

POSTAL NEWS

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November 8, 2010

1. Going Postal Al-Qaeda Style

Nancy Kobrin, PhD, Joan Lachkar, PhD

Why are we so surprised when we get a package in the mail sent to us by Al-Qaeda? Why suddenly this rash of mail bombs, particularly from Yemen? Our effort is to try and understand the juxtaposition of mail bombs and how they relate to suicide bombing let alone vehicle-laden bombs or even IEDs ("improvised explosive devices", usually encountered as roadside bombs). As if we have not had enough invasion on our soil inflicted upon us? Before we can conclude what to do, we need to better understand this type of violent communication.

These Yemen mail bombs are in a different venue of threat meriting an exploration of "jihadi postal" and so we have to figure out how can we beat them at their own game. For starters we need to understand that this is a form of nonverbal communication -- a way of evacuating into us what they feel and experience, namely their own fear and terror, along with their paranoid anxieties.

Collectively this postal message is their way of saying that they have found a way to catch us off guard by merely re-packaging the same old redundant tedious jihadi message under a different wrapper -- that of UPS. In our view we see terrorism as a projection, something that is alien and foreign to us and does not belong to us. By and large, Americans have felt safe and protected on our own soil. The terror belongs to them and is not ours.

Think of the Unibomber who turned out to be a mentally disturbed recluse living in a hut in the wilderness. Experts went so far to diagnose him as a high functioning Aspergers who managed to go to Harvard and then become a professor. Of course not all who have Aspergers disorder become violent. There are many other intervening factors but just because someone is a professor, engineer or doctor and may appear normal, they are not necessarily normal. They hide behind a mask of sanity, making their predatory behavior all the more confusing.

Yet the Unibomber's targeted audience was quite circumscribed. Back then while the Unibomber did cause considerable terror in the public sector, there was not this pervasive rage and annihilating hatred of the infidel. Furthermore, his own brother turned him in because his brother knew it was wrong, unlike Ibrahim Al-Asiri who blew up his little brother. We are now feeling and experiencing their fear and terror,

let alone their paranoia. Collectively they may be saying, what better way to tap into our terrors. Besides who wants to find a bomb in their mailbox?

The Yemen mail bomb plot is different in that it is highly sensational, sadomasochistically erotic - heightening our senses, which even lures us into jihadi pornography, another venue of terrorism, a reminder of the alleged mastermind, Ibrahim al-Asiri, who inserted bombs into the rectum of his youngest brother as well as sewed bombs into the underwear of the Christmas bomber. So why are we mentioning porno and fetishes? Bombs are Al Qaeda's fetish, meaning obsession. A fetish is "an inanimate object worshipped for its magical powers." Moreover, it is "a form of sexual desire in which gratification is linked to an abnormal degree to a particular object. . ." Bombs are not only their "sex" toys they are their perverse lifeblood.

We must be careful not to underestimate the degree to which such psychosexual dysfunction manifests itself by the delivery system of fetishistic postal bombs. Let alone how it yields this unspoken special terrorizing psychological effect to which the targeted audience is subjected.

But let's put the fetish off to the side for a moment. We also need to be careful and not fall into the trap of focusing solely on the mail bombs without thinking about them as a collective group of other weapons in Al-Qaeda's backpack of arsenals. They need to be analyzed together (functionally) very much like a very disturbed orchestrated symphonic piece but carrying a far greater impact.

This brings us to the subject of denial and the nature of the targets. It is simple for the intel experts to say that the two Chicago synagogues were not the real targets and the snail mail addresses were old and incorrect. It is easy to say that the Jewish community is not at risk.

However, one only has to think back to the Mumbai attacks on the Chabad Center to realize how vulnerable all Jewish institutions remain. Moreover, the recent tragic massacre of the Catholics in Baghdad also demonstrates how absurd it is to say that this is not a war about Islam vs. Judaism and Christianity. Islam is not just a religion but a political entity with its own quest to establish Sharia law.

Yet the bitter paradox these jihadis carry in their terror "packaging" of choice for this time is the following:

The more they destroy that which is sacred, the weaker and more impotent they become.

In Christianity and Judaism the body and human life is valued and sacred. While the body is allegedly sacred in Islam too, what prevails and dominates is perverse blood-letting and revenge. Never again should others be willing to write off and minimize these disastrous bloody events as merely the upshot of the cultural practice of cleansing honor with blood predicated on the tribal customs, say for example in Yemen. Such denial has only deepened the fetish and addiction to blood.

Yet as bizarre and tragic as this all is, the jihadis going postal is their infantile attempt to have a human connection. It is pathetic beyond words. Their religion and culture

have crippled them socially and their extreme ideologies keep their fragile personalities together.

What can we do? We must recognize its sadomasochism, set a limit and not buy into their perversion. Also the moderate Muslims must begin to recognize this dynamic and we must encourage moderate Muslims to rally against violence and be more proactive even though it may be scary to for them to take such steps.

Finally we must remember and so we repeat -- the terror belongs to them and is not ours. Hence, we must proclaim and write in bold letters: RETURN TO SENDER.

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Saturday, November 06, 2010, 09:00

2. Privatisation of postal service

I WAS horrified to find out that our Conservative MP Anna Soubry has been very selective, to put it mildly, in relation to the Beeston Postal Workers' Campaign to stop the privatisation of our postal service in parliament.

It is my belief that the option to privatise is one that would be met with opposition from many, due to the worry that this is a monopoly opportunity for the buyer if the service was privatised, hence all voices must be heard and represented in parliament.

As a business person who is very dependent on Royal Mail due to our online business being 25 per cent of our turnover, it is of great concern that privatisation could lead to higher costs, with few alternatives to move to another provider, due to the monopoly on low weight packages.

In fact it seems that history is repeating itself as we saw prices hike up in relation to the rail services being privatised only to line the pockets of such entrepreneurs as Richard Branson.

Many postal workers and members of the public have organised a campaign with a substantial response – 300 to be exact, hence I am a little surprised that our MP is suggesting that very few Beeston Postal Workers or member of the public protested. How can this be true?

Any MP, be it Conservative, Labour, Lib Dem, Green and so on, is placed into power to listen and represent the views of the people in their area.

Anna Soubry claimed she was a rebel and single-minded enough to represent what was right and not the agenda of her party.

It saddens me that once again we have a politician who claims a clean up in politics, with one hand reaching out to the electorate when in the other hand her fingers are crossed.

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