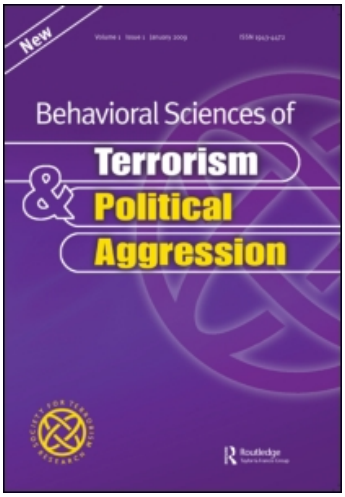
This article was downloaded by:
On: *2 October 2010*
Access details: *Access Details: Free Access*
Publisher *Routledge*
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t901392633

Righteous violence: killing for God, country, freedom and justice

Tom Pyszczynski[a]; Matt Motyl[a]; Abdolhossein Abdollahi[b]
[a] University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, Colorado Springs, Colorado, United States [b] Islamic Azad University-Zarand Branch and Kerman Shahid Bahonar University, Iran

To cite this Article Pyszczynski, Tom , Motyl, Matt and Abdollahi, Abdolhossein(2009) 'Righteous violence: killing for God, country, freedom and justice', Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression, 1: 1, 12 — 39
To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/19434470802482118
URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19434470802482118

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: http://www.informaworld.com/terms-and-conditions-of-access.pdf

This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression
Vol. 1, No. 1, January 2009, 12–39

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Righteous violence: killing for God, country, freedom and justice

Tom Pyszczynski[a]*, Matt Motyl[a] and Abdolhossein Abdollahi[b]

[a]*University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, Colorado Springs, Colorado, United States;* [b]*Islamic Azad University-Zarand Branch and Kerman Shahid Bahonar University, Iran*

(*Received 15 August 2007; final version received 2 February 2008*)

The present article uses *terror management theory* (TMT) to explore the psychological, social and cultural forces that lead diverse groups and individuals to endorse, promote and enact violence against innocent individuals. From this perspective, it is the psychological function of religious, ideological, national or ethnic ties that is crucial for understanding how they can lead to hatred and violence. TMT provides an empirically based theoretically driven explanation of how ideological, nationalistic and religious values combine with historical events and concrete grievances to make terrorist violence appealing to those facing individual or group suffering. Research is presented which suggests that many of the same psychological forces that lead terrorists to their violent actions also lead to counter-terrorist policies that create massive collateral damage. This collateral damage appears to further escalate the cycle of violence and may aid the targets of those attacks in recruiting people for the terrorist cause. After examining the issues that inspire such violence, research is presented that suggests possible avenues to decrease support for actions that prolong inter-group conflicts.

Keywords: terror management theory; violence; terrorism; military intervention; humiliation; death

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

> Man will lay down his life for his country, his society, his family. He will choose to throw himself on a grenade to save his comrades; he is capable of the highest generosity and self-sacrifice. But he has to feel and believe that what he is doing is truly heroic, timeless, and supremely meaningful. (Becker, 1973, p. 6)

> There is no one without a religious need, a need to have a frame of orientation and an object of devotion; but this statement does not tell us anything about a specific context in which this religious need is manifest. Man may worship animals, trees, idols of gold or stone, an invisible god, a saintly man or diabolic leaders; he may worship his ancestors, his nation, his class or party, money or success; his religion may be conducive to the development of destructiveness or love, of domination or of brotherhood; it may further his power of reason or paralyze it; he may be aware of his system as being a religious one, different from those of the secular realm, or he may think that he has no religion and interpret his devotion to certainly secular aims like power, money, or success as nothing but his concern for the practical and expedient. (Fromm, 1950, pp. 25–26)

What could be more abhorrent than killing innocent people – young children, parents and ordinary people – whom the killers might find they have much in common

*Corresponding author. Email: tpyszczy@uccs.edu

ISSN 1943-4472 print/ISSN 1943-4480 online
© 2009 Society for Terrorism Research
DOI: 10.1080/19434470802482118
http://www.informaworld.com

with if they took the time to meet them? We recoil in horror at the thought of airplanes purposefully being crashed into skyscrapers in New York City, young men detonating explosives belted to their bodies in crowded markets, buses or nightclubs in Israel, or young children being held hostage and then mercilessly slaughtered by their captors in Beslan. However, such acts of violence are becoming increasingly common and in some places occur on an almost daily basis. It is no wonder that many if not most people view murderous behavior of this type as the epitome of evil, and believe that the best way of reducing the threat of future attacks of this type is to kill the evil-doers and thus rid the world of the disease that leads to such wanton destruction. Unfortunately, such efforts often do more to exacerbate the problem than to solve it. Consider that, since President Bush declared war on terrorism and evil-doers in September 2001, terrorist attacks have increased from 28.3 to 199.8 per year while deaths as a result of these attacks have increased from 501 to 1689 per year (Bergen & Cruickshank, 2007). Indeed, in many cases, a violent reaction may be exactly what the terrorists were hoping for when they planned their attacks.

What strikes many, especially those determined to rid the world of evil, as particularly puzzling about terrorist violence is that terrorists view their acts as part of a righteous mission to vanquish what *they* perceive as evil. Of course the fact that *others* view *us* as evil is typically taken as further proof of the evil of the other (regardless of who the words "other" and "us" refer to). In today's world, the "Axis of Evil" is battling the "Great Satan", ostensibly for the good of all humankind! This killing of innocents as part of what is fervently believed to be a righteous mission is what distinguishes terrorism from ordinary crime (Richardson, 2006). Whereas, when criminals kill, they do it for their own gain or to settle uniquely personal scores, terrorists kill for the welfare of their group, typically in the service of a set of righteous ideals. Often, terrorist violence is embedded in an explicitly religious agenda, as in the case of the Islamic terrorism that has captured so much attention in recent years. Some argue that the link between Islam and terrorist violence is evidence of a fundamental flaw in this particular religion (F. Graham, 2001 as cited in People for the American Way, 2002; Robertson, 2001). Yet history shows that Islam has no monopoly on terrorist violence, and that Christians, Jews, Hindus and Buddhists have all resorted to such tactics at various times and some continue to do so to this day (Richardson, 2006; Stern, 2003). Others argue that it is religion, in general, that is the culprit in fomenting such murderous behavior (e.g. Dawkins, 2006; Hitchens, 2007). Yet terror has been central to a vast range of political movements, many of which were explicitly atheistic in nature, such as Stalin's and Mao's purges of non-communists or those who were not sufficiently ideologically pure, the Tamil Tigers' fight for a Tamil homeland, and many smaller-scale revolutionary movements of the 1960s and 1970s, such as the Red Brigade and Baader-Meinhoff Gang. In addition to religious and political ideology, many terrorist movements are oriented toward achieving a kind of ethnic purity, such as the murder of over 800,000 Hutus by the Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994, the ethnic cleansing of Bosnians and Kosovars by the Serbs in the former Yugoslavia, and of course, Hitler's Holocaust waged against the Jews and others viewed as inferior throughout Europe.

The idea of killing in the name of a loving and compassionate god who abhors such behavior, to promote an ideology designed to make people free or to provide safety and security for families, seems an incomprehensible paradox. What is it about religion, political ideology, nationalism and ethnicity that lends itself to persuading people that killing innocent others can be virtuous, righteous and even a sacred duty?

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

Erich Fromm (1950) argued that all humans are religious in the sense that all people belong to groups that provide a frame of orientation and an object of devotion. As our introductory quote suggests, this frame of orientation can entail a wide diversity of symbolic entities (e.g. deities, freedom, money, territory) that give life meaning and value. From this perspective, it is not the religious, secular or ethnic nature of the conflict that is important for understanding it, but rather the features that these cultural, social, and psychological entities share. In this article, we will use *terror management theory* (TMT; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986), which attempts to explain the roots of the human needs for self-esteem, belief in the absolute validity of their own particular conception of reality and how these human proclivities make peaceful co-existence of people with different cultures a perennial human problem. Thus the reader should be clear that TMT is a general theory of human motivation rather than a theory of terrorism, *per se*. However, we believe the theory sheds new and useful light on the psychological, cultural, social and historical forces that lead people to support violent solutions to inter-group conflicts. From this perspective, it is the psychological function of religious, ideological, national or ethnic ties that is crucial for understanding how these institutions can lead to hatred and violence. We will explore how religious, ideological, nationalistic and ethnic values combine with historical events and concrete grievances to make terrorist violence appealing to those facing individual or group hardship. We will argue that many of the same psychological forces that lead terrorists to kill also lead to lethal counter-terrorist policies that create massive collateral damage, and that these two forces create an escalating cycle of violence. Finally, we will discuss the implications of TMT for turning people toward more peaceful means of resolving conflicts.

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

Terror management theory

TMT proposes that natural selection bestowed humans and most other animals with a diverse set of adaptations oriented toward self-preservation and continued life. However, unlike other living things, humans are uniquely aware that they will die some day. This awareness creates the potential for paralyzing anxiety or terror. To manage this anxiety, people adhere to socially constructed cultural worldviews that imbue life with meaning and make it possible for the individual, group and life itself to have value. This value, typically referred to as self-esteem, is attained when people perceive themselves and their groups as living up to the standards of value (norms, values, roles, ideals) that follow from their worldviews. Being a valuable contributor to a meaningful reality makes it possible to transcend death either literally, by being granted entrance into an eternal paradise (e.g. heaven, nirvana), or symbolically, through societal remembrance in the form of memorial statues, awards or other lasting markers of our existence (e.g. a best-selling book, a treasured song or a Nobel Peace prize).

Because cultural worldviews and self-esteem are both sets of humanly created ideas, and there is no way of knowing if they are correct in any absolute sense, faith in them depends on social consensus from others. Those who share one's worldview and view one in a positive light increase faith in one's worldview and bolster self-esteem, thus increasing the effectiveness of both in managing anxiety; those with different worldviews and who view one in a negative light threaten faith in one's worldview and self-esteem, thus undermining their effectiveness in managing anxiety. This is why people are attracted to those with similar worldviews and those who like

them, and often repulsed by those with different worldviews and those who dislike them. TMT suggests that this dynamic predisposes people to be loyal to their group, society and culture and to be hostile toward those with different affiliations. When combined with grievances produced by actions by the outsiders that belittle, humiliate or contradict one's people or worldview, which of course are fueled in part by the tendency of these others to disdain those who are different, it creates a lethal cocktail that encourages violence.

