Israel's Teenage EMS Volunteers Risk Psychological Distress

By Daniel Gottlieb and Zvi Feigenberg

Over the past several years and the last year-and-a-half in particular, Israel has suffered numerous bombing and shooting attacks by Palestinian terrorists. These attacks have occurred in malls, discotheques, coffee shops, pizzerias, catering halls, and train stations, and on public buses and inter-city roads. They are frequent yet unpredictable. Everyone is a potential victim and everyone knows it. The anxiety level of the whole country is elevated, especially for Israel’s emergency medical services (EMS) crews, which have to face the effects of terrorism up front, first hand, and uncensored.

In a small country of limited resources and tremendous needs, volunteers in general, and teenage volunteers in particular, play a significant role in Israel’s emergency medical services, the Magen David Adom (Red Star of David). Throughout the country there are approximately 4000 volunteers, boys and girls between 15 and 18 years old who put in two to three shifts per week riding the country’s 500 ambulances and mobile intensive care units. These volunteers, trained in basic first-aid techniques, assist the medics and the paramedics and physicians who comprise the professional backbone of Magen David Adom (MDA).

Kuwait is Still Recovering From Trauma of Iraqi Occupation

By Fahad Al Naser

The 1990–1991 Iraqi occupation of Kuwait was especially destructive because the Iraqi aggressors were striving to eradicate the Kuwaiti identity. Kuwait was ruled as Iraq’s 19th province until its liberation at the end of February 1991. Many scars and post-trauma sequelae affected the psychological, social, educational, and cultural well-being of the Kuwaiti people. Individuals, families, and the society as a whole experienced typical massive traumatization as a consequence of sudden war, violence, torture, occupation, and personal loss.

In 1992, the H.H. the Amir of Kuwait established the Social Development Office (SDO) for the sole purpose of rehabilitating and restoring the Kuwaiti psyche that was grossly traumatized by the 1990-1991 Iraqi occupation. The SDO is a scientific, professional, non-profit organization dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and war-related disturbances through multi-dimensional strategies and techniques in counseling, psychotherapy, and rehabilitation.

Kuwait did not have previous experience in coping with war-related traumatic events, and lacked the mental health professionals needed to help afflicted individuals, families, and society. From a cultural point of view, people would not acknowledge or accept treatment for PTSD, and not much importance was given to this aspect of mental health. Thus, the SDO had to start healing the wounds that are so often not seen, but surely felt.

Continued on Page 2

Continued on Page 4
Many Magen David Adom volunteers work in the communities in which they live and they may have to respond to calls near their homes and in places they frequent. This was the case in a recent terrorist attack in Karnei Shomron, a small town in Samaria (the West Bank). The attack occurred on a Saturday evening when many teenagers were at a local pizza shop. Several of the MDA volunteers had planned to meet at the pizza shop earlier in the evening but decided instead to join their friends at the ambulance station—minutes later they heard the bomb blast. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to say to oneself those comfortable words of healthy denial, “this won’t happen to me.”

It is impossible to understand the effects of an event without an appreciation of the context in which it occurs. Beyond the sadness that accompanies any event in which many people are hurt and killed, terrorist attacks arouse tremendous anger. This anger may make it more difficult to maintain professional objectivity and distance. The nature of the terror attacks also arouses fear. In several instances terrorists have planned two-stage attacks in which after a first explosion, a second one is detonated after police, fire, and ambulance teams arrive. As a result, Magen David Adom crews now don flack jackets when responding to terror attacks.

Unlike most emergency medical crews in other places that deal with mass injury incidents only infrequently, Magen David Adom crews must deal with these incidents almost daily. It is unclear whether repeated exposure strengthens one’s psychological defenses or whether at some point it leads to a weakening of these defenses. Membership in the MDA and the volunteer youth corps is, however, associated with a very powerful espirit de corps that tends to have a generally salutary effect on the emotional well-being of the volunteers. In addition to providing a closely-knit social group, the MDA accords teenagers high social status, adult-approved activity, and thrill-seeking behavior. The group spends a good deal of its free time at the ambulance station instead of at home. For many volunteers, the MDA is almost addictive and there is a defiant feeling that some things, particularly feelings after terrorist attacks and other mass disasters, can only be discussed with fellow volunteers.

Psychologists tend to be somewhat hesitant to expose youth to the horrific sights that often accompany large-scale terrorist attacks ...

Nonetheless, the youth volunteers come to the scene of these attacks, often directly from their homes and on their own initiative.

Many EMS workers report that upon arriving at the scene of a terrorist attack, they do not stop to think about what has happened but go straight to work, functioning in accordance with the standard operative procedures in which they were trained and drilled. The ability to function automatically gives a sense of security and control in an otherwise dangerous and out-of-control setting. When these volunteers understand that their role is limited and that they cannot perform any life-saving operations, there is less chance that they will experience the guilt often expressed by paramedics. They will be less likely to question whether or not they provided the best possible care and made the most prudent decisions since their work does not require much decision making. And being able to do
something, even if it is just bringing a stretcher or schlepping an oxygen tank can give the sense of making the situation better, which is a great defense against feelings of helplessness that come from being in a passive position. Beyond the excitement of flashing lights and wailing sirens, these volunteers are infused with a sense of purpose and mission.

