour is valid, but the limitation to religion is too restrictive. Stalinism, Maoism, Pol-Potism and whatever ism underpins the current regime in North Korea all have or had followers who exhibited all the traits of religious fundamentalism, albeit, in their case, loosely based on misrepresentations of Marxism. But the fundamentalist need not have a precisely defined creed. Hitler, for example, wrote "Mein Kampf" but neither he nor anyone else, so far as I can discover, ever used it as a reference point for their policies and practices. Similarly, Napoleon had no profound philosophy other than initial support for republicanism which evolved into imperial ambition when he realised that he alone could transform the world. Certain [Animal Rights campaigners \(cached\)](#) are clearly fundamentalist. Margaret Thatcher became a partial fundamentalist after "her" victory in the Falklands War. She became increasingly unable to accept the possibility of her own fallibility.

Fundamentalism, for the purposes of this discussion, is any view of the world which is characterised by

- irrational certainty. (i.e. the conviction that X is true or that "I am always right", despite the absence of empirical evidence)
- refusal to consider critical or alternative views
- refusal to accept or even witness contradictory evidence

Fundamentalists tend to adopt one of two strategies in relation to their interaction with society. The "harmless" ones either disengage (harmless, that is, to the rest of us) and go off to create their own little corners of the world (examples: the [Amish](#), the [Mormons](#) or the [Children of God](#)) or spectacularly self destruct (eg [Jim Jones - Peoples Temple](#) - cult who committed suicide in Guyana in 1978 and the [Solar Temple](#) cult many of whose members who did much the same on a smaller scale in 1994). Then there are the "world changers" who, rather than withdraw from the world, conclude that they are obliged to change it in their image, adopting, in the process, a policy of militant activism. In pursuit of such a policy, most active fundamentalists seem to take the view that their *ends justify almost any means*.

[AC Grayling](#), commenting on the December 2004 case in which the play - "[Bezhti](#)" written by

[Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti](#) a Sikh playwright caused offence to other Sikhs who, in turn, made [death threats](#) against the author and forced the play to close, [puts it thus](#):

*Opposition to the West's progress towards its liberties has never been absent; the Counter-Reformation and the counter-Enlightenment exist today in the form of those who believe that there is a single right answer to everything, an answer that must be enforced even at gunpoint if necessary. Their ranks included Nazism and Stalinism in the 20th century, both premised on a rejection of the Enlightenment principles of democracy and individual liberty; but religion is a far older and more pervasive opponent, which achieves a more powerful psychological hold over adherents because it feeds on credulities, needs and fears, rather than on political abstractions or economic theories.*

All fundamentalism is inherently logically opposed to real democracy as this implies that social policy principles can be decided by means other than their particular favoured creed or practice. This opposition is as clear in Stalinist regimes as in Theocracies.

In War, sometimes, of course, the fundamentalism is clearly religious - as in the Christian Crusades or 9-11. Sometimes it is racist fundamentalism - like Hitler's visions of the Aryan master race. Sometimes ideological - Napoleon's attempt at imposing liberte, fraternite and egalite, for example, the Stalinist purges or the Khmer Rouge civil war in Cambodia. Often it is what we might call "historical" fundamentalism, whereby the perpetrators perceive, revive or invent past injustices which must be avenged - like the Argentinian invasion of the Falkland Islands or the Hutu genocide against the Tutsis. Occasionally we see opportunistic fundamentalism. This is straightforward bullying. The invader sees a weaker target who holds valuable assets or territory and does not appear to have alliances with any other countries who might intervene to prevent or repel the attack. The [Indonesian genocide in East Timor](#) seems to have been an example of that cynicism [strongly aided (as you'll read in that link) and abetted by the Australian government with tacit support from the USA and provisioned, amongst others, by arms sales from the UK]. The fundamentalism, in all cases, takes the form of declared infallibility of "the cause". It is inconceivable to the warmonger that they could, in any important respect, admit - even to themselves - the possibility that they might be wrong.

Chris Hedges in "[War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning](#)":[\(cached\)](#)

*When those who commit crimes do so in the name of the cause, they often come to terms with the crimes through an ersatz moral relativism. Facts are trimmed, used and become as interchangeable as opinions... Destruction of honest inquiry, the notion that one fact is as good as the next, is one of the most disturbing consequences of war.*

If we ever need to explain or justify the importance of philosophy in human affairs, this would be my core argument:

*Fundamentalism is the greatest human threat to human survival. Fundamentalism is only possible among those who do not understand the significance of the [First and Second questions](#) or their answers.*

No-one who comprehends both those questions and their answers - and thus internalises the inherent uncertainty in all conclusions we can reach about the nature of the universe we inhabit - no such philosophically aware human could possibly sustain any world view which justifies the actions responsible for initiating a war. Such a person could never - whilst of sound mind - believe that they were so unequivocally correct or an enemy so perfectly in error that an unprovoked attack was justifiable.

Just because, however, no truly rational being would *start* a war, this does not, of course, imply that no rational being would ever *fight* a war. If a rational being is attacked by an irrational one, it can certainly be a rational decision to defend oneself and that may entail warfare. The obvious question arises - particularly given the American invasion of Iraq - can a pre-emptive strike ever be justified? Philosophically that is not too difficult an issue. If the snake is poised to strike and escape is not an option, then, regrettably, we must kill the snake. If there is a rational and empirically verifiable basis for the belief that you are about to be attacked using weapons against which you have no certain defence, then the choice is straightforward. Kill or be killed.

The devil, as they say, is in the detail. The Americans clearly failed to demonstrate to the world at large - or even to their own people - any "rational and empirically verifiable basis" for a belief that they were about to be attacked. In fact, they didn't even argue that they were about to be attacked, at least not by Iraq. There was never any prospect of an Iraqi attack and they didn't pretend there was. Their argument was that Iraq was a hostile regime and could, potentially, arm terrorist groups who, in turn, were inclined to attack the United States or its allies.

Is that argument itself beyond reasonable bounds? Not in principle. Again, it comes down to the "rational and empirically verifiable basis" for the argument.

That terrorist groups exist with ambitions to attack the US is now beyond reasonable dispute. It is also fair to observe that relations between the USA and Iraq had deteriorated to such an extent that had the regime possessed appropriate materials, it might well have been inclined to pass them on to such terrorists. Whose fault that is we needn't resolve. The question is, was there any evidence that Iraq possessed relevant materials? It does seem that there was at least a [prima facie case](#) for such possession.