The central propositions of TMT have been tested in over 350 experiments conducted in 17 countries, using diverse research methodologies to assess a set of conceptually distinct hypotheses. Research has demonstrated that, when thoughts of death are salient, people display heightened preferences for others who belong to similar groups and share similar values. Conversely, reminders of death increase disliking for and aggression against people who belong to different groups and hold different worldviews (Greenberg et al., 1990; McGregor et al., 1998). In one series of studies, Rosenblatt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski and Lyon (1989) showed that people induced to think about death became increasingly punitive towards others who transgressed cultural and moral norms. Thoughts of death have been shown to affect a host of other attitudes and behaviors such as close relationships, pro-social behavior, nationalism, prejudice, risk-taking, self-esteem striving and sexual attitudes (Cohen et al., 2004; Dechesne, Greenberg, Arndt, & Schimel, 2000; Florian & Mikulincer, 1997; Goldenberg et al., 2003; Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997). Tests of other TMT hypotheses have shown that temporarily boosting self-esteem reduces anxiety and anxiety-related behavior in response to threats and also reduces the accessibility of thoughts related to death. The converse is also true. Threatening self-esteem or challenging one's worldview increases the accessibility of thoughts of death, which typically leads to increased clinging to one's cultural worldview and striving to gain self-esteem from it (Greenberg et al., 1997). Another line of research has shown that convincing people of the existence of an after-life by having them read bogus accounts of a scientific conference on the "Near Death Experience" eliminates the effect of reminders of death on both worldview defense and self-esteem striving. Although the details of cultural worldviews and the routes to which one takes to obtain self-esteem are culture-specific, these two psychological structures serve the same functions in all human societies. Taken together, these findings converge on the TMT notion that cultural worldviews and self-esteem function, at least in part, to protect us from deeply rooted death-related fears.

Of particular relevance to the terror management perspective on terrorism is the idea that cultural worldviews are fragile social constructions that must be continually consensually validated in order for them to maintain their effectiveness as anxiety-buffers. Pyszczynski et al. (1996) interviewed people in front of a funeral home or 100 m away from the funeral home and found that those interviewed in front of the funeral home made more exaggerated estimates of the proportion of their countrymen who shared their attitudes. More recently, Schimel, Hayes, Williams and Jahrig (2007) gave Canadian participants essays that were either strongly pro-Canadian or anti-Canadian and found that reading the essays contrary to their worldviews increased the accessibility of death-related but not other aversive thoughts. These findings suggest that alternative worldviews are threatening because they undermine our protection from death-related thoughts. The possibility that one's cultural worldview is incorrect opens the door to death-related thoughts and anxiety, which lead to efforts to defuse that threat.

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

TMT suggests a variety of strategies that people and groups use to defuse the threat to their anxiety-buffering worldviews and self-esteem. One common strategy is to try to convert others to one's own worldview, as in religious evangelism and missionary activity, thus increasing the number of fellow believers and therefore one's faith in the correctness of one's own worldview. However, some individuals and groups are resistant to assimilation and conversion. Such recalcitrant others are typically derogated, viewed as stupid, primitive, evil, biased or brainwashed (Greenberg et al., 1997). By derogating different others, the validity and virtue of one's own worldview are affirmed by implying that it is superior to the "misguided" beliefs of the out-group. The tendency to view terrorists as insane or psychopathological, brainwashed by diabolical leaders, or simply evil is a particularly relevant example of this tendency, just as is the tendency of terrorists to see those they oppose as evil, self-obsessed, infidels. Finally, some worldviews may be perceived as so threatening that their adherents feel compelled to kill those who ascribe to them, thus neatly eliminating any threat posed by these deviant beliefs and values.

Terror management processes and support for terrorist and counter-terrorist violence

Recent research conducted in Iran, Israel and the United States has provided empirical evidence for the proposition that existential fear encourages support for both terrorist and counter-terrorist violence. Pyszczynski et al. (2006b) demonstrated that reminding Iranian college students of their own mortality increased their support for martyrdom missions against the United States. These results are displayed in Figure 1. A second study, displayed in Figure 2, showed a similar pattern among Americans: thoughts of either death or the 9/11 terrorist attacks increased American conservatives' support for using extreme military measures, such as nuclear weapons, to kill members of terrorist groups, even at the cost of killing thousands of innocent Middle Eastern civilians.

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

Figure 1. Willingness of Iranian students to consider joining pro- and anti-martyrdom causes as a function of mortality salience. Higher scores indicate greater willingness to consider joining the cause.

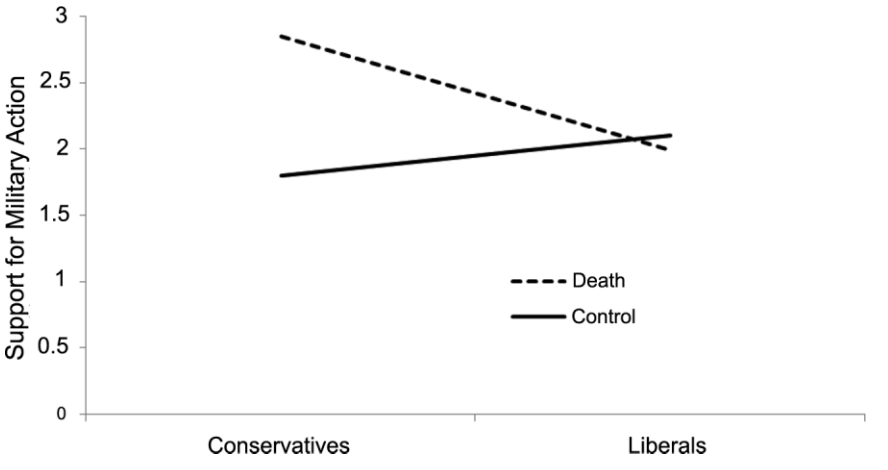


Figure 2. American support for use of extreme military force as a function of mortality salience and political orientation. Higher scores indicate greater support for use of military force.

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

Hirschberger and Ein-Dor (2006) found that reminders of death increase support for aggressive treatment of Palestinians among both Israeli college students and Gaza settlers, especially among those who denied the possibility that Gaza would ever be returned to Palestinian rule; these findings are depicted in Figure 3. Among the citizens of all three of these major players in the current Middle Eastern conflict, thoughts of death increases support for violent tactics, suggesting that existential fear is involved in encouraging support for such tactics, regardless of the specific grievances and ideologies that led these groups into conflict.

The fact that thoughts of one's own death produce nearly identical results as thoughts of terrorist attacks suggests that support for extreme measures to combat terrorism is not driven by a solely rational consideration of this problem. Participants

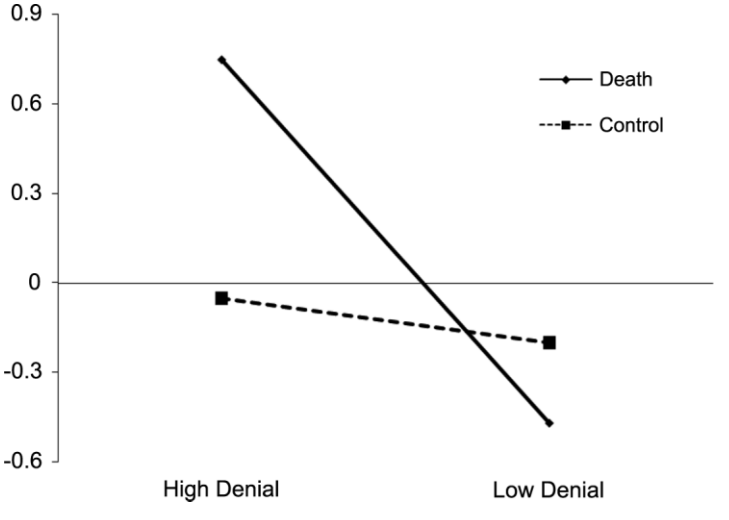


Figure 3. The impact of mortality salience and denial of the likelihood of disengagement on the legitimacy of violent action (*z*-scored).

in the "own death condition" of these studies never mention anything remotely related to the problem of terrorism, yet they show results nearly identical to those in the "terrorism reminder condition". Other studies show that that being reminded of terrorism increases the accessibility of death-related thoughts. For example, Gillespie and Jessop (in press) showed that reading newspaper accounts of either the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in the United States or the July 7, 2005, subway and bus bombings in London led participants to make more death-related responses on an ambiguous word-stem completion task. Landau et al. (2004) demonstrated that even subliminal presentations of the numerals 911 or the letters WTC produced similar increases in death thought accessibility. These studies show that thoughts of terrorism clearly bring death-related thoughts closer to consciousness, which repeatedly has been shown to lead to greater commitment to one's own worldview and hostility toward those with worldviews different from one's own. The continuous onslaught of media coverage of terrorist events and military action that occurs on a near daily basis in the Middle East would thus be expected to fan the flames of extremism and encourage further violence.

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

The vicious cycle of terrorist and counter-terrorist violence

The research described above suggests that, despite some obvious differences in the way these concerns are manifested, many of the same forces that motivate support for terrorist violence also motivate support for the use of lethal force to suppress terrorism. TMT suggests that support for violence and hostility toward those who are different or threaten one's worldview is ultimately rooted in the deeply rooted existential fear from which our cultural worldviews function to protect us. Of course one of the side effects of the use of violent tactics is that thoughts of death are constantly re-activated, leading to greater need for the protection provided by one's worldview, which leads to greater support for hostilities against those who threaten them, leading to an ongoing cycle of escalating violence.

There is a long history of social psychological research showing that hostility begets hostility and violence begets violence (e.g. Button, 1973; International Work Group on Death, Dying, and Bereavement, 2005; Widom, 1989). Aggressive action to counter violence is traditionally thought of as a rational instrumental response to being the victim of aggression, intended to restore justice, punish the aggressor and make further aggression too costly (e.g. Berkowitz, 1988; Geen, 1990). As President Bush (see Office of the Press Secretary, 2005) has put it:

> We will take the fight to the enemy … There is only one course of action against them: to defeat them abroad before they attack us at home. The commander in charge of coalition operations in Iraq – who is also senior commander at this base – General John Vines, put it well the other day. He said: "We either deal with terrorism and this extremism abroad, or we deal with it when it comes to us".

