before Chechen leader Aslan Maskhadov was killed on March 8, 2005, he also signaled his intention to have a dialogue with Vladimir Putin.

Islamic fundamentalist terrorists or messianic terrorists like bin Laden and al-Zarqawi have a different agenda: to eliminate any political system that does not embrace Islam as the "only true religion . . . and [accept] that all other religions and civilizations [are] barbarian, evil, and animal-like" (Laqueur, 2000, p. 33; see also Marsella, 2004, pp. 44–45). As noted by Hallett (2004), in public these terrorists claim that they are motivated by a "self-sacrificing love for the oppressed" (p. 53) as well as the elimination of poverty and injustice, "but their true motive is the apocalyptic belief that the world is so corrupt that they must destroy it [including killing innocent children and women] to save it" (p. 63). Messianic terrorists consider "killing as a sacrament act" (White, 2003, p. 51). This radical fundamentalist belief is known as *jihad*, or holy war, rooted in Islamic terrorists' interpretation of the method of the Prophet Mohammad (Laqueur, 2000), who went to Mecca and "declared a holy war, a jihad, on all non-believers" (White, 2003, p. 93). Islamic fundamentalist or messianic terrorists use Mohammad's words (i.e., the Qur'an) to justify their violence. It should be noted, however, that the majority of more than one billion Muslims in the world are "*peaceful citizens* [italics added]" (Powell, 2004, p. 54) and that fewer than one percent of them interpret the Qur'an in a radical fundamentalist manner.

A dialogue with the leaders of Islamic fundamentalist or messianic terrorist organizations may never be possible. This is the main message of the leader of al-Qaeda (bin Laden) in the *Al-Qaeda Training Manual* (U.S. Department of Justice, 2004): "Islamic governments have never and will never be established *through peaceful solutions* [italics added] and cooperative councils. They are established as they [always] have been . . . by gun . . . bullet [and] by tongue and teeth" (p. 1). In addition, bin Laden has confessed that he ordered the 9/11 attacks. Who would expect bin Laden to have a dialogue with President Bush in the White House?

Could a dialogue with messianic terrorists not in leadership positions be achieved? The answer is "probably," if that dialogue is theological rather than political. For example, in December 2002, Judge Hamound al-Hitar in Sanaa, Yemen, invited five al-Qaeda members in a Sanaa prison to engage with him in a theological dialogue with an emphasis on the interpretation of

the Qur'an, not on the perceived injustice of the political system (Brandon, 2005). Judge al-Hitar asked those messianic terrorists to read the Qur'an and justify to him where this holy book states under which specific situations innocent civilians can or cannot be killed and where the book states that children and women can be killed. They could not find in the Qur'an the justification for their asymmetrical terrorist attacks. Judge al-Hitar, however, showed to them numerous passages in the Qur'an instructing Muslims that innocent civilians (including children and women) should not be attacked, that other religions should be respected, and that a fight against the enemy is acceptable only in self-defense. The results: Judge al-Hitar said that those five terrorists plus "three hundred and 64 young men have been released after going through [theological] dialogues and none have left Yemen to fight anywhere else" (Brandon, 2005, p. 10).

Laqueur (2000) suggested that a major mistake made by the Egyptian government in response to terrorism was its brutal punishment of terrorists in prison with

no attempt on the part of the authorities to reeducate prisoners, to show them they have been misled by demagogues and that Islamic lessons they had been taught were no means the only and the most authoritative interpretation [of the Qur'an]. (p. 45)

Laqueur's comments suggest that judge al-Hitar was on the right track with his theological dialogues.

Examples of components of the "naive reliance" to combat terrorism that Moghaddam (2005) considers ineffective as well as "costly and counterproductive" (p. 167) include counterterrorism programs and "improved technology and superior military [forces]" (p. 167), to which the following might be added: diplomacy promoting international counterterrorism, intelligence sharing among nations, disruption of financial sources, and the support of moderate Muslim leaders. The U.S. Department of State (2004), however, noted that "al-Qaeda is no longer the organization it once was, largely due to such ["naive reliance]" (p. v).

