PART ONE

A Deeper Look

At this crucial moment in history, we are facing a formidable challenge. Over several decades, as new incidents of violence continually arise in different locations throughout the world, countless attempts to stop terrorism by force have lead to failure or, with the seemingly endless proliferation of violence, a sense of futility. Yet even if the means we have been using are ineffective, the task of ending terrorism is not insurmountable. What is required of us all, however, is not simple; no single approach or strategy will solve the dilemma. We are being asked by circumstance to undergo nothing less than a profound transformation, both collectively and within each of us; if we are to heal our world of this form of violence, we must enlarge our understanding and begin to see more clearly and deeply what we and others have suffered and how and why this suffering has occurred. If in turn such a change may seem impossible, we have only to remember that with shifting technologies, creative cultural movements, social and political revolutions, many transformations have already occurred in human history throughout the globe.

Instead of drawing a precise profile of the transformation we need here—a profile no one can render until this change has taken place—we have collected wisdom and insights from diverse healers and thinkers that seed the potential for change by opening new paths in consciousness. Because any process of transformation must begin with a radical change in perception, Part I of this volume, called "A Deeper Look," is dedicated to the way that collectively we see terrorism. This part contains three

chapters: the first, "Terror and Terrrorism," posits a new, more accurate, and, we believe, just way of defining terrorism; the second, "An Unbearable Heartache," helps the reader to grasp the full emotional dimensions of terror, the cataclysmic emotion that is the goal of terrorism, through accounts from those who have survived to tell the tale; and the third chapter, "Denial, Dogma, and the Heroic Myth," explores psychological habits, such as denial and fanaticism, that underlie and lead to acts of violence that are otherwise unthinkable.

Susan Griffin with Karin Lofthus Carrington

CHAPTER 1

Terror and Terrorism

You cannot solve any problem by blowing up innocent people.

—Chinua Achebe

Terrorism remains a crime against humanity no matter who commits it or for what reason. As one of the six children who survived the Oklahoma City bombing, Chris Nguyen, has said, "Terrorism is terrorism, no matter where it comes from." To be free of violent attack is a primary human right; yet violence against civilians continues in many forms. In this light particularly, to limit the definition of terrorism to specific acts of violence committed in one region, in a single period of history, or by one kind of perpetrator is to harness the meaning of the term to a polemical purpose and thus reduce its meaning. For over a century, terror has been used as an instrument of power many times by every political faction, left, right, and center. The modern use of the word came into being during the French Revolution. In the Soviet Union, Stalin was famous for using terror to suppress opposition; the Nazi regime used terror, including the Holocaust, to gain and retain power; terror has been used within the United States in the service of racism, and similarly all over the world to curtail human rights.

Both the destruction of the Twin Towers on 9/11 and the aerial bombings of cities or villages that result in the death of civilians are forms of terrorism, as are the lynching of African Americans that occurred throughout America through the first half of twentieth century, the massacre of civilians that occurred in 1981 in El Mozote, a village in El Salvador, and the assassination of doctors who provide abortions.

If our consideration of terrorism is to be truthful and fair, along with suicide and car bombs, we must include land mines, drones, and strategic bombing (which by military definition means bombing off the battlefield, behind enemy lines, often in areas where civilians live). In the same vein, nuclear armaments are by definition terrorist weapons, especially because, even when uranium-tipped bullets are used, the radioactive materials stay in the environment long after a battle is waged, causing harm even to the unborn children of future generations.

Without acknowledging the broad range of suffering caused by terrorism, we cannot fully understand the current and serious threat we are facing in America today. This acknowledgment is also crucial if we are ever to break the cycle of violence that terror and terrorism fuel. We must see the problem clearly and acknowledge our own role before we can undertake any steps toward transformation. As Chinua Achebe has said, "You cannot solve any problems by blowing up innocent people."

Taken together, the essays in this chapter open up the boundaries of thought and imagination by inviting us to enlarge our picture of terrorism by including the purposeful creation of conditions that lead to destitution and starvation, for instance, or by reminding us that whether speaking of Christianity, Judaism, or Islam, religion does not cause terrorism. The essays in this chapter also explore unconscious elements that prevent us from thinking clearly about terrorism, including the use of terms such as "War on Terror" that truncate our ability to reflect on the nature of the crisis. To underscore the gravity of this issue, we have reprinted an address by Jan Egeland, former Undersecretary for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator for the United Nations, on the prevalence of civilian casualties. In many conflicts civilian casualties are still not being counted or reported, and for this reason we have also included an excerpt from the biography of Marla Ruzicka, the young woman who gave her life to assess and redress civilian deaths in Iraq.

It is our hope that if terrorism is perceived as a threat to women, children, and men throughout the world, the worldwide movement against violence aimed at civilians that began to form after 9/11 can rise up again and turn the world away from a path of mutual, murderous violence.

