

Republican Perspective

26 October 2016

by John Littig

The Lone Wolves---a New Kind of War

Marcus Luttrell is a retired Navy SEAL and winner of the Navy Cross for his actions against Taliban fighters in Operation Red Wings. His experience is the subject of the film "Lone Survivor." Luttrell says "Your war is here. You don't have to go searching for it."

The low-tech "lone wolf" attacks by jihadis here on our own soil have become so frequent and common that we no longer can remember most of them.

Here's a very incomplete refresher, in no particular order: Mohammed Reza Tahen-azar, who ran down fellow U.N.C. students with an SUV; Major Nidal Hassan, who shot to death more than a dozen of his fellow soldiers and wounded dozens more at Fort Hood; U.C. Merced student Faisal Mohammad, who stabbed four of his classmates; convert Zale Thompson, who attacked N.Y.C. police officers with a hatchet; the Tsarnaev brothers who bombed the Boston marathon; Jah'Keem Yisrael who beheaded an Oklahoma co-worker who resisted his efforts to convert her to the Religion of Peace; Dahir Ahmed Adan, the St. Cloud mall stabber; Ahmad Khan Rahimi, the N.Y.C. bomber; Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik, the San Bernardino couple who murdered co-workers at an office party; Omar Mateen, the Orlando night club killer; well, you get the idea. And the list will be obsolete by the time you read this, because there will by then have been more attacks.

Our fellow Westerners have suffered similar attacks: Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale who ran over a British soldier in Woolwich and then for good measure hacked him to death with a meat cleaver; Martin Couture-Rouleau (aka Ahmad le Converti), who rammed soldiers with his car in Canada; Abdel Malik and Adel Kermiche, who beheaded a Catholic priest in his church in Normandy; Mohamed Bouhlel, who killed over 80 innocents in Nice by mowing them down with a truck. The list could go on, but why?

After the attacks in the U.S., there inevitably follows the government's seemingly obligatory statement that there is no indication of terrorism---followed hours or days after with the concession that it is, in fact, terrorism. (Except for the Fort Hood attack, which the administration still labels "workplace violence.") Then comes the meticulous investigation whether it was an attack *directed* by ISIS or merely *inspired* by ISIS. Borrowing from Hillary Clinton: "What difference does it make?"

We are in a new kind of warfare, and it isn't for sure that our government gets it. Our jihadi enemy (ISIS and Al Qaeda today---but surely a successor entity tomorrow

and so on---but for simplicity let's just say ISIS) does not have to direct the attacks. Our enemy has ideological soulmates here in the U.S. and throughout the world. It does not need a chain of command in order to launch attacks. It speaks to its "soldiers" via the internet.

Whereas ISIS used to urge recruits in the West to come to join the fight in Syria, it has now switched. It now urges potential jihadis in the West to stay put and attack targets wherever they are.

In a recorded message to followers in the West, ISIS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adani offered this guidance to the faithful: "The smallest action you do in their heartland is better and more enduring to us than what you would do if you were here with us." Here was his advice for attacking the military and their families: "You could literally search for soldiers, find their town, photos of them, look for address in Yellowbook or something, then show up and slaughter them." But he also advocated killing Westerners indiscriminately: "Kill the disbeliever whether he is civilian or military....Both of them are considered to be waging war. Both of their blood and wealth is legal for you to destroy."

The ISIS spokesman also offered specific advice for carrying out small-scale attacks in the "Crusader nations:" "Smash his head with a rock, or slaughter him with a knife, or run him over with your car, or throw him down from a high place, or choke him, or poison him."

Confirming this tactical change by ISIS, FBI Director James Comey reported recently that this has resulted in a dramatic drop in the number of Americans traveling to join ISIS. In addition, he reports over a thousand terrorism-related active investigations in all 50 States. Are you comforted knowing the jihadis are staying "home?"

ISIS has---whether by sheer brilliance, or by preference, or of necessity---initiated a new kind of warfare. In this scenario, the footsoldiers do not have to report for basic training, march in formation, pull KP duty, or wear uniforms. More importantly, they do not have to receive orders from---or even to ever communicate with---the chain of command. All they have to do is to believe in ISIS ideology and to receive via the internet their inspiration---their call to arms.

The hallmarks of Western societies include the world's most extensive political and religious freedoms, as well as legally mandated constraints on the powers granted to law enforcement and prosecutors. These characteristics will make it especially difficult to defend ourselves against the lone wolf jihadi tactics.

A good starting place might be for our government to recognize that these lone wolves---whether directed or inspired---are ISIS "soldiers" rather than crazies or common criminals. If in doubt, consult Marcus Luttrell.