



ATOCHA WORKSHOP

On March 11th, the Varsavsky Foundation will host the Atocha Workshop on Global Terrorism. This workshop will include participants from the International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security but will take place after the end of the summit as an independent event managed and financed by the Varsavsky Foundation. At the International Summit participants from around the world will be engaged in drafting the Madrid Agenda, the culmination of months of collaboration between key policymakers, leading scholars, and international experts. The Atocha Workshop will have a different objective. While The Madrid Agenda is about building a bridge among democracies for coordinated action vis a vis global terrorism, the Atocha workshop is less about consensus as much as it is a forum to promote creative thinking in the fight against terrorism. The objective is to create a repository of original thinking on Global Terrorism that will start on March 11th and continue to be fed weekly in the form of a blog by creative thinkers on the subject from around the world. The innovative format of the Atocha will be especially stimulating with small, focused, group debates on challenging topics. This will be combined with the use of a large group Policy Forum. The results of the Atocha Workshop will be published in blog format in the blog section of the Safe Democracy web site (www.safe-democracy.org) for all interested people around the world to see and comment on.

The Safe Democracy Blog:

The Safe Democracy Blog (SDB) is a portion of the web site for the International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism, and Security (www.safe-democracy.org) that will contain creative thinking and original research dealing with the problem of global terrorism. The general criteria for published ideas in the SDB are that they be original, creative, potentially executable and most important that their implementation would likely lead to a more democratic world. The basic concept of this blog is that in politics, as in biology, diversity is needed to fight a threat. Political leaders, when confronted with the problem of global terrorism need a menu of possible responses, the Safe Democracy Blog will contain such menu.

The Atocha Workshop:

The Atocha Workshop will take place at the Atocha Train Station on March 11th, 2005. It will begin directly after the commemoration ceremonies at the restaurant Samarkanda, and continue until 8pm. Here an atmosphere that encourages creative content production will be provided. We expect around 125 people to participate in the workshop.



Organization of the Atocha Workshop:

The Varsavsky Foundation will organize and run the day long Atocha Workshop. This will be an independent event that follows with the International Summit.

Atocha Workshop Participants:

The Varsavsky Foundation will invite the most creative participants of the International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security to join the workshop. This workshop will operate in such a structure that all of the participants in the roundtable discussions and the Policy Forum will have roles. Overall around 40 roles will be created, thus satisfying the participants desire for active collaboration. To date over 120 invitations have already been sent out.

Agenda

FRIDAY MARCH 11, 2005

12:00-13:00 Opening Plenary:

Open to the Public

Series of keynote addresses from 5 leading participants providing an update on various aspects of the current state of Global terrorism.

13:00-13:30 Special Address:

Open to the Public

Two 15 minute talks from leading Atocha Workshop participants

13:30-15:30 Creative Debate Lunch:

Open to Atocha Workshop participants

In 10 small groups, including a moderator and a rapporteur, members will have a timed debate on a specific topic under discussion. The rapporteur will be equipped with a laptop and will contribute the groups original thinking live to a blog set up specifically for the workshop. Feedback received on the blog will be shared with the group. Topics have been chosen to stimulate creative debate leading to policy proposals in the subsequent session.



15:30-17:30 Policy Selection Workshop:

Open to Atocha Workshop Participants

The rapporteurs from each of the 10 small groups will present their four most creative and original policy ideas to the workshop participants. The workshop participants will then vote on the best policy put forth from each group to get a list of ten policies recommended by the workshop participants. These 10 policies will provide the foundation for the Policy Forum to follow.

17:30-19:00 Policy Forum:

Open to the Public

The 10 best policy recommendations to come up from the Policy Selection Workshop will be presented to the members of the Atocha Workshop and the public in an unusual format. Policy sponsors will stand in booths trying to gain support for their policies as the public walks amongst the various recommended policies. Members of the public will then endorse the policies they believe to be constructive with their signature. This exercise will serve two purposes. It will give feedback to policy sponsors as to the general acceptance of their ideas, and will give the public a way to transform concern into action.

19:00-20:00 Closing: Remembrance of the Victims of March 11, 2005

Open to the Public.