What concerned me most, for example, were the stories that Iraq had manufactured and stockpiled significant quantities of [VX nerve gas](#). For example, [this story](#), deals, in a partisan, but nevertheless informative manner, with the strike against the al Shifa Sudanese pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum in 1996 while the empire was under Clinton management. It suggests the recovery of



reasonable forensic evidence (unaudited) of a VX precursor and intercepted phone calls between the Plant managers and Iraqi scientists. It doesn't discuss whether there were potentially plausible innocent explanations for such contacts so we are rather pressured to assume there was no such possibility. It also alleges that at the time, bin Laden was a secret investor in the company. The Clinton administration used this "link" to suggest a link between Al Qaeda and Iraq, though, as the author points out, Iraq may have been blissfully unaware of bin Laden's involvement.

Such stories have been commonplace since that attack. It was not unreasonable for we ordinary members of the public to assume that there might be a foundation to them.

If VX possession had been verified, and Iraq had refused to destroy the agent verifiably, that alone could, in my view, have been sufficient to justify a first strike. Given

- the risk that small quantities of such a toxic material could be easily smuggled out of Iraq and given
- the manner in which Iraq had been pushed into becoming a dedicated enemy and - never mind the missing links with Al Qaeda - given
- their [established links](#) with the Palestinian Intifida and thus
- the risk that at least one major [MIFT](#) terror group may have been "donated" the relevant small quantities;

the net threat would be far too high for any potential victim to ignore.

If released from a high building in New York, a single thermos flask of this material, optimally weaponised, could reasonably be expected to kill upwards of 10,000 citizens. In an enclosed or partially enclosed space, like, for example, a large sports stadium, we would expect 80 or 90% of the crowd to die within minutes.

There is no ethical dilemma in pre-empting such a verified threat. The ethical issues only arise because the threat in this instance was never sufficiently verified. The responsibility for that is widely shared. Read [Iraqwatch](#) for what appears to be a comprehensive and reasonably balanced summary. In short, yes, the Americans went off half-cocked and without sufficient verification, but only after more than a decade of obstructions to proper inspections (which could have provided proper verification or falsification) and sanction-busting (which provided illicit weapon making facilities to the regime) for which other UN members share considerable responsibility. All hands have blood on them. The Americans merely have more than most.

There is just one other rational basis for initiating hostilities against someone who has not (yet) attacked you - viz to protect a third party victim who has

- either been attacked or appears to be in imminent danger of being attacked and who
- is incapable of defending themselves and

- makes it clearly understood (or is visibly and actively prevented from so doing) that they would welcome your assistance.

## Consensus

Nevertheless, even when provoked to an act of war by external forces, I will argue, amongst other things, that any decision - in a rational society - to respond by going to war can only begin to be truly rational, or, indeed, truly ethical if it is not just a democratic decision, but one which commands the much higher level of support required for near Consensus. There are many strands of argument which support this conclusion but for now I will limit myself to one. Take, for example, the circumstances in which a pre-emptive strike is proposed on the basis of either 3<sup>rd</sup> party victim defence or imminent danger of direct attack.

Consensus is the only reasonable protection against abuse of that excuse. Warmongers have *routinely claimed* to be acting on behalf of 3<sup>rd</sup> party victims with little or no justification. Similarly there are many cases prior to the recent invasion of Iraq, in which the invader has claimed, without proof, that the victim of their attack had malicious aggressive intent. They have often even staged attacks from the alleged enemy to provide a pretext for their military response. Such "False Flag" attacks have been raised much higher in public consciousness since 9-11, because many conspiracy theorists argue that 9-11 is the mother and father of all false flag attacks. Part of their argument is to take great delight in reminding us all of just how many other such deceptions have been carried out just by the American Government. They have, at least, eliminated the argument that Governments don't behave like that. And if the so called "liberal democracy" of the world's leading nation can behave like that, it doesn't take much imagination to realise what the others can get up to.

The requirement to present the case for such assertions, openly, to a democratic plebiscite and to persuade the vast (rather than simple) majority of the people that such dramatic lethal action is necessary imposes a very high burden of proof on the potential invader.

It is likely that only extraordinary circumstances will persuade an educated electorate that military invasion is justified. Nevertheless, there have been examples in our recent history where I am confident that the required Consensus would have been attainable. Rwanda would have been a leading contender. Kosova and the Balkans generally a close second. In 2004 the obvious candidates were the Congo and Sudan. Clearly the purposes of military intervention by the United Nations or some force acting in their name in such cases must have nothing to do with material gain for the invader. Indeed one reasonable prerequisite in proposing such intervention could be the need to demonstrate that the invader will not benefit materially from the intervention. If material benefit is a realistic prospect, then, automatically, we should suspect and question the motives of the proposers. Be that as it may, I argue that the requirement to achieve consensus prior to initiating an attack is a major and necessary obstacle to the arbitrary exercise of power - particularly including the exercise of military power.



The ethics of Warfare are, therefore, almost secondary to the next major purpose of this chapter, which is to explain the overwhelming importance of Consensus in rational societies. Without it, it is doubtful whether a species aspiring to civilisation can survive for long once it has reached our level of technological development.

The first but least significant point to make about *Consensus* is that because the word will appear in this chapter several dozen times, it is worth clarifying exactly what we mean by it. If you haven't read it in previous chapters, you can see our [\*detailed discussion here\*](#). The short hand version is that, from now on, you should understand *Consensus* to mean "near Consensus" unless otherwise specified in the text. "Near Consensus" should, in turn, be taken to mean that, preferably more than 95%, but in no case less than 90%, of "those entitled to vote" have reached (or, we hope, will reach) agreement on a given policy or question.

Second and most importantly, while it may not be an obvious conclusion, 9-11 made one thing crystal clear, and the (at least) ill advised and premature US invasion of Iraq has emphasised its importance. It is now the main aim of this chapter, perhaps the entire book, to explain how and why it did so and to attempt to seed a Consensus about how to deal with the historical crisis into which we have been plunged as a result.

Many of us, perhaps naively, thought that the ending of the Cold War would lead to a prosperous and largely peacable "new world order". In particular, we would all benefit from the "peace dividend" - the funds released from the global war effort would now be made available to tackle global poverty and the gross inequalities between the developed and undeveloped parts of our world. We were, it is true, beginning to wonder why it was taking so long to realise these benefits but we still had some vague notion that we were still loosely on course.

