

Per the New York Times, Islamist Theocracy is Shriveling

by Lev Tsitrin

One can learn an awful lot by reading the *New York Times*. Who would have thought, when watching this week's mayhem in Afghanistan, that " [Hamas' military wing](#)" to learn that apart from "a core of several hundred members who receive military style training, including training in Iran and in Syria" it has "an estimated 10,000–17,000 operatives." Thus, Hamas alone more than exhausts Mr. Brooks' statistics; apparently, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, Iran's Revolutionary Guards, ISIS, Al Qaeda, Yemeni Houthis, the Taliban and others are, in Mr. Brooks' and the *New York Times*' definition, not "terrorists." That is a very elegant way indeed to "shrivel" the theocracy – just do not notice it! Paper it over, "the paper of record"!)

What a triumph! *Only* 13 percent of Moslems approve of Al Qaeda! (We are not given the number of the undecided; a better question would be, what percentage disapproves of it enough to want to crush it. From the fact that it has not been crushed, it appears that this number is rather low). Likewise, "Across the Arab world people are turning against religious political parties and the clerics who helped bring them to power. Many appear to be giving up on Islam, too." Ayatollah Mohammad-Taqi Mesbah Yazdi of Iran noticed the trend in his own country: "Iranians are evading religious teachings and turning to secularism." Please quantify it, Mr. Brooks, and tell us at which point will the Iran Revolutionary Guards run out of conscripts because there won't be any Moslems left in the land, everyone becoming pacifist Baha'i?

So, why worry? "In *The Washington Post*, Fareed Zakaria notes that "most Islamist terrorism today tends to be local – the Taliban in Afghanistan, Boko Haram in Nigeria, al-Shabab in the Horn of Africa. That's a major reversal from the glory days of Al Qaeda, when its leaders insisted that the focus must be not on the 'near enemy' (the local regimes) but rather the 'far enemy' (the United States and the West more broadly)."

So, Mr. Brooks tells us, let's let Islamism collapse under its own weight. If that weight increases – as it now does in Afghanistan – it is only for the better: the public disillusionment will be the greater, and the resulting implosion will be the surer.

There is, of course, a bit of a problem with Mr. Brooks' logic. The clerics don't care for the public opinion. Only God's is of importance, and they know what it demands with absolute certainty: that their rule be maintained. If God's rule is harsh, so be it. People must submit to God – and must be made to submit if they got other ideas, and refuse to. This, Mr. Brooks, is why ayatollahs are still in power in Iran despite public discontent: God speaks through the brute force

of his self-appointed enforcers. This is how Taliban maintained power, and will keep maintaining it. This is from where Hamas and Hezbollah derive their authority.

So dream on, Mr. Brooks. Keep publishing drivel, *The New York Times*. We live in harsh times, and your pious lies may be the best consolation available on the market.

Lev Tsitrin is the author of “