

Author: Asnia Asim, Pakistan

Title: A for altruism, B for brotherhood, C for compassion

Abstract

The paper extracts acumen for central idea by a tragic personal experience of loss of a dear friend in a terror attack. Then it proceeds into identifying terrorism as the major obstacle in personal life as well as of many others around the world, causing insecurity and impeding success by using examples from a global context. Triggered by the tragedy mentioned the author attempts to identify the reason behind terrorism to eventually advance a solution to it. Factors frequently proposed such as poverty and lack of education are considered but only to be dismissed in light of certain studies and facts. Finally increasing level of intolerance for others, frustration towards their practices is identified as the root cause.

An attempt to investigate as to why education has been unable to play its role in teaching individuals to accept others' beliefs is narrated, which ends up detecting major flaws in the curriculum being taught in educational institutions around the world. Specific examples are cited, describing instances where some appallingly biased concepts against some concerned party are being taught as part of curriculum.

Finally a solution to growing and uncurbed intolerance is proposed in the form of an international council, formed under the supervision of the World Bank, headed and run by generally admired and academically capable individuals from countries and communities around the world. The council is proposed to work in collaboration with the already established EFA program, in order to make the education brought to children effective in addition to efficient, and hence the council is given the name of International Council of Effective Education (ICEE). The mission, role, goals, members, curriculum changes and publicity campaigns are suggested, with the intention of providing a sustainable and secure future and relieving present of anxiety caused by growing terrorism.

8th of August, 2004, was the day that I was unfortunate enough to *experience* what insecurity meant in reality. My best friend was blown to pieces in a terror attack while he was on his way to meet me. It was an ingenious plan of twin blasts. The first one exploded when he was in the car, he came out like many others to help the panicking and profusely bleeding victims, falling right into the trap, and then another bomb attached to a motorbike right next to them, exploded. For many days after my loss, I often wished I had learnt what insecurity meant, through some dictionary or movie, but had not experienced it. While I was already wallowing in the misery of my loss, my feelings of vulnerability were multiplied when in coming days on television, I saw a mother similar to my friends', wailing over her son's body, outside a Moscow subway station¹ (Aug. 31, 2004); I saw expressions similar to what my friend might have had, on a web site linked to an Iraqi militant group showing a video of what is purported to be the killing of 12

¹ Washington Post Foreign Service Wednesday, September 1, 2004; Page A10

Nepalese workers by militants who had kidnapped them² (Aug. 31, 2004) and I saw a friend (like me) of some girl (like my friend) killed in a terrorist suicide bombing in Beersheba, Israel³ (September 1, 2004).

If someone asks me today what is the biggest obstacle I face in my daily life? An obstacle that distorts my plans for a sound future, that negatively affects my lifestyle, which has made my present and future insecure? My answer would be: Getting up every morning with a feeling that somebody in the world is going to harm someone else in an unbearably terrorizing and gruesome manner.

The High Level Panel's report, "A Secure More World"⁴ defines insecurity as "Any event or process that leads to large-scale death or lessening of life chances and undermines States as the basic unit of the international system is a threat to international security." What I and many others experienced in one month unfortunately fits the description perfectly. Terrorism was able to take innocent lives of 142 people in 10 days in places as diverse as Russia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Israel in August 2004⁵. Today's tragedy is the suffering caused to people around the world not due to an epidemic or a tsunami but due to other people. It is moral shattering but at the same time far more terrifying than a natural disaster because the frequency of such terror attacks is far higher and they are almost always unpredictable.

When such horrific scenes are repeated daily on every television set in every house, one question that comes to mind is: Why so much hatred, why this intolerance for another's values? The paper makes use of this word: intolerance, as it very aptly summarizes the core of all these attacks. The paper will describe the reasons for choosing intolerance as the essence behind terrorism against poverty or education as it proceeds.

The intolerance is not only towards Americans or Jews by only Muslims, but Sunni are hated by Shiite (vice versa), IRA against Northern Ireland and according to Muslims around the world USA's war on Iraq is an equally unjustified terrorist activity. To gauge the extent of this hatred toward *others*, to analyze how bad the situation is, I planned to conduct a casual survey, and asked people in my community what they felt about Americans, Jews, Shiite or Sunni. People's answers were full of incidents where they had lost some member or had heard of someone die in a terrorist activity *against* them, or Muslims, or Shiites or Sunnis. During the process of interviewing I was startled when a girl of almost eight, interrupted her father with extreme confidence and said looking me straight in the eye, "They are all after us, they want to kill us all, so it is better that we harm them before they harm us." The little girl's comment was painfully blunt but summarized everyone else's feelings of insecurity, just perfectly. This revelation puts focus on the fact that not only the animosity is strong but has also managed to seep deep

² BAGHDAD, Iraq, Aug. 31, 2004 (CBS/AP)

³ Wednesday, September 1, 2004 Posted: 12:26 AM EDT (0426 GMT) BEERSHEBA, Israel (CNN)

⁴ <http://www.un.org/secureworld/>

⁵ www.msnbc.com

into the roots of each interest group. This hatred and intolerance for anyone else's practices and beliefs has affected not only the adults but unfortunately the youth is also continuously being polluted with similar negative feelings.

