



CHAPTER 1

The Primitive Self and the Power of Catastrophic Threat

When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best...
They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're
bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're
bringing crime. They're rapists. (*Donald Trump in a speech
announcing his presidential candidacy [1]*)

The black-haired Jewish youth lies in wait for hours on end,
satanically glaring at and spying on the unsuspecting girl whom he
plans to seduce, adulterating her blood and removing her from the
bosom of her own people. The Jew uses every possible means to
undermine the racial foundations of a subjugated people. (*Adolph
Hitler, Mein Kampf [2]*)

There is no message more powerful, primal, or primitive than the evocation of the need to protect the family and “tribe.” We are genetically primed and culturally shaped to alert, defend, and aggress, and even to sacrifice the self in the service of that protection. In fact, the alert, defend, and aggress system is primary and fundamental to how humans are biologically built, emotionally primed and cognitively programmed. This extends to the protection of our way of life and the fundamental elements of those things we hold most dear—the protective response against threats to our freedom, our nation, our land. The provocation of outsiders raping our women is one of the most primitive and basic of these

threats. Rape invalidates the blood line, as the progeny of such an act may not be ours, and the loss of our women or our children translates to the end of the tribe.

Seen this way, the warning of the threat of attack by the “evil other” is a base warning to our built-in, hard-wired protective response system. It appeals to a primal need to protect the tribe and the family from the evil predator, the “other” who, once identified, must be destroyed. Humans are imbued with a deep intellect and the ability to think and process complex information in a rational manner. Even deep emotions can be reasonably understood and evaluated, arriving at fair and balanced conclusions. However, our rational thought and the processing of complex information are very much forebrain activities, relating to what are termed our “executive brain functions,” and is the last portion of the developed human brain in evolutionary time.

More basically, and more substantively, humans are protective animals with deeper brain structures that are more primitive and equally part of our origins, playing a major regulatory role determining how our brains and bodies function. Fight and flight are reflexive responses, and the fight-flight response is nested in deep, more primitive brain structures that developed for survival. Our responses to threat of the self, the family, our loved ones and the tribes to which we belong alert the brain and body to concentrate, act without thought, and ignore the vagaries of sound argument and compassionate consideration that might delay the need to rapidly and decisively respond. They cue hormones, blood, and muscles, and signal tribal affiliation behavior for mobilization of the protective response system.

1.1 WE ARE PRIMED TO BE ALERT AND READY TO REACT TO A DANGEROUS WORLD

Our modern, cultured self is a rather recent evolution in human existence. Any semblance of what we call culture consists of no more than perhaps 20,000 years of our history, when the first towns were formed near the Sea of Galilee during the Last Glacial Maximum. Our biology and our brain had over 2 million years of time to develop prior to this, and during this entire period, and for the most part until a few hundred years ago, the instinct to protect and survive was central to existence.

It is only recently that the threat of attack and loss due to famine, war, criminal violence, and disease was not essential parts of human life. Our built-in sensitivity to loss and threat is a response to our need to defend

against disease, attack from neighboring tribes and wandering bands, and internal violence within the group. We are of course aware of the threat of disease prior to more modern public health and medical intervention, principally the introduction of soap, clean water, and penicillin. More surprisingly, the murder rate in Medieval Europe was dramatically higher than today, with scholars reporting rates as much as 30 times higher than modern Europe, including acts of terrorism [3].

We decry the upswing of “modern” violence in the U.S., longing for the “good old days.” In fact, U.S. rates of homicide in colonial times were many times higher than today. The presence of increasing law and order structures in the form of better laws and better policing, and the reduction of poverty, resulted in a drop in homicide from the colonial period, which saw homicide rates of greater than 25 per 100,000 of population, compared to recent national rates below 5 per 100,000, a fivefold decrease [4]. Put in other terms, the rates of homicide nationally from 1700 until the Civil War were appreciably higher than the murder rate in New York City in 2015 of below 4 per 100,000 [5]. In fact, homicide rates today are markedly lower than in the early twentieth century in the U.S. [6]. Clearly, our news media portrays us as living in a dangerous world, but this state of affairs is better than in nearly any prior period.

Because of the saliency and consistency of ongoing, monumental threat throughout human development, we do not need to scratch humans deeply to bring the primitive, protective, and aggressive self to the fore. As an illustration of how close our primitive self is to the surface, we witness how aggressive affiliative behaviors are acted out on the playing field of often violent competitive sports, where teams are followed with a dedication akin to nationalism, and fans dress in tribal colors, carry team flags, and scream for blood. In Europe, fan behavior has actually blended with White supremacy nationalism, in a dangerous mix.

