

## Our War At Home

### Domestic Terrorism in the United States

#### *Spotlight on Oklahoma City Bombing*

One hundred and twenty lay dead, men women and children. The attack began on September 7<sup>th</sup> and culminated on September 11<sup>th</sup>, resulting in the mass slaughter of an emigrant party by members of the Utah Territorial Militia from the Iron County district. The year was 1857. Our history books identify this attack as the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Eventually the leader and organizer of the massacre was convicted and executed some 20 years later but most went free... **Domestic Terrorism.**

October 1<sup>st</sup> Los Angeles California. A powerful dynamite explosion rips through the Los Angeles Times building in L.A. The explosion starts a massive fire which kills 21 newspaper employees and injures 100 more. The act was committed by a union member belonging to the International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers. The year was 1910...**Domestic Terrorism.**

September 16<sup>th</sup>, a wagon filled with 100 pounds of dynamite was stationed across the street from the headquarters of the J.P. Morgan Inc. Bank in the financial district of New York City. The violent explosion killed 38 and injured 400. The year was 1920. Even though no one was found guilty, it is believed that the act was carried out by followers of Luigi Galleani.....**Domestic Terrorism.**

As disgusting as it is true the citizens of the continental United States are no stranger to domestic terrorism. The headline grabbing events depicting violent terrorist activities of recent weeks, months, years and even decades...ie Orlando, San Bernardino, Charleston.... only serves to highlight the proliferation of one of our darker realities.....*We're killing ourselves.*

2015 was the deadliest year for domestic terrorism in the United States since the Oklahoma City bombings in 1995, with at least 52 people dying at the hands of domestic terrorist, according to a new report from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

As concerned citizens residing in the United States, waking up each morning with thoughts of news of significant terrorist attacks on the nation can be very overwhelming. Most of us can recall where we were, what we were doing or wearing and even the exact time of day it was when we turned on the television or radio to learn about the horrible events of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Domestic Terrorism consists of many facets, such as attacks on soft targets, mass casualties, fear, religious backed opinions and an increase in panic. However, perhaps the most prevalent facet are the psychological side effects which make the next Domestic Terror attack even that much more successful.

Domestic terrorism can be grouped into four basic categories.....

- Motivated by religious convictions
- Motivated by racial prejudice and supremacist goals
- Anti-government/political motivation
- Or pursuit of unique special interest

Section 802 of the USA Patriot Act was expanded to include a specific definition of "Domestic Terrorism".....A person engages in domestic terrorism if they do an act "dangerous to human life" that is a violation of the criminal laws of a state or the United States, if the act appears to be intended to.....

- Coerce a civilian population
- Influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion
- Affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping
- And finally the acts have to occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the U.S.

By definition all terrorist acts involve violence or the threat of violence. Terrorism is specially designed to have far-reaching psychological effects beyond the immediate victim(s) or object of the terrorist attack. It is meant to instill fear within, and thereby intimidate a wider "target audience" that might include a rival ethnic or religious group, an entire country, a national government or political party or public opinion in general. As we have witnessed in many such incidents, terrorism is designed to create power where there is none or to consolidate power where there is little.

A recent example would be the 2013 Boston marathon bombing by two previously unknown brothers. Their act, while killing 3 and injuring 264 others created fear and mass panic and transformed an otherwise peaceful city into a sanctuary of anxiety and suspicion. For a moment the two brothers seized power through mass fear and destruction.

Ted Kaczynski, commonly known as the "Unabomber" perpetuated a 17 year reign of terror from 1978 – 1995 with homemade bombs, ultimately killing 3 and injuring 23. He later confessed that he felt a surge of complete power and control over his target audience when he engaged in his threatening activities.

In addition to individual lone wolf type of terrorist a number of very distinct groups and ideologies have been identified with domestic terrorism.

**Domestic right-wing terrorist groups often adhere to the principles of racial supremacy and are known to embrace anti-government, anti-regulatory beliefs. As a general rule, extremist right-wing groups engage in activity that is protected by constitutional guarantees of free speech and assembly. Law enforcement only becomes involved when the tough talk transgresses into unlawful activities. According to the ADL, of the 295 deaths from domestic terrorism over the past decade, fully 86% were at the hands of right-wing terrorist groups.**

**It is widely known that on a national level, formal right-wing hate groups such the National Alliance, the world Church of the Creator and Aryan Nations, continue to represent a high level of terrorist threat with an increasing level of violence integrated into their activities. Racism-based hatred remains an integral component of these groups' core orientations.**

**Another category of domestic terrorists, Left Wing Groups, generally profess a revolutionary socialist doctrine and view themselves as protectors of the people against what they refer to as the "dehumanizing effects" of Capitalism and imperialism. Their key aim is to bring about change in our society and they strongly believe that the change can best be realized through revolution rather than through an established political process.**

