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Finding Peace, Not Fear, After Domodedovo

By The Moscow Times

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A medieval legend tells of a traveler who crossed paths with Fear and Plague headed for London, where they intended to kill 10,000 people. The traveler asked Plague whether he would do all the killing. "Not a chance," Plague replied. "I will kill only a few hundred people. My friend Fear will kill the rest."

No one has claimed responsibility for the horrific suicide bombing at Moscow's Domodedovo Airport that killed 35 people and injured scores of others Monday. But a main goal of similar attacks in the past has been to instill fear. It looks like the bomber failed his mission.

The attack quickly inspired an outpouring of compassion — the exact antonym of fear. Twitter users began offering free rides to and from the airport. Aeroexpress, the Russian Railways subsidiary that offers rail services between the airport and Paveletsky Station, waived its standard 300-ruble ($10) fee. E-mails of sympathy and support poured in to The Moscow Times.

Operations also continued uninterrupted at the airport, with flights taking off and landing largely on schedule. Investors didn't wince, with the RTS and MICEX stock exchanges closing flat.

President Dmitry Medvedev took the upper road in televised comments shortly after the bombing. Instead of threatening to introduce fear-inspired measures to deal with future threats, Medvedev said the right laws were already in place and rightly acknowledged that a bigger problem lay with their enforcement. "What happened shows that all the laws that should have been enforced were far from correctly implemented. We need to examine this," he said.

But the sad truth is that no law — even if it is vigorously enforced — will offer complete protection from those determined to carry out terrorist attacks.

What we can do, however, is not allow the fear-mongers to triumph in their mission of hate and terror. Peace does not come from government policy but from within each one of us.

Fear can cause worry, headaches, insomnia and panic attacks. It can distract us from our work and personal lives, discouraging us from flying or even wanting to leave the perceived safety of our homes.

Fear, however, is rooted in our uncertainty about events that most likely will never happen. As such, worry is a useless activity. Our energy would be much better spent dealing with the realities of today rather than the unknown of tomorrow. Practically speaking, a simple way to combat fear — and any other form of stress — is adequate sleep, a balanced diet and regular exercise. Many people also find internal peace by putting their trust in a Higher Source.

We should not be overcome by fear but should overcome fear with compassion.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to those grieving after Monday's attack.

The views expressed in opinion pieces do not necessarily reflect the position of The Moscow Times.

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