The game of soccer (what the rest of the world calls football) evolved in medieval times, involving hundreds of players in what is sometimes referred to as “mob football.” In these pitched battles, rival villages and towns watched a form of controlled warfare to decide disputes over land, personal arguments, and rights of commerce [7]. Fast forward to 2015, soccer violence has escalated, as economic and national tensions rose. Fans, dressed in tribal-like colors and face painting, ripped out seats in Belgrade, Serbia, and attacked rival Parizan, injuring dozens of police in a bloody melee, hurling lighted flares and metal objects using military-like tactics [8]. Brazilian fans have murdered offending referees and players [9].

Any quick minimization of this as only a phenomenon of overzealous sports enthusiasts, and not related to political process, is quickly dispelled when one understands that the attacks are often perpetrated by White supremacist groups, and that they are intimately linked with “[r]acism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia...[which] are becoming...widespread” [among these fans], according to Moshe Kanto, president of the European Jewish Congress [10].

1.2 OUR BRAINS RESPOND TO EXAGGERATED MESSAGING OF LOSS AND DOOM

The most effective way to add fervor, strength, and resolve to any political or social argument is to invoke the specter of loss and doom. The hyperbole of threat, and particularly existential threat, is the most powerful fuel of action. Framing in black and white, not shades of gray, is both the means and the terminus for attracting any audiences’ attention, whether at the doctor’s clinic, in the courtroom, or in the world of politics. Reasonableness and carefully weighed argument does not sell newspapers, does not keep the viewer from the remote control, and does not attract donors’ dollars.

Only if the enemy is committed and perceived as capable of destroying us can we advocate, as did presidential candidate Ted Cruz in December 2015, “*If I am elected president, we will utterly destroy ISIS.... We will carpet bomb them into oblivion. I don’t know if sand can glow in the dark, but we’re going to find out!*” [11]. As carpet bombing is aimed at obliterating human life of civilians, of leveling whole cities, and is an ineffective strategy for undermining military capability of an enemy, we can understand that the true purpose of such bloodthirsty political diatribe is meant to excite some powerful and primitive force experienced by a large segment of the population. It is what they want to hear.

This primitive response is more universally experienced when there are real threats of terrorism, whose purpose is to create a sense of terror far disproportionate to its actual danger. We only require the hint of threat to alert our protective systems. For evolutionary purposes, our brains developed to be loss sensitive [12]. The loss of a tooth, of several females of productive age, of two hunters in the tribe, of a source of water, all threatened end of life, end of the tribe, and an end of our progeny. In contrast, the brain barely recognizes gain. It was not possible for our ancestors to make more than temporary gains during our evolutionary

period of development. Indeed, the sole purpose of gain was itself to protect against future loss. This primitive and basic element of our brain shapes our emotions, how we organize our attachment to others, our seeking protection and safety, and the very way we form our cultures and governments. It is therefore a highly effective strategy to speak in terms of extremes and the extremis of threat and annihilation.

Hence, Obama is not just someone we deeply disagree with; his political agenda has been the “worst in U.S. history” and he is a threat to us no less than communism, Hitler, and ISIS. Indeed, if we go further, and we link President Obama to terrorism as he himself is a Muslim, and then we argue that Muslims are our enemy who we must annihilate, then we must annihilate President Obama. He is not just someone that the right deeply disagrees with, he is not an American, he is part of the Muslim world that plan our destruction, and the worst president in history.

1.3 GUNS AND VIOLENCE AS AN OBVIOUS OUTGROWTH OF THE PRIMITIVE PROTECTIVE SELF

The same argument of extreme, with a basis in impending doom, is set forth by the gun lobby. We require, they argue, an armed populace to defend against ultimate threat. But to energize this argument, they must make our government and its leadership suspect. Government itself, and recently our own FBI, must be seen as either already conspiring to take away our liberty, or likely to take such action. For again, if that threat is only theoretical, far-off, or unlikely, then there is little energy in the defense of Second Amendment rights to bear arms. They must be the Nazi Gestapo and the Soviet Secret Police. Ironically, those who take this route sow the seeds for fascism by so doing. This is vividly portrayed in recent attempts by Fox News, using Trump surrogates to discredit the FBI and the Justice Department as they investigate Russian meddling, and potential conspiracy by the Trump team in the last election.

