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ulation that the enemy can be truly loyal to the nation-state.

Presently, the American media — and the U.S. State Department — predominantly focus on terrorist organizations that are active in Muslim countries while largely ignoring terrorist groups within the United States and in non-Muslim countries such as Spain, Ireland, and those in Latin America (Al Sayyid 2002: 178). This selective reporting only reinforces the perception in Western public opinion that terrorism is primarily a Muslim phenomenon. However, in contrast to World War I and World War II (during which the United States actively engaged in propaganda and internment campaigns against enemy aliens), some leading politicians sought in the weeks following the events of 9/11 to avoid such actions and attempted to calm intolerance. Nevertheless, discriminatory government policies — including interrogations, body searches, detentions, and deportations — aimed primarily at men from Muslim countries have only nullified messages of tolerance and understanding.

In the United States, the media — and cartoonists, especially — emphasize a variety of stereotypes and bodily features to further establish images of the enemy. Biological and physiological differences become markers of inferiority . . .
group are made to feel fearful, and as though they are outsiders, and hence are forced to demonstrate their loyalty to the nation.

In light of historical precedent and the post-9/11 environment, the notion of abstract hatred aptly describes the process of constructing the enemy as the ultimate evil. Gray observes, "I think it is abstract hatred and not the greater savagery of contemporary man that is responsible for much of the blood lust and cruelty in recent wars. Abstract here is meant as the opposite of concrete, which in its fullest sense still means to examine anything in its entirety, together with its relations to other things. Hence, abstract hatred arises from concentrating on one trait of a person or group while disregarding other features, not to speak of the larger context in which all the traits coexist and modify each other" (134). It is thus a dangerous cycle when the Other is degraded, demonized, and dehumanized in order to justify fear, hatred, violence, and killing of that group. It is simpler to view an entire population as savage and inhuman when you have no contact with anyone from that group. As the linguist Noam Chomsky comments, "It is much easier to personalize the enemy, identified as the symbol of ultimate evil, than to seek to understand what lies behind major atrocities" (37).

Conclusion

During times of crisis, national security and safety become primary concerns while civil rights and liberties become expendable. Given the severity of the 9/11 attacks, many legislators, policymakers, and citizens seem to have become willing to trade equality for increased national security. Ironically, however, inequality often leads to increased insecurity. When a group is vilified, not only do innocent people suffer, the moral fabric of the society as a whole is eroded. From the opposite side, being constructed as the enemy can have a range of effects on the stigmatized group, including social isolation, resulting in severe psychological and emotional consequences; prejudice, harassment, and discrimination; violence against others in individual incidents as well as state-sponsored forms; incarceration of innocents; and the most extreme instances — genocide and extermination of entire cultures.

Now, more than ever, there must be more personal contact among those of different faiths, ethnicities, and nationalities. This is not the time to exclude others, nor is it a time to live in isolation. However, mere contact and interaction do not ensure understanding or acceptance among peoples. Rather, we must build on compassion and tolerance in order to stop cycles of hatred and violence. We must also have the strength and insight to recognize our consequent responsibility for our deeds in times of war and peace and to take action accordingly.

Works Cited