Susan Griffin

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CIVILIAN CASUALTIES: THE NEW FRONTLINE

Susan Griffin

These days I sense in myself a muted, nearly inexplicable unease. The cause is not just global warming and a frail economy, but a shadowy sense that right now, just under the skin of public awareness, something terrible is occurring. It is as if, in rare moments of silence, beneath the joys and vicissitudes of daily life, I can almost detect a muffled sound. Is this the sound of weeping, a cry of terror? Or a warning?

That we are currently engaged in more than one violent conflict and losing young men and women in battle every day is disturbing enough. But almost daily, another kind of casualty occurs, one that seems hidden from public scrutiny. As planes without pilots called drones fly over villages looking for Taliban fighters in Afghanistan and Pakistan, they drop bombs that kill far more civilians than terrorists. At the height of the war in Iraq, a war of words ensued over how many civilian deaths occurred since the war began in Iraq. Was it 650,000 as a study by Johns Hopkins estimated, or only 10,000 as the Bush administration once claimed? At least the subject of civilian casualties was in the news. Yet the horrific dimensions of these events do not seem to register in public consciousness. Since the Hopkins study received far less attention than the plight of a young family of four lost in the snow that week, the accidental juxtaposition of these events awakens another question in me, one that is filled with doubt, irony, and hope all at once. Why is the great feeling of care that was inspired by a single family not aroused equally toward the countless families who have been injured or have died because of the war in Iraq? This question takes on an especially urgent dimension since at this moment in history, as civilians, we are all in great danger.

A terrible shift has taken place during our century, a momentous change not only in international events but also in military tactics practiced all over the world. Though there has never been a time in recorded history when civilians did not die in warfare, over the last five decades civilians have become the primary target of warfare. The fact that at the present time more civilians are dying in battle than soldiers is at the front line of an accelerating advance, one that moves in a terrible direction. While at the beginning of the century civilians represented 10 percent of casualties and soldiers 90 percent, now those numbers are reversed. This means that today 90 percent of those injured in warfare are unarmed, untrained, vulnerable, in large part women and children. How is it that we came to this state of affairs? Somehow, we have come to think that

the occurrence of massive civilian casualties in warfare is a permanent fixture of the world we inhabit, as if our drift into wholesale slaughter were a natural process, an inevitable and natural disaster.

The belief that this aspect of contemporary life cannot be changed must in some unconscious way be predicated on the fact that by the time many of us alive today were born, the deaths of thousands of civilians from the bombardment of cities had already taken place. Born in the midst of World War II, I admired the pilots who conducted bombing raids—young men, risking their lives, who were heroes to us. Though I saw photographs of burned and ruined cities, I encountered no images of the people who were wounded or killed during those raids. When I was young, it never occurred to me to question the morality of this tactic; I imagined that bombs had always existed.

But massive aerial attacks on civilians had two beginnings in modern times. If the first was the bombardment of civilians during World War I. A subtle turning point had occurred earlier, in 1907 at the Hague Convention, where in fact it was confirmed by the participating nations that to attack civilians would be against international law. Yet it was at the same conference that the ground for attacking civilians would be laid. If before that meeting it had been declared illegal for airplanes to drop weapons as a way to attack armies on the ground, now this conference agreed that airplanes would need to be able to defend themselves against attacks from the ground.

Throughout military history, arguments for various offensive weapons have been based on the need for defense. Because the adoption of any weapon will ensure it will soon be manufactured by other nations (who believe they will need it for defense, too), this argument induces a strangely somnolent drift toward mutual destruction. But there is another pattern that belongs to this history, one that on the surface would seem to support the argument. Once a weapon exists, there will be military commanders who will want to use it not just defensively, but offensively.

Although the international agreement reached at the Hague Convention of 1907 prohibited an attack on civilians by bombardments, the distinctions drawn between targets soon blurred. Early in World War I, the Deputy Chief of the Imperial German Navy Staff's request to use bombs to cow the British population into submission was denied, but the Kaiser did give the German Navy permission to attack "docks and military establishments in the Lower Thames and English coast." So on January 19, 1915, two zeppelins dropped eight explosives and two incendiary devices

on Great Yarmouth. They were supposed to target a small naval base and the docks. But given the mist, snow squalls, and crude navigational equipment, it was a great achievement even to find Yarmouth at all. Two bombs fell in a densely populated area known as St. Peter's Plain and another damaged the fish wharf. Though many houses and shops burned, and a 72-year-old woman coming home from shopping, a shoemaker working in his own shop, a 14-year-old boy, and a 26-year-old war widow were all killed, little or no damage was done to any military site. Then, in May 1916, after London was accidentally bombed, the Kaiser sanctioned raids against larger cities. By the end of the war, 5,806 bombs had been dropped, killing 557 people and injuring 1,358.

