

France's response to Paris attacks encourages ISIS caliphate fantasy

Written by Eric Walberg, Эрик Вальберг/ Уолберг ██████ ██████

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France's emotional response to the recent tragedy, devoid of reason and ignoring history, just makes matters worse.

The death toll in the November 13 attacks in Paris stands at 127. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani sent a message to his French counterpart Francois Hollande condemning the attacks. "In the name of the Iranian nation, itself a victim of the evil scourge of terrorism, I strongly condemn these inhumane crimes and condole with the bereaved French nation and government."

In contrast, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu opened his weekly Cabinet meeting by calling on world leaders to condemn terror against ... Israel. He began by addressing the killing of two Israelis, ignoring the 81 Palestinians who have died in protests this month. "The time has come for the nations of the world to condemn terrorism against us as much as they condemn terrorism anywhere else in the world." He pledged Israeli intelligence assistance to France, adding "An attack on any of us needs to be seen as an attack on all of us."

Translate: France's tragedy is a wake-up call for solidarity with ... Israel.

France's colonial legacy

Until 2012, France was spared serious terrorist attacks, but its enduring colonial mentality continues to stoke anger. Most evident recently was the official defence of anti-Muslim hate literature published by the magazine Charlie Hebdo. Rather than persecuting the Islamophobes, which would have prevented blowback by enraged Muslims, the French insistence on freedom led to an attack in January on the Paris offices of the magazine, killing 12 people and wounding 11 others.

Worse yet, the new Socialist President Hollande pushed ahead with a return to outright colonial invasion, with air strikes and arms to Syrian rebels in opposition to both the Syrian government and ISIS supporters. This confused policy only makes sense if the intent is to dismantle the Syrian state and refashion a Syrian puppet government, harking back to France's invasion of Syria-Lebanon following WWI in collusion with Britain, when they destroyed the Ottoman state and set up puppet regimes across the Middle East.

France was slow to adjust to post-WWII decolonization, and stubbornly maintained its military presence not only in Vietnam but in the Middle East. Along with Britain, now both humiliated

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bankrupt powers, it was in no position to enforce its will, and it handed over its colonial possessions to the US either directly or via the new world order institutions. Plus, of course, intrigue where a glimmer of independence appeared, as in Iran in 1953 or Egypt 1956.

Worst of all was the horror France inflicted for more than a century in Algeria. Algeria had to suffer a long, brutal war of liberation in which a million Algerians died before France finally left in 1962. French meddling in Algeria since has only compounded the animosity, especially the support given the military coup in 1992 in which 200,000 Algerians died.

France's current return to openly colonial policies, first in Afghanistan, then Libya, Mali and now Syria, are guaranteed to have dire consequences. To its credit, France did not support the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, but there are now 3,200 French troops there.

France and US support the terrorists

France and the US have played a dangerous and foolish hand in their great games of asserting world power, at times using jihadists (1980s in Afghanistan) and at other times attacking them (1990s+ in Afghanistan), sometimes both at the same time (2011+ in Syria).

“Thank God for the Saudis and Prince Bandar,” John McCain told CNN in January 2014. Is McCain not aware that two of the most successful factions fighting Syrian President Assad’s forces are Islamist extremist groups Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIS, and that their success is due to the support they have received from Qatar and Saudi Arabia? A senior Qatari official told The Atlantic journalist Steve Clemons that “he can identify al-Nusra commanders by the blocks they control in various Syrian cities. But ISIS is another matter. As one senior Qatari official stated, ‘ISIS has been a Saudi project.’”

France doesn't have a wild card like McCain, but, like the US, supports Islamic fundamentalists in Syria and elsewhere through its ties with the Saudi and Qatari regimes and its actions in Syria. Even after it became obvious to everyone that the regime change project in Syria has led to an expansion of terrorism, Hollande was still pursuing it.

But then this hypocrisy goes for all the western nations, in the first place Canada, which has been bombing Syrian rebels and, at the same time, just signed a \$14.8b arms deal with Saudi Arabia. The largest arms exports contract in Canadian history will be remembered as going to one of the worst human rights violators in the world and a funder of ISIS-related groups in Syria and Iraq. In fact, Canada's record on bombing Muslims in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, on restricting birqas and promoting 'free speech' defaming Islam, mirrors France, and led to a shooting last year that penetrated the parliament buildings in Ottawa and had Prime Minister Harper cowering in his closet.

Harper's answer, when he had stopped shaking, was the same as Hollande's: he insisted that “Canada will not be intimidated” by acts of violence and remained committed to Canada's efforts “to work with our allies around the world and fight against the terrorist organizations ... who bring their savagery to our shores.” He did admit that “we're all aware and deeply troubled that both attacks were carried out by Canadian citizens, by young men born and raised in this

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peaceful country,” but, like Hollande today, failed to draw the logical conclusion.

Powder keg

France has the largest Muslim population in Europe at 10m. Despite its claims of “liberty, equality and brotherhood”, it is considered the most racist country in Europe. French-Algerian communities still live on impoverished housing estates, go to bad schools, and have few opportunities for social advancement. Discrimination in everything from jobs to housing is routine. There are few French-Algerians in politics, the law, the media or any other profession, though the prisons are full. Hollande refuses to reverse measures like the burqa ban and has highlighted his opposition to halal meat and praying in the street because of a lack of mosques.

Populist rightwing politicians like Nicolas Sarkozy and the National Front's Marine Le Pen routinely portray alienated migrant communities as France's enemy within. Le Pen garnered 20% of the popular vote in the first round of May's presidential elections.

In their communique, the perpetrators of the recent attacks listed France's crimes as leading a “new crusade” in Syria, as well as defending the Charlie Hebdo magazine, and just because of general French decadence and racism. They claimed their targets were well chose□ a football match between 'crusaders' France and Germany attended by Hollande, and the Bataclan exhibition where “hundreds of pagans gathered for a concert of prostitution and vice” (the California group Eagles of Death Metal).

"This is for Syria," were the last words of one of the Paris attackers. But he could have said it was for Mali, or Libya, or Iraq. France is very proactive against Islamists worldwide, especially in the face of what is frequently seen as British and American retreat. Over 10,000 French troops are currently deployed abroad. In addition to Iraq, there are over 5,000 troops in western and central Africa. Last week Hollande announced that France will deploy an aircraft carrier in the Persian Gulf to assist the fight against ISIS.

As with Osama Bin Laden's strategy of promoting dramatic terrorist attacks in the West to provoke a crackdown and to radicalize Muslims, the strategy behind the current attacks is to generate a French crackdown to encourage Muslims to follow ISIS's caliphate fantasy. It has worked all too well so far, and Hollande's vow to be “ruthless” in his response leads him and France in the wrong direction.

In his address on recent events, Iran's Leader Imam Khomeini acknowledged that “there are voices of criticism in the West about its colonial past. But they only criticize the distant past. Why should the revision of collective conscience apply to the distant past and not to the current problems?”

<http://english.khamenei.ir/news/2494/France-s-response-to-Paris-attacks-encourages-ISIS-s-caliphate>

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