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Trends. Basque Frustration: The Tool of Suicide as Homicide

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Observers of international affairs might wonder what it takes to garner international attention, sympathy, and support for the various struggles billed as quests for political independence, self-determination, and freedom.

One obvious candidate might be the compelling logic of one's advocacy. Another might be that advocacy's compatibility and resonance with human rights documents signed and ratified by many members of the United Nations. Still another might be the utility of a struggle's resolution or continuation for the strategic interests of other governments, non-governmental organizations, and even corporate entities. In addition, terrorism--especially via gruesome homicide--crops up as at least part of a winning hand but seems to be receding through the habituation of the perceptual processes of various political observers. Supporting examples can be found for each of these candidates but so can exceptions. The same is the case for combinations of some or all of these candidates.

Yet another candidate for consistently garnering attention, sympathy, and support is the judicious generation of suicidal behavior. Voluntary sacrifice of segments of one's own people and possessions seems to elicit extensive coverage from mass media and facilitate transmission of the cause among media consumers. There seems to be as well a fascination with the struggle nurtured by the vicarious experience of suicidal behavior. As well, suicidal behavior as cultural icon constitutes a crucial component of collective identity in the strugglers and their supporters.

The lack of significant suicidal behavior on the part of Basque separatist organizations might be the precipitant of the general coordinator of Elkarri, a Basque non-profit, pro-separatist peace group, offering a paean to the cause of the Palestinian National Authority. He has stated, "Why is there no Camp David for us?"

Of course, once observers habituate to suicidal behavior, what would be left in the armamentarium of the struggle? For suicide, in the quest for political independence, self-determination, and freedom, might eventually beget the homicide of the quest. (See Daley, S. (August 11, 2001). Fear spreads as Spanish and Basque blood flows. *The New York Times*, p.A3; deLahunta, E. A., & Guttmacher, L. B. (1997). An elective on violence. *Academic Medicine*, 72, 89-90; Gagne, M., Koestner, R., & Zuckerman, M. (2000). Facilitating acceptance of organizational change: The importance of self-determination. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 30, 1843-1852; Jelenska, J. (1971). The analysis of threatened suicide as instrumental behavior. *Przegląd Psychologiczny*, n. 22, 161-169; Ross, N. (1974). Man's struggle for freedom: A psychoanalytic inquiry into the individual and social dimensions of human autonomy. *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, 38, 209-221; Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). The darker and brighter sides of human existence: Basic psychological needs as a unifying concept. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11, 319-338.) (Keywords: Basques, Peace, Separatist Organizations, Spain, Suicide.)