It is important to develop adequate sensitivity to the teenage volunteers’ risk for psychological distress as well as an appreciation of the palliative elements of the system that help mitigate against potentially deleterious effects. Adolescence by its very nature is a risk factor for psychological distress. Adolescents tend to seek thrills, to thumb their noses at danger, and at times to exercise questionable judgement. At their age, they often do not have adequate life experience and maturity to face the harsh realities of life. They tend to see their abilities in an exaggerated fashion and to downplay their limitations. They have a need to portray themselves as tough and invincible and do not easily admit to weaknesses.

Over the past seven years, Magen David Adom has instituted critical incident stress debriefings for all its staff on an as-needed basis. These debriefings are requested by the Station Chiefs to the Medical Director and are usually conducted within 72 hours after the incident. The debriefings are conducted by a small cadre of psychologists trained in critical incident stress management who themselves are volunteers. Participation by the crews is voluntary. In each group there are usually one or two people who show unusual signs of stress. To our knowledge, however, there have been no reports of full-fledged PTSD reactions or exacerbation of symptoms following debriefing, or cases in which psychological intervention beyond a one-time meeting was necessary. In addition to the debriefings, MDA at times will request a consultation for a volunteer or a crew who show signs of emotional distress as a result of their work, even if the distress does not result from exposure to terrorist activity. The feedback from the Station Chiefs is that the crews perceive the debriefings as helpful.

Israel’s unique use of adolescent emergency medical volunteers presents many challenges and dilemmas. Psychologists tend to be somewhat hesitant to expose youth to the horrific sights that often accompany large-scale terrorist attacks and in fact, the official MDA policy states that youth volunteers are not to be sent to the scene of mass terrorist attacks. Nonetheless, the youth volunteers come to the scene of these attacks, often directly from their homes and on their own initiative. The current thinking is that MDA must be more aware of the attendant risks of engaging the services of youth volunteers and needs to provide appropriate initial screening, proper training, periodic follow-up, and perhaps mandatory debriefing after particularly traumatic events. In addition, MDA needs to form a partnership with the parents of these teenagers as well as with their schools and agencies in their communities. Moreover, MDA as an organization needs to conduct research to determine the effects of exposure of youths to scenes of graphic violence and trauma and its correlation with symptoms of PTSD, inability to adequately fulfill tasks, and dropout rates.

Daniel S. Gottlieb, PsyD, is a clinical psychologist and Associate Director of The Israeli Institute for Systemic Studies, Family and Personal Change. Dr. Gottlieb also serves as a Mental Health Consultant in the Medical Division of Magen David Adom. He can be reached by e-mail at dgotlieb@netvision.net.il. Zvi Feigenberg, MD, is the Director of the Medical Division of Magen David Adom.
Considering this dramatic and traumatic situation, the SDO had to mobilize its efforts for the sake of rehabilitating the Kuwaiti psyche in a constructive and positive way based on local and international experiences. The SDO developed appropriate counseling and psychotherapeutic programs for the traumatized victims and their families, while gaining professional skills, knowledge, and experience through exchange with international agencies. Foreign experts were consulted, international and local training was implemented, and research programs were started on urgent issues. The SDO was the first institution of its kind in the developing nations of the Middle East and South Asia.

The SDO is dedicated to achieving the following objectives: (1) identifying afflicted individuals and families through assessment tools and diagnostic procedures; (2) conducting comprehensive epidemiological studies for discovering these cases, classifying them, and estimating their incidence and prevalence; (3) providing counseling and psychotherapeutic services to the victims; (4) rehabilitating the Kuwaiti psyche, achieving the state of restoration and adaptation; (5) promoting individual, family, and community mental health; (6) improving the quality of mental health services; (7) changing the social attitudes towards mental illness and mental health professionals; (8) providing preventive and interventional programs in coping with mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders, both in the general population and in the vulnerable high-risk groups; (9) promoting research programs and encouraging international, national, and local campaigns for training and continuing education; and (10) enhancing the social-psychological climate for an environment of well-being.

The SDO comprises four major divisions: Counseling Services, Research and Studies, Training Services, and Public Relations and Media. These divisions are diversified in specialization and unified within the SDO mission and objectives. A network of counseling centers and four specialized centers—the Assessment Center, Speech and Hearing Disorders Unit, Biofeedback Center, and Childhood and Parenting Center—serve as branch offices for the SDO throughout Kuwait. By assimilating the international advancements in the fields of traumatology, counseling, and therapeutic intervention strategies and techniques, treatment services were developed in accordance with the Kuwaiti culture. Certain emphasis was directed to the special needs of children and adolescents. Women and the family also receive special attention in the context of the SDO services.

The SDO sponsored a policy for continuing education through several training programs offered by international and world-renowned professionals, covering different fields in counseling, psychotherapy, psychiatry, rehabilitation, social service, and education. The SDO has also sponsored and published several research projects concerning post-trauma related disorders and phenomena. The SDO achieved about two hundred research activities, representing about 80 per cent of the total research programs in Kuwait.

Research has been closely associated with organizing scientific and professional conferences. The SDO has held four international conferences (the most recent in March 2002), eleven seminars, and several symposia and workshops on topics like PTSD, war–related disorders and phenomena, intervention strategies and techniques, the psychological impact of trauma on society and culture, professional skills, research methodology, and professional development.

As a result of its sincere efforts and creative achievements in dealing with war-related trauma, the SDO has developed during one decade into a unique center for excellence. The SDO now has communications with 75 international scientific and professional institutions and associations, exchanging knowledge and experience in dealing with PTSD-related disorders and phenomena and on preventing at-risk individuals from developing long-term PTSD. Membership in international organizations and ongoing cooperation and exchange will continue to enhance the SDO’s achievements in Kuwait and its reputation abroad.

