



BEHAVIORS AND BELIEFS

By Dr. T. I. Mudder

Written words seem obsolete when attempting to describe world events since 9/11. The recognition of a simple distinction between good and evil has quickly ushered in a new sense of what is relevant and irrelevant in our lives. The surge of patriotism helped bring a rapidly diverging country together. The positive response and support of many countries around the world has been overwhelming. It is a time to reflect upon the political and cultural seeds provided the means of incubation of such evil and terrorism. Guilt ridden men of wealth went into one of the poorest nations on Earth, and with minimal expenditure had the support of the people and used their nation as a platform for advancing pure evil. These men and their followers are hypocrites and cowards and shall surely perish. It is their destiny and desire. It is the immense difference in wealth and education and opportunity that exists between the developed countries and emerging nations that fostered the hatred and allowed the establishment of a worldwide network of terror. This enormous rift in economic status has reached acutely intolerable levels.

Western culture is evident everywhere in the world, even in the poorest and least educated nations. There is a desire to emulate western culture, particularly that of the United States. This desire arises from hope, which often transforms itself into resentment once these people realize or perceive that this desire is unattainable. The loss of hope can lead to hatred in the same manner that the from lack of knowledge emerges fear. We are experiencing this now in the United States with the Anthrax cases. It is nearly impossible for a person in a highly developed industrialist nation to fathom the misery of day to day life in this other world.

We in the industrialist nations must recognize that extravagance whether sought after or not will eventually be curtailed by the laws of science and not politics or opinion. What is normal has forever changed. Clearly, humanity has failed somehow when killing innocent people through suicide and terrorism is preferable to living.

The discussion of sustainable development must embrace the need to educate and not exploit these less fortunate people. By lifting the standard of living and providing hope to these impoverished and illiterate people, we can ease the conditions that contribute to the formation of terrorist activities. We in the industrialist and developed world have an ethical and philosophical responsibility to raise the consciousness and awareness of these people. There are many ways to accomplish this goal. All too often the drive for sustainability is about protecting our way of life and not providing less fortunate people a chance at a better one. To accomplish this goal requires education, jobs, respect, as well as infrastructure. It is merely a recognition that we all live together. It has been postulated that by raising the educational level of a young girl in an emerging nation to the seventh grade level the number of children she will eventually bare is cut in half. During this decade, hundreds of millions of these young girls will reach their reproductive years.

In the United States, we have become consumed with protecting an extravagant way of life by attempting to regulate ourselves to the point of eliminating all risks at all costs. While we were tracking down the last known molecule and element of pollution, we missed the big picture and lost sight of what aspects of our lives are really important and meaningful. Due to our prosperity and resulting complacency, we have had the luxury in developed nations to spent time wringing our hands over trivial matters. How does the western world justify the removal of parts per trillion of a pesticide from drinking water on the basis of a statistical assessment, when thousands of children die each day from curable water borne diseases. Neither the issue of global warming nor the harvesting of a tree seems that relevant or important right now. Before September 11th, pollution was overwhelming our world and the environment was in jeopardy of being totally destroyed.

The women and men in the mining industry are the ambassadors of Western civilization in the emerging nations and as such often provide the first glimpse into our culture and way of life. Sustainable development does not mean a complete sharing of the wealth although there are those who believe this to be the case. However, it does involve a transfer of knowledge and know-how and a promise of hope and a better life.

By condemning mining and manufacturing in developed nations like the United States without criticizing our consumptive life style we promote our negative image and foster the attitudes that lead to hatred and then to violence. Nonetheless, when polled Americans indicate overwhelmingly that they are environmentalists. The progress clock will continue to tick and will not be reset. Globalization will ultimately adjust our live styles and apply the economic pressure to bring balance amongst developed countries and emerging nations.

We have fallen short in properly defining sustainable development including companies, countries, and all types of governmental and non-governmental organizations. The solution involves a simple change in attitude and recognition of the truly important facets of our lives and those of others.

Astronauts often remark at how small and fragile the world seems in the vastness of space. The answer does not lie in exploiting every discoverable ore body. There is a balance that will ultimately be maintained between need and want regardless of the actions of humans. Lip service has not resolved these issues and neither has the spending of billions and billions of dollars by governments through dozens of foreign aid programs. The proof of our resolve and commitment as an industry lies in the manner in which we define sustainable development for the underprivileged and not the privileged, and implement it through the Global Mining Initiative, the MMSD and ICMM.