

Saturday, July 9, 2005

All Extremists should be lined up against a wall and shot

In fairly short order today I've read some pretty emotional posts from varying sources on some closed boards I'm on. One advocates the US "nuke" the border areas between Afghanistan and Pakistan to (paraphrasing) "make sure we get Bin Laden before he gets a suitcase nuke into NYC". Another posits that we are in the midst of the "Third Holy Jihad" being undertaken by Moslems to bring the world under Islamic Law.

The latter quoted Jordan's King Abdullah who noted "The real struggle is between moderate and extremist Moslems" and it occurs to me that everywhere The Real Struggle is between moderates and extremists. The same conflict arises in Israel, Palestine, the USA. Everywhere. What we have are minority extremists getting into pissing contests with each other and getting the majority moderates slaughtered like lambs in the crossfire.

The "Them or Us" cornerstone of almost every extremist ideology is basically irreconcilable with the inevitable "Chicken or Egg" paradox which is at the center of every militant ideological conflict occurring in the world.

Neocon extremists in the USA would have us believe that "The War on Terror" began on Sept. 11/2001. Militant Islamists would have us believe the conflict started earlier, a lot earlier than that. Perhaps with the establishment of Israel. A militant Zionist would say that's nonsense and that their beef with the world has it's origins elsewhere.

Nothing changes but the names, all of these camps are defined by a burning hatred of "the other" and I can guarantee you they all have one other thing in common: They ALL believe "the other guys started it".

In normal times, extremists are at best harmless nutjobs and at worst criminals. They provide comic relief, ample material for the "what not to do" files. They make themselves easy targets for talk show monologues and when they go over the line and take things too far and people get hurt or killed, we round them up and throw them into the prisons they belong or in certain jurisdictions, execute them. In any case the extremists are noise against the signal of life and dealt with by the prevailing cooler heads of society.

These are not normal times. There are places in the world where the extremists are in charge. We have ideologues calling the shots and setting policy. (These places aren't all "over there").

The problem with this is when extremists take shots at each other, they hit the other guy's moderates. The vast majority of the population are ordinary people who would routinely treat others with courtesy and respect each other's differences in cultures and lifestyles. Most people just want to be left alone to run their own lives and raise their families. Then all of the sudden a useful idiot on errand set by some far away extremist nutjob comes along and kills you or your family. It enrages enough victims that a few of them become local extremists and they eventually return the favour.

So then somebody from the former victim's camp goes over and kills off a bunch of ordinary people who had nothing to do with the prior incident as "revenge". Repeat, ad infinitum.

This isn't rational and it's pretty self-evident to moderates. To extremists, saying this much is blasphemy or treason. (A handy self-test which is probably accurate to within a few percentage points: If you are going to leave a disparaging comment to this post, you are closer to being an extremist than you are to being a moderate)

Extremists believe they can do no wrong, have never done anything wrong, don't make mistakes, have God on their side and will be ultimately victorious against The Other Guy. They believe they are justified when they go kill a bunch of ordinary people "over there" that had nothing to do with the last round of ordinary people some other extremists killed over here.

Extremists are bad for business.

Posted by Mark Jeftovic in Armchair Analysis at 14:24