Fahad Al Naser, PhD, is the Director General of the Social Development Office in Kuwait. He can be reached by e-mail at alnaser@qualitynet.net.
Thursday, August 22, 2002

8:00–8:50 am
Symposium: Successful Strategies for Treating Refugee Survivors of Torture
Chair: Paul E. Priester
Participants: Mojisola F. Tiamiyu, Ashraf Kagee, Dominicus So

10:00–10:50 am
Social Hour: Reception for International Visitors
Chair: Leslie C. Cooper

11:00–11:50 am
Symposium: Depression in the Mothers of Young Children–An International Perspective
Chair: Susan Kay
Participants: Susan Kay, Eduardo Lugo, Antonio Martinez, Stevan Newcomb

1:00–1:50 pm
Symposium: Cross-Cultural Assessments of Emotional States and Personality Traits
Chair: Charles D. Spielberger
Participants: Anthony Newcomb, William W. Latimer, James M. Statman

Friday, August 23, 2002

8:00–8:50 am
Paper Session: Fundamentalism, Terrorism, and Psychology’s Response to September 11
Chair: James M. Statman
Participants: Cluster, 8, 27, 34, 48, 52

1:00–2:50 pm
Thematic Programming–Discussion: Interlocking Issues of Culture, Poverty, and Violence–An International Perspective
Chair: W. Rodney Hammand, Bernice Lott, Corann Okorodudu, Paul R. Kimmel
Participants: W. Rodney Hammand, Sari Dworkin

4:00–4:50 pm
Invited Address: Lynn Stuart Weiss Lecture on International Psychology–Emerging Areas of Psychological Practice: Implications for International Psychology
Chair: Dorothy W. Cantor
Participants: APA Board of Trustees, 52, 48

Symposium: Perception of Sexuality Among Middle Easterners  Divisions: 52 McCormick Place, South Building-Level 5, Room S502a Chair: Brigitte A. Khoury Participants: Azhar Abu Ali, Berta Davis, Brigitte A. Khoury Discussant: Susan Heitler

9:00–9:50 am Invited Address: Cultural, Multicultural, and Cross-Cultural Intelligence Research: Necessary, Not Just Nice Divisions: 3, 1, 14, 15, 45, 52 McCormick Place, Lakeside Center-Level 4, Room E450a Participant: Robert J. Sternberg Chair: Wendy M. Williams

Invited Address: Culture and Point of View Divisions: 8, 1, 7, 9, 14, 15, 20, 27, 45, 52 McCormick Place, South Building-Level 1, Room S105a Participant: Richard Nisbett Chair: Claude M. Steele

Symposium: Hypnosis in Three Continents Divisions: 30, 1, 12, 17, 20, 38, 52 McCormick Place, South Building-Level 1, Room S106a Chair: Etzel Cardena Participants: Daniel David, Antonio Capafons, Richard A. Bryant, Teresa Rolles Discussant: Etzel Cardena

Symposium: Arab Americans and Muslims—Research, Counseling, and Training Division: 52 McCormick Place, South Building-Level 5, Room S502a Chair: Le’Roy E. Reese Participants: Daniel H. Hall, Sally Diegelman, Mahanz N. Mousavi, John E. Queener Discussant: Le’Roy E. Reese

Symposium: Intergroup Forgiveness in Settings of Ethnic Conflict—International Perspectives Divisions: 48, 9, 27, 35, 36, 41, 52 McCormick Place, North Building-Level 4, Room N426c Chair: Michael D. Roe Participants: Ed Cairns, Michael D. Roe, Audrey R. Chapman, David Mellor Discussant: Brandon Hamber

Symposium: Terrorism and Psychology Divisions: 52, 46, 9, 19, 27, 41 McCormick Place, North Building-Level 4, Room N427d Chair: Elizabeth K. Carll Participants: Chris E. Stout, Clark McCauley, Tom Greening, Elizabeth K. Carll Discussant: Ronald F. Levant

Symposium: Psychology’s Response to Global Health Problems Divisions: 52, 27 McCormick Place, Lakeside Center-Level 2, Room E261 Chair: Michael J. Stevens Participants: R. P. de la Rey, Sue-Huei Chen, Eugen Iordanescu


12:00–12:50 pm Symposium: Issues in Immigrant and Refugee Psychology—Cuban, Venezuelan, and Albanian Contexts Divisions: 52, 9, 27 McCormick Place, South Building-Level 5, Room S502a Chair: Michael I. Loewy Participants: Roberto Valasquez, Carmen L. Guanipa, Michael I. Loewy Discussant: Oliva Espin

12:00–1:50 pm Symposium: Terrorism Research—Current State, Gaps, and Future Directions Divisions: 9, 8, 30, 41, 48, APA Committee on International Relations in Psychology McCormick Place, North Building-Level 4, Room N426c Chair: Michael Wessexs Participants: Richard E. Rubenstein Discussants: Ed Cairns, Brinton Lykes, Leila Dane, Milton Schwebel

12:50–1:50 pm Symposium: United Nations World Conference Against Racism Divisions: 45, APA Committee on International Relations in Psychology, 9, APA Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs McCormick Place, Lakeside Center-Level 3, Room E351 Chair: Anderson J. Franklin Participants: Corann Okorodudu, James S. Jackson, Thema S. Bryant, Bertha G. Holliday, William D. Parham

