

Hezbollah, Tunnel Warfare and Digging Deeper – Gaining the Psychological Edge

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Islamic Theology of Counter Terrorism

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The history of tunnel warfare runs deep going back to ancient times and continuing up to the present from the Greeks, Romans, medieval Europe, Asia to the Middle East. There was the elaborate Cu Chi tunnel system built by the Viet Cong for the launching of the Tet Offensive in 1968. Bin Laden, the terrorist engineering expert, built elaborate tunnels in Afghanistan with the U.S. responding by using bunker buster bombs.

There is much cross over between terrorist proxy organizations like Hezbollah and Hamas. They show copy-cat behavior. As proxies for Iran they also received North Korean aid in construction. A lawsuit filed for victims of Hezbollah rocket attacks in 2006 demonstrated that when the judge cited the deep assistance of North Korea to Hezbollah right down to having copied Korean tunnels in the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea.

In 2014 Hamas tunnel warfare during Protective Edge led to Israel developing innovative technology to destroy them. The exchange between Hamas and Hezbollah with the assistance of Iran and North Korea have been on going. Once again, the northern border of Israel is of major concern with the recent discovery of a 4th Hezbollah tunnel and with probably more to be found. Advanced Israeli technology utilizing detection through vibration of digging in limestone (the terrain in the north is quite different from the Hamas tunnels in the south) is facilitating location and destruction of these tunnels. It has been reported that knowledge of the tunnels had been known to Israeli intelligence for a long time as well as the towns' inhabitants along the border who like those in the south heard and felt noise from the digging underneath their homes.

The IDF sought to draw Hezbollah out letting them believe that their deep digging was going undetected. The Israeli mental strategy shows how there is an even “deeper” psychological deep digging response to the terrorists' concrete digging. This deep psychology involves understanding the symbolic level of the communication and it provides a deep psychological edge. Sun Tzu the brilliant war strategist in *The Art of War* makes clear the need to know the mind of the enemy. Sun Tzu came from a shame honor culture just as Hezbollah, Hamas, the Iranians and North Koreans and thus he understood such impoverished infantile behavior. Shame honor dynamics can be easily missed by the Western mind. Just as the buzz word nowadays is AI's “deep learning,” for counter terrorism it should be “deep thinking and feeling” – i.e. continuously building and honing this special psychological deep intuitive edge to enhance protection and security purposes.

Thus, it is not enough just enough to follow the terrorist diggers, one has to dig deep mentally. What does a tunnel represent and symbolize in the collective fantasy mind of a terrorist organization like Hezbollah? It is more than just a tactical tool in their terrorist toolbox. It shows how they only know how to make a violent connection vis a vis a tunnel. How does it intersect and display itself with regard to cruelty, brutality and mass murder? The ideologies of Islamist annihilation arise out of shared unconscious fantasies that provide the incentive to make “concrete” the cruel sadistic brutal violence through literally building concrete tunnels with the aim of kidnapping and murdering Israeli citizens. The fantasies arising from an emotionally impoverished shame honor childhood is the driver. It is so impoverished mentally that often it easily escapes counter terrorism's perceptions like a terrorist hiding in plain sight.

Like serial killers, Hezbollah terrorists can be “high functioning” i.e. pass for being normal save for their revealing obsessional behavior and fixation on the perverse use of the tunnels of death – not tunnels used for example in transportation during peace time.

Twisting around the normative use of a tunnel Hezbollah seeks to pack a powerful nonverbal unconscious punch to terrify the northern inhabitants of Israel. By calling their bluff such as the IDF did by waiting them out, their infantile lethal behavior is deflated along with their nefarious intent. Like Sisyphus forever rolling the massive rock uphill, Hezbollah wastes time, energy and money of their own people because they are mentally stuck on hatred, annihilation and obliteration.

It might seem unseemly for many to contemplate this kind of symbolic level for the Hezbollah tunnel as a perverse expression of bonding. Yet only by treating the root of the problem, can the violence be stopped in the long run. Hezbollah is desperate. Their shame is easily detected in these anal like tunnels while they want to coerce the enemy into taking on their shame. This is the aim of terrorism to cause submission, death and destruction not positive connection and peace.

In January 2010 Sheikh Muhammad bin Salman Abu Jamea issued a fatwa forbidding Muslims from using or working on the Gazan smuggling tunnels. He did this at the behest of the Palestinian Authority. While the fatwa showed the mounting tensions between the PA and Hamas back then, it did deploy the use of sharia law to discredit the behavior. If a fatwa can be written concerning smuggling tunnels, why not fatawa (pl.) prohibiting the participation in and building of Hamas and Hezbollah terror tunnels? Are they not abusing their own people – a waste of precious resources that could help them rather than letting an elite group of perverse terrorists annihilate all? There is much that Islamic Theology can do to counter this kind of terrorism.

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