The FBI has become America's secret police. Secret surveillance, wiretapping, intimidation, harassment, and threats. It's like the old KGB that comes for you in the dark of the night banging through your door...the FBI is a shadow government. [13]

The stench coming out of the Justice Department and FBI is like that of a third world country. Well, it's time to take them out in cuffs. [14]

If this need to demonize is not understood, then those from more liberal camps, or even the reasonable political center, cannot understand why the gun lobby will not accept restrictions on automatic weapons and see this as an infringement of their rights. Those not familiar with weapons might think a handgun or hunting rifle is sufficient for any private citizen. But those are wholly inadequate against the weapons of war that a government might bring against us.

To stand up against a government, already infiltrated in their minds by Nazi Gestapo and Soviet KGB, requires an assault weapon. An AK-47 (Kalashnikov) or an M-16 effectively fires 100 rounds per minute, and gun advocates would like to have the maximum 100-round drum magazine available. Only if you understand the nature of the threat they feel as real, can you appreciate that they still feel insecure without the assault rifle's available grenade-launching capabilities. Such weapons have no purpose in hunting, unless you are hunting terrorists, and are all the more necessary if your government is perceived as having the near-term potential to act against you. Such weapons have no purpose in hunting, unless the fear is of the Mexican rapists and murderers that Donald Trump claims are pouring across our borders. Such weapons have no purpose in hunting, unless your fear is of Blacks rising against Whites in a race war.

In his chaotic speech at a recent NRA national meeting, the conservative talk show host, Glen Beck, projected a giant image of a Nazi character in a "Sieg Heil" salute as the enemy of gun owners' rights and the right to bear weapons. But the image was of New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, himself a Jew, who had the audacity to promote gun safety [15]. Similarly, NRA leader Wayne LaPierre promotes the right to buy any, including automatic weapons, as necessary for our survival in the face of "riots, terrorist gangs, and lone criminals...the threat of Latin American drug gangs...and civil unrest" [16]. His writing is infused with racial overtones. He responds, as he likely truly and deeply believes, that "it's not paranoia to buy a gun. It's survival." Survival means survival of the self when facing a criminal, but the energy of his words is only empowered when he evokes survival of "our way of life," "America," and places imminent threat as immediate, and not some vague distant possibility.

We must take people at their words. LaPierre knows guns and knows that for reasons of ease of access and maneuverability a full-length or even a short breach automatic weapon is not best for the tight quarters of protecting one's home. He is advocating for the private ownership of weapons of war. They are called "assault rifles" for the obvious reason that they

are weapons of tactical assault. His messaging is meant to alert the tribe to the imminence of the threat from the “Black hoard” that is ready to erupt at any moment.

The invoking of the image of survival is inherent in our conceptualization of the ultimate evil of Nazism. The survival drum is beaten constantly not only by extremists, but by mainstream political figures. Mike Huckabee has been a conservative evangelical candidate for president in several recent electoral cycles and appears more grandfatherly than hateful. But he warned during his role as a Fox News host in April 2013 that Obama was plotting to use gun confiscation to create a Nazi-style regime [17]. When Ted Nugent, a member of the NRA board and someone who has no national political stature, compares Obama to a Nazi, it can be more easily dismissed, but when sweet, compassionate, and deeply Christian Mike Huckabee evokes these images, it must be seen as a mainstream fear as Huckabee received tens of millions of votes in his presidential bids.

1.4 THE STORM OF TERRORISM AND THE PRIMITIVE RESPONSE

The purpose of terrorism is to create a sense of terror and fear, far disproportionate to the actual destruction caused by the violent act itself. The term we use, calling it *terrorism*, is likewise exploited to justify our response to it. In a strict definition, terrorism is political violence brought to innocent civilian targets. However, we are no less likely to call it terrorism when the target is against the USS *Cole*, a powerful nuclear-armed guided missile destroyer (12th of October 2000 in the port of Aden, Yemen). We still call it terrorism when the attack is the deadly 1983 Beirut truck bombing of the barracks of the 1st Battalion 8th Marines, killing 241 American Servicemen. And there is no rule of war that combatants when they are off-guard are out of bounds.

Before I am accused of supporting terrorism, let me set the record straight that as a former officer of the Israel Defense Forces and in many civilian roles that I have filled I am dedicated to stopping terrorism, and I would and have supported ultimate force in doing so. I am pretty hawkish on the topic. Rather, my point is that we use the word terrorism to raise the fear factor and rally a united response. I personally am equally motivated to merely defend those I love and the nations and people I support against violent acts of war, traditional or nontraditional. But for politics to

stir the masses, we need the concept of terror, and the enemy needs the concept of freedom fighter, preserver of liberty, defender of the Holy Koran, or our “Christian way of life.”

