

The Courage to Defend America's Retaliation

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Unprovoked acts of violence against the innocent have profound and diverse effects on the American consciousness ranging from blaming ourselves for the infamy perpetrated against us, to taking indiscriminate destructive action. It is more philosophically elegant to ponder the dynamics of evil than to take protective measures that may offend the sensitivities of those who are being protected. It is also more seemingly compassionate to send love to those who seek our destruction than to destroy them in an act of self-preservation. Meanwhile, as we discourse the psychology of violence and the ethics of retaliation, who is providing the security of our airports and the protection of our nation's vulnerabilities? Who will fight our battles to stop ruthless criminals from committing other atrocities? Perhaps the young soldiers not old enough to imbibe but old enough to die for the young students and their older professors that protest them in the safety of academia? With all its imperfections, the beauty of our great democracy is that we can disagree vehemently while we honor our differences. We must be very cautious however, not to fall into the trap set by those who attempt to shame our outrage with their pseudo-empathic appeals. Political correctness is a sanitized fascism that attempts to control thought, intention and action considered inappropriate by those who claim a monopoly on sensitivity. It is the most pernicious in times of war.

Compassion is a complex and frequently misunderstood emotion. It is arguably our highest human evolvment. Yet, those who fear righteous anger and justified retaliation have semantically raped this profoundly powerful emotion. Fanatical murderers hear no logic and feel no compassion. They view appeals to reason as moments of hesitant weakness that can buy them more time to do more evil. Even the Buddhists, who are masters of kindness in the face of malevolence, use the term "idiot compassion" to describe action that dissuades protective retaliation against impending destruction. I suggest that the dimension of compassion also includes the preservation of self and those under our protection. It should not be misunderstood as an emotion that neglects self, family and nation in the process of loving our enemies.

Is it intellectually enticing to express compassion for Bin Laden and his al Qaida monsters to show the oppressed third world our understanding of their suffering? Let me propose that the collective pain of those who live in oppressive nations can only be resolved when they stop blaming America and take decisive action against their own national oppressors as an act of compassion that rescues those they love from infamy. It is possible to defend our nation without feeling guilty for the suffering our enemies impose on their own people. While historically we have not been the best ambassadors of our own democracy, it does not follow that we should assume the roots of evil generate from our imperfect dealings with less abundant nations. Lets show compassion for the innocent *after* we have destroyed the enemy that hates America more than they love their own people.