This is certainly what most people and their leaders, from both angry radical groups and powerful countries, *think* is motivating their actions. We agree that one of the motives for responding to violence with counter-violence is most certainly that this could restore justice and deter further attacks, but this is only *part* of the story.

There is, in fact, some evidence that aggressive retaliation may sometimes be effective in preventing future attacks (Walters, 2005), but the key to the successful use of aggression to stop aggression is either overwhelming power that completely

destroys the opponents' capacity to retaliate or a sense that the retaliation was completely justified and that justice has been restored (Felson, 1982). Unfortunately, this is rarely, if ever, the case in real life and unlikely to be the case in encounters between terrorists and nations. The idea that the threat of extreme force will lead to a reasoned decision to withhold hostilities ignores the role played by emotion, perceived injustice and a sense of righteous mission. Furthermore, it ignores the role that immortality-granting ideologies, either religious or secular, play in these conflicts. Finally, even if a nation did have the military might to completely destroy their enemies, such actions are likely to lead to strong counter-reaction by other nations, those who sympathize with one's enemies and one's own people. As has been oft noted, you really *cannot* kill them all. The United States-led operations in Iraq is a prime example of this dynamic playing out on today's world stage.

From the perspective of TMT, there are several problems with using lethal force to prevent further terrorism. First, inflicting casualties provides ongoing reminders of death, likely to be repeated frequently in both the mainstream media and the propaganda arms of the "enemy combatants". Research has shown that reminders of death reliably increase support for more extreme forms of terrorist and counter-terrorist violence. Second, given that violent retaliation is likely to produce widespread casualties across the population of the region, it is likely to provide further evidence of the malevolence one's own group holds toward the people the terrorist group seeks to represent. This increases the sense of injustice, humiliation and cultural threat that combines to radicalize communities to support and sometimes join terrorist organizations. In many cases, such violent retaliation is likely to have more personal consequences for innocent others, killing family members and friends, destroying homes and neighborhoods, and creating chaos within a society. Stern (2003), Richardson (2006), and many others have all documented a plethora of cases in which otherwise happy, well-adjusted, successful and apolitical persons have been radicalized into active participation in terrorism after observing the loss of loved ones or the destruction of one's home. Indeed, in explaining his motives for the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, Osama bin Laden (Information Clearing House, 2004) remarked:

> The events that made a direct impression on me were during and after 1982, when America allowed the Israelis to invade Lebanon with the help of its third fleet. They started bombing, killing, and wounding many, while others fled in terror … It was like a crocodile devouring a child who could do nothing but scream … In these critical moments many ideas raged inside me … they unleashed a powerful urge to reject injustice and a strong determination to punish the oppressors.

Thus although retaliation in hopes of preventing further terrorist attacks seems intuitively sensible and is a very natural human reaction, it is fraught with dangers and likely to set psychological forces in motion that ultimately increase support for the terrorist cause.

We are certainly not arguing that aggressive military and/or police action is *never* a good idea in fighting terrorism. Our point is simply that the potential benefits of such tactics (e.g. punishing those responsible, making them incapable of further attacks, restoring a sense of justice within one's own society) should be carefully weighed against the likely costs. We agree that terrorist violence should not go unpunished, and we agree that in some cases military campaigns may well be the best way to reduce the likelihood of future attacks, but we strongly argue that aggressive retaliation should not be pursued without a careful weighing of the potential costs of such tactics,

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

in particular the very real possibility that violent counter-terrorist tactics will actually strengthen the terrorist organization that one hopes to disable. And we argue that an understanding of the psychological dynamics of the pursuit of righteous violence is essential to making such informed decisions. We turn now to a TMT-based analysis of these forces.

The worm at the core of terrorism

As has been suggested elsewhere, there is no single cause of terrorism, nor a unique link between terrorism and any particular worldviews (Lifton, 2003; Richardson, 2006; Stern, 2003). Nonetheless, worldviews play an important role in attracting members to the group and legitimizing violence. It is a dynamic interplay of diverse forces that lead groups of people to kill innocent others and sometimes themselves in the process. TMT suggests that much human behavior is motivated by the pursuit of meaning in life, value in oneself and one's group, and close connections and attachments to others, and that a major reason that people seek these things is to manage the potential for anxiety that is inherent in the finitude of the human condition. Clearly, terrorist movements, whether religious, political, nationalistic or ethnic in nature, have the potential to provide this much needed meaning, esteem and connectedness. Clearly the problem of death is never far from awareness in a world plagued by terrorist attacks and military aggression. In the following section we explore how these psychological forces can be used to tie together many of the forces that terrorism experts see as motivating terrorist violence by weaker groups who feel oppressed, and extreme counter-terrorist responses by stronger groups, usually nations, who feel threatened by terrorist groups. Central to our analysis are the propositions that: (1) at a deep level, the same psychological forces that promote terrorist violence also encourage extreme counter-terrorist use of military might; and (2) the resulting hyper-awareness of death that both tactics create promotes a self-perpetuating cycle of escalating hostility, hatred and killing.

Louise Richardson (2006) has recently provided an overview of diverse factors that promote terrorist violence in her excellent book, *What terrorists want*. We will build on her analysis to organize our own consideration of the forces that feed the vicious cycle of terrorist and counter-terrorist violence. Richardson argues that terrorism results when aggrieved people are able to find solidarity and hope for a better future in an organization, often directed by a charismatic leader, that uses a compelling ideology to elevate the struggle against the perceived oppressor to a "sacred" level that construes the killing of innocents as justified and even necessary to redress the grievances of the oppressed group. This sacred ideology may be explicitly religious in nature, as in the case of radical Islam, but may also be secular as in the case of the Irish Republican Army or Tamil Tigers, or even explicitly atheistic, as in the case of Stalinist, Maoist or other forms of communism. From the perspective of TMT, an ideology becomes increasingly sacred – and thus beyond question or rational debate – the more it serves a terror management function. Because it protects people from their existential fears, people are so drawn to it that they are reluctant to question it. The group plays into this by encouraging fervent declarations of one's faith in it (e.g. public prayer, shouting of ideological slogans, display of symbols, such as armbands, insignia or bumper stickers) and slavish adherence to its dictates. Richardson argues that terrorists hope to achieve *revenge* for perceived humiliation or injustice, in the hope of getting attention or *reknown* for the cause, group or individual, ultimately in

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

order to provoke a *reaction* from the target of the attack in the form of either concessions that directly address the grievances or an over-reaction that wins the sympathy of others, radicalizes the community and brings others to the cause.

Humiliation, perceived injustice, and revenge

Juergensmeyer (2000) suggested that terrorism is a way for humiliated groups to regain some of their lost sense of value in a struggle with a much more powerful adversary. In Stern's (2003) ethnographic interviews with members of diverse terrorist groups from around the world, virtually all reported that they felt alienated and humiliated and had a history of conflict with a dominant group, often over a specific geographic territory, but also over feelings that their culture and people are not held with the esteem they deserve. Lifton (2003) describes this feeling of humiliation as among the most painful and indelible of all human emotions. From a TMT perspective, humiliation is a feeling that one's self, one's people or one's worldview is not valued by others. Such belittling precludes the humiliated from attaining or maintaining self-esteem and hence undermines the efficacy of their cultural worldviews. As our research has shown, threats to one's anxiety buffer bring death-related thoughts closer to consciousness and lead to various ways of putting the other down to restore the anxiety-buffering effectiveness of one's worldview and self-esteem in order to return oneself to a state of psychological equanimity.

Such humiliation can result from individual encounters in which one has personally felt insulted, as has often been reported after encounters with military, police or security personnel involving checkpoints, searches or more direct insults. Humiliation also can reflect an empathic response to the travails of other group members, be they family members, close associates or even strangers. The key here is that the disrespectful treatment of the other is interpreted as being predicated on that person's group membership (being Muslim, Catholic, Palestinian or Irish). When insults are based on group membership, an insult to one is a humiliation to all because it implies general disdain for one's kind. As Richardson (2006) points out, terrorists and their sympathizers share a strong sense of group consciousness and social identification with their people. This collective group consciousness is part of what makes it possible for the individual to take on dangerous actions; the ultimate example of which is the martyrdom mission in which one's own death is the means to promote one's group's welfare and affirm the righteousness of one's cause.

Humiliation is often closely tied to the perception of injustice. Research by Lerner and Simmons (1966) has shown that people are strongly motivated to believe that the world is a just place where bad things do not happen to good people. Instances of injustice are deeply upsetting because they undermine the sense of safety we get by believing that our goodness and virtue will protect us from the many tragedies that might befall us. If one is treated badly, either the source of one's mistreatment must view one as inferior and thus deserving of such treatment, or there is a fundamental injustice that must be redressed. As noted above, this injustice is often experienced on a collective level, when one witnesses the suffering of other members of one's group. In either case, injustice leads to a strong desire to restore justice, and seeking revenge through violent retaliation is often the result.

The ongoing conflict in the Middle East presented a multitude of humiliating incidents on both individual and collective levels. For instance, after World War II, the Palestinians were evicted from a land they had occupied for nearly two millennia so

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

that the then aggrieved Jewish people would have their own homeland. In 1967, Israel dealt a devastating military defeat to Syria, Jordan and Egypt in just six days, which called into question the power of these states. In the ensuing decades, Israel gave Palestinians disjointed plots of land that lacked adequate water supplies and built military security posts in the middle of Palestinian neighborhoods, providing an ongoing reminding to Palestinians of their occupation (Stern, 2003). These are perhaps the most commonly cited perceived injustices invoked by virtually all radical Islamic groups, followed closely by the U.S. support of Israel, placement of U.S. military bases in Arab lands, and the sanctions, blockades and eventual invasion of Iraq.

