

Mission Ready

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Memorial Day in the Age of Terror

Memorial Day has always been a favorite holiday of Americans; it is a time when we give thanks to those who have sacrificed for this country; and it is also a holiday to enjoy the pleasures of freedom. On this Memorial Day, however, the shadow of terrorism hovered over our nation—largely because, a few days before, a top aide of Osama Bin Laden called on his fellow countrymen throughout the Middle East to initiate “more 911’s,” and to “set fire beneath their feet so that they have no peace;” he urged the like-minded to strike at American “soft targets” and do deliver a “summer of terror.” This broadcast was courtesy of the television station Al-Jazeera. To us, the most remarkable thing about that broadcast was that Al-Jazeera did not immediately go up in a puff of smoke.

This great nation should not allow any media outlet to broadcast calls to attack American families, or to promise a “summer of terror.” The terrorists have declared war upon this nation—not upon our warriors (in fact they avoid our warriors), but upon our civilians. “More 911’s” means more attacks upon unsuspecting men, women and children (there were day care centers in the Twin Towers). “Soft targets” means the kinds of targets we scrupulously avoided during the three week Iraqi War.

It’s not just that American women and children should not be publicly threatened; women and children anywhere should not be threatened, or considered “soft targets.” Certainly, if anyone threatened our families “in our face,” we would respond immediately—in their face. Maybe we’re old fashioned, but we think a television broadcast is equally confrontational, equally up front and personal—especially when the targets happen to be our loved ones. The news media outlets around the world should be put on notice: if you relay a message calling for attacks upon American innocents, you will be attacked, yourselves.

The terrorists obviously consider Al-Jazeera to be a personal asset—a means to broadcast their demands and their threats to the world at large. That means must be taken away from the terrorists, especially now that they have so few vehicles of public communication. The argument that Al-Jazeera is a “neutral” third party, broadcasting “both sides” of the issues of the Arab world is nonsense. There are not “two sides” to the issue of attacking innocents; one cannot be “neutral” in the face of calls to attack women and children where they live. By broadcasting those horrific calls to action, one becomes a party to the consequential attacks, and, therefore, one becomes an enemy of the United States and of all civilized societies and loses 1st Amendment protection.

If Tokyo Rose and Lord Haw Haw could have been silenced, during WW II, we would have silenced them. And no American would have maintained those propagandists had the right to be heard. Al-Jazeera is capable of silencing terrorism, too, by denying these child murderers an international forum. If it chooses not to, Al-Jazeera must be silenced, itself. The American people are entitled to defend their families, against violent action and against threats of violent action. It is against our laws—not to mention our consciences—to threaten women and children. Any individual, group, or entity which does so must realize that we, as a nation, will not sit back and wait for the actual attack to materialize. The threat, itself, is enough to affect the peace of mind of our families, and should be, for that reason alone, grounds for military strikes.

We trust you all had a happy Memorial Day; and we hope our jets will be in the air the next time Al-Jazeera chooses to broadcast threats to our families.