

We'll Always Have the March in Paris

On Sunday, January 11, 2014, Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority (PA), was in the front line of millions in the anti-terrorist march in Paris in protest against the brutal attacks that had occurred in the city three days earlier. An official statement issued on January 10, 2014 by the PA condemned "all terrorist attacks that claim innocent lives."

Notwithstanding the symbolic gesture by Abbas and the formal statement stressing the "sacredness of human life," the PA and Fatah did not condemn "all terrorist attacks." They continue to glorify acts of terror, as well as introduce severe punishment for behavior of Palestinians. President Abbas announced a decree that any Palestinian who sells, transfers, or leases land to a "hostile country or its citizens" is now to be punished by life imprisonment with forced labor. No one needs to guess the identity of the hostile country or its citizens.

The PA's own publications tell the true story of the double-talk by Abbas, now in the tenth year of his four-year presidential term, and the organization he heads. After a Palestinian terrorist had on December 25, 2014 stabbed two Israeli soldiers, the Palestinian journal *Al-Asima* commented that "these kinds of confrontations which frighten the enemy are excellent Palestinian examples of willpower and determination to win." The stabbing, which was caught on a security video, "serves as a school which demonstrates the bleeding in the heart of the entire Palestinian people." The video, the journal asserted, drew the approval of every youth, man, and woman in Palestine.

The Paris march was concerned with opposition to terrorism.

But the PA is not similarly concerned. In January 2015 , five terrorists who killed 10 Israelis were put on the list of martyrs of 2014 who had ascended to heaven, according to the Palestinian bi-weekly *Al-Asima*, whose editor is a member of Fatah's Central Committee. These terrorists, *shahids* (martyrs), killed five in the Jerusalem synagogue, and five by running them over by cars. Another terrorist tried to assassinate Rabbi Yehuda Glick. The PA sees the terrorists as carrying out martyrdom-seeking operations. The Palestinian journal on January 5, 2015 reported that in 2014, there were fifteen martyrs who ascended to heaven

The march through the streets of Paris was a symbolic endorsement of basic universal rights, freedoms of expression, and belief. These freedoms are now increasingly threatened by radical Islam, Islamic terrorism, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, Hezb'allah, and Hamas. They all are fanatical and murderous, they all seek to destroy the values of democratic countries and even their very existence.

In this attempt they aim at many targets throughout the world, but the constant one is the State of Israel.

Muslims could understandably feel offended by the biting satire about their religion expressed by *Charlie Hebdo*, though no reasonable person, Muslim or otherwise, can justify the massacre of the journalists responsible, and all Western media were surprised by the murders. There was much less surprise, and often less outrage in the mainstream media, that innocent Jews in a kosher shop in Paris were a deliberate target to be murdered.

If the march of millions in Paris means anything, it must be a prelude to action. The civilized world in facing the threat of radical Islam must go beyond simply a symbolic condemnation of the Islamist terrorist actions. Rallies are politically important in showing solidarity on common political and cultural issues and unity of purpose.

As usual, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper was most eloquent on the subject. In a statement on January 8, 2014, he declared that the international jihadist movement had declared war, a war on anybody who does not think and act exactly how they would think and act, and are executing it on a massive scale.

The international world must have backbone and confront that war. In this the countries that value freedom, openness, and tolerance must face head-on the reality of terrorist actions directed against them. The democratic countries appreciate as a result of the killings in Paris that the jihadists concentrate on Israel or Jewish communities and must take action to prevent this. Preventing Jews being murdered in kosher shops in Paris and elsewhere is equivalent in purpose to preventing the massacre of politically incorrect journalists. Those interested in civilized behavior must prevent the inflicting of pain and offense and the use of terrorist violence by radical Islam. They must rebuke those who resort to disproportionate and imprecise, and often fallacious and dishonest, language about Israel.

The threat of violence against Israel comes from a number of sources. In the not too distant future, Iran may soon have some form of nuclear military capacity. It is this threat that the Western world, and particularly the U.S., must consider – and thus must not make a deal with Iran that would allow this to happen.

More immediate threats are the groups Hezb'allah and Hamas, animated by radical Islam.

Hezb'allah is a well-organized force with a formidable, high-quality arsenal of weapons, more substantial than those in some European countries. It possesses 150,000 missiles and rockets, many of which can reach the whole area of Israel. It has long-range surface-to-sea missiles, anti-aircraft missiles, and anti-tank missiles. It is connected with and

supplied by Iran's Shiites and is currently aiding the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Hamas has been a constant aggressor against Israel and an existing danger with its long-range rockets and network of underground tunnels. Even after its losses as a result of the Israeli Operation Protective Edge in Gaza in summer 2014, Hamas, with a skilled military wing, still has more than 3,500 rockets. Hamas has been aided in Gaza by the even more extreme Islamic Jihad.

As a starting point, Western powers should stop funding the radical groups that demonize Israel. Groups such as Christian Aid (U.K.), Misereor (Germany), Trocaire (Ireland), Mennonite Central Committee (U.S.), and Oxfam should realize they are helping the promotion of a highly partisan radical political agenda, which has all too often included anti-Semitic themes.

More significantly, the countries in the civilized world, primarily the U.S. led by the Obama administration, must prevent or respond, physically, diplomatically, and economically, to the violence and terrorist activity against the State of Israel and its citizens by Hamas, Hezb'allah, and Iran. The speeches of Prime Minister Harper on the issue should be compulsory reading in the White House, on 10 Downing Street, and in the United Nations.

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