Proposed topics for Debate and Policy Promotion

1. Nationalism and Religion: Their Effects on Terrorism:

Nationalism alone as in the case of ETA seems to be enough to inspire terrorism. But the most lethal terrorist acts seem to be carried out by terrorists who blend both, nationalism and religion. The same appears to be true of the responses to terrorism as the 100,000 estimated dead in Iraq show. Nations that combine a heavy dosage of nationalism and religion, as the United States seem to have a tendency to be more ready to accept the use of force. What is it about this combination of nationalism and religion that makes actors feel more entitled to violence? Can anything be done to deflate it?

2. The Ethics of Bombing and Placing Bombs:

Why is bombing acceptable while placing bombs is not? Can democracies continue to justify bombing civilians from the air and ground as a valid terrorist fighting tactic? When does bombing unarmed civilian populations become a crime? How can democracies put together an ethical response to terrorism?

3. Why did Progressives Divide over Iraqi Policy:

Why did people as different in political backgrounds as Dick Cheney and Tony Blair fight the Iraqi war together?

4. Russia and the War on Terror:

How can Western democracies validly criticize the responses of Putin to Islamic terrorism while at the same time invade Iraq? Taking into account that the biggest terrorist threat is nuclear terrorism, shouldn't the United States either change its own policies or else go all the way and ally itself with Russia in the war against Islamic Terrorism?

5. Terrorism as an Enterprise:

Is terrorism a political movement or a political enterprise created by power entrepreneurs whose access to power is otherwise blocked? Establish a psychological profile of terrorist leaders: what really motivates people like Osama Bin Laden?

6. Muslim Society's Latent and Explicit Support of Terrorism:

What percentage of sympathizers do terrorists need to succeed within a society? What is the support that Al Qaida has in Islamic countries?

7. Allocating Resources in the Fight against Global Terror:

Was the \$200 bn spent by the US in the invasion of Iraq wisely spent? How much money is reasonable for the US to devote to fighting terrorism? Should some funds be spent in different initiatives? What could these initiatives be and how much could they cost?

8. America's War on Terror and the Fall of the US dollar:

Are there any links between the invasion of Iraq and the fall of the dollar? Has the war on terror affected the ability of US multinationals to do business around the world and sell their products and services?

9. The Impact of the War on Terror on American Multinationals:

10. Nuclear Weapons in the Arab World:

Why does the United States accept that Pakistan be the only Islamic nuclear power while fighting so hard against Iran's development of atomic weapons? How can this be explained to the Iranian people? Isn't it reasonable that Iran surrounded by 4 atomic powers already, Russia, India, Pakistan and Israel would want to own atomic weapons? Should we try to stop Iran or disarm others?

11. Rallying Moderate Muslims in the Western World:

Are Muslim citizens of Europe and the United States potential terrorists or contrarily potential allies in the fight against terrorism? Have the US policies in Iraq made these citizens more likely to sympathize and even collaborate with global terrorism? Now that Muslims make up 5% of the electorate in some western democracies, should policy towards the Muslim world in western democracies be made with Muslim voters in mind?

12. Possible US Responses to a Nuclear Terrorist Attack:

If the next Al Qaeda attack is an atomic car bomb exploding in Manhattan with over 100,000 people dead, how should the United States retaliate?

13. Terrorism Finance 101:

How much does it cost to start and maintain an Al Qaeda cell? How much money does it take to run Al Qaeda? How cost effective is suicide bombing as a form of warfare? It is estimated that it costs Hamas only around \$150 per suicide bombing. Is this one of the reasons for its success as a terrorist practice?

14. Debating Terrorists:

Knowing what we know about terrorists, what are the 10 most effective ways to convince a terrorist to give up violence? Do they center around carrots or sticks?

15. Empowering Muslim Women:

If Muslim women are denied basic rights that are common to them in Democracies, is there a way to work through women's groups to promote democracy and fight terrorism in Islamic countries?

16. Sex and The War on Terror:

Muslim terrorists criticize Western sexual values and yet endorse practices such as polygamy which Westerners find as unacceptable. Do these differences in sexual values come up in episodes of sexual violence such as Abu Ghayb? How do sexual views in general of Westerners and Muslims affect the conflict?

17. Crime and Punishment in the Muslim World:

Other than terrorism, do Muslim societies suffer a generally high, medium or low common crime rate? How does their definition and punishment for crime differ from those of Western Democracies?

18. Freedom Fighters or Terrorists? How to Shape the Debate:

Is violence by Iraqis against US Troops terrorism or a war of national liberation? Does terrorism refer to a method of fighting or to the targeting of civilians?