### **The Proud Commission of *Evil***

That illusion was shattered on September 11 2001. [We](#) learned instead that the divisions between us remain as deep as they ever have been and that the "new" enemy was far more committed than any previous foe we have faced. Though they are, fortunately, (so far) lightly armed in comparison to the military forces ranged against them, they have the advantage of being able to choose the battleground and, in particular, they are armed with a world view in which their ends justify any conceivable means of attack against virtually any target. If we thought that flying loaded passenger planes into tall buildings broke new bounds, any lingering doubts about how far such fanatics were prepared to go have since been swept away by the attacks, in 2004, on school children in [Beslan](#) and the deliberately, even proudly, video recorded beheading of non combatant hostages and the subsequent publication of those recordings.

The world reacted, understandably, as though this constituted a new development in warfare. There is, however, nothing new about the killing of innocents. Even the *deliberate* killing of innocents is not new (we needn't look beyond the "Holocaust" for the most egregious example of that). Nor is

boasting about it . Even the scale is relatively trivial by historical terms. True, [Ghengis Khan](#), even on a really bad day, probably never managed to slaughter 3,000 non combatants in less than an hour. Even the Nazis couldn't match that pace (unless you aggregate the output of all their extermination camps) but did manage to keep up their more modest 12,000 a day at [Auschwitz](#) for for a couple years, almost without a break. And, in the same war the Americans broke - and still hold - all previous records by [killing nearly 100,000](#) non combatants in a matter of seconds. Nor are [Suicide attacks](#) new.

So what then was new about 9-11?

First, it is unlikely that we'll ever know whether the timing and effects of the attack on the World Trade Centre were brilliantly planned or accidentally optimised for the killers' purposes. The fact that the attack on the second tower was broadcast live as it happened was a critical factor in the subsequent impact of the attacks. As was the live broadcast of the total collapse of the towers. Either it was all expertly planned or they had a hell of a lot of luck. If we're to believe the well known [disputed](#) video allegedly showing [bin Laden discussing the attack](#) in the days shortly after 9-11, they weren't expecting the towers to collapse. If that was true, they must have seen that as the icing on the cake, the helping hand that Allah must have lent to show his approval of their plan.

The timing, at least, appears to have been coolly and deliberately staged.

Previous "evildoers" like the Nazis didn't actually want the world to know what they were up to, and denied it constantly. Some of their sympathisers are [still denying it](#) today. In contrast, even the world's best PR team could not have dreamed up a more efficient way to publicise the attacks on America. Attacking the Twin Towers 18 minutes apart allowed just enough time to ensure that enough cameras would respond to the first attack and be in position to capture the second attack - enough to ensure we all got a ring side seat - while not allowing enough time for America's sleeping defences to intercept and prevent it.

Consequently, millions of people in America and around the world would watch the murder of about a thousand people in real time. Subsequently we could all see it replayed a thousand times in slow motion and enhanced detail. They and we would watch, without the filter of an edited recording, people throwing themselves out of windows a thousand feet up because they preferred suicide - by smashing themselves on the pavement - to being burned alive. They would see the icons of Global Capitalism collapse in on themselves and they would know that this must mean crushing those who were still inside trying to get out or those who were heroically trying to rescue those who couldn't save themselves. And don't forget, from the psychological impact point of view, at the time we were first watching, the numbers being talked about were not the eventual mercifully low death toll of "only" [2,645](#). The first news I heard - which was an hour or so after the impacts - suggested that up to 30,000 might have still been inside when they collapsed. So what we thought - particularly those watching in real time - was that we were witnessing the deaths of tens of thousands of fellow humans.

That was new.

Contrast it, for example, with [Eddie Adams iconic image](#) of the Vietnam War and try to remember how shocked we all were when we first saw that static image, after the fact, of a single unarmed man being shot in the head at point blank range. Forty years later we're watching the deliberate slaughter of thousands. On Live TV. Compare it again to how squeamish the Americans become when it comes to (not) [showing some](#) of their own handiwork. (but let he who is without sin cast the first stone)

The world has simply never experienced such a blatantly public attack captured for instant replay in such detail. The images, the utterly clear and unambiguous message of hate and determination which they represent are beyond anything we've experienced in human history. When we learned that one tower had been hit by a plane most of us probably thought "what a horrible accident". When we watched the second plane aiming at the second tower, we knew, without any pundit or analyst having to explain it to us, that this was no accident.

It was possibly one of the most traumatic events in history for observers. Studies since have found considerable [evidence of stress](#) in the US population, not just where we might expect it (Manhattan) but across the country. I suspect, if anyone ever went looking, we'd find evidence of stress around the world. Personally I am reputed to be fairly low on the stress curve but after watching the replays and news for a few hours that evening, from the comfort of my own home on the other side of the Atlantic, I distinctly remember feeling something very close to a panic attack as the full implications of what we had seen began to sink in.

These people want *me* dead! Or would do if they knew I existed. Dead or compliant. If I ever appear on their radar screens, any brief examination of this website would make it obvious that I am an opponent of almost everything they stand for (at least in terms of how to manage society). They clearly don't have a behaviour code which tolerates dissent from their viewpoint, so, if they are ever in a position to do so, I must assume they will try to eliminate my opposition; perhaps first by giving me the opportunity to recant and then, if I refuse, by killing me and destroying any evidence of my views.

You too are in the firing line, if you show any public signs of agreeing with the arguments I am making or similar arguments voiced by others. And, in the eyes of such an irrational foe, evidence of your agreement might be deduced from something as trivial as the fact that you have been shown to have visited relevant websites.

Death or compliance. Which will *you* choose? I hope, if I'm ever forced to make the choice, that I will have the courage to choose Death (unless I have a cunning plan...) but I have an even stronger hope that we can avert my ever having to make that choice!

Although the majority of victims were Americans, the main target was the WORLD Trade Centre which, by definition, was bound to have representatives of dozens of nations. This was the first time we'd seen war declared against almost the human race in total. (Actually the war was [declared several years earlier](#). We just didn't take it seriously until 9-11)

Never in our lives have we watched anyone, anywhere, openly commit such an unspeakable crime. And never in our history has such an unspeakable crime been committed with such overt publicity as one of its main aims. Yes there have been previous terrorist bombings, but never so clinically - or so successfully - arranged for the benefit of the live media.

In contrast, for example, though we all heard about the much more dramatic and *even more "evil"* Tutsi slaughter of the Hutus in Rwanda; and we all wrung our hands in impotent despair, we didn't actually see anyone having their head hacked off. And any journalists who got too close to the action were scared off by homicidal hooligans who, despite apparently running amok, still had enough presence of mind to ensure that their evil deeds were relatively well hidden at the time. That kind of reticence is the norm. Most "evildoers" recognise, at some level, that what they are doing is beyond the pale and, although that awareness does nothing to restrain their behaviour, they do at least "have the decency" to try to hide what they are doing and subsequently do their best to deny it ever happened and to prevent all attempts at uncovering the truth. At some time in the near future, for example, the recently deposed dictator of Iraq will face trial for the massacre of tens of thousands of his own citizens. We can anticipate that his defence will be based on a mixture of self justification (they were "rebels"; we were entitled to hunt them down and kill them) and denial (I ordered no such thing as the killing of thousands of women and children). The last thing we can expect to hear is some proud admission of the crimes.