Paper Session: Global Perspectives on Violence, Nonviolence, Reconciliation, and Recovery Divisions: 48, 9, 27, 35, 52 McCormick Place, South Building-Level 1, Room S104a Chair: Arthur J. Kendall

1:00–2:50 pm Open Meeting of the Interamerican Society of Psychology (SIP), Hilton Chicago Hotel, Conference Room 4C

Symposium: Developing Cross-Cultural Assessment Measures—Implications for International Research and Practice Divisions: 52, 7 McCormick Place, South Building-Level 4, Room S403b Chair: Robert F. Ostermann Participants: Samuel O. Ortiz, Andreas S. Anastasiou, Sharon L. Maftal, Jonathan H. Sandovol, Peter F. Merenda, Thomas D. Oakland, Gloria B. Gottsegen Discussant: Charles D. Spielberger

2:00–2:50 pm Poster Session: Current Research on Peace, Violence, and Conflict Divisions: 48, 9, 27, 35, 41, APAGS McCormick Place, Lakeside Center-Level 3, Hall D1 Chair: James M. Stutman

3:00–3:50 pm Presidential Address: Waging Peace in Times of War Division: 48 Hyatt Regency McCormick Place Hotel, Conference Center-First Floor, Room CC10A Participant: Leila F. Dane Chair: Ed Cairns

3:00–4:50 pm Symposium (Plenary): Psychology of Terrorism Sponsor: APA McCormick Place, Lakeside Center-Level 4, Room E450b Chair: Chris E. Stout Participants: Ariel Merari, Lt. Col. Morgan Banks, Marc Sageman, Clark McCauley

Saturday, August 24, 2002

8:00–9:50 am Thematic Programming—Discussion: Genocide and Hate—Origins and Change Sponsors: Cluster, 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 15 McCormick Place, Lakeside Center-Level 4, Room E451a Chair: Diane F. Halpern Participants: Frank Farley, Robert J. Sternberg Discussant: Diane F. Halpern

9:00–9:50 am Invited Address: Distinguished Contributions to the International Advancement of Psychology Award—Schizophrenics or Psychotherapists? Conflicting Psychological Perspectives on Shamans and Shamanism Sponsor: APA McCormick Place, Lakeside Center-Level 2, Room E258 Participant: Stanley C. Krippner Chair: Eugene Taylor
10:00–10:50 am
Invited Address: Terrorism, Apocalyptic Ideology, and Young Martyrs: Why Peacebuilding Matters Sponsors: APA Committee on International Relations in Psychology, 9 McCormick Place, Lakeside Center-Level 2, Room E263 Participant: Michael Wessells Chair: James S. Jackson

3:00–3:50 pm
Symposium (Plenary): Latin America’s Contribution to Psychology Sponsor: APA McCormick Place, Lakeside Center-Level 3, Room E353b Chairs: Etzel Cardena, Robert J. Sternberg Participants: Ruben Ardila, Susan Pick, Juan Jose Sanchez-Sosa, Wayne H. Holtzman Discussant: Etzel Cardena

Sunday, August 25, 2002
8:00–8:50 am
Paper Session: International Perspectives on Organizational Consulting Division: 13 McCormick Place, Lakeside Center-Level 2, Room E260 Chair: Ann M. O’Roark

Symposium: Overcoming Obstacles to International Psychological Research Divisions: 17, 52 McCormick Place, South Building-Level 5, Room S503a Chair: Paul E. Priester Participants: Sharon G. Horne, Michael Slyck, Paul Priester Discussant: Frederick T. L. Leong

12:00–12:50 pm
Poster Session: Issues in International Psychology Division: 52 McCormick Place, Lakeside Center-Level 3, Hall D1 Chairs: Susan E. Dutch, Lynn H. Collins


2:00–2:50 pm
Invited Address: Explaining Suicidal Terrorism—Theories Versus Empirical Evidence Divisions: 12, 25, 32, 48, 51 McCormick Place, Lakeside Center-Level 3, Room E353c Participant: Ariel Merari Discussant: John Clizbe

10:00–10:50 am
Symposium: Breaking the Violence-Repetition Cycle: Roles for Peaceworkers Divisions: 48, 27, 29, 35 McCormick Place, South Building-Level 4, Room S403b Chair: Tod S. Sloan Participants: Michael Wessells, Brinton Lykes, Steven Handwerker Discussant: Anne Anderson

11:00 am–12:50 pm

Thematic Programming—Town Hall Meeting: Terrorism, Poverty, Racism—Enemies for a Nation at War? Sponsors: Cluster, 9, 27, 34, 48, 52 McCormick Place, South Building-Level 1, Room S105b Chair: James M. Statman Participants: Laura Barbanel, Melba J. T. Vasquez, Alan I. Lesher, Judith E. N. Albino, Ethel Tobach Discussant: Robert J. Sternberg

12:00–12:50 pm
Poster Session: Issues in International Psychology Division: 52 McCormick Place, Lakeside Center-Level 3, Hall D1 Chairs: Susan E. Dutch, Lynn H. Collins


2:00–2:50 pm
Invited Address: Explaining Suicidal Terrorism—Theories Versus Empirical Evidence Divisions: 12, 25, 32, 48, 51 McCormick Place, Lakeside Center-Level 3, Room E353c Participant: Ariel Merari Discussant: John Clizbe
From Our Archives: US Psychology and War With Iraq

I wrote the article below for the Spring 1991 issue of Psychology International shortly after the Persian Gulf War. An implicit theme in that article was a question: Were the Bush administration’s aims in relation to Iraq reasonable and were the policies well constructed to bring about reasonable aims? With the United States headed once more down a path toward confrontation with Iraq, this question is still relevant in 2002.