Terrorism evokes terror, and we respond to the apparent randomness of the threat. Global news also sells newspapers and air time for advertisers, priming the pump of terrorist threat. In this way news sources serve as the public relations department of terrorist organizations, getting their message of fear out far better than the terrorists alone could ever manage through their internet capacities. In fact, terrorist organizations often strike on Friday so that the news and photos of the terrorist events remain unfiltered until Monday, as journalists move to a more part-time pace over the week end. In this way, terrorist organizations utilize the media in a sophisticated manner. They rely on the internet for direct communication, motivating adherents, and planning. They use public news broadcasting to project their message of violent threat and this is central to their success in projecting their image of power.

The attacks of terrorist organizations are designed to frighten the population, assert their power, and disrupt life. Their attacks are planned to create the most vivid and disturbing visual images. Israel has long experienced the brunt of such attacks, with Passover celebratory Seders, public buses, shopping malls, and night clubs being the target for bloody suicide bombings. It is the images of torn flesh, screaming women and children, and shaking cameras that project the chaos and terror that terrorists hope will punish their enemy. The softer the target, the harder the impact, so they aim violence at the most vulnerable elements of society. Filmed beheadings and executions are well-thought-out and orchestrated in the theater of violence they script for broadcast in 24-hour news around the world.

A central element of the fear evoked by terrorism is that it can occur anywhere, and often targets civilians in their everyday human endeavors. The horror of the September 11th attack on the New York World Trade Center brought the war of terrorism home to Americans. Europeans remained more complacent, even amidst endless warning of a large radicalized Jihadist element living in their midst.

That complacency ended abruptly in 2015 when Paris was rocked by the Charlie Hebdo attack, killing 11 journalists for the crime of cartooning the Prophet Mohammad. Not yet fully heeding the warning, all doubt evaporated for the French on Friday, November 13, 2015, when coordinated terrorist attacks struck Paris and the northern suburb of Saint-Denis. Beginning at 9:20 pm on date night, a time of fun, and dancing and

laughter, when young people should fear nothing worse than failing to find a desirable romantic partner, ISEL terrorists murdered 130 people, seriously wounding another 368 people in a multi-site attack on innocent civilian targets. It was intentional that they chose a time of laughter and everyday celebration.

Ironically, during my time in Paris just prior to the Charlie Hebdo attacks, lecturing on terrorism as an American who also holds an Israeli passport I found that most young Parisians were anti-Israel and had bought into a rather anti-Semitic view of the Middle East that they shared with the terrorists. In most of my talks it was clear that my audience sided with the terrorists against Israel and indeed most voiced the opinion that Israel was the terrorist organization. I was advised to hide my Israeli identity, and to not mention that I was Jewish (especially by French Jews) for fear of not just isolated reprisal by Muslim extremists, but because of the overt, shared hostile view among the general public, especially young people, toward Israel. But this is small irony, as these young people became victims because they were French and because destruction of their freedom, their joy of living in a world where women are not covered, would serve as a testimony to the power of ISEL and their disturbed version of Koranic law and principles. And terrorism works.

Americans', and now Europeans', fear of terrorism is far disproportionate to the threat in any rational sense. Examining preventable diseases and injury-related deaths in the U.S., figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that yearly deaths due to heart disease are estimated at around 633,000, nearly 80,000 people die yearly due to diabetes, and over 38,000 die yearly due to liver disease and cirrhosis [18]. For 2015 the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported 10,265 U.S. road deaths with confirmed blood alcohol level of 0.08 [19]. Thirty-six percent of those killed were not the intoxicated driver. By comparison, from 2001 to 2013, which included September 11th, over 406,000 people died by firearms on U.S. soil, compared to 3030 people killed by terrorism [20]. Subtracting the large tragic number of victims who died when the World Trade Center was attacked on September 11th, "only" 424 individuals were killed by terrorist acts on U.S. soil, since that date. Although these statistics are somewhat in arrears due to the time it takes to officially accumulate statistics, the general trends still effectively hold. The chance of Americans or Europeans being killed or injured during a terrorist attack is less than slight. Each loss of life is devastating, but terrorism is not a likely threat.

