

Is the Paris Massacre a Game Changer?
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In a multi-pronged attack on Paris, reminiscent of the nightmare attack in Mumbai, India several years ago, a tipping point seems to have arrived. Many assumptions about our enemy have had to be rethought:

First, the Mumbai siege was executed by Al Qaeda under the direction of the Pakistani Intelligence Service. The Paris attack was a copycat siege carried out under the direction of ISIS, a terror group that had not been thought capable of such a well-executed complex caper. We had assumed that ISIS could only operate in the Middle East, not in the West, except for social media prompting lone-wolf Jihadis to create mayhem wherever they were. We were wrong. But let us not exaggerate their skills; attacking a civilian population with nothing more sophisticated than Kalashnikovs and suicide belts is not impressive. It just emphasizes the primitive quality of ISIS, and all other Islamist sects: a taste for death, suicide, and going after civilians.

Even before ISIS, we noted that Islamists favored attacking marketplaces full of women and children or mosques full of worshippers. ISIS has gone beyond that in taking territory, overrunning communities, and "religiously raping" women and children, murdering them afterwards. (If you have missed hearing about religious rape, it is justified by ISIS as valid emulation of the Prophet in his wars. They pray before and after each rape.)

Second: the Paris attack comes just as Europe is being overrun by refugees, some from Syria, others from all the other dysfunctional countries with Muslim majorities. Ordinary Europeans are angry about letting this flood of people join earlier fellow migrants who have already demonstrated disdain for European culture. This Paris attack could not have been carried out without assistance from French Muslims, some of whom were born there. And amid the refugees, ISIS has smuggled in terrorists.

Third: there is disagreement on how to refer to these criminals. Our own president, and many from the EU, are trying not to impugn all Muslims. They do not want to imply that the West is at war with Islam. I admire their good intentions, but that seems like moving the furniture on the deck of the Titanic. We are at war with Islam, or rather, Islamists have declared war on us. Islam is in their very name (Islamic State), and Islam, in their ideology, is the basis for their actions. I certainly feel for the millions of decent Muslims around the world who are not guilty, but until we can distinguish the innocent from the activists, it is not wrong to impugn Islam.

Fourth: what can the civilized world do in response to this menace? The Islamist death industry has been at work in Iraq, Afghanistan, Tunisia, Lebanon, Israel, and now, Paris. Over the past few decades, the predecessors of ISIS (PLO, Al Qaida, and others) have murdered, blown up establishments where civilians worked or played, carried out horrific attacks in New York, London, and Madrid.

Anti-terrorist officials are decrying their inability to intercept cyphered messages sent by Islamists, thanks to the nasty work of Julian Assange and Edward Snowden, whose theft and publication of classified US documents revealed cooperation between government intelligence and cell phone companies. We need this tool!

Finally: we do need to step back to assess what this means for the world. ISIS is disgusting most ordinary Muslims. Because Islam has not managed to change to meet the norms of modern life, Muslims are left with three choices: radicalize and march back into the past, secularize and abandon their faith, or transform Islam into a modern nonviolent religion by discarding outmoded materials: Sharia law and misogyny. This is already beginning in the United States with the opening of the first women-only mosques and rebellion against traditional Muslim misogyny.

We need to understand that this violence is more directed at fellow Muslims than to the rest of the world. See whom Islamists mostly attack: women, civilians, and

anybody who speaks out against Islamism. They reign by fear, but they are fighting a losing battle against irrelevance. They are not "winning" anything, nor can they.

678 words.

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