It is probable that the post-Gulf War failure of US and UN efforts in Iraq was partly due to the US aims which were not only to get Iraq to cooperate with weapons inspections, but also to overthrow Saddam Hussein. (Some of Hussein’s behavior may have been a reaction to this threat.) What I wrote in 1991 is still true today—the United States has not considered the culture, the personality of Saddam Hussein, or his role in Iraq. Grandiosity, and what some analysts have called narcissism, are likely important elements of his personality. But a more “ordinary” aspect of his personality and the role he has created as a dictator and absolute ruler is his need for respect to maintain his image of strength as well as the reality of his power.

Could efforts that are sensitive to issues of culture and personality lead to changes in Saddam Hussein’s conduct and bring Iraq into the community of nations? Many things stand in the way. One is the pride of US officials who, as leaders of a superpower, also have personal and political issues that demand satisfaction. This may make it difficult for them to shift to a seemingly more conciliatory, even if possibly more effective, stance. Another barrier is society’s need for justice and reconciliation—Hussein’s past actions cannot simply be forgotten. Who decides how and to what extent he will be punished in order to bring about justice, and to what extent will reconciliation require letting go of the past? These are important questions which speak to the heart of the matter: how the international community ought to deal with unjust and repressive societies, of which there are many.

— Ervin Staub, July 2002

Persian Gulf Conflict Was Reflection of Stormy Undercurrents in US Psyche

By Ervin Staub

The United States and its allies have successfully prosecuted a war against Iraq. Although amazingly few allied lives were lost, there was great destruction to Iraq and many Iraqi deaths. It seems important to explore what led the United States to turn speedily to war, rather than pursue alternatives. I will focus on how cultural and psychological factors shaped the reactions, motivations, and behavior of the leadership and people of the United States. We are usually unaware of these influences, even though they have great power, and even shape political and economic motives.

Many nations supported Iraq after it attacked Iran and continued to support it despite its use of chemical weapons, the mass killing of Kurds, and other atrocities. After the Iraqi invasions of Kuwait there was a long overdue response: troops were stationed in Saudi Arabia to avert further attacks and international sanctions were imposed. According to many observers, the sanctions had a good chance of success in forcing Iraq, with its one-product economy, to withdraw from Kuwait. Real talks with Iraq may have provided Saddam Hussein the cover he needed to withdraw. Success in accomplishing this without war would have set an example for future behavior by the community of nations and discouraged future aggression.

Instead, the US leadership put massive additional forces into Saudi Arabia and promoted a UN resolution that both authorized the use of force to expel Iraq from Kuwait and to set a deadline for Iraq to leave. The President offered talks that, as he repeatedly said on television, were only an offer to deliver the “ultimatum” in person. Many experts on Arab culture have said that face-saving was essential for Hussein but as the talks were defined, participation in them would probably have meant loss of face.

My 1989 book, The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence, analyzes the background conditions that lead one group to turn against another or, as in this instance, make turning to aggression and war easier and more likely. These include persistent cultural characteristics and time-bound societal conditions—which I call difficult life conditions—that can give rise to intense psychological needs in group members that sometimes find outlet in group violence.

One important characteristic is a group or society’s self-concept, the shared view group members hold of their society. Strength, power, and superiority in relation to others have been noted as part of the group self-concept of the United States. This self-image has been frusted by great social change and attendant social upheaval, and the relative loss of economic power and prestige by the United States over the past 20 years. Recently there have been intense problems with drugs, crime, homelessness, education, the savings and loan and banking crises, and the beginnings of a recession. All this can result in a need—in both a people and its leaders—to defend societal and individual self-image. One way for Americans to overcome feelings of powerlessness and helplessness was to focus on superior military power in fighting against an enemy. They could join together in a shared identity as citizens of America as their country began successfully to fight “evil.”

Severe social problems can also make a people’s worldview ineffective in the essential task of comprehending reality. People often turn to or create an ideology that provides the image of a better life—a nationalist or universalist “better world” ideology that offers hope and a new guide to living and understanding life. These ideologies always identify enemies that stand in the way of their fulfillment—Nazi ideology is a classic example. Although its role in the psychology of the American people is not yet clear, Bush’s New World Order, in which nations will not aggress against other nations, is a version of such an ideology. Peoples and nations are often destroyed to fulfill such higher ideals, which can
genuinely motivate a country’s leaders and its people, or be used to gain support, or both.

Another important cultural characteristic is a history of aggression that makes further aggression acceptable. The United States has used force frequently since World War II and this “habit” seems to have become stronger in recent years as this country invaded Grenada and Panama, sent fighter-bombers into Libya, and created and supported the Contra and Unita surrogate armies. My research has shown that aggressors learn by doing, and that unless their aggression is checked, both individuals and groups become more aggressive over time. Just as Iraq’s aggression against Iran and its own Kurdish people made renewed aggression more likely, so the history of the use of force by the United States made a military solution easier in Iraq.

Another influence is the tendency of most groups to differentiate strongly between “us” and “them” and devalue certain out-groups. When a group nears or engages in violence, its devaluation of an enemy or victim usually becomes intense. While there are no explicitly “en- emy” images of Iraqis, the president and other leaders and the media used extremely devaluative statements for Iraq and the Iraqis. Saddam Hussein was demonized, turning from a US ally whose atrocities against his neighbors and countrymen had long been ignored into the outstanding threat to humanity and the world in our consciousness.