Intolerance has never been treated as the culprit but instead the United Nations and World Bank representatives have highlighted the need for poverty alleviation repeatedly in their papers and speeches. It is proposed that once income inequality is curtailed, crimes such as terror attacks can be lessened. For example, James D. Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank, asserted that the war on terrorism "will not be won until we have come to grips with the problem of poverty and thus the sources of discontent."⁶ Also writing in *Business Week* December 2001, Laura D' Andrea Tyson (dean of the Haas School of Business at the University of California) argued: "We live in a world of unprecedented opulence and remarkable deprivation, a world so interconnected that poverty and despair in a remote region can harbor a network of terrorism dedicated to our destruction. In such a world, our prosperity and freedom at home increasingly depend on the successful development of countries like Afghanistan."⁷ But the fact is that terrorists are better-educated and better off than many of their countrymen, like the September 11 hijackers came mostly from Saudi Arabia, a country that has reasonably high levels of per capita income, and the Israeli Jewish extremists who attacked Palestinians in the West Bank in the late '70s and early '80s, were Gush Emunim members, and a list of 27 of the Israeli terrorists revealed a pattern of high-paying occupations⁸. Hence poverty alleviation might not end up in a desperately aspired secure life.

If poverty reduction is not a harbinger of tolerance, then the next very obvious choice seems proper education provision to all. And keeping this in mind programs such as Education for All (EFA) by the World Bank seem very promising. This very enthusiastic mission strives to bring the benefits of education to "every citizen in every society"⁹. But then again these optimistic emotions are despoiled when the review by NBER Research Associate Alan Krueger and co-author Jitka Maleckova states that "Any connection between poverty, education, and terrorism is indirect, complicated, and probably quite weak," (Education, Poverty, Political Violence, and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?¹⁰ The author states that "Members of Hezbollah's militant wing who were killed in action in the 1980s and early 1990s were at least as likely to come from economically advantaged families and have a relatively high level of education as they were to come from impoverished families without educational opportunities." The writer describes other factors as reasons for terrorism promotion and says "Instead of viewing terrorism as a direct response to low market opportunities or ignorance, we suggest it is more accurately viewed as a response to political conditions and long-standing feelings (either perceived or real) of indignity and frustration that have little to do with economics."

⁶ cfrterrorism.org/causes/poverty.html

⁷ www.businessweek.com/magazine

⁸ JUNE 10, 2002 ECONOMIC VIEWPOINT By Robert J. Barro, Business week

⁹ www.worldbank.org

¹⁰ (NBER Working Paper No. 9074)

But the fact that education is supposed to broaden one's scope and teach an individual to learn as a child, to adapt and make the right choices, perplexed me. Hence I decided to casually study the various curriculum being taught and educational techniques being practiced in various parts of the world, and attempted to detect what was lacking in them, that individuals did not learn to be adaptive and accept others ideas and values. The findings are as follows.

The curriculum being taught and followed in many countries is biased in its representation of facts. Tales of holy wars and fights for freedom are taught to children at a very young age. Although such information is a part of history and is critical for learning, but when the events that took place are presented in an extremely partial manner the child naturally ends up developing hatred for the "bad guys". An example would be of the Indo-Pak history taught in both India and Pakistan. Chapters in their History books describe the nationals' fight for freedom and relate tales of how the British Army wrongfully invaded their land, how the British Army tortured them and how eventually they were able to fight for their freedom and take their land back. Children grow up loving their heroes like Nehru in India and Qaid-e-Azam in Pakistan, and of course despising the villains who tortured their forefathers, namely "The White People". In Saudi Arabia the textbook for one of the five religion classes required of all 10th graders in Saudi public high schools tackles the complicated issue of who good Muslims should befriend. After examining a number of scriptures which warn of the dangers of having Christian and Jewish friends, the lesson concludes: "It is compulsory for the Muslims to be loyal to each other and to consider the infidels their enemy."¹¹ In USA Patrick Henry Christian College is being termed as another extremist madrasa¹², as its students are trained with extremist view to "lead our nation and shape our culture with timeless biblical values".¹³ At Sacramento, West Coast, USA when students returning post-holidays to seventh-grade social studies classes in many school districts found themselves immersed in the study of Islam, parent complaints were making headlines on conservative radio and Internet news sites.¹⁴