As humans we must always manage risk probability. Getting into a car is typically the most dangerous thing civilians do. But we do not fear our cars and seldom change our behavior to avoid travelling in a car. Clearly if you should be fearful of something it is driving in a car, alcohol, obesity, or the gun in your own home, not terrorism. Words matter because they reach into deeper brain structures and elicit primitive levels of fear that are disproportionate to any reality. It is hard to rally the public to the fear of cows or lightning, even if the CDC reports that cows and lightning yearly kill more Americans than Islamic terrorists. Cows and lightning do not have the billion-dollar modern news empire working at their behest, and we are not hard-wired to fear them as we are the “evil other.”

1.5 WHO ARE THE TERRORISTS ANYWAY?

It is also instructive to look at who the terrorists are, as to make ourselves safe we need to know from what direction the threat is coming. The conservative right has clearly painted much of the Muslim world as suspect. Both leading Republican presidential candidates Ted Cruz and Donald Trump insinuated that Muslim Americans were also not to be trusted, promoting internal surveillance of Muslims living in the U.S. Despite clear and overwhelming evidence that such events never occurred, and unable to produce the film records he claims he saw, Donald Trump insisted...

There were people that were cheering on the other side of New Jersey, where you have large Arab populations. They were cheering as the World Trade Center came down. ... There were people over in New Jersey that were watching it, a heavy Arab population, that were cheering as the buildings came down. [21]

By such means, the threat of the outsider is manipulated by political opportunists who pump public fear, evoking the dual image of the foreign enemy and the enemy in our own midst. As President, Trump has continued by forwarding fake videos depicting Muslim violence against Christians. In this manner, President Trump has promoted hatred in a way that is reminiscent of Fascist pre-WWII Europe. Indeed, the videos were originally posted by Britain First, a far-right ultranationalist political group [22]. This group is so far out of the political mainstream that it was deregistered as a political party by Britain’s Electoral Commission [23].

The facts regarding the actual sources of terrorism would be surprising to most Americans. Since September 11, 2001, nearly twice as many people

have been killed by White supremacists, and anti-governmental fanatics and other non-Muslims in the U.S. than by radical Muslims [24]. By championing the idea that there is a war on Whites and a war on Christianity, politicians are ideologically arming terrorism in the U.S. Governor Rick Perry, when running for election in 2012, promised that if he was elected he would “end Obama’s war on religion” [25]. Bobby Jindal, the presidential candidate and governor of Louisiana, warned that “the American people, whether they know it or not, are mired in a silent war” against “a group of like-minded [liberal] elites, determined to transform the country from a land sustained by faith into a land where faith is silenced, privatized, and circumscribed” [26]. Such language clearly insights “patriots” to act against the aggressor, only the aggressor is America itself, or at least liberal America and its government.

Once again we see the use of the language of war and the ultimate enemy to exhort the passions of the brain regions related to tribal survival. On July 10, 2015 in the publication Red State, the leading conservative news and opinion blog, the author writes “But make no mistake – *the aims of secularists in America are the same as those of Islamic terrorists in the Middle East and elsewhere: to drive Christianity out of public life*” [27]. This writer is not voicing an extremist position, as he is essentially echoing presidential candidate Ted Cruz who has repeatedly stated that there is a war on religious freedom and Christianity in particular. To a gathering of 2500 at the Iowa Events Center on August 21, 2015, Cruz spoke powerfully from the podium, “There is a war on faith in America today, in our lifetime....Did we ever imagine that in the land of the free and home of the brave, we would be witnessing our government persecute its citizens for their faith?” [28].

It is this language of threat to our founding principles, the principles that generations have shed their blood to preserve that rallies political votes, because it evokes the passion of war and sacrifice on the tribal level. It motivates voters to make it to the polls, to vote for Christian-leaning, conservative candidates. But it is also a rallying cry for violence that mirrors the language used by Jihadists about the “West and the American Satan in its Israel helpmate.” Just as in Islam, there are four ways for believers to fulfill their Jihadist obligations:

- 1) *with faith in the heart,* 2) *by preaching and proselytizing,* 3) *by good deeds,* and 4) *by confronting unbelievers with the sword.* [29]

Islam, like all world religions, is a religion of peace, but violence is called for when the religion and those of the religion are attacked, when war is made on them, as radical Muslims believe is occurring. Thus, extremists worldwide use the argument of black vs. white, good vs. evil, us vs. them, and that you must choose “our side” “our tribe,” or you are among the evildoers of the other side.

O ummah [community] of Islam, indeed the world today has been divided into two camps and two trenches, with no third camp present: The camp of Islam and faith, and the camp of kufr (disbelief) and hypocrisy—the camp of the Muslims and the mujahidin everywhere, and the camp of the Jews, the crusaders, their allies, and with them the rest of the nations and religions of kufr, all being led by America and Russia, and being mobilized by the Jews. (Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader of ISIS [30])

Substituting the words of Conservative politicians of the right is a simple exercise that illustrates their use of these same structures for their call to arms.