*No State Shall, during War, Permit Such Acts of Hostility Which Would Make Mutual Confidence in the Subsequent Peace Impossible: Such Are the Employment of Assassins, Poisoners, Breach of Capitulation, and Incitement to Treason in the Opposing State"*

*These are dishonorable stratagems. For some confidence in the character of the enemy must remain even in the midst of war, as otherwise no peace could be concluded and the hostilities would degenerate into a war of extermination.*  
Emmanuel Kant - [Perpetual Peace 1795](#)

That hits the nail right on its head. Any enemy prepared to launch attacks like 9-11 clearly isn't interested in, eventually, negotiating a peace treaty. It is clearly intent on a war of extermination. If they cannot be dissuaded, or detained and safely restrained, we may be forced to exterminate them first.

With the new enemy, the rules have changed. Rather than hide their horrors, they parade them. Their [philosophy](#) (in so far as it can be called philosophy) starts with Qutb's interpretations and moves on

to defend and advocate the extreme behaviour. For example:

- *"People cannot be made obedient except with the sword! The sword is the key to Paradise, which can be opened only for holy warriors!"*
- *"We believe in the principle of establishing [Sharia](#), even if this means the death of all mankind,"*
- *"we issue the following fatwa to all Muslims: the ruling to kill the Americans and their allies - civilian and military - is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it."*

In 2004, video recordings of inevitably slow, clumsy and inefficient decapitations (presumably they'll get better with practice) became the new "norm" - if you wanted to download the gruesome images from the web (I'm not going to link to them, find them yourself if you're that keen!). I predict that, sometime in the next couple of years, [MIFT](#) will engineer some kind of event to which the live media will be drawn innocently expecting something other than what they will actually witness. They might, perhaps, expect a news conference. What they will get will be the real time beheading of a prominent hostage or perhaps some other nightmarish scene of slaughter. Why? Because they have seen how much more powerful the effect of the live images has been in comparison to anything recorded or merely reported. If they can guarantee a live audience, they achieve the same kind of benefit they got from the media on and after 9-11. They massively *amplify* their message. As Mary Kaldor puts it:

*...their violence is itself a form of political mobilisation. It is grisly, spectacular and designed for the media age. Whereas classical terrorists tended to attack strategic targets – such as important officials, telephone towers, or power stations – the new terrorists carry out mass killings, suicide bombings, or hideous atrocities like video-beheadings in order to gain and shape public attention and project their call to a holy war. ([link](#))*

So, if you're looking for what's new in MIFT tactics, it is, first, the abandonment of the "rules of war" and, second, skillfull use of the media to promote awareness of their campaign of unashamed, no holds barred, pure unadulterated [terrorism](#). Recognising, quite rationally, that they cannot match the military might of their opponents, they choose to go for the psychological jugular. Frighten the population (that's us in the west AND Moslems not already living under [Shariah](#) - which is most of them) into forcing our governments to concede their demands.

So far, their strategy is working remarkably well and probably beyond their wildest expectations. By the end of 2004:

- From being a disconnected rabble of disparate Islamic militant groups, a dominant paradigm had emerged which has changed the agenda, direction and tactics of Islamic militancy. Where most had been generally focussed internally on achieving Shariah within their own countries,



they transformed to being largely externally focussed on the common enemy, the corrupting influence of the non Islamic world, particularly the western democracies, particularly the United States.

- From a few hundred ihadis in the training camps of Afghanistan, Sudan, the Phillipines etc they had become a few tens of thousands spread widely around the middle east and Asia. The conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan and the poverty in North Africa appeared to be recruiting more to their cause than America's military efforts were destroying.
- They had forced the whole world to take them seriously
- They had succeeded in pushing the world's remaining superpower, who still - proudly and largely without recognising any irony - called themselves *the Land of the Free* very close to becoming a Police State.

With regard to that last measure of success, however, it must be said that they were pushing at an open door.

### Neo-Conservatives and the Religious Right - America's Fundamentalists

Assuming, for the time being at least, that we don't buy into the major (and notably not yet satisfactorily "debunked") conspiracy theory which alleges that the US Government - specifically led by Dick Cheney - was either directly responsible for 9-11 or at least permitted it to happen, we can further assume that the neo-conservatives and religious right obviously didn't welcome the slaughter of 3000 of their fellow citizens, including their own husbands, wives, parents, children, friends and other loved ones. But they did unhesitatingly seize the opportunity - the excuse of 9-11 - to impose, on their citizens and visitors to their country, many of the procedures and restrictions we normally only associate with totalitarian states. They had even launched attacks not so much on "freedom of speech" (which is sacred even amongst the religious right), but against the speakers who dared to utter certain lines of thought. By the end of 2004, they had already imposed surveillance systems the East German Stasi could only dream about. They had already restricted freedoms in areas well beyond the legitimate bounds of government.

Three years after 9-11 they still held more than a thousand people in their jails without charge and without the benefits of the most basic legal rights such as habeas corpus. Add this to their long running war against personal autonomy known as "the war on drugs" (about which much more in the next chapter) and their 2004 tally of political prisoners ran to approximately three quarters of a million. Not quite on a par with the worst periods of the Soviet system or the Chinese, but deeply disturbing for a country which genuinely sees itself as *the* beacon of freedom in the modern world without, apparently, experiencing cognitive dissonance.

### Close Links between the "enemy" Fundamentalists



Another novel feature of the conflict takes the form of a number of disturbing links between the leadership of the two sides of the war. [Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 911"](#) is a hyperbolic - but often accurate - presentation of some of the business and political links between leading Republicans (particularly the Bush family) and the Saudi leaders, including the bin Laden family. He does not mention, however, the deeper - and much more disturbing - philosophical links. Both sides are led by religious fundamentalists. Both have a medieval approach to morality. Both sides share common values across a *wide range of social issues*. Both share a psychotic level of conviction in their own moral rectitude. The parallels have been closely documented by Adam Curtis' autumn 2004 series "[The Power of Nightmares](#)" broadcast by the BBC.