The point to be noted in above examples is that the text books, educational activities and role-model teachers and parents in many countries are themselves planting seeds of hatred and animosity towards different sects, religions, races, countries and people. In more developed nations such as USA and some Britain such extremist or biased education isn't as ingrained in the curriculum as in most developing nations. But they lack true representation of Islam and Muslim practices, which aid children in better understanding of their Muslim community within the country and everywhere around the world. This is a reciprocal effect: people around the world misunderstand Islamic practices and label all Muslims as extremists, whereas Muslims already feeling

¹¹ www.nytimes.com

¹² **Madrasa:** a small set up of religious studies taught to young boys in Pakistan and Afghanistan, accused of breeding terrorists

¹³ www.voiceoffreedom.com/patrickhenrycollege/interns.html

¹⁴ By Barbara Curtis, Christian Times of the Central Coast, www.blessedcause.org/BlessedCauseNews/BCnewsCurtis.htm

threatened by super powers and the West become more defensive, and hence a vicious cycle of negative feelings continues unchecked. The fact is that nothing is being done to prevent or eliminate these misunderstandings, which later translate into intolerance towards others. More worrying is the situation mentioned earlier that more biased opinions and partial views are actually being taught to the coming generations. If such practices are not stopped, the frustrations towards others and the impatience towards their beliefs, breeding within societies all around the world will rise to an irremediable extent. As children mature into youth and further, it is harder to change their ideals. Once grown up, they are far too convinced of others' evil towards them and their community to change their views.

Proposal for Building a Secure Future

Technology has progressed at a pace much faster than what humans could handle or get used to. Evidence is the use of sophisticated weapons and communication systems for transnational crime and global terrorist activities. Such crime and terrorist organizations work globally and hence are hard to catch. But at the same time their impact is equally international and sends waves of insecurity and vulnerability all across the globe. Hence to fight such crimes of passion and extremity, triggered by intolerance and affecting all of humanity, there needs to be a global movement attempting to find a sustainable and lasting solution. Although, we, the people of today, do suffer badly from these attacks, we can secure our and our coming generations future by teaching them to be accommodative and tolerant towards others and their practices, religion, values and beliefs.

To achieve such a sustainable security the paper proposes a council formed under the influence of the World Bank. The mission and particulars of the council are explained below in detail.

The International Council for Effective Education

International Council for Effective Education, (ICEE) will be formed as a part of The World Bank Group's Education sector and will attempt to focus on the type of rather than the amount of education being provided all around the world. Its mission would be to check and establish curriculum that is free of any kind of bias, prejudice or misrepresentation in teaching institutions all around the world.

ICEE will proceed with more of a proactive role rather than reactive i.e. it will attempt to make effective changes in educational system and anticipate their impact on coming generations and children at present with respect to their socio-cultural setup.

Role

Efficiency is defined as “The ratio of the energy delivered to the energy supplied for its operation.” In the light of the above definition what EFA attempts to accomplish is efficient education as it plans to bring the benefits of education to “every citizen in every society”. Now that the role of EFA is explained, ICEE will work towards ensuring that education delivered is delivered effectively. Effective is defined as “The quality or property of being efficient.”

The above description describes the crucial role of ICEE in the achievement of the EFA goal and its participation in deriving benefit from resources dedicated to the cause of education.

ICEE can play an effective entity’s role only when it has formed close relations with the local governments since they hold the main links and channels of the country in their hands. At the same time ICEE needs to establish a network of pre planned activities with Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). As they are already active in welfare activities in local and international context, making use of local citizens, who have a better understanding of the region and behavioral impacts of various policies and actions.

The ICEE will play a vital role of ensuring effective education wherever education is being provided.

Goals

The ICEE will plan to achieve the following goals in order to provide effective education, wherever education is being provided.

1. ICEE will work in complete collaboration with the Education for All (EFA) program, already initiated by the World Bank. In this way all the new efforts being made by the World Bank to provide every child with proper education will be directed in the right direction. The resources (funds and money) will be utilized towards a complete goal of provision of timely and effective education.
2. ICEE will plan and implement complete new curriculum in the areas receiving education for the first time, the primary and secondary level schools and institutions beings opened.
3. ICEE will work towards gradually transforming the existing curriculum being taught around the world. It will conduct detailed studies of the material being taught and will try to gauge the impact on a child’s mind in his/her context (socio-cultural environment)
4. ICEE will design programs to train teachers – novice and experienced – in accordance with its goals, namely, promotion of more tolerant, adaptive and broadminded ideas.