*Fellow Christians, indeed the world today has been divided into two camps and two trenches, with no third camp present: The camp of **Christianity and faith**, and the camp of **secularism, liberalism** and hypocrisy—the camp of righteous **Christians** everywhere, and the camp of the **liberal secularism** led by the **liberal left**. (insertions mine)*

And with such powerful language, reasonable Christians are incensed and rally to the polls, less reasonable Christians turn to far-right talk radio and develop wild conspiracy theories, and extremist Christians blow up buildings and attack Black churches. But each of these groups claims the illegitimacy of the elected liberal, secular government that is argued by mainstream political leaders.

1.6 ADD THE INGREDIENT OF EXISTENTIAL THREAT TO ANYTHING AND...VOILA INSTANT PRIMITIVE RESPONDING

It might appear obvious that the primitive, protective self is a closely wired response to the threat of violence, terrorism and war. But the depth of the threat narrative, like a magic poison elixir, can be applied as an ingredient to virtually anything to produce the dynamics of the response to ultimate

threat. Our brains are so alert to such threat messages that once flavored with existential threats, little else rational is processed. Attention, argument, and behavior rally around the threat theme and support it because of the essential biology of survival. In fact, in a natural response, the brain begins to filter out non-threat messaging as dangerous because they avert attention from the required protective response.

Ted Cruz, in September 2013 from the floor of the U.S. Senate, said, “*If you go to the 1940s, Nazi Germany. Look, we saw in Britain, Neville Chamberlain, who told the British people, ‘Accept the Nazis. Yes, they’ll dominate the continent of Europe but that’s not our problem. Let’s appease them’*” [31]. You would imagine he was responding to Obama’s lack of response to terrorism, or Europeans not taking action to protect Israel, or even abortion, which for many is akin to murder. But, he was relating to the Affordable Care Act, Obamacare. In this way, the Affordable Care Act becomes Nazism, Obama becomes Hitler, and any who fail to make an ultimate sacrifice against it, become cowards. Further, their act as cowards drives us to the precipice of what, overspending, making medical care more intrusive by government? No, it takes us to the precipice of ultimate evil and the end of days.

From the beginning, opponents’ view of Obamacare was that it would destroy the country, making it an ultimate existential threat, as to destroy the country is to destroy who we are and all we cherish. How this will occur is seldom explained, and now many years after its inception, no apocalypse has occurred. True, Obamacare is not a perfect program, but even major corporations are fairly comfortable with how it has played out. Obamacare increases taxes, switching costs that were largely occurring anyway to the tax base. And one can appreciate the conservative viewpoint both against large government and higher taxes, but it is not an ultimate threat. It is a much smaller program than social security, Medicare, or public schools. So, it is neither ultimate in size nor impact. So, the rhetoric of destruction and end of America is a clarion call that they know will rally the troops, as troops are willing to go to war against ultimate evils. And of course, many conservatives are also against public education and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Christian Evangelists are largely against Obamacare (and the EPA for that matter). Is it somehow a threat to Christianity? In fact, Obamacare has seen the extension of medical care to millions of formerly uninsured individuals, bringing them the miracle and succor of modern medicine. Is this not the most Christian of acts? Even if costs were higher, is this not

the Christian thing to do? And indeed, economists have consistently found that health care spending costs have slowed to record lows, since the Affordable Care Act was introduced. There has been a sizable drop in the nation's uninsured, millions receiving regular access to medical care for the first time. Older children remain medically protected among the middle class, a sizable percentage of these being the children of Evangelical Christians, along with all of our adult children, as parents can keep their children on their health insurance until age 26. So again, the Affordable Care Act seems to be consistent with Judeo-Christian values (as it is to the values of all the world's major religions).

For centuries, the Church and Christianity has spent greatly and disproportionately to heal the sick. Hospitals throughout the world have been and still are largely sponsored by Christian charity. So, perhaps it is the provisions of Obamacare for contraception and abortion, but these are matters of health policy that can and are largely enforced through any medical insurance, that must meet federal law and nondiscrimination. One can even see the rationale behind the argument that the Bible speaks to freedom, and the Affordable Care Act limits some freedoms by enforcing certain choices. But so do many laws, and certainly many major laws.