Although residents of other Middle Eastern countries have had their own conflicts and disputes with the Palestinians and Iraqis, the fact that it was fellow Arabs or Muslims who were suffering fed into the shared belief that Israel, the United States and Europe care little for the larger ethnic and religious group to which many in the Middle East belong. Thus an insult to or humiliation of any given Palestinian or Iraqi, which has no concrete effect on most inhabitants of the Middle East, is perceived as a symbol of the disdain with which all Muslims and all Arabs apparently are viewed by the West. This tendency to identify with one's group and over-generalize in drawing conclusions about the attitudes and intentions of others is well established by a multitude of studies on social identity processes (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), as well as the tendency to assume that concrete acts directly reflect stable underlying attitudes and dispositions, referred to by social psychologists as the fundamental attribution error (Ross, 1977).

The point here is that it is not so much the specific concrete actions of others that foment anger and violence, but what these actions represent or symbolize. People do not take dramatic action because of a single instance, but rather because of the deeper meaning that the symbolic event represents. The international Islamic uproar over the Danish cartoon of Mohammed with a turban of missiles likely had less to do with the specific cartoons in question than what they were interpreted as implying about the way Islam is viewed by the Western world. Social identity research by Ruttenberg, Zea and Sigelman (1996) has shown that Arabs who shared the belief that out-groups viewed them as inferior were motivated to engage in ego-defensive behaviors that include intensified denigration of out-group members. Germanely, the Arabs in this study responded on the measure of ego-defensiveness following exposure to anti-Arab jokes and cartoons. In line with terror management theorizing, the Arabs in this study and those responding to the Danish cartoon are attempting to defend their collective self-esteem.

Another source of potential humiliation and worldview threat that could increase the appeal of radical Islamist movements is the ever-increasing globalization, or perhaps more specifically, Americanization, of world culture. Resentment of those more wealthy, powerful or influential than oneself is a natural human tendency. Because there are no absolute standards for what a good person should be like, we evaluate ourselves by comparing ourselves with others (Festinger, 1955) and our self-esteem is damaged when we encounter others better off than ourselves (Morse & Gergen, 1970). It also seems likely that perceptions of American lifestyles and values in the realms of material goods, leisure, entertainment, sexuality, women's rights and general irreverence toward tradition are threatening because they imply a lack of respect for more traditional worldviews. The stereotype of the materialistic, selfish and amoral American (Kohut, 2006) is widely shared throughout much of the world and especially the Middle East. To the extent that aspects of this worldview are at least

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

somewhat appealing to many, especially young persons and perhaps to some extent even to fundamentalists, it becomes an even more dangerous threat to the propagation of more traditional worldviews. A similar dynamic was documented in Reverend Jerry Falwell's provocative statement after the 9/11 terrorist attacks:

> I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way – all of them who have tried to secularize America – I point the finger in their face and say, "You helped this happen". (Pyszczynski et al., 2003b, p. 156)

Sometimes concrete acts or policies of a powerful nation may pose a symbolic threat by violating another culture's sense of the sacred. In his fatwa calling for the large-scale killings of Americans, bin Laden cited the placement of U.S. military bases relatively near the sacred Muslim cities of Mecca and Medina as one of many insults to Islamic sensibilities. No doubt these sites were chosen for their strategic and economic value rather than as a deliberate affront, but clearly these bases are objectionable to many Muslims and used by groups like al Qaeda to justify their portrayal of the United States as disrespectful and hostile to Islam (Lifton, 2003). In other cases, it appears that the desire to humiliate is more conscious and intentional, as in the U.S. military prisons in Afghanistan, Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, in which Muslim detainees were videotaped while being forced to perform fellatio on their fellow inmates or wear women's underwear on their heads, or being tormented by German shepherd dogs, considered unclean and disgusting by many Muslims (Zimbardo, 2007). Since the Abu Ghraib prison scandal came to light, there have been over 400 related military investigations launched, suggesting that such intentional humiliation may be more widespread than just those cases that have been widely publicized. Of course the American military is far from unique in their overt attempts to humiliate prisoners, and similar tactics have been employed by many on all sides of this conflict. Indeed, some have pointed to the televised decapitations of Western captives, which is clearly an affront to both Western and more generally shared human values, as justification for the intentional humiliation of Iraqi prisoners. It also seems likely that bin Laden and associates chose the World Trade Center and Pentagon for their attacks as much for their value as symbols of American economic and military power as for the concrete impact the attacks would have on the American economy and military. This is yet another illustration of the escalating reciprocal cycle of hostility and violence discussed earlier in this paper: a mutual war on the symbols of the other.

Large-scale Gallup Polling of 10 Major Muslim countries (Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey) supports the view that humiliation is a strong factor promoting support for terrorist violence (Gallup, 2006). While only a small minority – 7% of those polled – believed that the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the United States were justified, those who did provided valuable insight into the mindset of Middle Easterners who condone terror attacks. They indicated that the attacks were justified because they feel that the United States, and the Western world overall, aim to dominate the Islamic world militarily and politically. These individuals also felt that the Western world disrespects Islam. Overall, this subset of the population believed that the United States and the West harbored ill will for the Middle East. Wessells's (2006) interviews of pro- and anti-Taliban Afghanis provide converging support for this point. In this study, Afghans overwhelmingly viewed the United States-led war in Iraq as unjustified and responsible for a surge in

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

funding and recruiting for terrorist groups. Further, many of those interviewed said that the West aims to dominate the Middle East and felt humiliated by the injustice being committed against them. Wessells's interviews of Iraqi residents of Baghdad yielded similar results. The majority of Iraqis viewed the fall of Saddam Hussein as bad because it further enabled Western dominance in the region. Of those interviewed, nearly all attributed problems of increased lawlessness, violence and rape as a direct result of the presence of the United States forces. Frighteningly, many of the boys interviewed claimed to have joined a jihad because of what the United States has done in Iraq. Indeed, the "New Poll of the Islamic World" (Gallup, 2006) reported that, in the years since the beginning of the Iraq War (2004–2006), there was a threefold increase in terrorist acts committed in the Middle East compared with the previous two years, and the current year seems to be setting an all-time record for terrorist attacks in Iraq (Bergen & Cruickshank, 2007).

The role of community

Terrorism is a collective social action performed in the service of an aggrieved community, which may be religious, nationalistic, ideological or ethnic in nature. The majority of terrorist attacks are planned and executed by formal organizations such as al Qaeda, the Tamil Tigers, the Shining Path or the IRA. For the most part, the operations of such organizations are carefully planned, involve the cooperation of many individuals who play unique roles in the mission, and are heavily funded by members of the communities these groups aim to represent. A more recent development is the emergence of smaller informal local groups, sometimes referred to as "homegrown terrorists", without formal institutional ties, who have become radicalized through a combination of informal contacts, internet sites and personal reactions to the news of the day. It is believed that the 2005 attacks on the London subways and buses were the product of such a small unconnected group. Yet even in these cases apparently unconnected to the larger organizations, there is a strong sense of identification with an aggrieved community and a following of ideologies promoted by these international groups. The London bombers called themselves al Qaeda in Europe. In all cases, terrorists see themselves as part of a shared struggle against perceived oppressors of their group, who are pursuing the collective ideals of their culture, nation, religion, ethnic group or in some cases, all humankind. Their comrades in arms are typically referred to as brothers or sisters to emphasize the close interpersonal bonds they share. From the perspective of TMT, this solidarity of belief and purpose serves the vital function of enabling the perpetrators to transform what even they would probably consider an egregiously evil act into one of righteousness.

Most discussions of terrorism emphasize the practical operational function of terrorist organizations. Clearly, large-scale coordinated groups have access to greater resources and are capable of inflicting damage on a much grander scale than isolated groups of individuals. Although only a small number of people are needed to actually detonate the bombs in a terrorist attack, there are many smaller subsidiary roles that must be filled, including providing information, passing messages, maintaining safe-houses and even simply keeping quiet about plans that one may have heard about. In addition, financial support for the operations is needed. However, as Bakker and Dunker (as cited in Musharbash, 2007) have recently argued, small home-grown terrorist groups are also able to inflict serious damage given the ready availability of weapons, explosives and information about how to use them on the internet. Although

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

understanding the organizational dynamics of terrorist organizations is extremely important (for an overview, see Stern, 2003), our focus here will be on the psychological impact of group identification, which exists for both formally organized terrorist networks and the smaller bands of homegrown terrorists who are inspired by and identify with them.

One of the core assumptions of TMT, along with most contemporary thinking about how people understand the world in which they live (e.g. Festinger, 1955; Swann, 1987), is that our perceptions of reality are socially constructed. Our beliefs and values are acquired from the broader culture in which we reside, and faith in these beliefs and values requires that they are shared by others, especially others who are similar to ourselves, whom we value and respect. If something is true, anyone should be able to see it, at least anyone who shares our general perspective and is not hopelessly biased against seeing it. The more abstract and subjective an object of faith, the greater the need is for others to share the belief. This is why community support is so important for terrorist movements. One can hardly have confidence in one's mission to free or protect one's people if the people in question do not share your aims. Thus winning the "hearts and minds" of the constituent population is extremely important for terrorist groups. This holds true for any social movement, including those undertaken by nations.

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

This is not to say that anything approaching majority approval is needed for an organization to function. Indeed, al Qaeda is still planning and conducting terrorist attacks and the United States is still pursuing its military mission in Iraq despite the general lack of public approval for both shown in recent polls (e.g. approximately 7% of Muslims support terrorist attacks (Gallup, 2006) and 25% of Americans currently support continued military presence in Iraq (CBS News/New York Times Poll, 2007)). Those committed to a course of social action typically exaggerate the extent of support for their objectives and employ a variety of information control strategies (Kunda, 1987; Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1987) to maintain the belief that their constituents support them and that their mission is righteous and just, despite readily available evidence to the contrary. Terror management research shows that reminders of death increase this tendency to exaggerate the extent of support for one's attitudes, especially among those who hold minority opinions (Pyszczynski et al., 1996). In addition, those who disagree with one's cause are typically seen as misinformed, biased or brain-washed by the opposition. As President Bush has put it, "You're either with us or against us", apparently dismissing the possibility that someone might share one's goals but disagree with the tactics used to pursue them. This is why people in general, and those committed to fringe movements in particular, are so committed to convincing others of the truth of their position and the righteousness of their cause. It is also why those who do not share our truth are viewed as apostates, infidels or lunatics. Converting others to one's cause not only has the practical value of adding others to help one achieve one's goals, it also increases one's own faith in the legitimacy of these goals. Recent discussions of the "propaganda war" in the Middle East attest to the importance of generating as much support among the populace as possible.

