

Fisk: Want Terror? Try Here!

Posted by

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The Independent - Robert Fisk - There were more thumps in the darkness across Beirut where an awful lot of people are suffering from terror - although I can assure George W that while the pilots of the aircraft dropping bombs across the city in which I have lived for 30 years may or may not be fascists, they are definitely not Islamic.

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If You Want the Roots of Terror, Try Here

Robert Fisk

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I would love to have the Met in Beirut to counter terror in my part of the world

When my electricity returned at around 3am yesterday, I turned on the BBC World Service television. There were a series of powerful explosions which shook the house - just as they vibrated across all of Beirut - as the latest Israeli air raids blasted over the city. And then up came the World Service headline: "Terror Plot". Terror what, I asked myself? And there was my favorite cop, Paul Stephenson, explaining how my favorite police force - the ones who bravely executed an innocent young Brazilian on the Tube, taking 30 seconds to fire six bullets into him - had saved the lives of hundreds of innocent civilians from suicide bombers on airliners.

I'm sure Independent readers will join me in watching how many of the suspects - or "British-born Muslims" as the BBC defined them in its special form of "soft" racism (they are surely Muslim Britons or British Muslims, are they not?) - are still in custody in a couple of weeks' time.

And I'm sure it's quite by chance that the lads in blue chose yesterday - with anger at Lord Blair of Kut al-Amara's shameful failure over Lebanon at its peak - to save the world. After all, it's scarcely three years since the other great Terror Plot had British armoured vehicles surrounding Heathrow on the very day - again quite by chance, of course - that hundreds of thousands of Britons were demonstrating against Lord Blair's intended invasion of Iraq.

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So I sat on the carpet in my living room and watched all these heavily armed chaps at Heathrow protecting the British people from annihilation and then on came President George Bush to tell us that we were all fighting "Islamic fascism". There were more thumps in the darkness across Beirut where an awful lot of people are suffering from terror - although I can assure George W that while the pilots of the aircraft dropping bombs across the city in which I have lived for 30 years may or may not be fascists, they are definitely not Islamic.

And there, of course, was the same old problem. To protect the British people - and the American people - from "Islamic terror", we must have lots and lots of heavily armed policemen and soldiers and plainclothes police and endless departments of anti-terrorism, homeland security and other more sordid folk like the American torturers - some of them sadistic women - at Abu Ghraib and Baghram and Guantanamo. Yet the only way to protect ourselves from the real violence which may - and probably will - be visited upon us, is to deal, morally, with courage and with justice, with the tragedy of Lebanon and "Palestine" and Iraq and Afghanistan. And this we will not do.

I would, frankly, love to have Paul Stephenson out in Beirut to counter a little terror in my part of the world - Hizbollah terror and Israeli terror. But this, of course, is something that Paul and his lads don't have the spittle for. It's one thing to sound off about the alleged iniquities of alleged suspects of an alleged plot to create alleged terror - quite another to deal with the causes of that terror and to do so in the face of great danger.

I was amused to see that Bush - just before my electricity was cut off again - still mendaciously tells us that the "terrorists" hate us because of "our freedoms". Not because we support the Israelis who have massacred refugee columns, fired into Red Cross ambulances and slaughtered more than 1,000 Lebanese civilians - here indeed are crimes for Paul Stephenson to investigate - but because they hate our "freedoms".

And I notice with despair that our journalists again suck on the hind tit of authority, quoting endless (and anonymous) "security sources" without once challenging their information or the timing of Paul's "terror plot" discoveries or the nature of the details - somehow, "fizzy drinks bottles" doesn't quite work for me - nor the reasons why, if this whole panjandrum is correct, anyone would want to carry out such atrocities. We are told that the arrested men are Muslims. Now isn't that interesting? Muslims. This means that many of them - or their families - originally come from south-west Asia and the Middle East, from the area that encompasses Afghanistan, Iraq, "Palestine" and Lebanon.

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In the old days, chaps like Paul used to pull out a map when faced with folk of different origins or religion or indeed different names. Indeed, if Paul Stephenson takes a school atlas, he'll notice that there are an awful lot of violent problems and injustice and suffering and - a speciality, it seems, of the Metropolitan Police - of death in the area from which the families of these "Muslims" come.

Could there be a connection, I wonder? Dare we look for a motive for the crime, or rather the "alleged crime"? The Met used to be pretty good at looking for motives. But not, of course, in the "war on terror", where - if he really searched for real motives - my favourite policeman would swiftly be back on the beat as Constable Paul Stephenson.

Take yesterday morning. On day 31 of the Israeli version of the "war on terror" - a conflict to which Paul and the lads in blue apparently subscribe by proxy - an Israeli aircraft blew up the only remaining bridge to the Syrian frontier in northern Lebanon, in the mountainous and beautiful Akka district above the Mediterranean. With their usual sensitivity, the pilots who bombed the bridge - no terrorists they, mark you - chose to destroy the bridge when ordinary cars were crossing. So they massacred the 12 civilians who happened to be on the bridge. In the real world, we call that a war crime. Indeed, it's a crime worthy of the attention of Paul and his lads. But alas, Stephenson's job is to frighten the British people, not to stop the crimes that are the real reason for the British to be frightened.

Personally, I'm all for arresting criminals, be they of the "Islamic fascist" variety or the Bin Laden variety or the Israeli variety - their warriors of the air really should be arrested next time they drop into Heathrow - or the American variety (Abu Ghraib cum laude) and indeed of the kind that blow out the brains of Tube train passengers. But I don't think Paul Stephenson is. I think he huffs and he puffs but I do not think he stands for law and order. He works for the Ministry of Fear which, by its very nature, is not interested in motives or injustice. And I have to say, watching his performance before the next power cut last night, I thought he was doing a pretty good job for his masters.

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