I conclude that Moghaddam's (2005) metaphor may explain the origin of political terrorism but not the origin of Islamic fundamentalist or messianic terrorism sponsored by bin Laden and al-Zarqawi. On the surface, the self-sacrificing motivation of these terrorists agrees with Moghaddam's suggestion regarding improving the conditions on the ground floor (eliminating poverty, promoting justice and fairness, etc.; see Hallett, 2004, pp. 50–51), but their real motivation is a "commitment

to Islam as the one and only true religion" (Marsella, 2004, p. 44) and the enforcement of this radical fundamentalist belief through "sacrament" acts of violence against unbelievers. Contrary to Moghaddam's conclusion, conventional strategies (e.g., diplomacy, military forces, etc.) have been effective in preventing and combating terrorism. A dialogue with messianic terrorists in lower positions in the structure of the terrorist organization may be accomplished, but only if a theological dialogue is emphasized. But we should remember that before this dialogue can occur, messianic terrorists must first be captured (e.g., with military forces, intelligence sharing, etc.).

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Psychological Processes and "The Staircase to Terrorism"

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Terrorists are made, not born: This is the clear implication of at least 70 years of

psychological research on conformity and obedience, demonstrating that under certain conditions, psychologically normal adults can inflict serious and even lethal harm on others (Moghaddam, 2005a, chaps.15 & 16). A major challenge confronting psychologists is to delineate the conditions in which individuals are socialized to become terrorists as well as the psychological processes underlying this transformation. As a step toward this goal, I proposed (Moghaddam, 2005b) the metaphor of a narrowing staircase leading to the terrorist act at the top of a building, with thought and action on each floor characterized by specific psychological processes, including relative deprivation and the identity-based "good-copy problem" (ground floor); perceived justice and individual mobility (first floor); displacement of aggression (second floor); engagement with a morality supportive of terrorism (third floor); perceived legitimacy and solidification of categorical thinking (fourth floor); and vilification and distancing of "the enemy," particularly through terrorist myths (fifth floor).

Under certain conditions on the ground floor, where the vast majority of people remain, some dissatisfied individuals will search on higher floors for solutions to perceived injustices. If solutions are not found, they are more likely to climb to the top of the staircase and commit terrorist acts. This decision-tree conceptualization depicts thought and action as strongly guided by contextual conditions. There are always available in every major society, including Western societies, a few extremist voices advocating a morality supportive of terrorism; the question for psychologists is this: Under what conditions will such extremists gain a dedicated following, particularly among the young, and even garner sympathy among the general public?

I argued that short-term (typically military) and long-term (preventive) solutions to terrorism can be adopted in tandem (Moghaddam, 2005b, p. 167). However, if long-term preventive solutions are not effectively given higher priority, every terrorist killed through conventional short-term action will quickly be replaced by others climbing the staircase to terrorism. This is clear to observers closely monitoring a recent sharp rise in terrorism emanating from Islamic communities despite large-scale military actions against terrorists, a point that makes questionable the claim that "conventional strategies ... have been effective in preventing and combating terrorism" (Paniagua, 2005, this issue, p. 1039). Solutions need to be both long-term and short-term, and they need to be informed by research illuminating the psychological processes that emerge through participation in collective life (Vygotsky, 1978) on the staircase to terrorism.

Several of the points raised by Paniagua (2005) and Steiner (2005, this issue) are insightful and help to broaden the range of factors to be considered on the staircase to terrorism. Steiner highlights the role of incitement, and this points to the importance of both research and policies for better understanding, monitoring, and combating voices for hate. The neutrality of the psychological researcher is severely tested when the subjects of study are intent on deceiving investigators, and past research experience with extremist groups suggests that a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods are required to meet this challenge (see Billig, 1978). Incitement is a factor to consider, particularly on the ground floor of the staircase to terrorism, where some individuals are first persuaded to start climbing the stairway, and on the second floor, where incitement can lead to the displacement of aggression onto specific targets. Paniagua points out that a number of extremist leaders are not open to negotiation, suggesting that when attempting negotiation with individuals who have reached the final levels of the staircase to terrorism, authorities must selectively try different policies with different terrorist groups and leaders. This strategy has been put into practice with some success in several troubled regions, including Northern Ireland.

A subtle but profound theme links the other major points made by Paniagua (2005) and Steiner (2005): that Islamic terrorism is different and has to be treated as a separate phenomenon. Steiner implies this with reference to what he sees as a long history of conflict between the West and the Islamic World; Paniagua suggests this by placing terrorism by various major "terrorist organizations" in the category of *political* terrorism and depicting political terrorism as different from *Islamic* terrorism. Both of these observations are intriguing, but they should not distract psychologists from the foundational psychological processes that underlie terrorist thought and action.

Besides, these points made by Paniagua (2005) and Steiner (2005) raise more questions than they answer: If a long history of conflict gives rise to terrorism, why do some conflicts (e.g., the cold war, the French–English rivalry in Canada, etc.) not lead to terrorism, even when one side becomes relatively very weak? As for the distinction between Islamic terrorism and political terrorism, this is far too simplistic to be useful in practice, and such a classification would confuse rather than enlighten research and policy. But Paniagua and Steiner do make an important contribution by helping to highlight this question: What is distinct about modern Islamic terrorism? My contention is that this question can best be addressed with reference to the foundational psychological processes integral to collective life on the staircase to terrorism, with identity processes being the most central. Such exploration can benefit from psychological research in the social-identity tradition that was initiated in Europe and has become international (Worchel, Morales, Páez & Deschamps, 1998) and from exploration of identity challenges "from the terrorist's point of view" (Moghaddam, in press).

Islamic communities in many parts of the world are experiencing an identity crisis, central to which is the *good-copy problem*: the perception that identity ideals dominant in one's own community are "imported" and lack authenticity, and the best one can achieve is to become a good copy of, but never as good as or better than, majority out-group models. The good-copy problem has confronted numerous minorities, but it has rarely done so to the degree and in the manner now experienced by Islamic communities. For example, in the North American context, women and ethnic minorities have experienced the good-copy problem, because ideals have historically been shaped by White men. However, through collective "liberation" movements, involving in part the feminization of societal values and the transformation of ethnic images (e.g., "Black is beautiful"), women and ethnic minorities have made some progress toward establishing identity ideals that are authentic to their in-groups.

The good-copy problem also confronts numerous developing societies that are influenced by Western media and the images of Western ideals depicted through films, music, and electronic communications. This trend is even present in a country as vast and powerful as communist China, where women are the target of growing advertisement campaigns designed to persuade them that through face and body sculpture, "eye rounding," leg elongation, and various forms of drastic plastic surgery, they can become good copies of ideal Western models. In addition to the physical pain and sacrifice involved in surgical procedures such as leg elongation, conducted to help Asian women conform

to Western ideals of female bodily proportions, wider psychological consequences are indicated by research in the social-identity tradition. Individuals experiencing the good-copy problem have diminished possibilities for achieving a distinct and positive social identity—a universally desired outcome, as suggested by social-identity research.

In the face of imported Western identity ideals, non-Western societies face the challenge of constructing alternative indigenous identity ideals, particularly to influence the young. But what institutional resources are available in Islamic societies to help construct indigenous identity ideals? Because of complex political, economic, and cultural factors, the mosque is the only institution left intact and capable of action independent from the local dictators who rule almost all Islamic societies of the Near and Middle East. It was the mosque that served as the vanguard of the revolution against the dictatorship of the Shah in Iran in 1978, just as it is the mosque that has emerged as the most powerful standing institution in post-Saddam "democratic" Iraq.

Because dictators in the Near and Middle East have silenced all other viable voices, the mosque is the only resource still available to Muslims grappling with the good-copy problem. It is only in the mosques of the Near and Middle East that one can at least with some measure of safety hear political speeches critical of government policies. This relative freedom within the shelter of the mosque has created opportunities for the "incitement" that Steiner (2005) highlights. Extremists espousing the adoption of an "authentic, pure Islamic identity" have had greatest influence in the two countries that most directly evolved a collective identity on the basis of Islam: Saudi Arabia, the keeper of Islam's holiest sites, and Pakistan, which became separated from India in 1947 as an Islamic society (and was declared an Islamic republic in 1956). In line with this analysis, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are the source of the largest number of Islamic terrorist acts against Western targets.

In summary, Paniagua (2005) and Steiner (2005) make some insightful comments that enrich the staircase metaphor and highlight the question of why Islamic terrorism is on the rise and targeting the West. Psychological science can best address this issue by focusing on foundational psychological processes that emerge through collective life (e.g., identity processes and the good-copy problem) and are associated with support for a morality that condones terrorism.

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More Problems With Gap Closing Philosophy and Research

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Although Ceci and Papierno's "The Rhetoric and Reality of Gap Closing: When the 'Have-Nots' Gain but the 'Haves' Gain Even More" (February–March 2005) was more than welcome, the discussion was nevertheless still couched within a seriously culturally biased conceptual framework. Even though most psychologists accept this framework, it actually renders many ways of dealing with the problem of disadvantage invisible and undiscussable.

Some years ago, in the course of evaluating an adult education program designed to, in the words of the program provider, "enhance mothers' unique and irreplaceable" role in promoting the development of their 2–3-year-old children, my colleagues and I (Raven, 1980) inquired into mothers' priorities in child rearing. The middle-class mothers listed objectives of the kind typically discussed by psychologists, such as encouraging prereading skills and developing concepts. But the top priorities for the working-class mothers were that their children should "really need" and develop a respect for them.

Now, supposing one were to offer a cross-section of mothers an intervention program designed to help them ensure that their children really needed them, what would one expect the relative take up among middle- and working-class mothers to be?

I do not want to pursue this question here. My point is that virtually all the interventions discussed by Ceci and Papierno (2005) are construed within—and designed to reward—what one might call a Western, middle-class mind-set and to reinforce its personal and social structural consequences through a self-fulfilling process. Yet there is ample evidence that people, even living in Westernized societies, espouse a wide variety of alternative values. Many of the mothers involved in our study failed to take up the programs that were proffered because the whole way of thinking embedded within them conflicted, somewhat inarticulately, with their own. They sensed that the programs were somehow destructive of their values (although they could see that the programs had economic advantages). In reality, many of the programs mentioned by Ceci and Papierno (2005) are not only destructive of nonmainstream values, they also contribute to societal processes that are rapidly heading our species toward extinction, carrying the planet as we know it with it (see the special section on psychologists and sustainability in the May 2000 issue of the *American Psychologist*).

Ceci and Papierno (2005) very usefully discuss the efficacy of a number of educational interventions that have often been promoted as panaceas. Unfortunately, virtually all of these suffer from the previously mentioned problem. The Western—and particularly the American—mind-set (which is heavily embedded in psychological theory) has (actually for sociological reasons) increasingly embraced a single-factor model of ability. Yet ample evidence shows that children have the capacity to develop a huge variety of different talents and abilities and that society needs this wide variety. (See Raven & Stephenson, 2001, for a summary of the evidence supporting these claims, but see Raven, 2002, for a more pointed discussion of the issues involved.) Here it is sufficient to refer to but one example of a type of potentially universalized educational intervention that is very different than those discussed by Ceci and Papierno. When, in the course of multiple-talent-oriented, inquiry-oriented, project-based education conducted mainly in the environment around the school,