This is also why it is necessary for a social movement to paint its message in bold strokes of black and white, or good versus evil. If one's cause is predicated on viewing one's group as suffering at the hands of merciless oppressor, that oppressor needs to be viewed as the incarnation of evil. If one's cause is led by a virtuous leader who cares only about the good of his people, that leader needs to be glorified and, if possible,

seen as being on a mission from God or some other higher power. Our studies have shown that, in 2003 and 2004, reminders of death increased American's support for President Bush and his policies and led to more negative attitudes toward Arabs (Landau et al., 2004; Motyl, Pyszczynski, Cox, Siedel, & Maxfield, in press; for a more thorough TMT analysis of the psychology of leaders and followers, see Solomon, Cohen, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2008). This is one of many places where tying a political movement to religious ideology is beneficial to the movement. Having God's approval makes it much easier to convince the masses of the righteousness of one's cause, even when one's methods directly conflict with religious teachings.

Communities also play an important role in glorifying the foot soldiers who risk their lives or intentionally sacrifice themselves for the cause. Posters depicting idealized images of suicide bombers are commonly displayed, often garlanded in flowers, in many Middle Eastern communities. There are pop songs about martyrs, commemorative cards, websites devoted to telling the stories of martyrs, and even martyr of the month calendars (Richardson, 2006). Families of suicide bombers often enjoy increased social status, respect and sometimes financial gain after terrorist missions. Officially sanctioned "martyrs days" are held annually in some countries on the anniversary of a particularly significant suicide attack to commemorate and honor all who have given their lives for the cause, much like the Memorial Day and Veterans Day holidays in the United States. The very term "martyr" implies a selfless devotion to a cause. Heroification of those who have died, in either suicide attacks or government sanctioned military actions, serves to elevate the righteousness of the mission and further increase support for it within the community; all of which are necessary to overcome the normal human social sanctions against the killing of innocents.

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

One of the most important goals of terrorist attacks is to publicize the cause and hopefully draw others to support it either tacitly by expressing support for its goals, or actively by joining the organization. Bloom (2006) suggests that, by emphasizing the goals of fighting injustice and humiliation, suicide terrorism is a means through which the humiliated community can obtain a vicarious victory. Although the suicide terrorist may not be able to defeat the adversary in a military sense, terrorist attacks gain victories for their causes in the form of worldwide media coverage and local social approval. Weinberg (2006) compares the activity of terrorists in Iraq to those of the Viet Cong in the Tet Offensive. Both offensives were military losses, but greatly increased support for their causes among the constituent communities. Furthermore, both the Tet Offensive in Viet Nam and the ongoing terrorist attacks in Palestine kept the world aware of the massive casualties involved in these conflicts and increased anti-war sentiment worldwide. Similarly, the near-daily terrorist attacks in Iraq provide an incessant stream of macabre images covered in the media on a daily basis.

Sacred ideology: religious and secular

Throughout this paper, we have argued that it is the symbolic meaning of specific concrete actions and historical events – what they imply or mean – that threatens people's individual and collective self-esteem and cultural worldviews, thus creating feelings of humiliation and injustice that motivate them to take arms against an enemy. Terrorism is a tactic in which innocent civilians with no direct personal responsibility for these problems are killed as a way of exacting revenge and motivating one's more powerful adversary to take action. Yet killing innocent others violates virtually every moral code known to humankind. This creates a problem for anyone who sees his or

her struggle as righteous and just. This is where sacred ideologies come into play: they are used to justify one's violent acts, to make what would otherwise be unthinkably reprehensible feel not only justified but in many cases a sacred duty to one's people, one's God, or to all of humanity. Sacred ideologies can be religious, nationalistic, political, ideological or ethnic in nature. Usually they contain combination of many of these elements: they typically build on core elements of the cultural worldview that the aggrieved group has been using to buffer existential anxiety for centuries or millennia. The grievances and conflict with the more powerful group lead to a radicalization of this worldview, which serves as a rallying call and battle plan to direct the struggle.

Justifying killing in the name of a sacred ideology, religious or secular, requires that the humiliation, perceived injustice, and other grievances be construed as an affront to what is good and righteous. In the case of the radicalized forms of Islam currently being used to justify terrorist killings, the grievances are interpreted as an insult to Allah. Similarly, Christian activists who bomb abortion clinics and assassinate physicians view abortion as an abomination against God's protection of the unborn, and Jewish terrorists who attack Palestinians, or who killed leaders like Ishtak Rabin, view Israel as the Promised Land that God had given to the Israelites in an ancient covenant. The various Western European and American communist factions who bombed buildings and assassinated politicians and innocent bystanders viewed the capitalist system as an intractable impediment to a coming utopian society based on Marxist principles. The Serbs who killed countless Bosnians and Kosovars, and the Tutsis who massacred Hutus in the 1990s, viewed their actions as righteous revenge for centuries of domination or injustices – some in the distant past – that violated their fundamental human rights. Research on terror management has documented the role of sacred symbols in controlling death-related fears. For example, Greenberg, Porteus, Simon and Pyszczynski, (1995) showed that, when people are reminded of their mortality they are more distressed at the thought of sacred icons, such as a flag or crucifix, treated as ordinary objects.

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

In all cases, the humiliation and injustice is construed as an affront to one's people, one's God or the good of humanity. This affront is viewed as a sign of the intractable evil of the other, because only such absolute evil could warrant the extreme measures that are believed necessary to restore justice and restore one's people to their rightly place in the world.

When one's adversary is absolute evil, virtually any means can be justified to serve the sacred end of bringing the world back into cosmic balance. Terrorists and counter-terrorists agree that the killing of innocents is regrettable, but when the enemy is evil incarnate, and one's God therefore sanctions violence against them, one must do what must be done, and short-term suffering of the few is seen as a small price to pay for the long-term welfare of the many. Bushman, Ridge, Das, Key and Busath (2007) have recently shown that exposure to Old Testament verses that sanction violence against one's enemies leads to significant increases in aggressive behavior. To the extent that one's value, and therefore one's psychological equanimity, depends on living up to the dictates of one's religion, violence is much more likely when it has been given God's official stamp of approval, that all is fair when battling evil.

Furthermore, the more powerful one's enemy, the more just are extreme tactics in one's battle for righteousness. Although evil always must be fought, the more powerful the evil other, the more damage he can do, which makes extreme tactics seem all

the more righteous. This is why al Qaeda emphasizes the vast military and economic power of the United States, Israel and Europe. It is also why United States, Israeli and European leaders are invested in keeping their populaces ever-mindful of the threat posed by terrorist groups and their desire to employ the most destructive means they can access to carry out their fight with the West.

In addition to justifying violent tactics, sacred ideologies are also extremely valuable for recruiting others to join the fight or at least provide the material and social support necessary for the battle to be waged. Having God (or one's nation, ancestors and future progeny, or a liberating ideology) on one's side greatly increases the appeal of the fight to the few who actively wage it and the masses who tacitly support it. Just as insults to one's anxiety-buffering worldview are more likely to enrage the masses, when a particular form of behavior is valued within the context of a sacred ideology, people are especially drawn to such behavior because this is how they establish their value or self-esteem and control their fears. A large body of experimental work has shown that, when people are reminded of death, they are more likely to conform to salient cultural norms. For example, Taubman ben-Ari, Florian and Mikulincer (1999) found that reminders of death led to riskier driving among Israeli soldiers who used their driving ability as a source of self-esteem, and Goldenberg, Pyszczynski, Johnson, Greenberg and Solomon (1999a) demonstrated that reminders of death increased the importance that women high in body self-esteem place on looking good. More directly relevant for present purposes, Greenberg et al. (1992) showed that reminders of death typically lead to more negative attitudes toward those who insult one's worldview, but that such reactions are eliminated when people are reminded of a value of their worldview, such as tolerance for divergent opinions, that mitigates against such negative reactions.

Furthermore, when prominent religious, national, ideological or ethnic leaders, who are viewed as knowing more than the rest of us, sanction the fight, those who rely on these leaders for guidance are likely to follow. The higher the source from which these leaders draw their authority, the more compelling their dictates become. The masses need to be continually reminded of the direct link between the leader and his source of power – thus both terrorist leaders, like Osama bin Laden, and leaders of powerful nations engaged in counter-terrorist policies like, George Bush, are prone to reminding their constituents that they were chosen by a higher power for their mission. On ABC News (1998), bin Laden described his calling thus:

> We are worshipers of Allah and we carry out our duties. Our duty is to call on all nations to join the light. Our first duty is being people of this religion and to fight for this religion. It is our duty to lead people to light.

And on Israel News Online (2003), Bush explained his calling:

> God told me to strike at al Qaida and I struck them, and then he instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did, and now I am determined to solve the problem in the Middle East. If you help me I will act, and if not, the elections will come and I will have to focus on them.

A sacred ideology elevates the struggle from a merely human dispute to a matter of cosmic significance that stretches far beyond the interests of the individuals doing battle. Although unfair treatment of human beings is reprehensible, insults to God cannot be tolerated. Sacred ideologies are widely used by social movements, including

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

terrorist and counter-terrorist movements, to confirm the righteousness of one's position, to make tactics that would otherwise seem too extreme or even downright reprehensible seem just and righteous, and to unite one's desired constituents behind the cause. Such ideologies can be powerful glue that ties the various components of a terrorist or counter-terrorist movement together.

It seems that the key to using religion or any other humanistically oriented ideology to promote violence is careful selection of the specific teachings and quotes from holy texts that are used to promote the movement. Clearly many or perhaps most adherents to the ideologies that are used to justify bloodshed view such use as a perversion of the central elements of the belief system. In recent years, many Muslims have argued that using the Koran to justify killing misses the central message of this holy book. Similarly, many Americans have argued that using the American value of freedom and liberty as a rallying core for a no-holds-barred war on terror, which sanctions torture and views legal process as "quaint", loses touch with the essential values upon which the United States was built. As many others have pointed out (e.g. Lifton, 2003), the use of these fundamentally pro-social worldviews to justify the actions taken in the current conflict requires careful cherry-picking of doctrines and historical precedents. However, if some elements of sacred ideologies can be used to justify violence and unite one's people against a real or perceived enemy, it may be possible to use these same ideologies to discourage conflict and promote peace.