5. ICEE will form close alliances with governments and move with their coordination and at the same time will keep closer monitoring of the use of aid being granted for educational purposes. Its role will exceed mere provision of funds and ensuring of education provision and will be to answer questions like: What is being taught? Why? And How?
6. ICEE will form close alliances with Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working within each country and donate funds and aid in order effectively implement its plan across the region.
7. ICEE will have the official capability to take action against schools or educational institutions teaching extremist views, promoting biased views or refusing to cooperate. E.g. madrasas that were operating in Pakistan.

Council Members, Representatives and Cooperators

People taking part in the ICEE actions and achievement of goals will be vital to its success and effective functioning. Members working at different levels for different tasks need to possess the following characteristics:

1. Advisors to council: These advisors to the council regarding changes in curriculum will be nationals of the country under consideration. They need to be very well educated and should possess a thorough understanding of the values, culture and norms of the society and at the same time the impact of changes made on it. These individuals need to be highly esteemed and generally liked or admired in their country or community so that people don't feel that they are once again being manipulated by "The West".
2. Participants of the Council: All individuals taking any part in the council and its activities should be selected completely on the basis of their personal inclination towards a more coherent, peaceful and adaptable future. As long as they don't believe in the cause of the ICEE they won't be able to perform in complete coherence with the council's goal.
3. Publicity People: The individuals chosen for ad-campaigns and publicity of the ICEE should be admired and well reputed celebrities from the local as well as international entertainment field. Popular political as well as religious leaders can be convinced to take part in the council's publicity campaign, to convince their following crowds of its credibility.
4. President: The president or head of the council should be some globally known and admired individual in terms of personality as well as academics. The president shall be changed annually, and each country participating in the program shall be given a chance of participation.
5. Members to Council: Different members to the council need to be of influential position so that they can back the actions taken by the council. E.g. President Bush or British Prime Minister, Tony Blair could be made honorary or permanent members of the council.

The New Curriculum

Additions:

The new curriculum as well as the changes proposed in the existing ones need to include the following:

1. Addition of more stories and poems for children written by other children their age from the other end, mentioning their names, countries and interests. With such an addition children will develop a natural bond towards those their age, but of different race, color and religion.
2. Addition in text books of different names (e.g. use of name Amina in a math problem in USA and Angela in Saudi Arabia) and colorful pictures of people wearing different dresses with different features.
3. Arrangement of dramas and plays written in different countries and children should be encouraged to participate.
4. Collaborative interactive sessions with children from around the world e.g. chatting and e-mailing on pre-chosen topics and pen pal activities where there is no internet.
5. Addition in curriculum and textbooks, of the positive role played by United Nations, World Bank, Red Cross etc. and various other organizations in the development of their country as well as global development.
6. Inclusion of various incidents of coordination among people of different religion, races and nationalities in times of tragedy, for example, the tsunami incident, where volunteers from all around the world tried to help the victims.

Omissions:

Following aspects of the curriculum need to be either completely omitted or changed:

1. Extremist religious statements or scriptures out of religious books or by religious scholars.
2. Biased statements and narratives against any other country, religion or sect. for example, "...the fight of Pakistan or India against brutal British umpire"
3. Use of names that are considered a threat or are disliked by communities somewhere else should be avoided, for example, Osama bought six oranges..., or Rushdi sold five apples...

Ad and Publicity Campaigns

A global publicity campaign needs to be launched that works on the following format:

- Spreads a message of tolerance and equality for different people in a global context but targets individuals at the local level.

- A campaign making use of all types of celebrities in sports (David Beckham, British), entertainment (Aishwarya Rai, Indian), politics (Pervez Musharraf, Pakistani) and others
- The campaign could take inspiration from the “Got Milk” campaign, spreading a message of public welfare, carefully selecting celebrities to represent and deliver the message, in a generally accepted and appreciated manner.
- Celebrities from different ends of the world can appear together in advertisements to amuse and encourage individuals all around the world.

Conclusion

Today every individual of any community feels threatened by some opposing party. When fear of being objected to for following ones beliefs or religion transforms into fear of being killed, hijacked or raped for doing the same thing, action needs to be taken. In today’s world when people have become impatient they need to be re-taught the meaning of tolerance and resolving issues with civil negotiations. This can never be achieved in a world where every child is being taught different lessons of freedom fighting and is encouraged to develop negative feelings towards someone else, based on either biased information or facts included in textbooks and curriculum that are beyond his understanding. Hence collective action is proposed in the form of an international council headed and run by eminent members from all types of communities around the world. Only an action on the international level leading to consistent representation of unbiased and positive messages and lessons about other people everywhere in the world, can lead to a sustainable security system, which can be carried on in coming generations and free them of insecurities faced by us at present.

Sources of Information

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