tory and following from his ideological commitment to capitalism, this book is worth reading for its insights and treatment of a difficult and insufficiently examined subject.

Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, *is editor of this journal.* ❑

Truths and Psychoanalytic Insights into Suicidal Terrorism

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Review of Nancy Hartevelt Kobrin, The Banality of Suicide Terrorism: The Naked Truth About the Psychology of Islamic Suicide Bombing (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2010), 978-1597975049, 192 pages, Hardcover, $24.95.

Suicide terrorism is, indeed, banal. The first part of the title speaks a truth. The subtitle is somewhat off-putting as it professes a "naked" truth and specifies "Islamic," which deflects from the banality of suicide bombing. There is no such thing as only one "naked" truth; author Nancy Hartevelt Kobrin's truth may be very different indeed from the truth a suicide bomber is experiencing as he/she sets off on a mission.

Dr. Nancy Hartevelt Kobrin, whose doctoral degree is in Romance and Semitic languages and comparative literature, is a psychoanalyst whose expertise is in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and counter-terrorism. She delves into the extremely painful and horrific topic of the psychology behind the Islamic suicide bomber's actions. Rather than declare it as "naked" truth, more accurately her book is shedding light on the dynamics of the Islamic family with its clan mentality, idealization and denigration of females, premature separation of the male child from his mother, and the young males' initiation into the world of men. She provides insights into a culture that accepts domestic violence and

vacillates between shaming and honoring. In my opinion, as a psychoanalyst who has lived under the threat of such violence, reducing suicide/murder through martyrdom to a psychoanalytic interpretation of unresolved rage toward one's mother or father is not helpful in curbing these violent acts against humanity.

The book is both riveting and extremely thought provoking, while at the same time sensationalizing and bringing rationality to the immoral act of suicide-murder. Dr. Hartevelt Kobrin closely studies the men behind many attacks on humanity and highlights how a strong, charismatic leader like Osama bin Laden can give demoralized people a sense of purpose, hope, and belonging. The hunger for these needs to be met is so desperate that primitive aggression overrides the need to protect life itself.

It is important to note the emphasis on family life and its impact on early childhood development. Kobrin is astute in her description of the intimate and yet frightening ritualistic, entrenched belief systems that are perpetuated in Islamic families. When domestic violence, abandonment, and violation of sexual boundaries are committed in the family, a child has a much more difficult time processing primitive and confusing messages, behaviors, and feelings. Consequently their trust in authority figures is, at best, ambivalent. When the child cannot trust their home to contain danger and offer protection and support—the need to belong, and the behavior that goes along with gaining support and belonging—gives a child a focus for coping. Even when families do provide a safe environment for growth, a child must face separation and can only separate successfully if there is safety provided outside of the home by society. Being part of a larger extended family, community, or country means embracing the values and responsibilities that come with belonging.

This past summer, I had the opportunity to visit Nor-

mandy, France and process the Normandy landings by the British, Canadians, and Americans during World War II. I was struck by how young men, the same age as suicide bombers, were given the mission of protecting their country by risking their lives or by destroying the lives of others. The momentum, the importance placed on the mission, and what was at stake propelled these fighters to act as aggressively as possible in ways that would be viewed as "evil" and criminal in daily civilian life. War has different rules and behaviors. Islamic suicide bombers believe they are fighting a jihad—a religious war that has been imprinted on them throughout their history. One cannot extract a full psychoanalytic understanding of the personality of a suicide bomber without acknowledging the impact of group psychology as well as that of the individual.

Dr. Hartevelt Kobrin addresses the concept of projective identification and how the terrorist tends to project his feelings onto the victim and thus never has to address his own terror. I wonder if the act of suicide-murder is a way of mastering one's own terror of living a life with no meaning, no value, and no hope—a life sentence that is very real to those who are born in a powerless society with little hope of change.

Terror and fear are powerful feelings for both perpetrator and victim. They can be both protective and immobilizing. This book is significant because it highlights the fear and terror the suicide bomber, his family, and his community live by, as well as how they translate and share that experience with those who they blame for its cause. Whether it is a mother, a father, or an abstract external object of love and hate such as America or Israel that is feared and terrorized, the challenge remains as to how to put a halt to suicide-murder attacks.

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Helpful Insights on Fundamentalism Despite an Anti-Religious Bias

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Review of Charles B. Strozier, David M. Terman, and James W. Jones, with Katharine A. Boyd, eds., The Fundamentalist Mindset: Psychological Perspectives on Religion, Violence, and History (Oxford University Press, 2010), xxi, 274 pages, ISBN 978-0-19-5379-66-2,296 pages, Paperback, $19.95.

The authors of this scholarly compilation propose a typology of the "fundamentalist mindset" and delineate it as a universal phenomenon. It reveals itself in different traditions and movements, yet evinces strikingly similar psychological features. Wherever it occurs, it typically entails religious or quasi-religious apocalyptic vision and messianic aspirations; a fanatical belief in a cause; the dehumanization of heretics who do not share it; and a co-dependent relationship between charismatic ideologues and the rank-and-file, who fight the millennial struggle between good and evil.

In various settings, the proclivity to develop a dualistic mind frame is evident particularly among individuals who suffer from weak identity. Often, this is related to Robert Lifton's traumatic paradigm of the "historical dislocation." This is a crisis of values that occurs during periods of rapid