

Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor – Your *Jihad*

Book Review by Tom Andres

What could be more American, more rousing patriotic, than a political convention held smack in the middle of Kansas City, USA? You know, the kind where you can stroll among the various booths in the lobby, then excitedly bounce up and down in your seat cheering the inspirational speakers. And maybe afterwards meet up with fellow activists and plot strategy at, say, a nearby Ramada Inn. Oh yes, forgot to mention, this was a Hamas convention, focusing on future “crusader-Zionist-infidel conspiracy” targets around the world, with discussion groups devoted to “car-bomb lessons,” “how to handle improvised explosives” and the “interrogation and execution of collaborators.”

Yes, all true in the suicidal pre-9/11, bendy-border, got-my-visa-in-a-Cracker-Jack-box America, as meticulously and courageously detailed by Steven Emerson.

While reading Emerson you keep wanting to smack the heel of your hand to the middle of your forehead – Nuuh! What *unbelievable* dangers were allowed to grow up around us! The book’s cover shows a map of America, pinpointing communities that unwittingly hosted terrorist headquarters, conventions, conferences, rallies, traing camps, internet servers, money-laundering businesses, ‘charitable’ groups, and yes, God strike me dead, ‘summer retreats for adults and childrem.’

Besides Kansa City, what communities? Well, just a few out-of-the-way places, like: New York; Chicago; Los Angeles; Washington, D.C.; San Francisco; Philadelphia; SanDiego; Dallas; Boston; Cleveland; Detroit; Denver; Seattle; Oklahoma City; Laurel and Potomac, Maryland; Brooklyn, New York; Charlotte,

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North Carolina; Orlando, Ft. Lauderdale and Boca Raton, Florida; Sacramento, Santa Clara and Anaheim, California; Tucson, Arizona; Bridgeview, Illinois; Herndon, Springfield and Falls Church, Virginia; Arlington and Richardson, Texas; Plainfield, Indiana; Oxford, Mississippi; and Manhattan, Kansas.

Emerson’s investigation into all this began on Christmas Day, 1992, when he was drawn into the Oklahoma City Convention Center by a buzz of activity involving men wearing traditional Middle Eastern attire, and then noticed books and videos on sale “preaching Islamic jihad.” Gaining further admittance as ‘recent convert,’ he heard speaker after speaker “preach violence,” while the audience chanted ‘Kill the Jews!’ and ‘Destroy the West!’ Hmmm.

Since this was nine years before the 9/11 attack we might wonder exactly where were our half-dozen or so biggest mega-million-dollar national security and law enforcement agencies, for example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation? At this point it is hard to avoid the Dave Barry line: “I’m not making this up.”

While observing a Muslim conference in Detroit in December, 1993, Emerson tells how, “after five days of listening to speakers urging Muslims to wage jihad,” he was startled to see introduced as a guest speaker, a senior FBI agent from the Detroit office, who then delivered some perfunctory remarks that were greeted with hostility and sarcasm. When Emerson later asked FBI officials how this could possibly be, they first denied it, then admitted that the agent had gone there thinking it was “some kind of Rotary Club.” (Could the name have been Clouseau?)

What could account for such obliviousness, such a narcoleptic lack of urgency?

Not long before 9/11 Emerson attended a security meeting of top government officials, afterward e-mailing a friend, “We are doomed,” because the prevailing

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The Terrorists
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attitude seemed to be, “We are such good people that nobody would ever want to attack us.” (Not unlike the zippity-do-da fall-of-Baghdad expectations.)

Americans had also become “numbed” by terrorist infiltration methods that take advantage of our very porous system (Emerson, Congressional Testimony, 12/01) – which leads to what may be the most chilling development of all.

It is not just that terrorists have penetrated our borders, but that America is being colonized by dozens of unassimilated cultures, to such an extent that foreign terrorists and criminal gangs can immerse themselves in neighborhoods where once suspicious behavior now goes unnoticed.

Meanwhile, most of America’s political, corporate, media, educational, religious, and creative (e.g. Hollywood) elites have become enthralled with (and, no doubt, some just plain fear of criticizing) “diversity,” “multiculturalism,” and mass legal and illegal immigration. Is there now any major politician who does not daily bow down and chant, “Our strength is our diversity!”? Curious, since numerous studies have shown that nations with the greatest diversity are also the most war-torn. Exhibit A: Iraq.

Only the intervention of average voters seems capable of turning these grave security threats around. This, of course, is made much less likely with a two-party monopoly system that almost never allows popular votes on the issues of lower immigration levels or greater border enforcement – in spite of, or because of, decades of opinion polls showing a clear majority of voters strongly favoring both reforms.

Emerson stresses that most Muslim immigrants are decent and hardworking people. No doubt. But experts, some of them Muslim, Emerson reports, have estimated that 50 to 80 percent of the 1200 Muslim mosques in the U.S. had been taken over by extremists.

Is Emerson an alarmist? Although estimating the number of sleeper cells and the like needs constant reevaluation, his basic thesis has been all too tragically vindicated. In June Of 1997, after considering the “mounting evidence of the strength of al Qaeda and other groups,” he warned in an interview, “get ready for twenty World Trade Center bombings.” That’s pretty much what happened – only all at once.

After 9/11 we kept hearing, “Everything has changed.” But has it?

It is somewhat as if violent criminals had invaded, burned and ransacked our homes, butchering members of our family, and we respond by demanding random ID checks from the Avon Lady and mounting gun turrets on the roof – all the while hopping into bed each night, having left the back door yawning open in the breeze, beckoning to the dark unknown.

Emerson’s excellent reporting clearly demonstrates what happens when a nation comes to think of itself as an exception to history and virtually throws open its borders. On the individual corporal level we can imagine what would happen if someone were to cast aside their own protective immune system – so embarrassingly passe, so intolerant!

For all these reasons I strongly recommend Steven Emerson’s *American Jihad*. •

He Would Not Play the Race Card

Cesar Chavez declared himself to be a union leader rather than a leader in the Chicano movement. Stressing the need to avoid narrow race-based nationalism, Chavez seemed to attack some of the basic principles of emergent Chicano identities:

“I hear more and more Mexicans talking about la raza – to build up their pride, you know,” Chavez told me. “Some people don’t look at it as racism, but when you say ‘la raza,’ you are saying an anti-gringo thing, and it won’t stop there.

Today it’s anti-gringo, tomorrow it will be anti-Negro, and the day after it will be anti-Filipino, anti-Puerto Rican. And then it will be anti-poor-Mexican, and anti-darker-skinned-Mexican....La raza is a very dangerous concept. I speak very strongly against it among the chicanos.

At this point in the struggle, they respect me enough so that they don’t emphasize la raza, but as soon as this is over they’ll be against me, because I make fun of it, and I knock down machismo, too.”