

EYE ON THE NEWS

Sometimes Jihad Is Just Jihad

Examining the West's habit of blaming itself for the terrorism directed against it

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The Brussels terror attacks have resurrected a tortured argument against national security measures first minted after 9/11. According to this self-flagellating narrative, Islamic terrorists consciously intend to goad Western countries into diminishing the civil liberties enjoyed by those countries' Muslim residents (and enjoyed exclusively *in* those Western countries). Those Western Muslims will then become so incensed by this irrational restriction on their freedoms that they will join the terrorist jihad.

According to [the New York Times](#), for example, ISIS "seeks to manipulate European fears of terrorism and migration." Part of the Islamic State's intention, says the *Times*, paraphrasing French sociologist Gilles Kepel, is "to mobilize fears of the 'enemy within,' create further rejection of European Muslim citizens and radicalize them at home, to create a kind of civil war between European Muslims and the 'crusader states.'" The president of the London-headquartered International Institute for Strategic Studies, François Heisbourg, seconded this interpretation. Reports the *Times*: "In dealing with terrorism through denial of nationality, abuses of civil liberties or an indefinite state of emergency, Mr. Heisbourg warned that 'you may create the conditions where you end up with the civil war in European societies that Daesh clearly wants.'"

The *Times* article also threw in for good measure the usual hallucinatory exculpation of radical Islam in creating terrorists: "Some political scientists, like Olivier Roy, a scholar of Islam at the European University Institute, say that Islam does not cause radicalization, but serves as the vehicle for radicalized

anger from some Muslim youth.” In other words, Western racism causes Islamic terrorism, notwithstanding incidents like Sunday’s Easter massacre in non-Western Pakistan.

So let’s get this straight. ISIS has no respect for civil liberties. Its advocates preach an autocratic, theocratic, tribal society that beheads innocents without the slightest due process of the law. Its power is total and brutal. It seeks to dominate as much of the West as it can by acts of violence that violate every Western norm of combat.

Yet, when it comes to Muslims living in the West, ISIS suddenly becomes a zealous advocate for the same civil liberties that are unknown in its own territory. It allegedly expects Muslims in the West to be protected by an ACLU-certified panoply of rights that it automatically denies residents of its imaginary caliphate. Furthermore, according to this counterintuitive narrative, though ISIS detests the West and would never allow Jews or Christians to colonize ISIS territories, it allegedly gets really hot under the collar at the prospect of any diminishment of open Muslim migration into the hated dens of Western decadence. And ISIS is killing people not because it wants to kill the infidels, but for a far more complicated, two-step reason: to induce Western security measures that only a radical civil libertarian would object to, but that will allegedly arouse Muslim residents of the West into deadly rebellion.

Reality check: ISIS isn’t “seeking to manipulate European fears of terrorism;” it is *creating* those fears by its own actions. Those fears wouldn’t exist but for Islamic terrorism. Any heightened security and immigration measures that Europe may belatedly implement are not the product of some irrational paranoia; they are the product of the demonstrated failure of existing policies to protect innocent lives. ISIS engages in the same brutal tactics in countries with civil liberties and in countries without civil liberties. Those tactics are not designed to trigger a lessening of civil liberties, but to kill as many people as possible.

It is perfectly appropriate and legitimate for the West to institute whatever immigration measures it believes will best protect it from terrorism. Outside very limited exceptions for asylum-seekers and refugees, a nation’s immigration policies should be developed exclusively to further its own self-interest. It owes entry to no one outside its borders. Europe’s immigration

policies have been a patent disaster; the desperate manhunts across the continent since last week for confederates of the Brussels attackers speak for themselves. Though the horse is already out of the barn, Europe would be insane to preserve the immigration status quo from which it is now reeling, and the United States would be equally insane to follow it down the same self-destructive path.

A country has an obligation to gather the intelligence needed to keep its citizens safe. When the threat is Islamic terrorism, that intelligence-gathering will by definition concern itself with Muslim targets; that is not invidious racism, it is a tautology. Western security investigations remain well within a constitutional framework of checks and balances.

The liberal intelligentsia's reflexive blaming of Western society for anti-Western barbarity is the ultimate act of narcissism. That intelligentsia believes that everything that happens is about us. In fact, it's not. The remaining pockets of savagery in the world exist independently of the West. According to the liberal elites, however, the West has no right to take common-sense security measures to defend itself against that savagery.

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