

Correcting is Coping

by Jeff Smith

Anybody's first two reactions after witnessing an unprovoked attack are retaliation and sympathy for the victims. While we must bring to justice anyone who attacks innocent people for whatever reason, and offer our blood and help to the survivors and their families, we must also do all in our power to prevent future attacks.

Killing the people who organize terrorism does not eliminate the problem. While America's wealth and power do make some people envious, it's poverty and injustice that push a few over the edge. From the masses of the oppressed, lone madmen recruit young male followers.

Our way of life is fragile. No matter how many precautions we take, however many rights we give up, complete security remains impossible. Police and politicians will add new security measures at airports, but we do not have to live hamstrung in our own fortress. We can strengthen both our security and our liberty. As Americans we must ask more of our government:

1. Much of the investigation must take place on foreign soil with cooperation of foreigners. Once suspects are identified, do not bomb suspected targets, which will assuredly kill more innocents. Instead, whoever is accused, try them in an international court of law, as we did with Nazis and Milosovic.

2. Do not abandon any ally but do be forthright about whose side (Israel's) the US is on in the Mideast. Join the conversation to hear and consider all proposals from all interested parties on how to settle this land dispute peacefully and permanently. Advance the possibility of sharing the land by sharing her annual rental values.

3. Acknowledge more sides of the story. Some rich Americans do use US muscle to increase their already vast wealth. By arming dictators of impoverished nations at the expense of US taxpayers, we alienate ordinary folk. Instead of wasting aid on corrupt elites, let foreign producers trade with America.

We Americans play a vital role in the world. Television showed males celebrating in a street in Palestine. Yet note: they all wore American sport shirts, American jeans, American sneakers. Like it or not, we are the world leader. We cannot get away with being good. We must be the best. What will help us to live in safety is to live in harmony with others, to make fewer enemies and more friends, to be as fair as we are powerful. So that innocents will not have died in vain, let us choose to use international courts of justice, to broaden the dialog for Mideast peace, and to use our power and prestige not to favor a few but to raise up the many. **G**