Most alarmingly, as Curtis documents, both antagonists reached the same conclusion about their respective audiences. The Islamic fundamentalists decided - in line with the logic of [Takfirism](#) - after failing to ignite popular uprisings against western inspired anti-Islamic corruption in Algeria, Egypt, Sudan and elsewhere, that the Moslem people themselves had already been corrupted by western influences - and, therefore, had made themselves legitimate targets for the increasingly psychopathic campaign of violence and intimidation. Similarly, having failed (when Clinton was elected) to persuade their people that America's task was to be the standard bearer for "Good" against "Evil" on the World Stage, the Neocons, too, concluded that the people themselves were "wrong". They embarked on a campaign to discredit the incumbent Democrat President at any cost - even, [some would argue](#), the theft of an election. Eventually, for them, 9-11 became the convenient "proof" of the existence of Evil which it was their god given task to oppose.

The two sides may or may not be aware of their close links, but the Neocons and Religious Right certainly have far more, philosophically, in common with [Ayman al-Zawahiri](#) (the Islamic disciple of Sayyid Qutb who persuaded bin Laden to finance the Jihad) than with me, most of my readers, or, come to that, I hope, most Americans. Conspiratorialists would probably suspect that they are aware of these links and share a common agenda, while those of us who see the protagonists as, essentially, psychologically unstable, would not be surprised if they had not yet recognised their deep similarities.

## Shared Opposition to Democracy

Personally, however, I believe that, ultimately, even without a conspiracy, their shared values will eventually lead the protagonists to form a common front against what we might call "secular autonomists"; those of us who share the kind of values this book promotes where the **sole constraint** on personal behaviour is "*do nothing to any 3<sup>rd</sup> party without their free and informed consent*" and any rules on wider social interaction are decided at least by large democratic majorities and preferably by Consensus.

As Curtis points out, the very notion of deciding major behavioural moral issues on the basis of plebiscite rather than theological doctrine is the very heart of the problem. It is exactly what the

Islamic fundamentalists (such as Qutb) used as their evidence that the west is the source of the corruption in Islam, as a few autocracies began to introduce the limited western model democracies. By (their) definition, anyone participating in an election either as voter or candidate was effectively committing [Apostasy](#) - turning their back on their religion and denying the validity of the Koran. Why? Because the implication of democracy is that moral matters can be decided by the people, rather than the clear word of their god. Some fundamentalists argue that the the Koran specifically permits - even advocates - the killing of Moslems who break the faith. And denying the primacy of the Koran - in all matters - is a serious breach of the faith. Rarely has this view been [voiced so explicitly](#) as by the Islamic fundamentalists publicly threatening participants in the January 30 2005 election in Iraq.

*Those who participate in this dirty farce will not be sheltered from the blows of the mujahedeen*

*Democracy is a word of Greek origin meaning the sovereignty of the people... this concept is considered apostasy, contrary to the doctrine of one God and Sharia*

To be fair, though, at least they're honest about their position. They object to democracy because it implies that a majority opinion can outweigh the opinion - the divine guidance - of their holy book. That isn't a rational position, but it is at least a clear and honest position. Their anti- democratic credentials are not exclusive to Islamic fundamentalists. As John Cornwell documents in "[The Pope in Winter](#)", the Catholic pontiff, John Paul, tried to insert his god into the European constitution and, despite his noteworthy campaign for freedom on behalf of his native Poles and those suffering elsewhere under earlier communist regimes, his later attitude to freedom was somewhat ambiguous; essentially being limited to the "search for the truth" - where the truth is defined very much as the truth preached by his own church.

The American Religious Right, of course, are hoping to incorporate some of their prejudices into their own constitution. So religious groups generally feel that Democracy isn't fully capable of making decisions in line with their preconceptions. But even secular elites won't trust the masses to decide more than who gets to make the real decisions. Otherwise most European states would still have capital punishment for example. So although only Takfirists, so far, however, have considered that killing potential voters is the obvious means of preventing democracy making the wrong decisions, most of the world is still governed by those who have used less drastic means to achieve similar limitations.

## Leo Strauss

By contrast with that honest - albeit disgustingly violent - religious rejection of democracy, or the confused denial by those who sincerely believe that what we've got already *is* democracy, the Neocons entire strategy is based on a philosophy of deception. Their mentor, Leo Strauss, was a latter day Machiavellian and Platonist. The main lessons he appears to have imparted included the following (these are not quotations, they are paraphrased from an [informative interview](#) with [Shadia](#)

[Drury](#), an acknowledged expert on Straussian philosophy:)

- *The natural order (the food chain) is the morally correct order. What IS thus dictates what OUGHT. Observance of the natural world clearly demonstrates that "might is right".*
- *Justice is merely the interests of those who hold power enshrined in the rules they make to protect their position. (an analysis from which Karl Marx would not dissent. But he would argue that this is a crime and should be challenged.)*
- *Secrecy, Lies and Deception are essential tools for the exercise and maintenance of power.*
- *Fear is an excellent means of control*
- *So are myths, including religion.*
- *politics is a conflict between mutually hostile groups willing to fight each other to the death*
- *humanity depends on man's willingness to rush naked into battle and headlong to his death*
- *Perpetual war is an ideal state. Only perpetual war can overturn the "modern project"*
- *the history of western civilisation has led to the triumph of the inferior, the rabble*
- *Whatever can be done to bring the masses along is legitimate. If you can use democracy to turn the masses against their own liberty, this is a great triumph.*

I'm assuming I don't need to waste your time or mine debunking that cynical patrician approach. If you were remotely inclined to agree with it, it is highly unlikely you'd be reading it here.

As an atheist, he argues that, in the absence of God, morality has no absolute basis; with which, of course, I agree; that's a major focus of this book:- How to make rational rules we can all agree on in the absence of divine or other absolute authority. The conclusion he reaches, however, is somewhat different to my own, viz: that "the wise" must fill this vacuum and steer the masses in the right direction. (I discuss Strauss' philosophy in more detail in [Part 1 of Chapter 7](#))

## [The Medieval Mindset](#)

The obvious connection between Qutb and Strauss is their agreement that the common people are not capable of making decisions in their own interest. Qutb's logic is religious. Strauss is simply a narrow minded elitist. They are both examples of the *medieval mindset*. Both believe that only an appropriate authority can make the "correct" decisions needed to maintain a civilised society. Qutb's authority is his distorted reading of the Koran and the only decisions required are how to decide which part of that scripture applies to a given situation. Strauss's authorities are appropriately selected and trained Platonist disinterested wise leaders who are capable of acting in the best interests of society. Both agree that their ends justifies almost any means. The chief difference is that, while MIFT are prepared, violently, to bludgeon opponents into submission proudly and openly, the neocons cannot afford that luxury because, like it or not, even the limited form of democracy they work under is sufficient to remove them from power if they offend their electorate. They are forced, therefore, to adopt more subtle means of manipulation.