So, what becomes apparent is that the Evangelical abhorrence to the Affordable Care Act is more about their being right-wing Republicans than any Christian group. And then when they choose Donald Trump over Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio, and indeed a much more Christian-practicing Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama, it would appear that it is Obama and Clinton they hope to defeat, and not the evil of Obamacare. In this manner, this desire to defeat the Democrats is a desire to defeat ultimate evil, or logic just cannot become this twisted. Otherwise they would be fighting to preserve the universality of Obamacare, and remove the offending religious infringements, not the entire ending of Obamacare. They would be offering clear, workable proposals to keep millions of children and families insured and speaking to those very Christian aspects of Obamacare. But the Evangelical right is silent on these issues.

Obama "the dictator" is another ultimate argument where the magic ingredients of infusing any issue with survival and ultimate doom are applied as they refer to "Dictator Barack Hussein Obama." Rep. Robert Pittenger stated in response to President Obama's executive order on guns in January 2016 that "legislation is passed by Congress. It's not passed by monarch" [32]. We are a democracy and this makes the image of the totalitarian dictator abhorrent to us, a reason to rise up and overthrow a

false government. We do not want a president who rules us, but one who shares power with the Congress.

But the courts have not struck down these “dictatorial executive orders,” the point being that legal authority has preserved his use of Executive Authority, consistent with the constitution. So perhaps what is meant is that Obama is just dictating too much, and a real president would be less executive. Luckily, executive orders are numbered and have been since the Federal Register Act in 1936. Franklin Roosevelt, likely due to the exigencies of war, tops the list with 3721 Executive Orders. Barack Obama has issued the fewest Executive Orders of any modern president per term, and they number under 250, through March 2016. Ronald Reagan far exceeded Barack Obama with 381, and George W. Bush ended his presidency with 291 [33]. As Fig. 1.1 shows, President Obama was the least dictatorial of presidents, but the call for our freedom against the great dictator, the ultimate threat to our freedom and way of life has been made and the call to our patriot spirit has been made...damage done.

What we must instead conclude is that those who in mainstream politics charged him with the punishable crime of being a dictator, merely

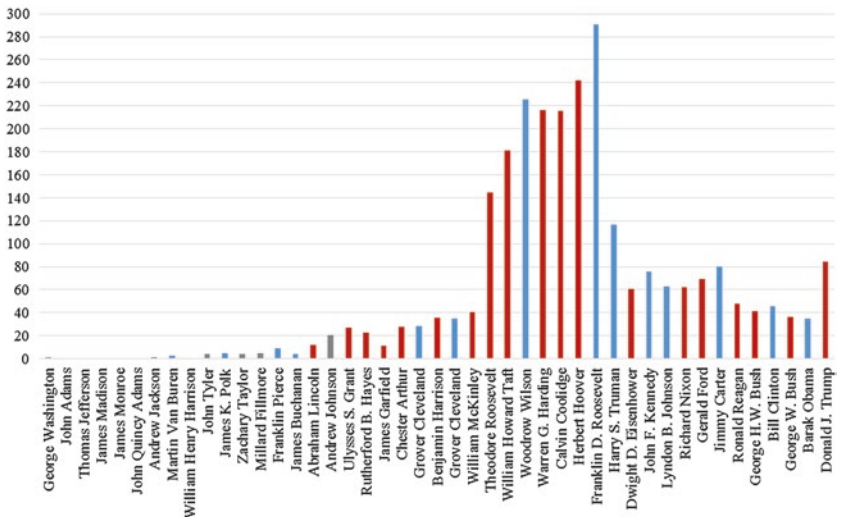


Fig. 1.1 Executive orders per year in office. (Adapted from Kristen Bialik, *Pew Research Center* [33])

meant that they did not like his politics. But arguing mere political differences does not evoke any of the rancor, disdain, and hatred that these politicians desire to fuel the defeat of a government which they do not even recognize as legitimate. The Muslim, noncitizen, falsely elected, communist president is also a dictator...words of revolution, not political activism. As the poster which popular right-wing radio host Alex Jones encourages you to download and place in public places and Facebook, the dictator must be stopped [34]. Extremist of course, but his radio show has up to 2 million listeners per week, more than Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck combined (Image 1.1) [35].

Once the Nazi metaphor is raised, to argue in favor of the target, is to argue in favor of tyranny and ultimate evil. Conservative, evangelical presidential candidate Ben Carson assigned the Nazi framework to nearly every aspect of political opposition. In August 2015 on the TV show *Nevada Newsmakers*, Carson compared Planned Parenthood to Nazi liquidation genocide.

