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## **THE CHILDHOOD ORIGINS OF TERRORISM** **ДЕТСКИЕ ИСТОЧНИКИ ТЕРРОРИЗМА**

*В статье рассматриваются психологические корни мусульманского терроризма как лежащие в сфере семьи, воспитания и положения женщин. На основе социологических, статистических и антропологических исследований описывается широкая практика клитеродектомии в около 40 мусульманских странах, дается картина физического и сексуального насилия, анализируются проблемы воспроизведения травм в воспитании и взрослой жизни.*

Because so much of the world outside the West has for historical reasons fallen behind in the evolution of their childrearing modes, the resulting vast differences between national personality types has recently turned into a global battle of terrorism against liberal Western values. In order to understand this new battle, it would be useful to know what makes a terrorist-what developmental life histories they share that can help us see why they want to kill “American infidels” and themselves-so we can apply our efforts to removing the sources of their violence and preventing terrorism in the future.

The roots of current terrorist attacks lie, I believe, not in this or that American foreign policy error but in the extremely abusive families of the terrorists. Children who grow up to be Islamic terrorists are products of a misogynist fundamentalist system that often segregates the family into two separate areas: the men's area and the woman's area, where the children are brought up and which the father rarely visits [1]. Even in countries like Saudi Arabia today, women by law cannot mix with unrelated men, and public places still have separate women's areas in restaurants and work places, because, as one Muslim sociologist put it bluntly: “In our society there is no relationship of friendship between a man and a woman” [2]. Families that produce the most terrorists are the most violently misogynist; in Afghanistan, for instance, girls cannot attend schools and women who try to hold jobs or who seem to “walk with pride” are shot [3].

Young girls are treated abominably in most fundamentalist families. When a boy is born, the family rejoices; when a girl is born, the whole family mourns [4]. The girl's sexuality is so hated that when she is five or so the women grab her, pin her down, and chop off her clitoris and often her labia with a razor blade or piece of glass, ignoring her agony and screams for help, because, they say, her clitoris is “dirty”, “ugly”, “poisonous”, “can cause a voracious appetite for promiscuous sex”, and “might render men impotent” [5]. The area is then often sewed up to prevent intercourse, leaving only a tiny hole for urination. The genital mutilation is excruciatingly painful. Up to a third die from infections, mutilated women must “shuffle slowly and painfully” and usually are unable to orgasm [6]. Over 130 million genitally mutilated women are estimated to live today in Islamic nations, from Somali, Nigeria and Sudan to Egypt, Ethiopia, and Pakistan [7]. A recent survey of Egyptian girls and women, for instance, showed 97 percent of uneducated families and 66 percent of educated families still practicing female genital mutilation [8]. Although some areas have mostly given up the practice, in others – like Sudan and Uganda – it is increasing, with 90 % of the women surveyed saying they planned to circumcise all of their daughters [9].

The mutilation is not required by the Qu’an; Mohammad, in fact, said girls should be treated even better than boys [10]. Yet the women have inflicted upon their daughters for

millennia the horrors done to them, re-enacting the abuse men inflict on them as they mutilate their daughters while joyfully chanting songs such as this: “We used to be friends, but today I

am the master, for I am a man. Look – I have the knife in my hand... Your clitoris, I will cut it off and throw it away for today I am a man” [11].

As the girls grow up in these fundamentalist families, they are usually treated as though they were polluted beings, veiled, and sometimes gang-raped when men outside the family wish to settle scores with men in her family [12]. Studies such as a recent survey of Palestinian students show that the sexual abuse of girls is far higher in Islamic societies than elsewhere, with a large majority of all girls reporting that they had been sexually molested as children [13]. Even marriage can be considered rape, since the family often chooses the partner and the girl is as young as eight [14]. The girl is often blamed for her rape, since it is assumed that “those who don't ask to be raped will never be raped [15]”. Wife-beating is common and divorce by wives rare-in fact, women have been killed by their families simply because they asked for a divorce [16]. It is no wonder that Physicians for Human Rights found, for instance, that “97 percent of Afghan women they surveyed suffered from severe depression” [17].

It is not surprising that these mutilated, battered women make less than ideal mothers, reinflicting their own miseries upon their children. Visitors to families throughout fundamentalist Muslim societies report on the “slapping, striking, whipping and thrashing” of children, with constant shaming and humiliation, often being told by their mothers that they are “cowards” if they don't hit others [18]. Physical abuse of children is continuous; as the Pakistani Conference on Child Abuse reports: “A large number of children face some form of physical abuse, from infanticide and abandonment of babies, to beating, shaking, burning, cutting, poisoning, holding under water or giving drugs or alcohol, or violent acts like punching, kicking, biting, choking, beating, shooting or stabbing...” [19].

