

Terrorism is as Terrorism Does : a Short Little Essay on My Perspective on the Concerns about Terrorism

by Captain Paul Watson

I think the wholesale destruction of our oceans and forests and the incredible assault on bio-diversity is terrorism of the highest order - terrorism that is accepted by anthropocentric culture as normal. The fact is that we will lose more species of plants and animals between 1980 and 2040 than have gone extinct over the last 65 million years. This mass extinction is of greater significance, and will have a far greater consequence than the present terrorist attacks by all sides upon each other.

When I see the daily bombing on television, I am not thinking of the Taliban or Bin Laden or even the victims of the absurd concept of "friendly fire". My thoughts and concerns go to those species of non-humans, both plant and animal that are dying under that military assault. Those daisy cutter bombs obliterate more life forms each time they are dropped than were killed in the World Trade Towers.

These same bombs will soon be used in the jungles of the Philippines with even more devastating consequences. Tens of thousands of monkeys, parrots, snakes, insects, trees, flowers etc. will die. Will we uproot all of nature to weed out the terrorists?

When I hear the laments for the Taliban destruction of some 700-year-old Buddhist statues in Afghanistan, I can't help but wonder why the same concern is not expressed for 2000-year-old redwood trees in California. Statues are after all simply non-living stone whereas the Redwoods are ancient living citizens.

In truth, this conflict is a triviality. Human culture is chaotic, insane and predictable. We are the idiot apes intent upon seeing who has the bigger banana. All we care about is ourselves, and our trivial petty little problems. We amuse ourselves with this political drama - it gives us a rush, makes us feel like we belong to something important. As the poet Leonard Cohen once wrote, "We are locked into our suffering and our pleasures are the seal."

In other words, we are so busy amusing ourselves that we can't see where the real problems are, and where the real threats lie. And the truth is that the news media dishes this violence out as entertainment.

War is now in again and this will bring on a whole slew of war movies, and once again we can come out of the closet and admit to our violent nature. Mel Gibson has a new movie glorifying the Vietnam atrocities called *We Were Soldiers*. The banner proudly proclaims, "We were young. We were Brave." It should also read, "We were Stupid."

Another war movie doing well at the box office is *Black Hawk Down*. These "heroes" invade Somalia and are amazed that Somali's attacks them.

Vietnam was a horrific killing field where humans died along side elephants, tigers, trees, frogs, water buffalo and birds - burned by napalm, riddled by claymores, incinerated by bombs, defoliated by agent orange.

We have learned nothing from Vietnam it appears. Gott mit us. Today Afganistan, tomorrow the Philippines, Iraq, Columbia, maybe Iran. There will always be new people to kill I suppose, new ecosystems to destroy - Oh God I love the smell of napalm and defoliants in the morning. It removes the stench of nature from our theologically conditioned senses, or so it seems. For it seems we prefer the smell of war and industry to the scents of the wilderness.

Osama Bin Laden is not the problem nor is George Bush or Saddam Hussein. They will be gone tomorrow and replaced by new hominid clowns. The problem is us. As Pogo once said, "we have met the enemy and he is us."

The whales swimming in the oceans, the elephants, the eagle, the wolf, the seal, and the redwood - these beings do not see terrorism in New York or Israel. September 11 means nothing to them - they see terrorism every day in every corner of the globe - an insidious creeping relentless cancerous form of terrorism that kills with poison and habitat destruction, with harpoons, and bullets, long lines and drift nets, where bulldozers do more damage than tanks, and where the chain-saw is more lethal than an AK-47.

It is so easy to be sucked into this drama but it is simply a momentary drama. The players change every day, and every year. Two years from now it will be a whole new set of "bad guys." There will be new faces to hate. There will be new wars to waste energy and time on, and through it all - the world will continue to die, and the media will continue to pump out a manufactured reality - you are what the media tells you are. Reality is what the media tells you it is. Reality is defined by the media in a myriad of cultural perspectives that are all restricted to anthropocentric values.