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

A beacon of hope

Recent research has shown that support for violence and conflict thankfully are *not* an inevitable response to existential fear. TMT suggests that people cope with their fear of death by working to maintain faith in their cultural worldviews, attain self-esteem by living up to the standards of their worldviews and seek close interpersonal bonds with those who share their worldviews. Those with worldviews different from our own – especially those who actively derogate, disrespect or challenge our worldviews or personal or collective self-esteem – evoke anger and hostility. This tendency to reaffirm the rightness of one's own position by putting down those who disagree is a strong one, but it is countered by values that discourage such behavior. Perhaps in part to offset this strong tendency, most modern worldviews contain values and teachings that promote tolerance and compassion for those who are different, and proscriptions against behavior that hurts others, especially violence. Clearly, all three major religions represented in the current Middle Eastern conflict promote compassion and kindness to all persons. The secular ideologies of the nations involved also encourage viewing all humans as equally worthy and deserving the unencumbered pursuit of life, liberty and happiness. As we have argued above (see also Hafez, 2006a, 2006b), terrorist and war-mongering leaders and their followers selectively interpret these teachings to use them to sanction or lionize violence. We suspect that the vast majority of people alive today would agree that people should be treated with respect and compassion, that hurting others is wrong, and that killing is repugnant.

TMT suggests that people's worldviews consist of a complex array of ideas and values that reflect the wide diversity of information and experiences that people have encountered over the course of their lives. Each of us constructs our own worldview by integrating these diverse experiences into something that is uniquely ours

(Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Goldenberg, 2003). Sometimes these elements are consistent with each other and fit together well, and sometimes not. Similarly, the collective worldviews of a culture or society also reflect a diverse array of influences over the history of the group. Thus, the Christian Bible teaches that God is both jealous and thirsty for vengeance and loving and merciful and instructs followers to seek vengeance by taking "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth", but to also love one's enemy and turn the other cheek. Similarly, the Muslim Koran teaches that Allah is also vengeful in instructing Muslims to take "a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and a wound for a wound" (Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 1983), but peaceful and loving in calling for Muslims to "do goodness to others because Allah loves those who do good" (Imran 3.148; Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 1983). Social psychological theory and research confirms the many conflicting elements that make up individuals' beliefs and values (Crano & Prislin, 2006) and documents the power of situational forces in determining which elements of one's attitudes will be expressed at any given point in time (Ross & Nisbett, 1991; Zimbardo, 1969).

Over the last 20 years or so, research has shown that elements of worldviews are most likely to influence behavior when they are activated or primed. For example, Snyder and Swann (1976) have shown that attitudes are more likely to determine behavior when people are first asked to take a minute to think about their attitudes before acting. In a related vein, Bargh (1996) has shown that subtly activated concepts, even outside of conscious awareness, lead people to behave in ways that are consistent with these concepts. For example, after being primed with words related to aggressiveness, people behave more aggressively in totally new situations (Todorov & Bargh, 2002); or after being primed with the concept of intelligence, people do better on a test of general knowledge (Dijksterhuis & van Knippenberg, 1998). Research on the effects of self-focused attention, which generally leads people to behave in accord with salient standards for behavior, has shown that self-focus can lead to diametrically opposed forms of behavior, depending on which standards are salient at the time (for a review, see Carver & Scheier, 1998). Terror management research has shown that, although reminders of death seem to make people especially prone to react negatively to threats to their cultural worldviews, it also leads people to work harder to live up to standards for valued behavior that are salient in the situation (for a review, see Pyszczynski et al., 2003b). For example, Walsh and Smith (2007) have shown that reminders of death increased women's desire for affiliation and group identification when primed with thoughts of their gender, but increased their preference for uniqueness when primed with thoughts of their selves. Particularly relevant to present concerns, Greenberg et al. (1992) found that reminders of death led to more negative evaluations of a person who insulted one's worldview but that affirming one's commitment to the value of tolerance completely eliminated this effect. These findings raise the possibility that reminding people of the values they hold dear that run counter to conflict and violence might lead to very different responses to existential fear.

Compassionate values

Rothschild, Abdollahi and Pyszczynski (under review) recently investigated the effect of reminding people of the teachings of their religion regarding the virtue of compassion on the way they respond to reminders of mortality. In their first study, conducted

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

in the United States, participants' level of religious fundamentalism was assessed (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992), and they then responded to questions that reminded them of either their own mortality or physical pain. They then read and evaluated a series of quotes that were either well-known Biblical teachings of Christ regarding the compassionate treatment of others (e.g. loving thy neighbor as thyself, forgiving others, and doing unto others as you would have them do unto you), neutral quotes from the Bible that were unrelated to compassion, or neutral quotes from a variety of non-religious sources. Finally, their support for the use of extreme military force to fight terrorism (including the use of nuclear and chemical weapons) was assessed. High levels of religious fundamentalism were associated with support for the use of extreme military might except under one condition: when participants were reminded of death and primed with the compassionate teachings of their religion. Furthermore, reminders of death significantly *decreased* support for extreme military measures among fundamentalists who were first primed with compassionate teachings. A follow-up study replicated these findings in Iran. Reminders of death increased anti-Western attitudes (e.g. "The US and its European allies' presence in the Middle East is threatening to our Islamic being. We should fight against them", "We cannot trust the US and its European allies; they are our enemies") among Iranians when they were primed with the value of compassion from a secular source. However, this same reminder of death *decreased* anti-Western attitudes when they were first primed with compassionate quotes from the Koran (e.g. "Do goodness to others because Allah loves those who do good"). These findings suggest that, although existential fear often does increase hostile intentions toward those with different worldviews, it can also decrease such intentions when compassionate values central to one's religion are on people's minds.

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

Secure interpersonal attachment

In another recent series of studies, Weise et al. (in press) tested some ideas derived from the intersection of Lakoff's (2002) analysis of moral politics, Mikulincer, Florian and Hirschberger's (2003) recent work on attachment theory, and TMT. Lakoff argues that conservative and fundamentalist ideologies reflect an approach to life based on the internalized mental model of a "strict father" who views the world as dangerous and sanctifies the moral absolutes of rewards and punishments, tradition, hierarchy, opposing "evil", and the moral supremacy of one's own belief system. Lakoff views liberal ideology as rooted in an internalized model of a "nurturing parent" that emphasizes the moral imperatives of empathy, nurturance, flexibility and growth. Attachment theory suggests that people become securely attached and trustful of others as a result of a caring and nurturing relationship with one's parents, but that insecure attachment can result from aloof, inconsistent and extremely strict parent–child relationships. Mikulincer et al. (2003) have provided a convincing body of evidence that attachment relationships serve as terror management relationships throughout one's life.

These lines of reasoning suggest that existential threat is most likely to lead to shifts in a conservative direction among those with less secure interpersonal attachments. In a study done shortly before the 2004 U.S. presidential election, Weise et al. (in press, Study 1) showed that, although death reminders increased support for conservative candidate George Bush among those low in attachment security, they led to increased support for liberal candidate John Kerry among those high in attachment

security. This shows that long-standing individual differences in attachment security are one factor that determines how people cope with their fear of death.

Most attachment theorists acknowledge that the vast majority of people have had both sorts of experiences with their parents and other attachment figures throughout their lives, and thus have access to some elements of both mental models (e.g. Baldwin, 1995: Bowlby, 1969; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). This led Weise et al. to conduct a follow-up study investigating the effects of activating memories of a warm caring person who accepts them "for who they are" on the way death reminders affect support for extreme military solutions. Death reminders tended to increase support for military might among those primed with a neutral relationship. However, as predicted, death reminders significantly *decreased* support for military might among those primed with thoughts of a warm caring relationship. Apparently, secure relationships with others actively encourage compassionate treatment of others, thus making it more difficult to endorse tactics that would kill.

Common humanity and the value of family

Another approach to encouraging peace is to encourage people to construe all humans as sharing a common humanity. This view has been advocated by a multitude of religious, ideological, political and popular leaders over the centuries. For example, in the Old Testament book of Isaiah (2:4; New International Version), the Jewish people are implored to, "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: [suggesting that] nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more". In the New Testament, Jesus instructed his followers that they should love their neighbors (Mark 12:31; NIV). Similarly, the Koran (5.32; Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 1983) "decreed for the children of Israel that whosoever kills a human being, except (as punishment) for murder or for spreading corruption in the land, it shall be like killing all humanity; and whosoever saves a life, saves the entire human race". This philosophy is not limited only to the Abrahamic faiths, but traverses many other cultures, too. For example, Jainists' make their highest vow to:

> all living beings, irrespective of their size, shape, or different spiritual developments are equal. No living being has a right to harm, injure, or kill any other living being, including animals, insects, and plants. Every living being has a right to exist and it is necessary to live with every other living being in perfect harmony and peace (Jain Study Center of North Carolina, 2007).

In Africa, Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu is a proponent of the prominent political and religious philosophy of *Ubuntu*, which he describes as "essence of being human. It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up in yours" (Tutu, 2005). Similarly, communist ideologists from Marx to Lenin emphasized the shared plight of the common man. Even popular music of more recent history conveys these ageless humanistic ideals. For instance, one of John Lennon's most popular pacifist anthems implored people to:

> Imagine there's no countries
> It isn't hard to do
> Nothing to kill or die for
> And no religion too
> Imagine all the people

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

Living life in peace
…
And the world will live as one (Lennon, 1971)

Within social psychology, Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood and Sherif's (1961) famous Robber's Cave Study showed that bitter rivals could be brought closer together by giving them mutual goals, and more recently, research has supported Gaertner and Dovidio's (2000) "Common Ingroup Identity Model" contention that encouraging either the breaking down of group boundaries through a process they refer to as decategorization, or creating a new shared identity through a process they refer to as recategorization, can reduce intergroup hostilities.

