

## Jihad

by Marilyn Reeves

I recently read a fascinating novel called “Terrorist” by John Updyke. It is the story of a young American of mixed parentage, Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy, whose Arab father abandoned his Irish mother while Ahmad was still an infant. Left to care for her son on her own, Ahmad’s liberal mother is only too glad to permit Ahmad to take lessons in Islam from the local imam, Shaikh Rashid. And Ahmad, a sober and serious student, is eager to learn the ways of his absent father.

As the boy grows into a young man, his mentor increasingly instills in his mind the evil ways of the American people and the glory of self-sacrifice for those willing to dedicate their very lives to the cause of eradicating that evil. Paradise awaits those who serve.

The story builds to a breath-taking climax in which the reader is praying, “Oh please, don’t let him do it!”— knowing full well that all too often their plans to cause massive death and destruction are carried out. The mantra, “Kill the infidel!” is the divine Jihad of the Muslim world. And the infidel is anyone, anywhere, who does not live in accordance with the edicts of Islam.

How does one fight a philosophy? To us, their way of life seems ignorant and backward.

Their women are treated as chattel. Their young men are trained to extol the ways of suicide and violence. Yet the Muslims view the western world, especially Americans, as the ones who are evil. They see our young girls dressed like Britney Spears, their half naked bodies sporting tattoos and piercings. They watch our media which promote casual sex and violence as a normal way of life, and our money-driven culture as one at odds with their religious teachings.

If a hero – in any culture – is defined as a great spiritual leader, capable of master-minding a sophisticated plot that will destroy the maximum number of the enemy and undermine his morale, then Osama bin Laden was indeed a hero. That we were finally able to track down and execute bin Laden was a great victory for the American cause. Except that he will be replaced by another and another and another. What good are bombs and guns in a war of religious beliefs? Do we expect the Muslims to surrender to a peace treaty as in conventional war? Do murdering their people, tearing up their land, and sacrificing the lives of our own soldiers accomplish this goal?

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