**In recent years, the ALF (Animal Liberation Front) – an extremist animal rights movement – has become one of the most active extremist elements in the United States. Animal rights activist will aggressively engage any person and/or organization that the activist perceive are harming animals. They have been documented as sabotaging facilities involved in animal testing and numerous other animal based industries.**

**Black Liberation Army, a splinter group made up of the more radical members of the Black Panther Party, sought to overthrow the US government at one time in the name of racial separatism. The group was suspected of involvement in over 60 incidents of violence between 1970 and 1980.**

**Traditional arguments on the primary causes of domestic terrorism have largely been attributed to factors such as nationalism, communism, fascism and other forms of political ideology while contemporary factors attribute causes to threats on religious freedom and infringement of constitutional rights.**

**Some recent studies have identified yet another key area that has contributed to Domestic Terrorist activity in recent years..... **Economic Factors.****

**In the wake of the global financial and economic crisis which began in 2007 a strong link has emerged between poverty, economic marginalization and home grown terrorism. Many of the acts of domestic terrorism recorded in recent years are largely motivated by either monetary or job losses and financial hardships and poverty. The assertion that poverty and economic deprivation cause terrorism has a long history and is based on one simple idea -----it is a nearly universally accepted assumption of human behavior that "aggression is the outcome of frustration".**

This category of Terrorist aggressors are of particular concern, as we enter the 10<sup>th</sup> year of a world economic slowdown.

Since January 2009 (last updated February 2016) 32 terrorist attacks within the United States have resulted in 83 fatalities and 402 injuries. These are considered terrorist attacks based on the declared political/religious motivations of the attackers and/or the attackers' affiliations with organizations and/or individuals advocating politically-motivated violence.

So what is our plan of action? How will those who are Sworn to Protect and Serve, Protect us from the Terror within?

An article appearing in the Sunday edition of the Kansas City Star on April 19, 2015 suggested that we are losing the War on Domestic Terrorism..... The first paragraph commented....

***“Twenty years after the Oklahoma City bombing, federal authorities have lost sight of domestic extremists and failed to prevent acts of terrorism. The lack of focus, funding and information-sharing across disparate agencies has led to fatal consequences for unsuspecting victims around the country. Meanwhile, the violence is metastasizing and the threat is growing.”***

This year senior officials with the U.S. Department of Justice recently announce possible legal changes which could allow the government greater room to combat so-called “anti-government extremists”

On Thursday February 4, of this year, it was reported that John Carlin, the Justice Department's chief of national security, and federal prosecutors are looking for new tools to deal with the rise of “domestic extremists”. Carlin noted that the U.S. government is facing an increase in opposition from militia groups, sovereign citizens and other anti-government extremists.

In October 2015 it was reported that the United Nations and the Department of Justice announced the creation of a new program designed to help local communities combat “violent extremism”. Called the Strong Cities Network (SCN), the plan calls for “systematic efforts” to share experiences, pool resources and build a community of cities to inspire local action on a global scale.

U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch commented, that the Strong Cities Network will serve as a vital tool to strengthen capacity-building and improve collaboration, and will enable cities to learn from one another, to develop best practices and to build social cohesion and community resilience here at home and around the world.

Although initiatives like the “Strong Cities Network” are a step in the right direction there are still huge challenges and obstacles that face the law enforcement and intelligence community.....

1. The intelligence community is still fragmented in terms of describing what intelligence should be collected, and for what purpose. Its many components are still operating independently -----The community cannot talk as a community.
2. There is widespread terrorism fatigue, and there are serious budget constraints.
3. Post 9/11, there have been mounting attacks on domestic intelligence operations. Secret government surveillance programs, often highly sensitive and thus necessarily secret, area not always well explained, contributing to public suspicion and growing debate.
4. Some of the obstacles that limit cooperation, information sharing and collaboration among the various layers of government were put into place for good reason. To protect privacy and civil liberties of citizens.
5. Privacy and civil liberties should not be used as a blanket excuse to keep the intelligence community and local law enforcement apart.
6. Many agree that local police departments are better positioned to collect domestic intelligence, and channel that information up the line, but only a few police departments have the resources and support to do so.
7. Lacking anticipatory Intelligence is a big issue. The primary trend is to be more reactive at the Strategic Level.

One useful tool that was added to the USA Patriot Act following the 9/11 attacks was section 806.

Section 806 amended the civil asset forfeiture statute to authorize the government to seize and forfeit: All assets, foreign or domestic of any individual, entity, or organization engaged in planning or perpetrating any act of domestic or international terrorism against the United States.

Consequently, the civil asset forfeiture power of the United States government is awesome. The government can seize and/or freeze the assets on the mere assertion that there is probable cause to believe that the assets were involved in domestic terrorism. Because it is a civil proceeding, the person is not entitled to be represented by an attorney at public expense.

The spectre of a society totally protected and free from random and destructive acts of domestic violence is more myth than reality. Our society was built on the premise individual rights and freedoms.

