



## Straight Talk

by Muriel Sluyter

## How Do We Handle This Mess?

23 April, 2002

---

Greetings, Gentle Reader,

We Americans are living in an increasingly dangerous world. While some live in environments made dangerous by neighbors' criminal activities, most have been protected from such things. But in the past few decades, the degeneration of American society has impacted the safety of our neighborhoods. Now, the extreme violence and criminality of the world are moving in on us. We are being forced to learn the effects of violent, irrational hatred, something most have never experienced first hand.

Those of us who bear others no ill will have become targets of people who bear everyone but their own race and religion a great deal of ill will. Worse, their way of showing their hatred is to mutilate and kill their enemies. I make no pretense of understanding such thinking, but I don't have to understand it to acknowledge its existence and recognize it as a threat to our peace, health and safety.

We think people won't hate us if they live in our country and get to know us. We think those who have been educated here will come to understand we are no threat to them. They already know that, but it doesn't keep them from wanting to kill us. They have been brainwashed, and our being pleasant people and America's being a good place to live cannot change that.

To them, it matters not how nice we are and how much we want to help people around the world. What matters is that they have been taught that we and our way of life must be destroyed. It is their duty—their sacred duty--and they are dedicated to the performance of that duty.

In the Middle East, any Palestinian who wants to work with the Israelis toward peace is brutally executed by his fellow Palestinians, as was Anwar Sadat by his fellow Egyptians. Indonesian Muslims have slaughtered Indonesian Christians by the thousands and insist they are going to continue to do so until all Christians have either converted to Islam or been executed. India's Hindus and Muslims kill each other at every opportunity, although their government does all it can to prevent such atrocities. The Pakistanis eagerly help the Kashmiri Muslims fight the

Indian government, although both India and Pakistan have nuclear weapons and the technology to deliver them.

What a mess! Our response? We could go to the UN and ask them to tell other countries not to be naughty to us, but chances are that wouldn't accomplish much. We could beg our enemies to like us and leave us out of their fights, but that would just prove to them that, in addition to our being an affront to their conviction of historical superiority, we're completely nuts.

We could become as violent as our enemies. We could decide to kill them all. Not only is that impossible, it would be a betrayal of everything America stands for.

Concerning the old law's requiring an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, Fiddler On The Roof's Tevye said, "... (t)he world would become blind and toothless." While we must never permit others to attack us with impunity, our children must not become blind and toothless barbarians.

It looks as though all we can do is try to be good Americans. That means tending to everyday responsibilities, taking care of and loving our children, teaching them of a God of peace, teaching them not to hate those who hate us, going to work, paying bills, mowing the lawn. In essence, to be a good American must be and always remain a responsibility, an honor and a privilege.