## Manipulation of Public Opinion

This manipulation takes two forms. First the ownership and control of the mass media as spelt out in considerable detail by Noam Chomsky. Everything he tells us in "[Manufacturing Consent](#)" is even more relevant in 2004 than it was when he published it in 1988. Essentially by controlling the agenda, the boundaries of debate and who is allowed to be heard (and for how long), the media moulds western society - America in particular - into the docile form required to sustain the capitalist political economies. We keep expecting the internet to change things in this regard because the web allows intelligent motivated citizens to bypass the establishment channels. Unfortunately, although [almost 2/3rds](#) of American citizens now have web access, to date only [29%](#) have yet begun to consult, regularly, online web based news sources. (But it is growing, slowly) The majority ([83%](#)) in America, for example, still rely on Local or Network TV News for their [distorted view](#) of the world.

The second form of manipulation is "[the big lie](#)"; the straightforward invention or distortion of evidence, or the promotion of conclusions as though they are based on evidence. This is the *grande* version of the "some say" unattributable rumour technique routinely used on Fox News to imply that authoritative sources believe something that Fox wishes either to promote or challenge. (Watch [Outfoxed](#)). It involves the simple assertion that there is evidence or expert consensus that x or y is the case - despite the complete absence of such evidence or consensus - combined with attacks on the personalities and motives of opponents (rather than their arguments) with the intention of promoting an emotional, rather than intellectual, response in a docile audience. Donald Rumsfeld is an old hand at the relevant techniques.

Curtis documents the cold war episode in the mid 70s following the signing of the first ABM treaty where the early neocons - including, most prominently, Senor Rumsfeld - had convinced themselves that the Soviets weren't acting in good faith. They were certain (irrationally - they had no empirical evidence) that the Russians were devoting increasing resources to developing the upper hand in the nuclear arms race. For example, "[Team B](#)" convinced itself that the Russians had developed sophisticated anti-submarine detection technology in contravention of the treaty. The CIA consistently and categorically denied any basis for such beliefs. Team B reviewed the evidence and were reluctantly forced to agree with the experts view that there was no evidence to sustain their belief. Did they behave rationally and drop the charges? No. They concluded that the absence of evidence "proved" that the Soviets must have developed technology so advanced that the Americans were unable to detect it! They said it loud enough and often enough, and poured sufficient vitriol on those who challenged their childlike lie, that when Reagan was elected the B Team became the A Team and their paranoid vision of reality became official US Policy. (You have to absorb Chomsky to understand how the media collaborated in this deception)

Sound familiar?

When Bush junior was inaugurated in January 2000, the neocons came to power obsessed with

Sadam Hussein and looking for ways to justify going to war against him to finish off the job Bush's father had chosen not to complete the first time around. They claim to have been convinced that Saddam had stockpiles of Chemical, Biological and possible even "Nukuler" weapons. All the experts, from the United Nations weapons inspectorate to their own intelligence agencies, agreed that there was no evidence of such stockpiles. The most they could sustain was that Iraq had not properly accounted for the weapons listed after the end of the first war. Following 9-11, the neocons first reaction was to bomb Iraq. Richard Clark had to point out that there was, again, no evidence that Iraq had any connection with the attacks and that what little evidence there was pointed much more clearly to MIFT. The neocons reluctantly had to permit the prime target to be Afghanistan. But this did not deter them from insisting that there must be a link between Saddam and Al Qaeda. (Ironically, had they merely insisted on a link between Iraq and MIFT, they would have been on firm ground. It has been widely known for some years that Iraq has funded Hezbollah and other Palestinian groups; but the alleged link specifically to AQ simply didn't exist - or, to be more precise, no evidence of such a link has yet surfaced). However:

*Rumsfeld was so determined to obtain a rationale for an attack on Iraq that on 10 separate occasions he asked the CIA to find evidence linking Iraq to 9/11; the CIA repeatedly came back empty-handed (Time magazine, May 13, 2002).*

### The [Office of Special Plans](#) (wiki)

So, once again, they set up their own Straussian team to "review" the evidence available to the experts. The "Office of Special Plans" (OSP) was tasked with undermining the CIA caution about alleging any such linkage.

Their methods included:

- use of partisan sources (Iraq defectors)
- selective use of intelligence
- invention of intelligence
- selective suppression and distortion of intelligence
- bypassing peer review within the Intel community
- removal of key personnel with relevant expertise if they were known not to toe the party line
- replacement with placemen who were known to support the party line
- direct contradiction of professional expert consensus

Karen Kwiatkowski (now a retired Lieutenant Colonel who worked closely with the OSP in the Pentagon in the run up to the second Iraq War) [reveals in detail](#) some examples and consequences of this approach. You will no doubt be familiar with the following claims made by Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Perle and others, all allegedly supported by the Intelligence. Kwiatkowski's comments are in italics:



- Saddam Hussein had gassed his neighbors, abused his people, and was continuing in that mode, becoming an imminently dangerous threat to his neighbors and to us -- *except that none of his neighbors or Israel felt this was the case.*
- Saddam Hussein had harbored al-Qaida operatives and offered and probably provided them with training facilities -- *without mentioning that the suspected facilities were in the U.S./Kurdish-controlled part of Iraq.*
- Saddam Hussein was pursuing and had WMD of the type that could be used by him, in conjunction with al-Qaida and other terrorists, to attack and damage American interests, Americans and America -- *except the intelligence didn't really say that.*
- Saddam Hussein had not been seriously weakened by war and sanctions and weekly bombings over the past 12 years, and in fact was plotting to hurt America and support anti-American activities, in part through his carrying on with terrorists -- *although here the intelligence said the opposite.*
- His support for the Palestinians and Arafat proved his terrorist connections, and basically, the time to act was now.

Senator Carl Levin (Senate Armed Services Committee) performs an even more [clinical demolition](#) ([cached](#)) of the OSP "assessments" a summary of which was leaked, in what some regard as a sign of Neocon desperation, and became the basis for the infamous Weekly Standard "exclusive" provocatively entitled "[Case Closed](#)". ([cached](#)) Levin's report even includes (see page 20) the spectacularly relevant:

*Taken to its logical extreme, this argument implies that absence of evidence may in fact be evidence itself – that the fact that no evidence can be found is an indication that evidence exists but is being hidden.*

It doesn't even matter what evidence was being talked about. What we have here is the classic hallmark of the Neocon approach to the "facts". If the facts don't support your preconceptions, then - either - change the facts, ignore the facts, or [change the people](#) ([cached](#)) who are supposed to report them.

