

“BRAVE” TALIBAN GUNMEN SHOOT FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL IN HEAD BECAUSE SHE DARES TO BLOG ABOUT SCHOOL

[youtube]<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwEU0XriqHo>[/youtube]

Three years ago, at the age of 11, Malala Yousafzai gained attention for her outspoken defense of education for girls in the face of Taliban oppression that vowed to bar girls from schools in the Swat Valley region of Pakistan where she lives. Yesterday, Taliban gunmen, who were so cowardly that they hid behind masks, boarded Malala's bus after school and shot her in the head. Doctors have removed the bullet, but she remains in critical condition as of the most recent reports.

Today's New York Times article on the shooting reproduces at its top a 30 minute documentary the Times produced in 2009 featuring Malala. The Times also carried the Taliban's remarks on the shooting:

A Taliban spokesman, Ehsanullah Ehsan, confirmed by phone Tuesday that Ms. Yousafzai had been the target, calling her crusade for education rights an "obscenity."

"She has become a symbol of Western culture in the area; she was openly propagating it," Mr. Ehsan said, adding that if she survived, the militants would certainly try to kill her again. "Let this be a lesson."

Reuters has more from the Taliban:

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack saying Yousufzai was “pro-West”, had been promoting Western culture and had been speaking out against them.

They justified shooting her by citing instances from the Koran when a child or woman was killed.

“Any female that, by any means, plays a role in the war against mujahideen should be killed,” said Taliban spokesman Ihsanullah Ihsan, using the term for Islamic holy warriors to refer to the Taliban.

“We are dead against co-education and a secular education system.”

Pakistan’s leaders have been quick to condemn this atrocious attack.

Of course, this sort of thing could not happen in the United States. Or could it? Consider for a minute that we have a House Science Committee that is dominated by science deniers whose denial of science is driven in part by religious fundamentalism. We also had a nearly successful candidate in the Republican primary who made the bashing of secularism one of his favorite topics. Perhaps this tragedy should serve as a reminder that theocratic violence is wrong and should be countered at all times.