Another series of mistakes led the British air force to drop bombs on German civilians. Their targets were munitions factories, usually located just outside metropolitan areas (a strategy described as a pacifist maneuver, a way to end the war by destroying the means to make weapons). Yet fearing attack from the ground, thus often flying where visibility was impeded and for this reason unable to find their targets, the pilots would release their bombs over populated areas.

After it became increasingly clear that it was not factories but civilians who were being wounded, maimed, and killed by their bombs, the British High Command held a secret meeting in which they acknowledged the strategy had failed. But, committed to a course of action that had cost a great deal of money, time, and many soldiers' lives, instead of changing the tactic, the command devised a new rationale for what was called strategic bombing. Secretly stated among themselves, the purpose would be to strike *terror* into the civilian population.

Their new aim was to undermine the will to fight. Perhaps in the sterile world of abstract thought this plan is logical, but experience should have led them to doubt the efficacy of the idea. Though the zeppelin attacks inspired panic, they only strengthened the patriotic feeling that Britain's enemy was monstrous. It was only after soldiers returned with reports of carnage on the battlefield that British citizens turned against war.

The second precedent for the large number of civilian casualties in warfare today occurred before World War I, as part of Europe's colonization of America, Asia, and Africa. In fact, the first violations of the Hague Convention's prohibition against the bombardment of civilians occurred in 1911, when the Italians dropped bombs on Tripoli. More than a decade before the savage bombing of Guernica that shocked the world prior to

World War II, Spain had dropped bombs on civilians in Morocco. Other European powers dropped bombs in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, both before and after World War I. In this period, no one argued that it was morally right to attack civilians; rather, in a hazy and convoluted argument shaped by racist assumptions, it was declared that the air raids were planned to bring civilization to backward peoples.

On a subtle level of consciousness, colonial violence must have lowered the threshold of tolerance for violence against all civilians. Before World War II, British Major General Trenchard argued most vociferously for the creation of a strategic bombing force. He had commanded the squadrons of planes that dropped bombs behind enemy lines in World War I. Between the wars, he ordered squadrons to attack a tribal settlement in Iraq, and well before that, in the first years of the twentieth century, as the military governor of Nigeria, he had ordered British soldiers to set Zulu villages on fire. It was, in fact, common during the nineteenth century for European colonists and American forces to attack native villages.

One can see a tug of war occurring throughout this period between a seemingly inexorable march toward mass destruction and the awareness that these acts violated human rights. Gandhi himself was so disturbed by the burning of Zulu villages that he questioned his allegiance to the British Empire and began to conceptualize *Satyagraha,* the movement that was to free India from colonial rule. Within England, not only did Gandhi have allies, but loud and powerful protests arose against the bombing of villagers in Iraq. In the long run, attacks on civilians were to escalate, but in the short run, these protests were effective. At the start of World War II, British forces were committed to avoiding civilian deaths.

For a short period after bombing civilians in Guernica, then Poland, and finally in Rotterdam, because of the strength of international protests, Hitler declared that he would not wage a war against women and children, and ordered his air force to aim attacks only at military and industrial sites. Thus, in the first months of the war with Great Britain, both sides tried to keep their bombs from falling on civilians.

However, after the Luftwaffe accidentally dropped bombs over London, Churchill ordered raids against Berlin. In retaliation, a series of fierce attacks, now called *blitzkriegs,* were turned against Great Britain, which continued from the fall of 1940 until the spring of 1941. In 1940 alone, from August to November, London endured 200 bombing raids every night except one. By the end of the war, 43,000 civilians had been

killed and 139,000 injured. Yet in contrast to the relatively minor attacks of World War I, very few British citizens panicked: the stated aim to weaken the will of the civilian population had failed again.

Still this failure did not stop Britain from using the same tactic, now called *morale bombing,* against Germany. On May 30, 1942, in Operation Millennium, 2,000 tons of high-explosive bombs and incendiaries were dropped over the medieval city of Cologne, burning the city to the ground. In this attack, 45,000 were left without homes. Only 382 civilians died; but as the raids continued, their ferocity grew, until finally in Operation Gomorrah targeted against Hamburg, an intense rain of bombs created a firestorm that left 42,600 dead. This was the prececent for the famous firestorm in Dresden, which killed somewhere between 25,000 and 35,000 civilians.

Despite their own suffering from German aerial attacks, British attacks on German civilians did not take place without protest. Many citizens protested what was being called "obliteration bombing." Prominent among them, the writer Vera Brittain led a campaign, publishing a statement signed by other prominent citizens and a series of pamphlets titled "Massacre by Bombing," which detailed the atrocities and argued against the government's justification for them.

