

## Untangling fundamentalism

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After having spent some time feeding on its back, a fat-mosquito provoked the lion to fighting by biting its nose. The lion tried to squash it but missed and bled its own nose. After throwing some “paws” the lion guessed right and killed the vain mosquito. Another hungry mosquito watched this “rare event” (black swan event or butterfly effect) from afar and committed two causal fallacies.

1. The bleeding followed the biting, so mosquito bite was the cause. This is a “type I error” coined in Latin: “*Post hoc ergo propter hoc*” which translates: “after this, therefore because of this”.

2. If mosquito bit bled the lion it can harm smaller animals more. This is a well known cognitive bias termed: “overconfidence effect”.

Encouraged by the fallacies, the mosquito decided to attack the spider. It thus flew straight to its web only to be trapped and fall prey. In contemporary world, the fat mosquito is Al-Qaeda-which grew fat by sucking on petro and drug money. The lion is the United States which squashed Bin Laden albeit significant cost. The hungry mosquitoes are the impoverished “Al-Qaeda fans” who are brainwashed by fat mosquitoes. The spider is the Ethiopian government which is quietly building the economy by staying out of trouble.

Afghanistan was not Al-Qaeda's favorite place. It was forced to go there. Al-Qaeda established its first base in the Sudan. Who forced Al-Qaeda out of Sudan? Al-Qaeda was forced to flee Sudan because of its failed plot to kill Mubarak in Addis. Who aborted this plot? It was neither the US Navy Seals nor the Israeli commando. It was the Ethiopian security forces. Who provided evidence to the international community by tracing the origin of the plot? It was neither the CIA nor the Mosad- it was the Ethiopian government. It is also worthy of note that this was back in the 1990s when the security web was not yet spread nationwide and state coffers were almost empty. It would take six more years for the international community to recognize the mosquito's vanity.

If the fat mosquito got trapped by the hastily woven web a decade ago; the hungry mosquito will "most likely" be trapped by the strong web today. A strong security web in place will not discourage the hungry mosquito though-precisely because it is an irrational actor. It is irrational because it has been brainwashed. It is brainwashed by the handouts of fat mosquitoes that make a living by seeking alms and selling drugs-instead of hard work. These fat mosquitoes are, in turn, brainwashed by their own lifestyles. They spend their imposed leisure between excessive luxury and spreading their habits. They resemble the "addict" who disseminates drug samples in the ghetto for free only to wait till his customers develop addiction and ends up asking for outrageous prices during subsequent transactions.

In the same vein, terrorists invite "poor and disgruntled" individuals to undergo through "daily routine" in return for charity. Until they develop the new habit, they let them "free" from worrying about their daily bread. Once that routine becomes their second nature, they will find themselves alienated from their natural habitat. Just like the drug addict who can't live without drugs, the recruits will "psychologically" be unable to live without their group. Most people tend

to undermine the importance of social life for normal existence. But in reality people do anything to belong to some sort of group. People who have identified themselves as part of a group would sacrifice their lives for that group. The need for belongingness is, perhaps, not difficult to meet for normal people. Individuals who develop strange mindset and habits are, unfortunately, liable to starve from a sense of belongingness.

The goal of terror masters is thus to estrange individuals from the community by inculcating antisocial mindset and habits into their daily routine. They deceive poor people by giving them charity in return for complete submission. They feed them until they are completely estranged from their family, friends and community and pledge allegiance to them. Once they develop new mindset, new habits and new community, they terminate material aid. At this point, material need has ceased its grasp over them. They have replaced that need by social poverty. “Belongingness need” exceeds “material need”. They are willing to endure poverty for belongingness. Not only will they become cheap (as they no longer require material assistance), they will become disposable devoid of reason and free will. They are addicted to “belongingness need” that they are ready to forgo material need and even their lives if their recruiters deem it appropriate. That is the irrational basis of suicide attacks. It is a subtle kind of addiction to “group belongingness”.

Based on the above, one can draw three important lessons. First, terror seeks “political power” by transforming “poor and marginalized” people into fundamentalists. It does this in the order of providing material assistance, controlling daily routine and total submission of reason and freewill. This leads one to the second conclusion, namely: terror is a kind of vertical relationship. It is like the relation between a gun and a bullet whereby one is powerless without the other. The recruit is poor, irrational and submissive. Its strength lies in daring, its weakness

lies in calculation. The recruiter is the mirror-image. It has resources but, without human bullets, is completely useless (like an empty gun). Third, poverty is a necessary but not sufficient condition for fundamentalism. Discontentment is the tipping point. This means economic growth should go hand in hand with social justice. But these don't guarantee short term solutions. Grassroots based security web should be spread in the geographical, economic and social peripheries to trap fat mosquitoes.