Democracy - the real thing, that is, not the sham version we're stuck with - will be a major impediment to this kind of manipulation. This is the major reason why secular elites - who have their own interests to promote - are just as keen as religious fundamentalists to continue to resist the evolution of democracy.

The democratic approach is also fundamentally opposed to - and by - the religious approach to social



decision making based on doctrine and alleged divinely inspired writings. Fundamentalist religion leaves no room for personal autonomy or democracy - other than distorted versions of the already limited elective dictatorships we currently suffer. To the religious opponent of homosexual practice or intoxication, for instance, they are "evil" and should not be permitted regardless of how many citizens vote to allow it. Their classification of "evil", in the case of such behaviour, is not based on harm caused to non-consenting victims - as it might be, legitimately, for instance, in relation to theft, murder or rape - but on alleged disapproval of their deity as documented in the Old Testament. Unlike rational beliefs, these opinions are seldom open to rational discussion.

## The Final War

The Final War humanity is beginning to fight is thus likely to be the grand battle for the soul of our species. It will be between theists and straussians who wish to retain control of what people can do and think and the rest of us who wish to obtain/regain/retain control of what we do and think entirely on an individual basis (subject to the *sole constraint* mentioned previously). I believe that war has already started; not on September 11 2001, nor even with the first attempt at destroying the World Trade Centre back in 1993. One can argue that its seeds go back centuries or even millenia, but I think we will eventually acknowledge the first battle in the final war was triggered by the obscene injustice which accompanied the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. That conflict has been steadily escalating ever since. Oh, and as I mentioned in [chapter 5](#), though clearly I don't practise any religion, I am genetically Jewish and lost some 46 members of my extended family in the holocaust. I say this just in case anyone wrongly assumes that I'm likely to be anti-semitic. (which would, in any case, imply I was anti arab as much as anti jew. Both are [semities](#).)

The Final War will determine the fate of humanity. If the controlling tendency wins, the outlook for the species is bleak. If autonomy wins, the outlook for controllers is bleak (at least for their ability to exert control). With such high stakes we can and must anticipate the most extreme levels of violence and dedication. 9-11 demonstrated the kind of commitment we can expect. Get used to it.

What appears to be driving [MIFT](#) is, first, a number of genuine grievances which begin with the illicit and un-compensated expulsion of millions of Arabs from their Palestinian homes and territory to make way for the State of Israel. Though Jews were the prime beneficiaries of this crime, the responsibility for the crime itself seems to belong firmly to the then fledgling United Nations who clearly had no idea what problems they were about to cause. Those grievances and crimes have grown to insane proportions in the decades since. The Arabs made the initial strategic blunder of trying to deny the right of Israel to exist - which ensured not only that they would attract little sympathy from the rest of the world but that the new State would have every incentive to make itself a regional military superpower, albeit with considerable help from its American backers.

Secondly, however, the legitimate MIFT grievances have become the fuel which drives a particularly brand of militant religious extremism. They are further assisted by what appears (to this non scholar of Islam) to be a highly contentious, possibly even insane, interpretation of Islamic philosophy which

has its roots in the writings of Sayyid Qutb, who was executed by the Egyptians in 1967. His flame, however, was preserved by the man reputed to be the prime spiritual adviser to one Osama Bin Laden: Sheik Abdul Ayman Asawahari. He took Qutb's arguments for killing "legitimate" targets (like head of state Nasser) and expanded them to endorsement for the killing of any Moslem who didn't practice their religion in their "approved" fashion. And, of course, non moslems were always fair game.

These were fairly major changes in the "rules". Combine that with the clearly demonstrated willingness to commit suicide whenever that is necessary to press home the attack and you have an enemy far more dangerous than a rabid dog. They will attack any target of any size at any time with any weapon. There is no constraint on their actions. Not even the certain death of their own comrades will deter them.

Incidentally, despite the obvious atheist and, indeed, anti-religious position taken by this book, it is only fair and entirely necessary to point out that this new phenomenon is not - as the many [anti islamic hate sites](#) profess - a natural consequence of any reasonable interpretation of Islam. (Check out [Islam Online](#) for a more accurate - or at least more mainstream - picture of the Islamic world view) Nevertheless, the world's most dangerous terrorists appear, today, to be almost exclusively Moslem. That is bound to have an impact on the way their religion is seen globally. That impact can only be countered by opposing messages from within the Islamic community.

Meanwhile, there are those of us who spend a great deal of time "following the future". We are keenly aware of the pace of technological progress and its implications, both positive and negative. In that context, this "new" threat takes on a new dimension. We've had militant terrorism since at least [Irgun's](#) efforts prior to the establishment of Israel. We've seen the IRA, the Red Brigades, Baader Meinhof, the PLO, ETA, Tamil Tigers, the Sandenistas and on and on. Some are still with us today. Each has their agenda and a spectrum of tactics they were prepared to adopt in pursuit of their goals. Some could even be said to have held global vision of their aims on a par with the new threat. In the late 60s and early 70s there was still a rump of Marxist based "revolutionaries" who believed in much the same [domino theory](#) as the cold war Americans, albeit on a different scale. Their task was to be the nudge that got the revolution going and made the first dominoes fall. That's not a million miles apart from the [MIFT view](#).

What's the difference, then, between [Baader Meinhof](#) and MIFT?

My guess is that even those who killed for Baader Meinhof, the IRA, ETA and all the others were as horrified as we were by 9-11. (Someone should conduct a survey!)

Think about that for a while.

If I'm right and all previous classes of terrorist reacted to 9-11 like "normal" human beings, what does that tell us about a) those quaintly old fashioned and relatively harmless previous generation of

terrorists and b) about this generation.

The IRA campaign stuck to strictly military, political or strategic targets for the first few years. Then they became disillusioned because it wasn't working, So they widened their target range to include sites which inevitably included civilians. They [killed four soldiers and one civilian](#) in a pub in Guildford targeted because it was known that the pub was frequented by off-duty soldiers. That, however, turned out to be just the opening salvo. One of their number killed himself while planting a bomb in the middle of Coventry. The government imposed a ban on a local funeral. Allegedly in retaliation for this, the bombers then targeted [two pubs in Birmingham](#) ([cached](#)) and killed 21 teenagers having a good night out.

