

[Scott Atran](#) gave a lecture entitled "For Friends and Faith: Understanding the Paths and Barriers to Political Violence" at Hampshire College in the [lecture series](#) on science and religion. The abstract: "Many creatures will fight to the death for their close kin, but only humans fight and sacrifice unto death for friends and imagined kin, for brotherhoods willing to shed blood for one another. The reason for brotherhoods- unrelated people cooperating to their full measure of devotion-are as ancient as our uniquely reflective and auto-predatory species. Different cultures ratchet up these reasons into great causes in different ways. Call it love of God or love of group, it matters little in the end... especially for young men, mortal combat in a great cause provides the ultimate adventure and glory to gain maximum esteem in the eyes of many and, most dearly, in the hearts of their peers. This century's major terrorist incidents are cases in point."

The video of the lecture is available [here](#) and that of the Q&A session [here](#).