

[Congressional Record: August 2, 1994]
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PENSACOLA ANTIABORTION MURDER AND RELIGIOUS FANATICISM

<bullet> Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the events of last Friday in Pensacola, FL, and their broader implications on our civilization as a whole.

At 8 a.m. Friday morning, Paul Hill, a former Presbyterian Minister, shot and killed Dr. John Britton and James Barrett. Mr. Barrett was escorting Dr. Britton to his job at an abortion clinic.

Dr. Britton was 69. He had started working at the clinic a year previously, knowing full well the dangers of the occupation. The last doctor for this clinic was Dr. Gunn, who was killed by an antiabortion activist last year in front of the city's other clinic. Dr. Britton was extremely brave, but he was also cautious; however, the bulletproof vest he wore Friday morning was ineffective in stopping the shotgun spray Paul Hill aimed at his face.

James Barrett, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel, was 74. Mr. Barrett was shot in the head right in front of his 68-year-old wife June, who was also injured.

This was the third shooting by anti-abortionists within the last year and a half, and the second--and third--fatality.

Paul Hill's reasons for murder were chillingly simple. He has stated that ``the bible teaches us to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Therefore, killing a man who is about to kill an unborn child constitutes killing in self defense.'' To Paul Hill, the murder was a justifiable homicide.

Mr. President, this syllogism lies at the heart of one of the most corrosive dangers the world faces today.

Many religious teachings and texts offer justifiable reasons for killing. Even so, mainstream religions systematically guide their populations away from these arguments and in the direction of tolerance. The only individuals who employ religious justifications in order to commit cold-blooded murder are religious fanatics. But we cannot dismiss these fringe elements. We cannot pretend that they do not read from the same bibles from which many of us read and say the same prayers which many of us recite. We cannot cast a blind eye to the horrible dangers they represent. And we need to be brave enough to bring the public's attention to the problem posed by religious fanaticism.

This problem grows in severity every passing year. In the dawn of human civilization, there was only so much damage a single human being could execute. However, our technology has developed, and each new weapon has increased the power every individual represents. The classic example of this truth is the gun. During the 19th century, in the western-most frontiers of this country, guns were nicknamed ``equalizers'' because in effect they gave every individual the same power as any other. Anyone with a gun had the power to eliminate one if not several human lives. The defensive structures of our Nation and every nation have been recreated in order to cope with this capacity.

Mr. President, from dynamite to plastic explosives to nuclear bombs, the power of individuals has increased and will continue to increase. Consequently, we cannot let people slip through the cracks and fall

into the well of fanaticism. The Paul Hills of this world are willing to dedicate if not sacrifice their lives for the sole purpose of advancing their world view by hurting or destroying others. Education and leadership must come now before it is too late.

In light of the importance of responding to the threat posed by fanaticism, the most significant event that occurred in the world last week received little of the attention it deserved.

One of the most tense places in the world right now is the Middle East. Many countries and religions in the Middle East are fighting over possession of the same pieces of land, interpretations of the same texts, versions of the same myths. However, last week we saw a moment of peace between two countries in that region that have long been adversaries. Perhaps most importantly, we saw two leaders speak to their respective people, not only as political heads of state, but as religious individuals, and preach tolerance and call for peace.

Mr. President, King Hussein's and Prime Minister Rabin's lead must be followed by every religious and political leader to every constituent and every worshipper in the world. We must take responsibility for affirmatively leading our constituents and our congregations down the path of tolerance.

It is with this goal in mind that I return to the subject of Pensacola.

One of the things that made me especially upset this weekend when I watched television news coverage of the incident was the sign that hung over the abortion clinic. The name of the clinic was ``The Ladies Center,' ' and the typeface on the sign was as blatantly euphemistic as this title. The fact that an abortion clinic needs to be disguised and to be separated from the hospitals, HMO's, and community health centers where such medical procedures should be performed is as upsetting as the fact that abortion clinics need to be under 24-hour guard.

The wrong response to the Pensacola shootings is to segregate abortions even further from those seeking the procedure. The right thing to do is to treat abortions as exactly what they are--a medical procedure that any doctor is free to provide and any pregnant woman free to obtain. Consequently, abortions should not have to be performed in tightly guarded clinics on the edge of town; they should be performed and obtained in the same locations as any other medical procedure. How can we as political leaders teach tolerance to the public when we still treat women who seek abortions as poorly as less civilized societies treated lepers?

Mr. President, if this Constitutionally protected right is to be preserved, and if women are to be treated decently and with respect, abortions need to be moved out of the fringes of medicine and into the mainstream of medical practice.

And by the same token, if our children are to be safe from the danger of fanaticism, tolerance needs to spread out of the mainstream churches, mosques, and synagogues, and into the religious fringes.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.<bullet>