Motyl et al. (under review) recently sought to determine if increasing one's sense of common humanity could reduce or reverse the effects of thoughts of death or hostility toward out-groups. Their two experiments built on Weise et al.'s (in press) demonstration of the power of attachment relationships and used images or thoughts of family and childhood to encourage participants to think in terms of these universal aspects of humanity. In their first study, American college students were reminded of either death or another aversive topic, and then asked to make judgments about a series of photographs that depicted families from diverse cultures, American families, or groups of apparently unrelated people. Participants' implicit attitudes – non-conscious, difficult to control associations of Arabs with positive and negative concepts – were assessed with the widely used Implicit Association Test (Greenwald, Nosek, & Banaji, 2003). Although reminders of death increased implicit anti-Arab prejudice in the neutral and American family conditions, they led to a significant *reduction* in anti-Arab attitudes when a sense of common humanity had been evoked by viewing pictures of families from diverse cultures. A conceptual replication of this study was then conducted in which feelings of common humanity were activated by having people read a collection of "favorite childhood memories" supposedly written by either Americans or people from diverse countries. After the same mortality salience manipulation used in the previous studies, explicit – conscious, self-reported – attitudes toward immigration were assessed. Whereas mortality salience increased the negativity of attitudes toward immigration in the American childhood memory control group, this effect was completely eliminated among participants whose sense of common humanity was activated by reading and identifying with stories of childhood from diverse cultures.

Group and cultural identification are extremely important for bringing people together to fight each other. Both terrorist groups and nations use this psychological fact to rally people behind their cause. Creating a broader sense of common humanity builds on this same principle, but tries to create a broader more inclusive sense of who one identifies with as group members. The goal is to use humankind's common experiences, hopes, dreams, fears, and general plight to create a more universal sense of "we" and "us". Perhaps greater emphasis on the very real problems all humans face could encourage this broader sense of shared humanity; problems like climate change, poverty, disease and violent conflict itself.

Much of the research discussed above has been confined to laboratory settings and has tested primarily in college students, albeit college students from numerous countries, and is hence limited in its generalizability. Recent preliminary research by Kruglanski (2007), however, suggests that the above-mentioned findings may apply to non-student populations' reactions to real-world conflicts. Kruglanski assessed attitudes toward terrorism in Saudi Arabia and Singapore before, during and after the

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

implementation of state-sanctioned programs designed to reduce support for terrorist violence. In Saudi Arabia, moderate religious leaders were recruited to preach peaceful interpretations of the Koran to fundamentalist Muslims in prison. In Singapore, peace activists have been recruited to promote peaceful action on internet discussion boards and chatrooms. People encountering these peaceful, compassionate and unifying messages in both of these countries have portrayed diminished levels of support for terrorist ideologies. Louis (in press) has also presented evidence that the overly-simplistic, Manichean linguistic frames used when dealing with international conflicts and terrorism, in general, may be counterproductive. Louis reports that stating you are either with "us" or against "us" forces peaceful political opponents into a category with terrorists and prevents those opponents from distancing themselves from terrorist groups and ideologies. This research suggests that, by avoiding these forced linguistic frames, we may deter support for terrorism in countries that are not "with us". Together, these findings indicate that, while there is still much work to be done in the area of conflict management, peace and terrorism, preliminary research suggests that social psychological research can inform our understanding of real-world conflicts and may be useful in suggesting ways to ameliorate inter-group hostilities.

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

Summary and conclusion

Violent conflicts that cost hundreds of thousands of human lives are nothing new. Since the earliest days of humankind, people have fought over not only territory and resources, but also religion, ideology, ethnicity and justice. TMT provides a way of thinking about what is at stake in these disputes and shows connections between the various ideas and values that move people to kill others and sometimes sacrifice their own lives for a cause. Although religion, ideology, nationalism, ethnicity and abstract values, like justice, deal with different aspects of the human quest for meaning, value and freedom from fear, they all reflect a common core element: the hope for immortality and freedom from fear and anxiety that is inherent in the human condition. Social psychological research illustrates a set of non-conscious processes that link specific concrete events to abstract meanings and interpretations, which lead people to kill because of the threat to their psychological equanimity that they pose. It is our hope that, in combination with insights from many other disciplines, social psychological research can point us toward ways to reduce and hopefully even reverse these all too human proclivities. Taken together, the studies of the impact of compassionate religious values, secure attachment and common humanity provide a ray of hope regarding the impact of existential fear, cultural worldviews, religion and ideologies on the ongoing conflict between parts of the Western and Islamic worlds. Although both terrorist and counter-terrorist leaders and organizations play on human fears and use their culture's beliefs and values to combat these fears, our hope is that a scientifically informed understanding of why people "kill for a cause" will enable us to use these same principles to bring about a reduction, and hopefully some day, an end, to these hostilities.

Notes on contributors

Tom Pyszczynski is an experimental social psychologist and co-developer of terror management theory. He is currently Professor of Psychology at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and Director of Human Factors Research at that university's Homeland Security Center.

Matt Motyl is a graduate student in experimental social psychology at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and an associate editor for the graduate student-run journal *New School Psychology Bulletin*.

Abdolhossein Abdollahi is an experimental social psychologist and Professor of Psychology at Zarand Islamic Azad University and Kerman Shahid Bahonar University in Iran.

References

ABC News (1998). *To terror's source.* Retrieved July 30, 2007 from http://web.archive.org/web/20010927151820/http://abcnews.go.com/sections/world/DailyNews/miller_binladen_980609.html.

Altemeyer, B., & Hunsberger, B. (1992). Authoritarianism, religious fundamentalism, quest, and prejudice. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 2*, 113–133.

Baldwin, M.W. (1995). Relational schemas and cognition in close relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 12*, 547–552.

Bargh, J. (1996). Automaticity in social psychology. In E.T. Higgins & A.W. Kruglanski (Eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles* (pp. 169–183). New York: Guildford Press.

Becker, E. (1973) *The denial of death.* New York: Free Press.

Bergen, P., & Cruickshank, P. (2007). The Iraq effect: War has increased sevenfold worldwide. *Mother Jones Magazine Online.* Retrieved July 30, 2007 from http://www.motherjones.com/news/featurex/2007/03/iraq_effect_1.html.

Berkowitz, L. (1988). Frustrations, appraisals, and aversively stimulated aggression. *Aggressive Behavior, 14*, 3–11.

Bloom, M. (2006). Dying to kill: Motivations for suicide terrorism. In A. Pedahzur (Ed.), *Root causes of suicide terrorism: The globalization of martyrdom.* New York: Routledge.

Bowlby, J. (1969). Disruption of affectional bonds and its effects on behavior. *Canada's Mental Health Supplement, 59*, 12.

Bushman, B.J., Ridge, R.D., Das, E., Key, C.W., & Busath, G.L. (2007). When god sanctions killing: Effect of scriptural violence on aggression. *Psychological Science, 18*, 204–207.

Button, A. (1973). Some antecedents of felonious and delinquent behavior. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 2*, 35–37.

Carver, C.S., & Scheier, M.F. (1998). *On the self-regulation of behavior.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

CBS News/New York Times Poll (2007, July 22). Retrieved July 30, 2007 from http://www.pollingreport.com/iraq.htm.

Cohen, F., Solomon, S., Maxfield, M., Pyszczynski, T., & Greenberg, J. (2004). Fatal attraction: the effects of mortality salience on evaluations of charismatic, task-oriented, and relationship-oriented leaders. *Psychological Science, 15*, 846–851.

Crano, W.D., & Prislin, R. (2006). Attitudes and persuasion. *Annual Review of Psychology, 57*, 345–374.

Dawkins, R. (2006). *The God delusion.* London: Bantam Books.

Dechesne, M., Greenberg, J., Arndt, J., & Schimel, J. (2000). Terror management and the vicissitudes of sports fan affiliation: The effects of mortality salience on optimism and fan identification. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 30*, 813–835.

Dijksterhuis, A., & van Knippenberg, A. (1998). The relation between perception and behavior, or how to win a game of Trivial Pursuit. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*, 865–877.

Felson, R.B. (1982). Impression management and the escalation of aggression and violence. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 45*, 245–254.

Festinger, L. (1955). Social psychology and group processes. *Annual Review of Psychology, 6*, 187–216.

Florian, V., & Mikulincer, M. (1997). Fear of death and the judgment of social transgressions: A multidimensional test of terror management theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 73*, 369–380.

Fromm, E. (1950). *Psychoanalysis and religion.* Connecticut: Yale University Press.

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

Gaertner, S.L., & Dovidio, J.F. (2000). *Reducing intergroup bias: The common ingroup identity model.* New York: Psychology Press.
Gallup (2006, May 2). New poll of Islamic world says. *VOA News Online.* Retrieved July 30, 2007 from http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2006-05/2006-05-02-voa82.cfm?CFID=169350783&CFTOKEN=88724635.
Geen, R.G. (1990). *Human aggression.* Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole Publishing.
Gillespie, R., & Jessop, D.C. (in press). Do reminders of terrorist events influence acceptance of racial pride? A terror management theory perspective.
Goldenberg, J.L., Landau, M.J., Pyszczynski, T., Cox, C., Greenberg, J., Solomon, S., & Dunnam, H. (2003). Gender-typical responses to sexual and emotional infidelity as a function of mortality salience induced self-esteem striving. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 29*, 1585–1595.
Goldenberg, J.L., Pyszczynski, T., McCoy, S.K., Greenberg, J., & Solomon, S. (1999b). Death, sex, love, and neuroticism: Why is sex such a problem? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79*, 118–130.
Greenberg, J., Porteus, J., Simon, L., & Pyszczynski, T. (1995). Evidence of a terror management function of cultural icons: The effects of mortality salience on the inappropriate use of cherished cultural symbols. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 21*, 1221–1228.
Greenberg, J., Pyszczynski, T., & Solomon, S. (1986). The causes and consequences of the need for self-esteem: A terror management theory. In R.F. Baumeister (Ed.), *Public self and private self* (pp. 189–212). New York: Springer.
Greenberg, J., Pyszczynski, T., Solomon, S., Rosenblatt, A., Veeder, M., Kirkland, S., & Lyon, D. (1990). Evidence for terror management theory II: The effects of mortality salience on reactions to those who threaten or bolster the cultural worldview. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 58*, 308–318.
Greenberg, J., Solomon, S., & Pyszczynski, T. (1997). Terror management theory of self-esteem and cultural worldviews: Empirical assessments and conceptual refinements. In M.P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology,* vol. 29 (pp. 61–139). New York: Academic Press.
Greenberg, J., Solomon, S., Pyszczysnki, T., Rosenblatt, A., Burling, J., Lyon, D., et al. (1992). Why do people need self-esteem? Converging evidence that self-esteem serves an anxiety-buffering function. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 63*, 913–922.
Greenwald, A.G., Nosek, B.A., & Banaji, M.R. (2003). Understanding and using the Implicit Association Test: I. An improved scoring algorithm. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*, 197–216.
Hafez, M.M. (2006a). Moral agents, immoral violence: Mechanisms of moral disengagement in Palestinian suicide terrorism. In J. Victoroff (Ed.), *Tangled roots: Social and psychological factors in the genesis of terrorism* (pp. 292–307). Washington, DC: IOS Press.
Hafez, M.M. (2006b). Dying to be martyrs: The symbolic dimension of suicide terrorism. In A. Pedahzur (Ed.), *Root causes of suicide terrorism: The globalization of martyrdom* (pp. 54–80). New York: Routledge.
Hirschberger, G., & Ein-Dor, T. (2006). Defenders of a lost cause: terror management and violent resistance to the disengagement plan. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 32*, 761–769.
Hitchens, C. (2007). *God is not great: How religion poisons everything.* London: Twelve Books, Hachette Book Group.
Information Clearing House (2004). *Full transcript of bin Laden's speech.* Retrieved July 30, 2007 from http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article7201.htm.
International Work Group on Death, Dying, and Bereavement (2005). Breaking cycles of violence. *Death Studies, 29*, 585–600.
Israel News Online (2003). *Roadmap is a life saver for us.* Retrieved July 30, 2007 from http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=310788&contrassID=2&subCo.
Jain Study Center of North Carolina (2007). *Five great vows of Jainism.* Retrieved July 29, 2007 from http://www.nonduality.com/hl1887.htm.
Juergensmeyer, M. (2000). *Terror in the mind of god: The global rise of religious violence.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