The world i.e. Planet Earth is more important than our problems. Americans will survive the attacks in New York and the Afghans will survive the attacks in their country and the Israeli's will survive the attacks in Israel - they will survive with losses but the species Homo Sapiens will not in the long run survive our assault on bio-diversity, nor will millions of other species, other Earthlings.

Western culture is feeling sorry for itself, and is lashing out at its perceived enemies like a Goliath in the guise of a David. Arab culture is feeling sorry for itself and is rushing about looking for a stairway to heaven. The Indians are intent upon punishing the Pakistani's and over what? A few acres of uninhabitable mountaintop where real estate values are priced by conceit, and not practicality. Canada is tripping over itself to eagerly kiss the behind of the United States but finding that Tony Blair's puckered lips are stuck with crazy glue to W's posterior. Americans have opened up the dustbin and are singing the star-mangled banner as they shovel in civil rights, freedoms, tolerance and intelligence. Kill, kill, kill, kill is the battle cry of the Republic these days.

Meanwhile all of Bush's friends made out like bandits with the assets of Enron.

We have eyes and we need only to open them to see that this reality that we cherish is nothing more than a shadow and a mask. There is a real world around us - a world populated by socially complex non-human beings for which we give little thought as to their rights, and the violence that we everyday perpetuate against them.

I don't give a damn about these crusades. Christians and Jews killing Muslims, this nonsense has been going on for two thousand years and will continue for as long as people continue to use the

sword to teach the love of Christ or the will of Mohammed's Allah. God, Allah, Yahweh, Jesus Christ, all of it is superstitious mumbo jumbo crap from the dark ages. It amazes me continually that anyone could, or would believe this stuff. Heaven and hell - what's wrong with the here and now?

We live in a paradise placed on a blue and white jewel speeding through the cosmos of infinity and what do we do? - We leave the rose garden to go look for imaginary lilacs.

Yes I know, I lack faith. But I have seen the bloody price of faith and I am content to live upon and defend my one certain paradise - the Earth beneath my feet and the oceans upon which I float. Everyday the sheer grandeur of the majesty of the natural world awes me. I don't need competing pie in the sky explanations for why this paradise exists. I know it exists, and I also know we are destroying it.

But man will continue to look for answers to questions that have no merit. "The answer," said Gertrude Stein, "is that there is no answer - that is the answer."

A wise man once said that we will not realize peace until the last politician is strangled to death with the entrails of the last priest. Perhaps.

But one thing I do know is that you don't achieve peace through endless war and the endless infliction of death and destruction. I also do know that unless the root causes of our problems are addressed in an intelligent manner - that there will be no salvation from the hell of our own invention.

These problems are the massive escalation of the destruction of bio-diversity, the poisoning of ecosystems, and out of control human population growth.

As humanity's numbers increase, other species must diminish because we are stealing their carrying capacities. As our numbers increase, there will be a corresponding increase in domestic violence, disease, stress, warfare, social discord, famine and apathy. And it is predictable that we will fight disease by inventing new plagues. We will fight violence by initiating new wars and crusades. We will fight famine by starving the many to feed the few.

The point is that we will never triumph until we see that our enemy is ourselves, and what we must destroy is our anthropocentric conceit and our anthropocentric values.

So we can either waste our time rooting for this side or that side - West vs. East, North vs. South, Right vs. Left, Muslim vs. Jew vs. Christian vs. Hindu, Conservative vs. Liberal, Communist vs. Capitalist. Or we can turn our back on all these anthropocentric concepts and see reality for what it is - One world, one planet, one complex biodiversity of life whose one purpose is simply to live and let live in accordance to a design that has been billions of years in the making.

I am not saying that humans are acting unnaturally. Everything we do is natural. We are behaving like the natural apes that we are. It is the cumulative effect of our numbers that is causing the problems. No species may long violate the natural laws of ecology like the law of biodiversity, the law of interdependence and the law of finite resources - and survive. Our demise will thus be natural also. We will not perish because we acted unnaturally - we will perish because we have acted stupidly.

The only way out is by adopting an ecocentric perspective and ecocentric values. Seeing the world as a whole and not just the parts that we choose.

The question is not if there will be a future for life on Earth - the question is will we be a part of this future?

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