The revulsion this caused around the world caused the Provisional IRA fund raising effort in the United States to collapse. They got the message. (Evidence that market forces do work, even on Terrorists!) Although subsequent bombings did kill civilians, they were never again the deliberate target. (and, in November 2004, 30 years later, we saw the first hint that the IRA [might admit](#) they were wrong and apologise) (The only subsequent deliberate attack on civilians was the [Omagh bombing](#) carried out by a splinter group - the "[Real IRA](#)" - who did not accept the woolly liberalism of their erstwhile provo colleagues.)

The ethical differences between the two generations of terrorists are not just differences of degree. The previous generation had no desire for Armageddon and tried to be selective in their choice of target. The current generation accept that Armageddon might be necessary and even desirable, and are prepared to provoke it.

The practical difference between this generation and that one is that there is no message akin to the IRA's loss of funding - which could be passed to MIFT with the same enlightening effect. No similar influential peer group exists to whom they will listen. Indeed, opposition from the Arab "street" would only confirm their view that the Islamic world is already corrupt and in desperate need of their violent salvation. The only authorities they recognise are the select few imams whose version of Islam they are living to the letter.

It simply wouldn't have occurred to Baader or Meinhof to commit an act like 9-11.

First, while they might have agreed that the occupants of the twin towers were prime beneficiaries and representatives of the capitalist system they sought to destroy, they didn't dehumanise them and think of them simply as prime targets. Nor, indeed, did they see death and physical destruction as being necessary preconditions for the destruction of capitalism. That some destruction and death might be required was a regrettable necessity and they felt they were justified in making such a judgement. But their whole concept of terrorism was a much more genteel version than MIFT. They were prepared to kill a handful to frighten millions and spark a general uprising. There is no obvious reason - in the MIFT world view - why the majority of humanity should not be eliminated to ensure that only the pure Moslem survives.

Second, and more pragmatically, "traditional terrorists" recognised the revulsion such attacks would produce within the minds of their target audience - "the working class proletariat" - and understood that this would dramatically undermine their support. MIFT believe the exact opposite: that only violence and revulsion will be sufficient to shock their target audience (the Islamic World) into supporting their brand of fundamentalism.

Third, Baader Meinhof members were atheists who could not kid themselves that they would benefit, personally, from martyrdom by waking up in paradise. That's not to say that atheists aren't capable of becoming suicide bombers. Indeed the first and - until the recent wave of [over 500 suicide attacks](#) (free reg required) ([cached](#)) by MIFT in Iraq - leading exponents of terrorist suicide bombings were/are atheists - the [Tamil Tigers](#). They are quite remarkable in this respect. Their suicide can only be understood as a form of genuine altruism: personal self sacrifice for the good of the survivors. Regardless of whether we approve their killing of other human beings (and, as far as I've been able to research, although they have often killed innocent victims, they have always aimed at what, in war terms, are legitimate targets; military or political leaders) we must admit to a sneaking respect for human beings who have been prepared to give their lives in pursuit of a benefit they know they will never enjoy and never even bear witness to.

Indeed, the only reason we find it difficult to feel the same admiration for the courage of the 9-11 hijackers (though, obviously, not their actions) is that, as acknowledged religious fanatics, their motives were clearly not as pure and selfless as the Tamils. If they genuinely believed in their own life after death in an environment which, by all religious accounts, is supposed to be vastly superior to the one we inhabit, then they could hardly be said to be making any kind of sacrifice at all. They were making a leap of faith, certainly. But they were relying on there being a safety net at the other end of their leap.

In any case, no other terrorist organisation has produced anyone as unselfishly committed as the Tamil Tigers nor with religious convictions as deep as MIFT. The Tigers' rational choice of targets makes them a formidable foe and a major threat to their enemies in Sri Lanka. By no stretch of the imagination, however, are they a threat to the entire human species.

Nor, frankly, are MIFT. Yet. But unlike the Tigers, they would like to be. They are prepared to do whatever it takes to change the world into something of which they approve. And the problem with that is obvious. Most of the rest of us wouldn't share their vision of what constitutes a world worthy of approval.

Over a large number of fundamental issues, there are no possible compromises between fundamentalists and rational beings.

Where is the option for compromise between permitting Abortion and forbidding it. The continuing opposition to Stem Cell research shows that the anti-autonomists will never accept any level of

abortion. They have already shown that they are prepared to kill in that cause, and in the nearest they get to a suicide bomber, they have anti-abortion terrorist Paul Hill. The *Reverend* Paul Hill, who turned himself in after killing Dr John Britten and James Barrett (it seems only fair to mention their names, if we're mentioning his. Like the 3000 victims of 9-11, they deserve to be - but sadly won't be - remembered for much longer than their killers).

Hill looked forward to the martyrdom his death would bring and the encouragement this would provide for others to take similar actions. He [expected](#) "a great reward in heaven" ([cached](#)). So, again, like MIFT suicide bombers, even if you approve his choice of target, his attack and self sacrifice cannot be seen to be altruistic. He has been described as a dangerous psychopath (same link). But that is doubtful in my view. I do not get the impression that he could, for example, have launched, or even wished to launch, an attack on the scale of 9-11 even if an appropriate target had presented itself (say - an imaginary conference of thousands of Abortionists perhaps) Something in him would have recognised that such an attack would have been excessive. Even if he personally wished to carry out such an attack, he probably would have understood that the public reaction to it would have been to bury his side of the argument for ever. Indeed, it is widely argued that his actions are responsible for the much lower profile of the anti-abortion lobby ever since. Having said that, they showed up in time to make history by getting the catholic bishops to advocate one of the candidates - for the first time ever - in the 2004 Presidential election. Kerry is a lifelong catholic and personally opposes abortion, Bush is a Born Again protestant who has authorised the execution of over 100 of his own citizens and authorised the military action responsible for the deaths of more than 50,000 innocent civilians, so its obvious which they nominated. Right?

Right! One year after [opposing the War](#) ([cached](#)) they were now right in the middle of, the catholic pro-lifers nominated the serial killer because he promised to make abortion illegal. Kerry's the wimp who believes such decisions are deeply personal choices. This is not, however, limited to or even focussed on the trivial squabble between Republicans and "Democrats". Both contain and mostly represent the controlling tendency.

This - final - War is the war between Self Control and Group Control; between those of us who want individuals to control the State (while it continues to exist) and those who prefer the State to control the individual.

In the next part of this chapter, we will explore the reasons we cannot dismiss either the immediate threat represented by MIFT or the even more serious threat of growing authoritarianism arising from the inept handling of that terrorist threat.

**End of Part 1. (Last Edit Jan 2005)**

[I haven't had enough punishment,  
take me to Part 2 now...](#)



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