From the onset of the war the emphasis in the US was on supporting “our boys” and focusing on their potential loss of life and suffering—little attention was paid to the loss of “their” lives from the intense bombing. Euphemisms like collateral damage were used for the killing of civilians. There were accounts of the destruction of tanks, but no mention of the people in them. There was an almost complete absence of information about and images of Iraqi injuries and death in the media due to a combination of military censorship and perhaps self-censorship by the media. As a result, empathy and the awareness of shared humanity with the Iraqi people were less likely to be aroused.

Group violence often builds step by step, with each small action making the next one seem acceptable. President Bush shaped events in ways that built commitment to a war that seemed increasingly inevitable: placing an increasingly large force in Saudi Arabia, getting the UN resolutions passed, and making it seem that he was willing to talk while Hussein was not. As in other instances of group violence, the step-by-step nature of this process brought about changes in people that made new steps acceptable. It is highly probable that through these actions the president and our leadership also shaped their own inclination to go to war.

When the war started there was an immediate shift of attitude in the US in support of it. Tom Brokaw reported about a week into the war that an NBC-Wall Street Journal poll found 90 per cent of the population supporting its continuation until it was brought to a satisfactory end. There was a rise in the sale of flags and other patriotic items. This upsurge of support may have come from a feeling of purpose and power and shared identity as Americans that at least temporarily replaced the confusions of our contemporary national life, and perhaps from an upsurge of enmity against Iraq, now our opponent in a war.

In addition, what we know about “bystanders” to violence indicates that it is very difficult to oppose one’s group, or even to distance oneself internally from it. This is especially so when there is strong national unity on an issue that binds people together. Even those who do not speak out feel uncomfortable and subject to external and internal pressures to join the majority.

Many commentators have noted that the president has had difficulty articulating the Nation’s reasons for going to war with Iraq. Oil was certainly one factor; others were stopping Iraq from becoming a dominant power in the region and diminishing its capacity for destroying its neighbors. But “national interests” are defined in the framework of cultural and psychological factors that also shape a nation’s modes of fulfilling its goals.

By military standards the allied victory in Kuwait and Iraq was easy. But violence is unlikely to shape the future in a positive way, to lead nations to include the value of human rights and non-aggression in their definitions of national interest. The feeling of strength, power, and unity the war affirmed for many Americans and the increasing acceptance that this was simply fought for moral reasons can make the future use of force by the United States even more likely.

Ervin Staub, PhD, is professor of psychology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He has conducted research on altruism, values, aggression, and motivation. He can be reached by e-mail at estaub@psych.umass.edu.
**International Snapshots**

**Guggenheim Foundation Awards Social Science Research Grants:** The Guggenheim Foundation welcomes proposals from the social sciences, natural sciences, and the humanities that promise to increase understanding of the causes, manifestations, and control of violence, aggression, and dominance. Highest priority will be given to research that concerns violence, aggression, and dominance in relation to social change, the socialization of children, inter-group conflict, interstate warfare and crime, family relationships, and investigations of the control of aggression and violence. Priority will also be given to areas and methodologies not receiving adequate attention and support from other funding sources. Research grants are awarded to individuals and not to institutions. For detailed information contact the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, 527 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022; 212-644-4907 (telephone); 212-644-5110 (fax); http://www.hfg.org (website). Applications must be received by **August 1, 2002**.

**Publisher Seeks Authors on International Women’s Issues:** Greenwood Publishing is producing a six-volume reference collection about women’s issues worldwide. It will focus on a wide range of historical, cultural, economic, and political issues including colonialism, politics, women’s health, religion, sexuality, racism, women’s rights, and women’s movements. Authors are needed to write chapters on the following countries: Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Suriname, Guyana, French Guiana, Costa Rica, Panama, Belize, and Honduras. Each author is asked to write in English (limited translation is available) and will be awarded an honorarium for her/his contribution. The deadline for submission of the first full draft is **August 1, 2002**. For more information contact Amy Lind, Assistant Professor, Women’s Studies Program, Arizona State University, PO Box 873404, Tempe, AZ 85287-3404; 480-727-5354 (telephone); 480-965-2357 (fax); lind@asu.edu (e-mail).

**United States Institute of Peace Invites Applications for Fellowships:** The Jennings Randolph Program for International Peace, a program of the United States Institute of Peace, awards Senior Fellowships and Peace Scholar Dissertation Fellowships to enable outstanding scholars, policymakers, journalists, and other professionals to conduct research on important issues concerning international conflict and peace. Project proposals that deal with the sources and nature of interstate or civil conflict, with ways to prevent, limit, or end violent conflict, and with post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation are welcome. Senior Fellows reside at the Institute for a period up to ten months to conduct research, consult with staff, and contribute to the ongoing work of the Institute. The Peace Scholar Program supports doctoral dissertations that explore the sources and nature of international conflict, strategies to prevent or end conflict, and to sustain peace. Both competitions are open to citizens of all nations, however, applicants for the dissertation fellowships must be enrolled in an accredited college or university in the United States. All applications must be received by either **September 16, 2002**, (Senior Fellowships) or **November 1, 2002**, (Peace Scholar Dissertation Fellowships). Contact the United States Institute of Peace, Jennings Randolph Program for International Peace, 1200 17th Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC, 20036-3011; 202-457-1700 (telephone); 202-429-6063 (fax); jrprogram@usip.org (e-mail).