I certainly see a connection in the sense that Margaret Sanger, their founder, and people like Adolf Hitler ... felt there were certain people who were superior and certain people who were inferior. And the way that you strengthen the society was to enhance superior ones and eliminate the inferior ones. [36]



Image 1.1 InfoWars.com's "Stop Dictator Obama" contest [34]

In the broadest terms, Ben Carson extends the Nazi metaphor to all of those who sit on the opposite side of government. As quoted on the conservative web site Breitbart.com, Carson states that “the current state of our government and institutions are very much like Nazi Germany”:

“You had the government using its tools to intimidate the population. We now live in a society where people are afraid to say what they actually believe” [37]. He [Carson] blames in particular political correctness and government intimidation for the state of today’s Nazi-like reality.

Nor is this tool of infusing any issue with existential threat and the assignment of the evil of Nazism only used by Republicans against Democrats or by the far right against the left. The use of fear messaging that alerts the brain’s built-in responses of deep fear and survival reaction can be effectively added to nearly any argument. It is a language that is used as a weapon of politics amongst the right as they justify their position and attack the position of their political competition within their own conservative faction of the Republican party.

On April 10, 2016, on NBC’s *Meet the Press*, Donald Trump’s convention manager Paul Manafort said of conservative presidential candidate Ted Cruz, “You go to these county conventions, and you see the tactics, Gestapo tactics, the scorched-earth tactics” because “they are not playing by the rules” [38]. So, “not playing by the rules” constitutes Gestapo tactics and the life-threatening scorched-earth policy. The German Secret State Police, the Geheime Staatspolizei (Gestapo for short) were the personification of the evil of Nazism. The utterance of their very name struck the deepest chord of fear. They had the power of arrest, interrogation, and incarceration, often summarily executing any perceived enemy of the Nazi regime. With terrifying authority, they descended on the home and workplace abducting Jews, communists, labor leaders, gypsies, and Christians. Their tools were terror, liquidation, starvation, summary execution, confiscation of property and theft of cultural treasures. They performed as supervisors in the death camps. To use the Gestapo metaphor is abhorrent, but it is a powerful rallying cry if politicians choose to rely on the politics of fear to rally their supporters and delegitimize their opposition.

1.7 THE SEARCH FOR OUR HUMANITY

How we react to those who oppose us is always a tightrope walk when deeply felt issues are being addressed. Terrorism, war, abortion, and even conservative versus liberal politics raise many difficult questions. Even

determining our direct response to terrorism itself draws the best and worst of our reasoning.

Responding to terrorist attacks in Israel, Rabbi David Stav, national-religious chairman of the orthodox Tzohar rabbinical association, stated that a terrorist who is injured and no longer posing an immediate danger must not be harmed further. “*In these days in which the blood is boiling... it is important to preserve our moral superiority; [we must] not harm those involved in murderous acts who have already been neutralized and do not represent a threat,*” he ruled [39]. But Safed Chief Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu stated unequivocally that “*[i]t is forbidden to leave a murderer alive ... Jewish law is clear... there are courts that can avenge blood and there are individuals who can avenge blood*” [39]. Another prominent Israeli religious authority, Rabbi Ben-Tzion Mutzafi, laid his interpretation of Jewish law out in no uncertain terms, “*It is commanded to take hold of his head and hit it against the ground until there is no longer any life in it*” [39].

Addressing and combating extremist ideology in word and deed is perhaps the greatest, most defining struggle of our generation. How we counter extremist ideology will likely be the meter on which our success as a civilized society will be judged by the lens of history. If everything is argued in the extreme and all who oppose us in political life are delegitimized and cast as tainted by ultimate evil, we lose the proportionality that is required for political discussion, and to know when discussion should legitimately end and violent defense of the self, family, and nation begin. Losing this proportionality is as old as the bible, and you may choose which bible you are referring to. For Torah, Old Testament, an “eye for an eye,” had nothing whatsoever to do with taking another’s eye in revenge, no matter how often it is misused. It is a tract that details the financial obligation incurred toward one’s neighbor if you are responsible for the loss of his eye. But our desire for revenge, to protect through all means possible, is hard-wired in our deep brain and easily brought to the surface of any issue that we feel passionate about. All we need is to portray the opposition as rapists, murderers, or dictators who will steal our freedom. Label them Nazis, terrorists, or fascists, and we elicit the primitive response system of rally, defend, and aggress, allowing no sanctuary. Our passions are found in the same deep, early formed regions of our brain, and essential for our survival as a species. The human response to words, and sticks, and stones is deeply ingrained in our fundamental, evolutionarily developed biology, and easily signaled and brought to the surface.

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