- The right to free speech
- The right to bear arms
- The right to assemble
- Religious freedom
- The right to privacy

Preserving our rights and freedoms while yet protecting us from the enemy within is a delicate balancing act that always seems to be too Much.....or too Little.

### ***Spot Light on Oklahoma City Bombing***

April 19<sup>th</sup> 1995 began as a very normal and typical day in the life of Alvin Nixon, a resident of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Up at 5:00AM in the morning and out of house by 5:30AM to meet a group of buddies at the local YMCA for an early morning workout and to shoot some hoops with the guys before work as has been their routine for years. But this day will prove to be very different.

Alvin, 44, a native Oklahoman was born in Hennessey, Oklahoma in 1951. His family later moved to Oklahoma City where received his formal education, after which he attended Central State University in Edmond, Oklahoma where he received his Bachelors and Master's degrees in Criminal Justice. In 1977 he began what would ultimately become a very successful 31 year career with the federal government as a United States Probation Officer, assigned to the Oklahoma City U.S. District Court System.

At about 7:05AM Alvin and his friends completed an always competitive workout and headed to the showers to prepare for work. They would always bring their work attire along to save time. Alvin arrive at work a 7:45AM and as was his routine, parked his truck the parking garage of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City and walked a block and a half to his office. His office was located in the Oklahoma City Federal Courthouse Annex. A smaller three story building adjacent to the huge Federal Court house and connected by an elevated walk way.

After a trip to the coffee station, Alvin settled at his desk to begin retrieving and responding to the numerous voicemails which always started his day. At 8:50AM there was a message from his son, Darrin, a standout athlete at a local high school reminding him of an event at school that evening.

At 9:00AM a co-worker passed his office and uttered a reminder of a 9:30AM meeting in the conference room..... Just another Day at the Office.

At exactly 9:02AM the quite peaceful morning was interrupted by the sound of an enormous explosion. The building shook as the sound of broken glass filled the air. First thoughts through Alvin's mind was that there must have been a natural gas explosion nearby or maybe a letter bomb has gone off within the building, in his line business those kind of threats are real and not to be taken lightly.

As everyone begins to emerge from their offices they immediately begin to follow the established emergency building evacuation plan, which no one ever dreamed would be implemented in a real situation. Outside on the ground they observe that the building seems to be structurally okay, just broken glass everywhere. It is then determined that two employees are missing. Alvin and another supervisor return to the building to search. There is no electricity, no lights and no telecommunications. The employees are not found, however it is later determined that they left the scene by automobile out of fear of the unknown.

In a few moments the grim reality of what has just happened becomes known, as first responders flood downtown Oklahoma City and began their gruesome task.

As an officer of the court, Alvin is trained in rescue and emergency preparedness and later will assist in the rescue and recovery effort. Seven law enforcement officers who were personal friends and acquaintances of his were lost in the tragedy.

The Oklahoma City Bombing was a domestic terrorist bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City. As you may recall, the bombing was planned and carried out by Timothy McVeigh, Terry Nichols and accomplices Michael and Lori Fortier.

The bombing destroyed one-third of the building, killed 168 people, and injured more than 680 others. The blast destroyed or damaged 324 other buildings within a 16 block radius, shattered glass in 258 nearby buildings and destroyed 86 cars. The total estimated damage was over \$652 million dollars.

The Oklahoma City attack was the deadliest terrorist attack on American soil until the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and still remains the deadliest domestic terrorism incident in United States history.

**Timothy McVeigh** was found guilty on 11 counts of murder and conspiracy on June 2, 1997. He was executed by lethal injection at the Federal Correctional Complex, in Terre Haute, Indiana on June 11, 2001.

**Terry Nichols** stood trial twice. He was first tried by the federal government in 1997 and found guilty of conspiring to build a weapon of mass destruction and of eight counts of involuntary manslaughter of federal officers. The state of Oklahoma sought a death penalty conviction on 161 counts of first degree murder. On May 26 2004 the jury found him guilty on all charges, but deadlocked on the issue of the death penalty. He is serving 161 consecutive life terms without the possibility of parole.

**Lori Fortier**, received immunity for her testimony. **Michael Fortier** was sentenced to twelve years in prison on May 27, 1998. On January 20, 2006 Michael Fortier was released for good behavior into the Witness Protection Program and given a new identity.

On April 19, 2000 the Oklahoma City National Memorial was dedicated by President William Jefferson Clinton. A remembrance observance is held on the same day each year at 9:02AM, beginning with the traditional 168 seconds of silence ----- one second for each person who was killed.

**Alvin Nixon**, my brother-in-law, well, with the moral support and the assistance of a close friend, he visited the memorial site for the first time and only time in 2012.

**God Bless America!!**

**Wendell Lynch**

**Athenaeum Society**

**Hopkinsville, Ky.**

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