

Kerry the Killer

With even Senator John Kerry joining the posse of terrorist-killers, the 21st century world's turning into the Wild West. By Robin Ferrer

Ever since President George Bush II announced his macho policy of killing terrorists, several strong leaders, not to be outdone by Mr Bush in Churchillian qualities, have also expressed eagerness to go after terrorists and kill them.

The most prominent of the avowed terrorist hunters in recent weeks has been the Democratic candidate for the 2004 US presidential elections, Senator John Kerry.

In each of the first two [presidential debates](#), Mr Kerry said—more than once—that he is dedicated to hunting down and **killing** terrorists. “I believe in being strong and resolute and determined. And I will hunt down and kill the terrorists, wherever they are,” he said in the first debate on 30 September 2004. And in the second debate on 8 October 2004 he had this: “I will never stop at anything to hunt down and kill the terrorists.”

Perhaps, it was being called a metrosexual, wishy-washy, and a liberal, that made Mr Kerry feel the need to show some rough, alpha-male qualities. In that case, what better way than to sling on a gun and announce he too was going off to hunt and kill “the terrorists”. And since the British prime minister Tony Blair assures us that Churchill would have killed large quantities of terrorists given half the opportunity, this has got to be the civilized and leader-like way of dealing with terrorism.

The problem with the killing approach is that it gets messy if people authorize themselves to kill terrorists. Why, then 19 young men, armed only with box-cutters, might hijack a couple of planes and fly them into tall buildings (or pentagon-shaped ones) in order to kill 4,000 terrorists working there. It all becomes a question of perspective. If Mr Olmert looks

like a terrorist to Mr Humbert, Mr Humbert kills Mr Olmert. And if Mr Humbert looks like a terrorist to the son of Mr Olmert, then Mr Olmert Jr kills Mr Humbert. But Mr Humbert has a nephew who...

It would be fairer, more sensible, and more civilized to strengthen and support an international system of justice under which *all* terrorists (including leaders of states that practice terrorism) can be tried and sentenced. Otherwise, people and groups can trade charges of being terrorists, take the law into their own hands, and go about killing their favourite terrorists. Why, driven crazy with fear, **you** might worry that there's some Haji somewhere who thinks you are a terrorist and tries to kill you. So, of course, it's better you kill Haji before he kills you. But guess what? Haji may have a few tough relatives. So, just to make sure, you better arrange to kill all Hajis. If some Haji has a chauffeur, better not forget to kill him, too—just in case. And if your nonagenarian grandmother says that's way too much talk about killing, and that's no way for decent, God-fearing children to talk, throw Churchill or Kerry at her. Or, to heck with it, kill her, too.

That's how presidents talk today.

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Sixth Commandment

Thou shalt not kill.

Exodus 20:2–17.

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The Scale of the Killing

Kill a man, one is a murderer; kill a million, a conqueror; kill them all, a God.

– *Jean Rostand, Thoughts of a Biologist, 1939.*

War Kills

Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?

Anti-Vietnam War slogan.

Urge to Kill

The urge to kill, like the urge to beget, / Is blind and sinister. Its craving is set / Today on the flesh of a hare: tomorrow it can / Howl the same way for the flesh of a man.

– *Andrei Voznesensky, Hunting a Hare, transl. WH Auden, 1964.*