Kohut, A. (2006). "America's image slips, but allies share concerns about Iran, Hamas". *Pew Global Attitudes Project,* Retreived July 30, 2007, from http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=252.

Kruglanski, A. (2007). *What motivates suicidal terrorism? The role of significance quest in the willingness to die for a cause.* Invited Presidential Address given at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association.

Kunda, Z. (1987). Motivated inference: Self-serving generation and evaluation of causal theories. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 53*, 636–647.

Lakoff, G. (2002). *Moral politics: How liberals and conservatives think.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Landau, M.J., Solomon, S., Greenberg, J., Cohen, F., Pyszczynski, T., Arndt, J., et al. (2004). Deliver us from evil: The effects of mortality salience and reminders of 9/11 on support for President George W. Bush. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 30*, 1136–1150.

Lennon, J. (1971). *Imagine.* Retrieved July 30, 2007 from http://www.john-lennon.com/.

Lerner, M.J., & Simmons, C.H. (1966). Observer's reaction to the 'innocent victim': Compassion or rejection? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 4*, 203–210.

Lifton, R.J. (2003). *Superpower syndrome: America's apocalyptic confrontation with the world.* New York: Thunder's Mouth Press.

Louis, W.R. (in press). If they're not crazy, then what? The implications of social psychological approaches to terrorism for conflict management. In W. Stritzke, S. Lewandowsky, D. Denemark, F. Morgan, & J. Claire (Eds.), *Terrorism and Torture: An Interdisciplinary Perspective.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

McGregor, H., Lieberman, J.D., Solomon, S., Greenberg, J., Arndt, J., Simon, L, & Pyszczynski, T. (1998). Terror management and aggression: Evidence that mortality salience motivates aggression against worldview threatening others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*, 590–605.

Mikulincer, M., Florian, V., & Hirschberger, G. (2003). The existential function of close relationships: Introducing death into the science of love. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 7*, 20–40.

Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P.R. (2005). Mental representations of attachment security: theoretical foundation for a positive social psychology. In M. W. Baldwin (Ed.), *Interpersonal cognition* (pp. 233–266). New York: Guilford Press.

Mogahed, D., Pyszczynski, T., & Stern, J. (in press). Religious engagement and violence. In C. Meister (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Diversity.* London: Oxford University Press.

Morse, S., & Gergen, K.J. (1970). Social comparison, self-consistency, and the concept of self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 16*, 148–156.

Motyl, M., Pyszczynski, T., Cox, C., Siedel, A., & Maxfield, M. (under review). One big family: The effects of mortality salience and a sense of common humanity on prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.*

Musharbash, Y. (2007, April 11). *Terrorism in Europe: Bin Laden's eurofighters.* Retreived July 30, 2007 from http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,476680,00.html.

Office of the Press Secretary (2005). *President addresses nation, discusses Iraq, War on Terror.* Retrieved July 30, 2007 from http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/06/print/20050628-7.html.

People for the American Way (2002). *A convenient scapegoat: The Right's demonization of Muslims.* Retrieved August 1, 2007 from http://www.pfaw.org/pfaw/general/default.aspx?oid=5005.

Pyszczynski, T., Abdollahi, A., Solomon, S., Greenberg, J., Cohen, F., & Weise, D. (2006b). Mortality salience, martyrdom, and military might: The great Satan versus the axis of evil. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 32*, 525–537.

Pyszczynski, T., & Greenberg, J. (1987). A biased hypothesis-testing model of motivated attributional distortion. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology.* New York: Academic Press.

Pyszczynski, T., Greenberg, J., & Goldenberg, J. (2003a). Fear versus freedom: On the defense, growth, and expansion of the self. In M. Leary & J. Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of self and identity* (pp. 314–343). New York: Guilford Press.

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

Pyszczynski, T., Solomon, S., & Greenberg, J. (2003b). *In the wake of 9/11: The psychology of terror.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Pyszczysnki, T., Wicklund, R. A., Floresku, S., Koch, H., Gauch, G., Solomon, S., et al. (1996). Whistling in the dark: Exaggerated consensus estimates in response to incidental reminders of mortality. *Psychological Science, 7*, 332–336.

Richardson, L. (2006). *What terrorists want: Understanding the enemy, confronting the threat.* New York: Random House.

Robertson, P. (2001, September 13). *Transcript of Pat Robertson's interview with Jerry Falwell on the 700 Club.* Retrieved July 30, 2007, from the People for the American Way website http://www.pfaw.org.

Rosenblatt, A., Greenberg, J., Solomon, S., Pyszczynski, T., & Lyon, D. (1989). Evidence for terror management theory I: The effects of mortality salience on reactions to those who violate or uphold cultural values. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57*, 681–690.

Ross, L. (1977). The intuitive psychologist and his shortcomings: Distortions in the attribution process. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 10*, 173–220.

Ross, L., & Nisbett, R.E. (1991). *The person and the situation: Perspectives of social psychology.* New York: McGraw–Hill.

Rothschild, Z., Abdollahi, A., & Pyszczynski, T. (under review). *Does peace have a prayer? Effects of mortality salience, religious fundamentalism, and compassionate values on hostility toward the outgroup in the United States and Iran.*

Ruttenberg, J., Zea, M.C., & Sigelman, C. K. (1996). Collective identity and intergroup prejudice among Jewish and Arab students in the United States. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 136*, 209–220.

Schimel, J., Hayes, J., Williams, T., & Jahrig, J. (2007). Is death really the worm at the core? Converging evidence that worldview threat increases death-thought accessibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 92*, 789–803.

Sherif, M., Harvey, O.J., White, B.J., Hood, W.R., & Sherif, C.W. (1961). *Intergroup conflict and cooperation: The Robbers Cave experiment.* Norman, OL: University of Oklahoma Book Exchange.

Snyder, M., & Swann, W.B. (1976). When actions reflect attitudes: The politics of impression management. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 34*, 1034–1042.

Solomon, S., Cohen, F., Greenberg, J., & Pyszczynski, T. (2008). Knocking on Heaven's door: The social psychological dynamics of charismatic leadership. In G.R. Goethals, D. Forsyth, & C. Hoyt (Eds.), *Social psychology and leadership.* New York: Praeger Perspectives.

Stern, J. (2003). *Terror in the name of god: Why religious militants kill.* New York: Harper-Collins.

Swann, W.B. (1987). Identity negotiation: Where two roads meet. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 53*, 1038–1051.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J.C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W.G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–48). Monterey: Brooks/Cole.

Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an (1983). *The Holy Qu'ran,* M. H. Shakir (Trans.). Retrieved on August 8, 2007 from http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/k/koran/koran-idx?type=simple&q1=Do+good+to+others&size=First+100.

Taubman Ben-Ari, O., Florian, V., & Mikulincer, M. (1999). The impact of mortality salience on reckless driving: A test of terror management mechanisms. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76*, 35–45.

Todorov, A., & Bargh, J.A. (2002). Automatic sources of aggression. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 7*, 53–68.

Tutu, D. (2005). *God has a dream: A vision of hope for our time.* London: Rider.

Walsh, P.E., & Smith, J.L. (2007). Opposing standards within the cultural worldview: Terror management and American women's desire for uniqueness versus inclusiveness. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 31*, 103–113.

Walters, G.D. (2005). Proactive and reactive a*ggression*: A lifestyle view. In J.P. Morgan (Ed.), *Psychology of aggression* (pp. 29–43). New York: Nova Science.

Weinberg, L. (2006). Suicide terrorism for secular causes. In A. Pedahzur (Ed.), *Root causes of suicide terrorism: The globalization of martyrdom.* New York: Routledge.

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010

Weise, D.R., Pyszczynski, T., Cox, C.R., Arndt, J., Greenberg, J., & Solomon, S. (in press). Interpersonal politics: the role of terror management and attachment processes in political preferences. *Psychological Science, 19*, 448–455.

Wessells, M. (2006). The impact of U. S. Antiterrorism interventions on terrorist motivation: Preliminary research in Afghanistan an Iraq. In P.R. Kimmel, & C.E. Stout (Eds.) *Collateral damage: The psychological consequences of America's war on terrorism* (pp. 165–188). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Widom, C.S. (1989). The cycle of violence. *Science, 244*, 160–166.

Zimbardo, P.G. (1969). *The cognitive control of motivation: The consequences of choice and dissonance.* Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.

Zimbardo, P.G. (2007). *The Lucifer effect: Understanding how good people turn evil.* New York: Random House.

Downloaded At: 01:00 2 October 2010