But the attacks continued, becoming even more deadly under the command of the American military in the Pacific theater. Firestorms were deliberately created in Kobe, Japan, killing 8,800; in Tokyo, successive raids killed 73,000 civilians. What followed this was less an exception than a continuation of a pattern already well established: the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 together killed 135,000 civilians at once, and radiation poisoning, whose effects continue through genetic damage even today, killed countless others, many born well after the war.

It has often been suggested, albeit with a wistfully resigned tone, that the challenge of nuclear weapons is that they exist at all, as if the weapons themselves had initiated the problem. But before these weapons were invented, the use of explosive bombs and the brutality of colonial expeditions had seeded a strategy that made their invention possible. Though nuclear weapons present a grave danger in themselves, they were spawned by the policy of murdering civilians in the course of war.

Throughout the cold war, nuclear weapons were never used, but civilians continued to be the targets of warfare. During the Vietnam War, the city of Hanoi was bombed, and in both the South and North, Vietnamese civilians suffered from the use of napalm and Agent Orange. In the

recent wars in the former Yugoslavia, women were targeted and gang raped by the thousands. In the shelling of Lebanon, the city of Beirut, where close to one million civilians live, was a target.

Is it any wonder that terrorists, insurgents, and armies of all kinds both official and unofficial would have adopted the same tactic? Not just weapons of mass destruction pose a risk to us all today, but also the mentality of massacre, the policy of targeting civilians. Suicide bombers are sent to places where ordinary people, not engaged in any military activity, eat, drink, celebrate, or worship. Civilians engaged in medical care or social work are taken as hostages, as are journalists. But are these awful acts, which appear to us so senseless and brutal, so different from the atrocities that the United States along with most European nations have committed against civilians?

In fact, the history of terrorist tactics is inextricable from the history of bombing civilians. In the impassioned pamphlet she published in 1944, Vera Brittain presciently warned that through attacks on civilians, Europe was creating "the psychological foundations for a Third World War."

Yet the human capacity to erase a dangerous reality from the mind is formidable. That most people panicked far less during the horrific blitzes of World War II than they had during the far milder attacks of World War I may seem strange. But on another level it makes a terrible sense. Many Londoners stopped going to the air raid shelters when the sirens sounded, and others resorted to magical thinking to explain why they had not died. Returning to Germany in 1945, just after the war, Alfred Doblin wrote that people walked "down the street and past the terrible ruins as if nothing had happened and . . . the town had always been like that." According to W. G. Sebald, reconstruction efforts in Germany adopted the same denial by creating "a new, faceless reality, pointing the population exclusively toward the future and enjoining on it silence about the past."

Ultimately, to adjust to the outrageous and unacceptable is a sign of profound hopelessness. Helpless to change a circumstance, we tend to mute the force of it in our minds. Yet this comes at a cost: as often happens with victims of trauma, with collective denial we lose the ability to respond at all, to protest or speak out.

Is it by conscious intent that civilian deaths are kept at a distance? The pilots who fly bombers today are thousands of miles away, looking only at coordinates. Even the suicide bombers, who must use their own bodies and mingle with their victims, manage to create a mental distance

by shrouding themselves in fantasies conjured by ideologies masquerading as religious doctrines. The advantage of their own death is that they never have to wake to the reality of the mangled bodies of the innocents they have harmed.

Sadly, it is a similar distance that keeps us all from waking up to the accelerating dimensions of this terrifying aspect of contemporary battle. The fear of being attacked together with a sense of powerlessness disables our empathy for those who are being maimed and killed now. But the tide can be turned. Once we acknowledge the mutual danger we are in, the sleeping power of civilians all over the world can rise to stop these attacks, which are aimed in the end against all of us.

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In still another photograph, the air marshal himself is looking at pictures. He is studying portraits, taken from the air, of cities that have been bombed. He looks at these images through a small aperture in a wooden box called a stereopticon, a device which adds a third dimension to what he sees. Through this instrument, a two-dimensional, gray landscape suddenly reveals *gaping craters, heaps of rubble, burned out buildings with the walls still standing, acres and acres of roofless buildings.*

On the opposing page, the air marshal leafs through his famous *Blue Book,* a huge document he has prepared to impress the leaders of the Allied effort with the efficacy of strategic bombing. It contains maps of several German sites, which he has marked, according to *Life* for *emasculation.*

I am, of course, stopped by this last word. The author has placed it in quotations. . . . What is meant by this word? Is it the implicit unmanning of the vanquished by conquering armies? Or is it that emasculation which occurs when one man's women and children are harmed by another man? Or both of these. And of course there is the obvious meaning, the loss of a part of the body, the sexual body by which a man is defined. But even this literal reading moves to a larger implication, the loss of identity itself. That stripping away of every extraneous layer, of every role we play in life, which one suffers when faced with unimaginable terror.

(Susan Griffin, from *A Chorus of Stones: The Private Life of War*)

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