**AAAS Seeks Nominations for International Scientific Cooperation Award:** The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) seeks to recognize an individual or small group working together in the scientific or engineering community for making outstanding contributions to furthering international cooperation in science or engineering. The award is open to all regardless of nationality or citizenship. In addition to the ISC award, the AAAS presents a number of other awards and prizes each year. All nomination materials must be received by **August 1, 2002**. For additional information concerning any AAAS award, contact: Linda Stroud, Awards Liaison, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1200 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005; 212-326-6659 (telephone); 202-289-4958 (fax); lstroud@aaas.org (e-mail); http://www.aaas.org/international (website).

**Join APA as an International Affiliate:** Psychologists living outside the United States and Canada may join the American Psychological Association (APA) as International Affiliates. Affiliates can attend meetings of the APA, subscribe to its journals, or purchase publications and electronic products at the same reduced rate charged to Members. Affiliates receive *Monitor on Psychology* and *Psychology International* at no charge. The annual International Affiliate fee is $27 or $20 for Affiliates from transitional or developing countries. To apply, contact The American Psychological Association, Membership Department, 750 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002, USA; (202) 336-5580 (telephone); (202) 336-5568 (fax); membership@apa.org (e-mail); or apply on-line at http://www.apa.org/members.
International Meetings Calendar

July 15-19, 2002
The XVI International Congress of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology (IACCP)
Yogyakarta, INDONESIA. Contact: E-mail: pal@yogy.a.wasantara.net.id
Website: http://www.iaccp.org/conferences/indonesia/first.html

July 16-19
International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP) 25th Annual Meeting
Berlin, GERMANY. Contact: ISPP Central Office, Pitzer College, 1050 N. Mills Avenue, Claremont, CA 91711
Tel: 909-621-8442; Fax: 520-395-2224
E-mail: ispp@pitzer.edu
Website: http://ispp.org

July 18-21, 2002
2nd Biannual Conference on Personal Meaning: Freedom, Responsibility, and Justice
Vancouver, BC, CANADA.
Contact: Derrick Klaassen, MA, Executive Director, International Network on Personal Meaning, c/o Trinity Western University, Graduate Program in Counseling Psychology, 7600 Glover Road, Langley, BC V2Y 1Y1, Canada.
Tel: 604-513-2121; ext. 3355; Fax: 604-513-1211, Canada.
E-mail: klaassen@meaning.ca
Website: http://www.meaning.ca

July 20-24, 2002
34th Annual International Conference of the Community Development Society: “Building Peace – Community and Diversity”
Cleveland, Mississipi, USA.
Contact: Jerry W. Robinson, Jr., PhD, Center for Community Development, Delta State University, PO Box 3134, Cleveland, MS 38733
Tel: 662-846-4359; Fax: 662-846-4359
E-mail: jrobins@dsu.deltast.edu
Website: http://www.comm-dev.org

July 20-25, 2002
8th International Conference on Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders
Stockholm, SWEDEN. Contact: Alzheimer’s Association, 919 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60611-1676
Tel: 312-335-5813; Fax: 312-335-5781
E-mail: internationalconference@alz.org
Website: http://www.alz.org

July 21-August 2, 2002
31st Annual Gestalt Therapy European Summer Residential Training Program
Vevey, SWITZERLAND
Contact: Rita F. Resnik, PhD, 1460 7th Street #300, Santa Monica, CA 90401
Telephone: (310) 395-6844; Fax: (310) 319-1663
E-mail: SweetRita@aol.com
Website: http://www.CouplesTherapyTraining.com

July 21-August 2, 2002
35th International Rudolf Dreikurs Summer School
Postsdam, GERMANY
Contact: International Committee of Adlerian Summer Schools and Institutes (ICASSI)
E-mail: icassi@btinternet.com
Website: http://www.icassi.org

July 29-August 3, 2002
11th World Congress of Psychophysiology
Montreal, CANADA. Contact: E-mail: sm.wilkinson@elsevier.co.uk
Website: http://www.elsevier.com/locate/iop2002

July 30 - August 9 2002
31st International Summer School
Berlin: “Dealing with Time in Groups and Organizations”
Berlin, GERMANY
Contact: Group Dynamics Section of the German Association for Group Psychotherapy and Group Dynamics (DAGG), European Academy Berlin Bismarckallee 46-48, D-14193 Berlin, Germany
Tel: 49(0)30-8959510; Fax: 49(0)30-89595195
E-mail: ir@iss-berlin.org
Website: www.iss-berlin.org

August 2-6, 2002
Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development
Ottawa, CANADA.
Contact: ISSBD, School of Psychology, University of Ottawa, PO Box 450 Stn. A, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 6N5
Fax: 613-562-5147
E-mail: issbd@uottawa.ca

August 4-8, 2002
17th Congress of the International Association of Empirical Aesthetics: Art and Environment
Takarazuka, JAPAN.
Contact: The Secretariat of IAEA2002 Takarazuka University of Art and Design
7-27 Tsutsujigaoka, Hanayashiki, Takarazuka, Hyogo, 665-0803, Japan
Fax: 81-727-58-7869
E-mail: info@iae2002.gr.jp
Website: http://www.iaea2002.gr.jp

