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Trends. Aviation Terrorism's Winning Hand

IBPP Editor
bloomr@erau.edu

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Author: Editor

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Abstract: This article discusses aviation security, terrorism, and the psychology behind pilot motivations for opting out of flying members of the Israeli government to Israel.

When negative stereotyping and terrorism is applied towards individuals and towards groups of people, other individuals and other groups of people have three basic classes of choices. One choice is to pile on and engage in the same sorts of thoughts, emotions, motives, and behaviors. A second choice is to avoid the targeted out-individual or out-group-most often because of not wanting to be "outed" as well through other-perceived association with those already outed or not wanting to be a victim of "collateral damage." A third choice is to engage with the outed in solidarity-perhaps to demonstrate human solidarity or humanistic resistance to what is not humane.

According to multiple news sources, several airline pilots have opted for the second choice and have refused to fly with any personnel of the Israeli government onboard. Even if only to avoid becoming collateral damage, one might strongly argue that the pilot opting and socially isomorphic behaviors like it further reinforce the out-group status of whoever has already been outed-thus playing into the hands of terrorism. And such opting as social phenomenon seems fairly consistent with the history of crimes against humanity, wherein the second choice often appears as the most common with the latter two choices contesting far behind. That this history still seems to characterize human behavior suggests an evolutionary advantage to be exploited for different reasons by both terrorists and those who seek to extricate themselves from a world of terrorism to one without it. Unfortunately, this last group only facilitates ensuring that there is no such latter world. (See Erickson, E.J., Jr. (August, 1999). The anarchist disorder: The psychopathology of terrorism in late nineteenth-century France. Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities & Social Sciences, 60(2-A), 0517; Heinz, W.S. (1995). The military, torture and human rights: Experiences from Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay. In R.D. Crelinsten,& A.P. Schmid (Eds.). The politics of pain: Torturers and their masters. (pp. 65-97). Boulder, CO, US; Laqueur, W. (1987). The age of terrorism. Boston, Little Brown & Co.; Lindy, J.D., & Lifton, R.J. (Eds.). (2001). Beyond invisible walls: The psychological legacy of Soviet trauma. New York, NY, US: Brunner-Routledge; Report: Pilot refuses to fly Israeli deputy foreign minister from Cincinnati. (August 11, 2002). Associated Press; Weine, S.M. (1999). When history is a nightmare: Lives and memories of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina. New Brunswick, NJ, US: Rutgers University Press.) (Keywords: Aviation Security, Terrorism.)