

Radical Islam poses a real, direct threat to the West – including Canada

It is distressing to witness the waffling and quibbling in both federal opposition parties over Canada's contribution to the anti-terrorist effort in the Middle East, and even more depressing to note the failure of the opposition to show any recognition of the nature of the intensifying struggle between the West and radical Islam. I have expressed here before my concerns about the steady deterioration of the size and condition of our armed forces (though the personnel are of uniformly high quality). But Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Foreign Minister John Baird have consistently and often courageously recognized the nature of the terrorist threat, and particularly the fraudulence of the arguments calling Israel an apartheid society with no right to exist as a Jewish state.

The recent outrages in Paris have caused the more discerning political leadership and commentariat in many countries to recognize that the Israelis are just a pretextual grievance, because they are in territory the Arabs claim as their own. (This is bunk, as the territory of Israel was always inhabited by some Jews and was previously governed by the British, Turks, Crusaders, Byzantines, Romans, and Jews, and never by Arabs, but that is almost beside the point.) The real enemy is the entire West, not just, or even particularly, Israel.

The associate publisher of the influential Paris newspaper *Le Figaro* wrote last week in an uplifting "Declaration" that a "new religious war on a planetary scale" has been declared. (The piece evokes Emile Zola's seminal "*J'Accuse*" in Georges Clemenceau's *L'Aurore* in 1898 during the Dreyfus Affair.) "Islamists massacre Christians in Egypt, Iraq, Philippines,

Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria, all over, in fact," he wrote. He predicted a "pitiless unleashing of a renascent Islam ... by the immense Islamized masses of the Third World and our great metropolises," motivated by a "hatred of Christianity (that) vastly exceeds all problems of faith. Attacking churches, priests, other religious personnel, and the faithful, Islamists wish to destroy Western civilization, democracy, capitalism, what they call 'neo-colonialism,' equality of the sexes, the Rights of Man, all progress as we conceive it. Marx, Lenin, and Stalin have been replaced (as enemies of the West) by Allah and the Prophet. Bellicose imams have taken the places of the political commissars ... We weep with our usual crocodile tears for the Copts murdered in Egypt and Christians assassinated in Baghdad as the representatives of the West, European culture, capitalism, neo-colonialism, the dollar and Coca-Cola," though they antedated the Muslims in the Nile Valley and Baghdad by five centuries, "but we sit by passively with folded arms."

This elegant and fiery French polemical writer reached his apotheosis with the demand for an end to nauseating platitudes about "Islamo-Christian amity ... and the harmonious co-habitation of our three monotheisms, the avoidance of absurd and sometimes odious references to the 'most sober hours in our history,' and the cessation of the repentances and cowardices" of the West.

It was stirring stuff and though slightly overstated, he is closer to the mark with claims that all Islam hates and wishes the destruction of the West than are most of our pitiful Western leaders still imputing these incidents to a few malcontents, the pressing of "hot buttons" of Muslim sensitivity, or some new manifestation of Western avarice, patronization of other cultures, or supposedly compulsive belligerency. For five minutes last week, a White House spokesman dangled jerkily like an imperfectly hanged man before the press corps trying unsuccessfully to explain the

administration's aversion to any reference to "Islamist extremism." I am relieved, and all Canada should be grateful, that Harper and Baird see it plain as the outright evil that all this terrorist activity is. If, as a civilization and an alliance (however tattered), the West recognized that much of Islam is anti-West and if we required that Muslim national and religious leaders condemn violence or suffer onerous consequences for tacitly (or overtly) condoning it, we would swiftly separate the world's many decent Muslims from the loopies who keep killing Christians and Jews.

The underlying problem has almost nothing to do directly with the West: Muslim countries have failed at self-government almost everywhere, and have had very little success in developing civic values. This is one of the many reasons why both George W. Bush's crusade for democracy and Barack Obama's Cairo speech exalting Arab history were nonsense. The democratic choice of Muslim Arab electors is apt to be the anti-democratic, Islamist party, as with Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and, until the army intervened in its constitutional role as conservator of democracy, Algeria. (The Algerian army stopped the free election of an anti-democratic party to preserve democracy, in 1992.) The comparative success of the West gnaws at Muslim sensibilities, and the poor living conditions of many Muslim immigrants in the West aggravate their unhappiness.

There is particular merit to this in France, where those Muslims who had been loyal to France in the Algerian War and fled the independent Algeria for France were shabbily treated. This explains both the greater numbers and greater agitation of the French Muslims than the German-resident Turks, who are styled "guest-workers" and came to Germany under specified conditions and on temporary visas. These are ancillary problems of the post-Christian implosion of much of Europe's birthrate, but they are temporary phenomena – the birthrate is

already starting to rise in some areas of Europe (and not just among Muslims), and so, tentatively, is Christianity. To a large extent, the same lumpen-left that thinks the West is responsible for Muslim attacks on it, that Israel is an apartheid state, that the Roman Catholic Church is just a superstition-mongering humbug, claptrap and hallelujah factory run by septuagenarian celibates and closeted homosexuals, are themselves too dyspeptic or self-obsessed to procreate in self-sustaining numbers. All of these schools of misjudgment are beginning to crumble.

Justin Trudeau and Thomas Mulcair certainly don't belong in any of these dark holes, and the leaders of the opposition have a duty to oppose. But they are making too much of the exchange of fire between ISIS and Canadian forces in Iraq. The prime minister told the House of Commons that forces were not being sent to the Middle East in ground combat roles, but everyone knew they were entering a war zone and there was always a possibility of hostile encounters. It is specious to claim from this that Harper misled Parliament. Justin Trudeau's comment in October about Harper "whipping out" our CF-18 jets to show how big they are was gratuitous locker room laddishness that trivialized a serious subject involving risk-taking for a good cause by members of our armed forces (even if Harper's bellicosity, many decibels above what is altogether credible for a country of such emasculated military force as Canada has become, invites skepticism). And both opposition leaders should stop this nonsense that we can't distribute aid to refugees at the same time as we participate in the military action against the terrorist forces that apparently inspired the attack on the Centre Block of Parliament that caused the prime minister to take refuge in a broom closet.

More importantly, the entire political and media community in this country, as it apparently has in France, must stop playing little Red Riding Hood with what is an attack on our

civilization. Canada is a designated target. Everything that almost all Canadians believe in is being comprehensively assaulted, and distributing blankets and running around with our hair on fire when shots are exchanged in combat zones is not even the start of an adequate response. The United States plunged thoughtlessly into Iraq, and almost as mindlessly, abruptly decamped from it, helping create ISIS. It is somnambulating to the end of the Obama fantasy. Unlike most of his countrymen, the president doesn't speak of the Islamist threat in realistic terms. But even he understands that the local forces of armed opposition to terror have to be assisted, and American political divisions are no excuse for half-measures and posturing here, or for a failure by our opposition to get to grips with this widespread international problem, especially now that it is active within our country.

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