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A Fallacy: Violence Solves Conflict

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TBWT Guest Contributor

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It appears that the current U.S. administration advocates the use of violence to solve unresolved conflicts. If so, this is a regressive policy, a return to the uncivilized and barbaric way of resolving conflicts. And, it is unfortunate that other nations may be emulating the U.S. leadership to resolve disputes with their neighbors. Today, Israel uses violence to resolve disputes. Likewise, Pakistan and India also appear to view violence as a way to resolve their conflict. Additionally, groups within nations with grievances are resorting to greater and greater violence in an attempt to impose their will.

I believe, that it is the language that leaders used that creates the notion that violence is an appropriate tool for solving conflicts. The danger with this approach is that the citizens of these nations, and the world at large, will come to believe that violence is an appropriate method of resolving conflicts. In essence, often the citizenry internalize the propensity towards violence of their leaders. Eventually, they will also attempt to solve conflict within their home and local communities with violence.

During the Vietnam era, Dr. Martin Luther King reminded his audience "that U.S. lawlessness abroad breeds violence within the United States as well." In essence, American leaders were signaling to its citizens that violence could solve their problems. King recognized that he had to oppose violence, not only in the ghettos of America, but violence everywhere. Thus, he had to speak clearly against all purveyors of violence in the world. If he were alive today he would speak against violence perpetrated by all nations and by groups aspiring to form nations. He understood that we can conquer evil by ensuring distributional justice among the world citizens and that violence cannot conquer evil. Violence and evil are different sides of the same coin.

It appears, however, that some leaders believe that the violence they perpetrate is good and violence that others perpetrate is bad. Clearly, the notion that we ought to view violence as good when we perpetrate it and as bad when our adversaries perpetrate it is fallacious and not Christ-like. Hence, if the citizenry does not reject the leader's cognitive dissonance, it will become their cognitive dissonance as well. King understood that violence in any form was against the teaching of Jesus Christ; therefore, he rejected violence at any level. In Genesis 6:13 (NIV), God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth." The key point here is that God tells Noah that He will destroy all purveyors of violence; not that one is better than others.

So, what is the duty of the citizens of the nations whose leaders filled the earth with violence in

their name? Their duty is to ensure that their nation contributes to the will of God, a civil society, and to avoid engendering the spirit of violence. They must reject violent prone leaders. Had the German citizens rejected Hitler's propensity for violence against non-Aryans, the Holocaust would have not occurred.

However, they allowed Hitler to fill their thought processes with hate and violence. As a result, they rejected the humanity of non-Aryans. Thus, they could slaughter them with impunity. Americans should, therefore, reassess their views towards imposing their will through violence. Moreover, it is wise for the citizens of violent nations to hastily reject violence and embrace peace. A peace that comes through understanding and facilitating the wants and needs of your neighbors.

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