

America Is Not Suffering Daily Terror Attacks

WASHINGTON – One of the most damaging –and completely unchallenged– myths propagated by some candidates in this surreal presidential campaign, and reinforced by almost all national media, is that America is targeted, on a daily basis, by terrorists. Indeed we Americans are all potential (and defenseless) victims of a well orchestrated campaign of Islamic terror expertly managed by ISIL, its agents, and thousands of radicalized sympathizers.

Terrorism in America

Yes, of course, in recent years there have been a few well publicized terror attacks perpetrated by individuals who declared to be followers of the Islamic Caliphate still ruling over parts of Syria and Iraq, and other Islamic radical groups.

But a recent [WSJ](#) editorial lists a total of only 5 violent actions on US soil by Islamic terrorists since October 2014. By far the worst among them is the San Bernardino mass killing that occurred in December 2015. More broadly, a total of 45 Americans have been victims of terror attacks since 9/11.

Terrorism is serious business

Of course, terrorism is bad stuff. No doubt about it. But we are talking about only a few incidents that involved very few terrorists, and a relatively small number of victims. However bad, none of this suggests the existence of a relentless “terror campaign”, with mass killings of innocent Americans occurring on a regular basis.

Of course, law enforcement and all our intelligence and counter terror agencies should stay on top of this Islamic

terror issue. As we have had these incidents, there is no doubt that others are plotting some more.

And the very fact that there have been high-profile terror attacks in other countries (Paris, Ankara, Istanbul, and most recently Brussels) suggest that we may have more and may be better planned terror plots targeting the US in the near future.

We are not under attack

Still, with all due respect for the victims and their families, the extremely limited proportions of this phenomenon in the USA hardly suggest that we are in the midst of a national security crisis.

If we look at the number of violent deaths in America, the total number of victims of terrorism are very low on any list. In 2014 in California there were 1,699 homicides; in Houston, 239 murders, in Indianapolis, 138. But none of this makes headlines. Drug related crimes, conflicts among criminal gangs leading to homicides, and armed robberies gone bad are so common in America that they only deserve a quick mention in the evening news.

Given this context, it is frankly baffling that isolated terror attacks are portrayed by the media, several politicians, and many experts as part of a wave of planned attacks aimed at destroying America. Indeed some have described our current predicament caused by terror plots as a "fight for survival". Talk about exaggeration.

Very frequent non political killings get much less media attention

For some reason, when a deranged former employee completely loses his mind and goes to his old work place and starts shooting everybody in sight, we say almost nothing. No banner headline the next morning. Somehow these mass killings are

“normal”. As bad as these episodes that result in many deaths may be, we are used to them. Being shot and possibly killed by a disgruntled former co-worker is a possibility that we all accept.

Tens of thousands die in car accidents

From a different perspective, as a society, we are perfectly willing to accept that any time we get into our cars we expose ourselves to the possibility, remote but real, that we may get killed in an accident. Indeed, tens of thousands Americans die because of car accidents, every year. (32,000 in 2014). We know this. And yet we keep using our cars; even though we are fully aware that this routine activity involves a significant level of risk.

We demand total protection

However, the extremely remote possibility of being shot by an ISIL supporter while he screams “God is Great”, somehow is a totally unacceptable level of risk. Therefore, we feel perfectly entitled to be scared to death.

The fact that a few such terror incidents have indeed occurred has been turned into a collective belief –in fact certainty– that, here we are, totally defenseless and exposed, in the midst of a major national security crisis. We are unprotected and afraid. And so we scream, and demand guarantees of 100% protection from such evil doers.

And yet, this fear is totally irrational, and therefore unjustified. Based on current data, the odds of getting killed by a terrorist in America are extremely small.

Why the hyperbole?

So, why all the hyperbole about terrorism? Who knows really? There is absolutely no rational explanation for this. However, the fact that many politicians and most media keep repeating

that we under daily assault, with plenty more to come, does not help recreate any sense of proportion.

The media love this

All media are at fault. They know that stories on terror attacks, and stories on potential terror plots get large audiences. Fear sells. And so the media provide maximum coverage, using every possible hyperbole to magnify any terror related news story.

As an example, just look at the 24 hours non stop coverage of the recent terror attacks in Brussels. For sure, this is a newsworthy tragedy. More than 30 people killed, hundreds wounded. But, once the news has been given, do we really need this level of total saturation, almost obsessive coverage? No new facts are revealed during these fake "news reports". Most of the "coverage" consists on asking hypothetical questions to terrorism experts who make a living telling us that this horrible and of course bound to get much worse.

Sure, this way cable news outlets get bigger audiences; and so the media companies get higher prices for TV commercials they put on the air that advertise detergent and pain killers.

Phony story

But the American public is fed a phony "Islamic terrorists are determined to kill all of us" story that fuels a climate of fear and uncertainty. Even if we take into account major acts of terror that have occurred outside of the United States, the emerging picture does not even remotely justify the term "war" to describe the phenomenon.

Yes, the media make more money. Some politicians magnify the terror danger, while promising that when they get elected they will finally take care of the problem, and all will be well again. But in all this America loses perspective and good judgement.

I am not suggesting that terrorism is not a serious problem. It is a major issue to be handled by competent US intelligence and counter terrorism professionals, hopefully working together with their counterparts across borders.

Terrorism is indeed a serious matter. But it is not a national crisis.