August 6-10, 2002
22nd International Congress of Individual Psychology: “Self and Society - Development, Precess, and Quality”
Munich GERMANY. Contact: DGIP Congress Office, Markstrasse 12, D-99867, Gotha, Germany
Tel and Fax: 49-3621-2 96 91
E-mail: dgip-gotha@t-online.de

August 13-15, 2002
International Conference on Lifelong Learning and Social Development
Kerala, INDIA. Contact: Ms. Cle Anderson, American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, 4380 Forbes Blvd., Lanham, MD 20706
Telephone: 800-835-7262; Fax: 301-918-1846
Website: http://www.discover-india.com

August 19-21, 2002
XXI Nordic Congress of Psychology:
Research, Practice, and Prevention - From Books to the World Wide Web
Reykjavik, Iceland.
Contact: Camilla Tvingmark, Iceland Travel Conference Department, Lagmuli 4, 104 Reykjavik, Iceland.
Tel: 354-585-4300; Fax: 354-585-4490
E-mail: camilla@icelandtravel.is
Website: http://www.sal.is

August 24-25, 2002
11th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for Comparative Psychology
Chicago, Illinois. Contact: Gary Greenberg, PhD, President ISCP, Department of Psychology, Wichita State University, 1846 18th Street #300, Santa Monica, CA 90401
Contact: Rita F. Resnik, PhD, 1460 7th Street #300, Santa Monica, CA 90401
Telephone: (310) 395-6033; Fax: (310) 319-1663
E-mail: SweetRita@aol.com
Website: http://www.CouplesTherapyTraining.com

Additional international meetings can be found on the Office of International Affairs Homepage at http://www.apa.org/international, on the IUPsys Homepage at http://www.iupsys.org, or in the International Journal of Psychology available at many libraries.

Continued on Page 12
September 1-5, 2002
1st Brazilian Congress of Psychology: Science and Profession Sao Paulo, BRAZIL. Contact: http://www.crpssp.org.br/congressocienciaeprofessao/index.htm

September 3-6, 2002
International Family Therapy Association - 14th International World Conference of Family Therapy London, UNITED KINGDOM
Contact: Medical Events, Suite 6, Enterprise House, 111 Elmers End Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3, 4SY, UK
Tel: 44 20 8659 8111
E-mail: ifta2002@medicalevents.com
Website: http://www.ifta2002.com

September 11-13, 2002
2nd World Conference on the Promotion of Mental Health and Prevention of Mental and Behavioral Disorders: “Developing Partnerships - Science, Policy, and Programs Across Cultures” London, UNITED KINGDOM
Contact: The Conference Office, Clifford Beers Foundation, Mariazell, 5 Castle Way, Stafford ST16 1BS, United Kingdom
Tel: 44 (0) 1785 246668; Fax: 44 (0) 1785 246668
E-mail: michael_murray@charity.demon.co.uk
Website: http://www.charity.demon.co.uk

September 12-15, 2002
4th World Congress on Stress Edinburgh, Scotland, UNITED KINGDOM
Contact: Northern Networking Ltd, 1 Tennant Avenue, College Milton South, East Kilbride, Glasgow G74 5NA, Scotland, UK
Tel: 44 (0) 1355 249966; Fax: 44 (0) 1355 249959
E-mail: stress@glasconf.demon.co.uk
Website: http://www.stressconf.co.uk

October 7-13, 2002
Challenge the Alps: Course in Conflict Management and Mythodrama Einsielden, SWITZERLAND
Contact: Dr. Allen Guggenbuhl, IKM Guggenbuhl AG, Untere Zaune 1, 8001 Zurich, Switzerland
E-mail: info@ikm.ch
Website: http://www.ikm.ch

October 18-20, 2002
2nd International Conference on the Dialogical Self: Meaning in Movement Ghent, BELGIUM. Contact: Dr. Hubert Hermans, Scientific Committee Chairman, Dept. of Clinical Psychology and Personality, University of Nijmegen, PO Box 9104, 6500 HE Nijmegen, The Netherlands.
Telephone: 31.24.3612575; Fax: 31.24.3615594
E-mail: hhermans@psych.kun.nl or Jan De Clercq, Conference Manger at j.declercq@rug.ac.be
Website: http://allserv.rug.ac.be/~jdeclercq/dialogicalselfconf2002/

October 20, 2002
International Conference on Stress and Depression Milan, ITALY
Contact: Istituto di Psicologia Clinica Rocca-Stendoro, Corso Concordia 14, Milan 20129, Italy
Tel/Fax: 39-02-782627
E-mail: ist.roccastendoro@libero.it
Website: http://www.rocca-stendoro.it

November 7-10, 2002
1st Ibero-American Congress of Psychology and International Psychology Students Meeting Villas del Mar, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. Contact: Lic. Alberto Gomez, Calle 5 No. 9 Cerros de Buena Vista 1, Villa Mella. Apartado Postal 5276 (La Feria), Santo Domingo, Republica Dominicana
Tel: 1-809-533-5721/568-4495; Fax: 1-809-535-4905/568-4495/686-0340
E-mail: albagosa@codetel.net.do; william.quesada@codetel.net.do

2003
27th Congress of the World Federation for Mental Health Melbourne, AUSTRALIA
Contact: Congress Secretariat, ICMS Pty Ltd, 84 Queensbridge Street, Southbank VIC 3006, Australia
Telephone: 61 3 9682 0244; Fax: 61 3 9682 0288
E-mail: wfh2003@icms.com.au

International Affairs Office
American Psychological Association
750 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002