

JERROLD POST

Dr. Jerrold Post is Professor of Psychiatry, Political Psychology and International Affairs and Director of the Political Psychology Program at The George Washington University.

Dr. Post has devoted his entire career to the field of political psychology. Dr. Post came to George Washington after a 21 year career with the Central Intelligence Agency where he was the founding director of the Center for the Analysis of Personality and Political Behavior. He played the lead role in developing the "Camp David profiles" of Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat for President Jimmy Carter and initiated the U.S. government program in understanding the psychology of terrorism. In recognition of his leadership at the Center, Dr. Post was awarded the Intelligence Medal of Merit in 1979. He served as expert witness in the trial in the spring of 2001 for the al Qaeda terrorists responsible for the bombing of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and, since 9/11, has testified on terrorist psychology before the Senate, the House of Representatives, and the United Nations. He is a widely published author, whose most recent book is "The Mind of the Terrorist: The Psychology of Terrorist from the IRA to al-Qaeda." Dr. Post is a frequent commentator on national and international media on such topics as leadership, leader illness, treason, the psychology of terrorism, suicide terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, Hugo Chavez, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Kim Jong Il.

*When Hatred is Bred in the Bone:
The Psychocultural Foundations of Contemporary Terrorism*

After an introduction to the broad spectrum of terrorist psychology, this presentation will focus on nationalist-separatist and radical Islamist terrorism. We are seeing an increasing broadening and deepening of values and behavior associated with terrorism within mainstream society, as the new heroes and role models are the *shahids*, the martyrs, carrying out acts of suicidal terrorism. These do not represent acts of psychopathologically disturbed youth, but socially valued acts of mainstream individuals responding to powerful social forces. The manner in which radical Islamist leaders have reframed suicide as martyrdom and the social psychology of the assembly line producing suicide bombers will be explicated. The centrality of the core identity of belonging to a valued social movement and the role of the new media in creating a virtual community of hatred will be emphasized. Quotations from interviewed incarcerated terrorists will be used to illustrate the psychology of the terrorists. Implications for counter-terrorism, including the role of psychological operations will be considered.