

07/2009

RE: Hating us for our values

Dear Editor,

Paul Greenberg, 6/4/2009, makes the argument that Islamic extremists don't hate us for what we have done, but instead rather hate us for our values and way of life and I think there is probably some truth to this point, particularly for the most extreme religious elements of global Jihadism. However, I do have to consider whether the slightly more moderate Muslim might be somewhat dismayed by the seemingly perpetual presence of foreign occupying troops and aerial bombardment upon their country, however carefully planned and executed, given the inevitably chaotic nature of warfare.

I would ask Mr. Greenberg: if the shoe were on the other foot, and it was their occupying troops on our American soil and their planes dropping bombs on our (at least in their eyes) bad guys (along with the best intentioned but not always avoidable collateral damage), how then would he feel? I think I know the answer and I suspect it would not be along the lines of "thank-you for coming here and everything you have done".

I admit there's a bit of a "which came first" dilemma here (the foreign military/colonial interventions or the fundamentalist/traditionalist backlash), but still I have to wonder how effective a recruiting tool our continued presence and resulting civilian casualties (however unintentional) are for underemployed, impressionable, impulsive and impatient young men. Ask yourself: how would the young American men that you know react to the mistaken killing of their parents by a foreign soldier in their own home?

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