19. Madrasas, Islam, and the Education Gap in the Arab World:

Is education effective in preventing terrorism? Is Israeli education proof of this? Of the over one million Israeli citizens of Palestine descent, few have committed terrorists acts yet 25% of Palestinian Youths educated in the occupied territories between age 12 to 17 responded in surveys that they would like to become suicide bombers. Is this proof that Palestinians educated by Israelis behave very differently from Palestinians educated by Palestinians under occupation? Should the US and Europe invest resources in education in the Middle East? Would Middle East countries accept this intervention?

20. The PR War: Al Qaeda vs. U.S:

Who is winning the PR battle? The US or the Islamic Extremists? How does each side manipulate the Internet, mass media, and use key personalities for their cause? Who would be the most effective spokesman for the American war on terror? Is Bush the US's most effective spokesman? Is Bin Laden the most effect spokesman on the other side? Is the right measure of PR effectiveness the "conversion rate"?

21. The Arms Race Version 2.0: Muslims vs. Christians Proselytizing:

In the post cold-war era, are we entering a different type of an arms race? What are cultures from around the world doing to finish at the top in the race for disciples? From Evangelical Christians to Islam Fundamentalists, who is winning this war?

22. The Unholy Alliance between Red States and the Muslim world:

Do we have an unholy alliance between people from the Red States and the Muslim world as these individuals are driven more by religion than other values? Are the people in the Blue States and Europe their hostages?

23. The Leftist Attack on the IMF and World Bank and the Rightist Attack on the UN and Their Effect on Multilateralism :

Is the attack of the UN by the right and the IMF and World Bank from the left denigrating international institutions to the point that the general public doesn't believe they can effectively deal with problems such as global terrorism?

24. The Presence of Infidels:

Western democracies accept Muslim citizens, allowing them to freely practice their religion. Yet, many Muslims believe that infidels should not get the same treatment in their countries. Is this differential treatment acceptable? Is the problem that Al Qaeda raises of having American bases in Saudi Arabia that the soldiers are not Muslim or that they are foreigners?

25. The Use of Force:

Other than the some fierce pacifists most citizens of democratic countries believe that democracies need to be armed and be ready to use military power in order to preserve themselves. But what should the guidelines be for its use?

26. Violence and Religion:

Is religion itself a terrorist hostage? To what extent are religions violent or very violent people religious?

27. The UN: Under Funded Expectations:

Can the UN do all that we expect from it including leading military intervention with a budget that is 3 times smaller than that of the State of Colorado? How can international institutions help in the conflict of global terrorism if they are so under funded?

28. The Race for Nuclear Weapons:

Is having nuclear weapons the only way for LDCs to get the attention of the USA? Isn't the USA providing an incentive to despots to seek them?

29. US Troops in Iraq:

Will the US troops leave Iraq in the next 3 years? Are the US troops in Iraq to safeguard democracy, oil supplies, or both?

30. Democracies and the War on Terror:

What is the most effective anti-terrorist plan that democracies can put together that does not make military intervention a part of the strategy? What can be done at the grassroots level in the Muslim world to improve the average Muslim's view of Western Democracies?

31. Democracy and Terrorism:

If the whole world was a democracy, would there still be terrorism? If the Millenium Goals are achieved, would there still be terrorism?

32. The Likelihood of Another 9/11:

Was Osama Bin Laden unusually lucky on 9/11 as he himself seemed to believe? Can a reasonable argument be made that the fight against terrorism has been effective and that it is very unlikely that we will ever see something like 9/11 again?

33. Victims of the War on Terror:

How many deaths have occurred since 9 11? How many of the dead are Christian, Jews or Muslims? Why?

34. Death in the Islamic World:

Is there a relationship between terrorism and the punishment by death that conversion to another religion carries in many Muslim countries? If most Muslims approve of extremely harsh penalties for people who convert, does that make death of non-Muslims easier to tolerate in general?

35. The State of Open Society and the War on Terror:

What are reasonable measures that democracies can take to protect themselves against terrorism? Are the US air travel security procedures reasonable? Why are the securities procedures at European airports so different? Is terrorism effective when it forces open societies to become “less open?”

36. The Role of Saudi Citizens in Supporting Global Terrorism:

37. Is Saudi Arabia Osama Bin Laden’s Real target?: