



News Release

Doug Lippincott, Director of Communications
Office: (315) 279-5231 Home: (585) 346-2639
Fax: (315) 279-5281
E-mail: dlippinc@mail.keuka.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—July 22, 2004

In the Post-911 Era, Patience is Indeed a Virtue

An opinion piece by Sander Diamond, professor of history, Keuka College

Deferred pleasures are a thing of the past in this country.

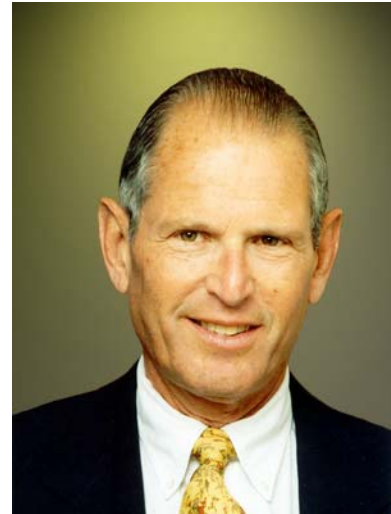
The electronic revolution, the TV clicker, ATMs, and fast food joints have made an already impatient people more impatient. We curse people who put us on hold. We hate to wait in line for anything. Our wars end not in years, but in weeks, as if time has collapsed in our Einsteinian world.

However, times dictate that we learn to wait. Like youngsters in school, we must learn to exercise patience—as we wait for the other shoe to fall.

Like Hitler before him, bin Laden will make good on his promise. We have been told by Homeland Security Chief Tom Ridge that the clock is ticking. The chatter among terrorists suggests that we can expect a major and devastating attack sometime between the political conventions this summer and the Nov. 2 election. Predictions are dire. A radiological or biological attack could cause mass harm to a major urban area. We fear an attack on our oil refineries and power grids, the downing of several airliners with hand-held missiles, or a massive explosion in a mall or multiplex theater filled with hundreds of people. In the food belt, there is the fear of an assault on our crops and animals. In our ports, some 8 million containers—carried by 57,000 ships—are unloaded each year.

Those responsible for our safety are working 24/7 to find out where and when it will happen. But in a nation of 3.7 million square miles, 7,000 miles of borderland, and 95,000 miles of shoreline, it's like looking for a needle in a haystack. We can hope that the terrorist talk is just talk, aimed at draining our will and resources. Students of World War II recall that in an effort to throw the Germans off before D-Day, Patton was given command of a faux army in England. We can alter our daily routines. We can vacation in some out-of-the-way place. But as the Israelis have learned, there is no escape from terrorism. In this new game of terrorist Russian roulette, safety is conditional and there are few places to hide in a modern and complex nation.

(more)



SANDER DIAMOND 2

One is reminded of a letter signed by Albert Einstein and delivered to President Roosevelt in the summer of 1939. On the eve of the war, many leading members of the scientific community who immigrated to the United States from Europe feared that Germany was working on an atomic bomb. The letter pointed out that “a single bomb of this type, carried by boat and exploded in port, might very well destroy the whole port together with some of the surrounding area.” After spending trillions on missile and other defenses, we share the same fears today as the men who built the first atomic bombs for the United States.

“Duck and cover” drills may have been good for our psyches in the 1950s, but they offered no protection from an H-bomb attack. Similarly, in the post-911 world and in light of the findings of the 911 Commission, there is little the average American can do to ward-off an attack. Fear of another attack, an American *Angst*, is now a permanent feature of daily life. We can only hope that our security forces are smarter than the terrorists and that an alert security person will foil any plot, as was the case in the Northwest several years ago.

As a result of the failure to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, corporate scandals, and so many other things, our trust in government has been frayed. But in the area of security, we have to place our trust in those charged with our protection and continue to go about our daily lives. We simply have to adjust to the new environment created by people dedicated to inflicting a major blow against the United States. We have to learn to be more patient at airports and border crossings, and with the delicate balance between our civil rights and security.

Hopefully, the conventions and election will come and go without an attack. Even so, the terrorists will not simply go away. They tried to bring down the Twin Towers in the mid-1990s; they came back that fateful morning of Sept. 11, 2001.

This time, we will have to be smarter than them.