Islamic schools regularly practice corporal punishment-particularly the religious schools from which terrorist volunteers so often come-chaining up their students for days “in dark rooms with little food and hardly any sanitation” [20]. Sexual abuse-described as including “fondling of genitals, coercing a child to fondle the abuser's genitals, masturbation with the child as either participant or observer, oral sex, anal or vaginal penetration by penis, finger or any other object and [child] prostitution” – is extensive, though impossible to quantify [21]. According to the recent survey of Palestinian students, boys report having been used sexually even more often than girls [22]. Children are taught strict obedience to all parental commands, stand when their parents enter the room, kiss their hands, don't laugh “excessively”, fear them immensely, and learn that giving in to any of their own needs or desires is horribly sinful [23]. All these childrearing practices are very much like those that were routinely inflicted upon children in the medieval West [24].

The ascetic results of such punitive upbringings are predictable. When these abused children grow up, they feel that every time they try to self-activate, every time they do something independently for themselves, they will lose the approval of the parents in their heads-mainly their mothers and grandmothers in the women's quarters. When their cities were flooded with oil money and Western popular culture in recent decades, fundamentalist men were first attracted to the new freedoms and pleasures, but soon retreated, feeling they would lose their mommy's approval and be “Bad Boys.” Westerners came to represent their own “Bad Boy” self in projection, and had to be killed off, as they felt they themselves deserved, for such unforgivable sins as listening to music, flying kites and enjoying sex [25]. As one fundamentalist put it, “America is Godless. Western influence here is not a good thing, our people can see CNN, MTV, kissing...” [26]. Another described his motives thusly: “We will destroy American cities piece by piece because your life style is so objectionable to us, your pornographic movies and TV” [27]. Many agree with the Iranian Ministry of Culture that all American television programs

“are part of an extensive plot to wipe out our religious and sacred values” [28], and for this reason feel they must kill Americans. Sayyid Qutb, the intellectual father of Islamic terrorism, describes how he turned against the West as he once watched A

church dance while visiting America: “Every young man took the hand of a young woman. And these were the young men and women who had just been singing their hymns! The room became a confusion of feet and legs: arms twisted around hips; lips met lips; chests pressed together” [29].

Osama bin Laden himself “while in college frequented flashy nightclubs, casinos and bars [and] was a drinker and womanizer,” but soon felt extreme guilt for his sins and began preaching killing Westerners for their freedoms and their sinful enticements of Muslims [30]. Most of the Taliban leaders, in fact, are wealthy, like bin Laden, have had contact with the West, and were shocked into their terrorist violence by “the personal freedoms and affluence of the average citizen, by the promiscuity, and by the alcohol and drug use of Western youth ... only an absolute and unconditional return to the fold of conservative Islamism could protect the Muslim world from the inherent dangers and sins of the West” [31]. Bin Laden left his life of pleasures, and has lived with his four wives and fifteen children in a small cave with no running water, waging a holy war against all those who enjoy sinful activities and freedoms that he cannot allow in himself.

From childhood, then, Islamist terrorists have been taught to kill the part of themselves-and, by projection, others-that is selfish and wants personal pleasures and freedoms. It is in the terror-filled homes-not just later in the terrorist training camps-that they first learn to be martyrs and to “die for Allah.” When the terrorist suicidal bombers who were prevented from carrying out their acts were interviewed on TV, they said they felt “ecstatic” as they pushed the button [32]. They denied being motivated by the virgins and other enticements supposedly awaiting them in Paradise. Instead, they said they wanted to die to join Allah – to get the love they never got. Mothers of martyrs are reported as happy that they die. One mother of a Palestinian suicide bomber who had blown himself to bits said “with a resolutely cheerful countenance”: “I was very happy when I heard. To be a martyr, that's something. Very few people can do it. I prayed to thank God. I know my son is close to me” [33].

Like serial killers – who are also sexually and physically abused as children – terrorists grow up filled with a rage that must be inflicted upon others. Many even preach violence against other Middle Eastern nations like Egypt and Saudi Arabia “for not being sufficiently fervent in the campaign against materialism and Western values” [34].

If prevention rather than revenge is our goal, rather than pursuing a lengthy military campaign against terrorists and killing many innocent people while increasing the number of future terrorists, it might be better for the U.S. to back a U.N.-sponsored Marshall Plan for them-one that could include Community Parenting Centers run by local people who could teach more humane childrearing practices [35] – in order to give them the chance to evolve beyond the abusive family system that has produced the terrorism, just as we provided a Marshall Plan for Germans after WWII for the families that had produced Nazism [36].

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