



“Every day of peace is a life saved”

Brendan Duddy

An onion is made of its layers, and this is the same for human personalities. What are the multiple layers that make you who you are?

Can people really understand you by using categories such as “British”, “American”, “Japanese”, “Iranian”, “Jewish”, “Muslim”, “Christian”, “Jihadist”, “fanatic”, “extremist”, “moderate”, “good guys”, “bad guys”, “crazy people”???

The answer seems plainly obvious when we think of ourselves - Of course, no one can understand us by only using categories of nationalities, ethnic groups, religious groups. Every individual belongs to multiple categories in different shades.

So,

Where do you belong?

What do you belong to?

Where do you feel safe and comfortable?

What can you not live without... that is “worth fighting for”?

The late Major Philip Malins MBE MC, Second-World War veteran who fought in the British infantry against the Japanese, once told us at a symposium that the reason the war became so ugly was because they went through a systematic process of “categorising and dehumanising our enemies”.

It makes sense that this was the only way to make fighting possible. However, if one wants to fight “the enemy” effectively, it is crucial to understand why “the enemy” is fighting, what their objectives are and how they are thinking. Otherwise, we end up fighting a never-ending war with no objective other than revenge.

If one believes in the “winner-take-all” colonial-style of doing things, military fighting may be the only option when there are interest clashes. But for most of us, we have learnt the lessons from the colonial-style mistakes made by our predecessors and do not want to repeat the same mistakes.

History tells us that when we know what “the enemy” actually wants, there is always a point of agreement that can be reached. Once that point is agreed, there is no need for fighting anymore.

Let us start putting faces to the lives saved by not having another war –otherwise, that face no one wants to think about could be mine or yours. Because those being attacked right now may be dehumanising us and wishing for revenge.

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