

The K.F. Stone Weekly

(Formerly "Beating the Bushes")



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WILL WE "ALWAYS HAVE PARIS?"

*Celui qui contemple les profondeurs de Paris est saisi de vertige.
Rien de plus fantastique.
Rien de plus tragique.
Rien de plus sublime."*

"Whoever contemplates the depths of Paris is seized with vertigo. Nothing is more fantastic. Nothing is more tragic. Nothing is more sublime" So wrote Victor Hugo, a man who knew more than a thing or two about the heart and soul of the City of



Lights. Today, that city, her multi-cultural residents - indeed, most of the civilized world - is enveloped in darkness. For once again, a brazen act of mass murder has "seized the city with vertigo," and left the rest of us struggling to come up with a workable "once-and-forever" response to the cancer of international terrorism.

Acts of mass murder, regardless of whether they occur in a French football stadium, aboard a Russian airliner or on the grounds of a Connecticut grammar school are both horrific and inherently incomprehensible. They put thinking, civilized people into Hugo's vertiginous state -- reeling, nauseous, gasping for breath. For many, such acts of barbarity stimulate the worst, most inane aspects of the human race. Over the past 24 hours, in addition to seeking as much up-to-the-minute news as possible from

Paris, I have been paying a lot of attention to what people with public voices are saying, thinking and tweeting on radio and the internet.

Many are engaged in blame, which the extremely gifted Canadian novelist-cum-designer [Douglas Coupland](#) describes as ". . . *just a lazy person's way of making sense out of chaos.*" These "lazy people" are all certain they know precisely who's responsible for the terrorist attacks in Paris - even if they do not agree with one another. While the chatterbox class has pointed a spavined finger at President Obama, Hillary Clinton, Hollywood liberals, progressives and other assorted "multiculturalists," internet conspiratorial mavens have put Zionists, religion in general, the [Bilderberg Group](#) "climate changers liars" and [Bavarian Illumunists](#) into their lethal cross hairs.

Hey, dreaming up conspiracies is easy; all you need is a fertile imagination and just enough knowledge to be dangerous. Why not blame the Paris attacks on hyper-wealthy climate change deniers and mega trillion buck and oil/coal/gas companies? Why not claim that it is they who surreptitiously underwrote the Parisian carnage in order to derail the upcoming international climate change conference to be held in . . . you guessed it . . . Paris? In the world of conspiracies, one pack of lies is just about as compelling as the next . . .

Then there is that swath of Islamophobic "humanity" which blames each and every Muslim man, woman and child on the planet:

Why does NO ONE say the obvious thing on TV!? It's insane. Don't want terrorism in the US? Stop importing Muslims!

Ann Coulter (@AnnaCoulter) [Nov. 14, 2015](#)

DAMN I'm pissed. Innocent people dying in Paris because the west just can't recognize that Islam is a dirty, violent gutter religion.

Neal Boortz (@Talkmaster) [Nov. 13, 2015](#)

Even [Marine Le Pen](#), leader of the far-right National Front Party, one of France's largest political parties, made sure to blame Islam for the horrendous attacks. Her tweet translates as "A cold anger strikes our heart," followed by "#IslamistTerrorism."

Une colère froide nous serre le cœur. [#TerrorismeIslamiste](#) [#Fusillade](#) MLP

— Marine Le Pen (@MLP_officiel) [Nov. 14, 2015](#)

These are many of the same people who, by the way, seek to impress their followers with their superior knowledge of the international Islamic cabal by referring to the President of the United States as "Caliph al-Obama" and "Caliph Abu Barkr al-Husseini al-Obama."

Still others see fit to use yesterday's terrorist assault as a means of propping up their favorite political cause, whether it be the need to put more weapons into the hands of "good people everywhere," the issue of illegal immigrants, refugees and mass deportation, or the "taking out" of every Muslim on the planet. Loudmouth Michael Savage - who told his robotic admirers that he was the only one who knew the truth about who was behind the Parisian attacks - declared that the government had to immediately deport every illegal immigrant, close all our borders (can you say "Maginot Line?") and require every mosque from Maine to California to provide the government with the names and addresses of all their members.

The various Republican hopefuls spit out phrases of fury and retribution, calling for the extirpation of ISIS without spending a single syllable explaining how the goal is to be achieved:

We can't wait any longer. ISIS must be wiped out. [#Paris pic.twitter.com/q26Bbn9gOA](https://twitter.com/q26Bbn9gOA)

— John Kasich (@JohnKasich) [Nov. 14, 2015](#)

President Obama said "ISIL continues to shrink" in an interview just hours before the horrible attack in Paris. He is just so bad! CHANGE.

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) [Nov. 14, 2015](#)

Senator Marco Rubio released [a short video](#) in which he called the attacks a "wake-up call" to a "civilizational war against radical Islam." [sic]

In a radio interview with [Hugh Hewitt](#), former Florida Governor Jeb Bush emphasized the military nature of the conflict with ISIS. *"It's not a law-enforcement operation and the mindset in our country at least needs to change to recognize it for what it is. This is an organized effort to destroy Western civilization and we need to lead in this regard."*

"We need to immediately declare a halt to any plans to bring refugees that may have been infiltrated by ISIS to the United States," Texas Senator Ted Cruz [said in a statement](#) on Friday. *"We need to redouble our efforts to prevent ISIS agents from penetrating our nation by other means."* Addressing the military campaign in Iraq and Syria, Cruz also hinted at revising the U.S. military's rules of engagement, saying that ISIS

will “not be deterred by targeted airstrikes with zero tolerance for civilian casualties, when the terrorists have such utter disregard for innocent life.”

Lost in all this - and barely reported at all - are the responses from Muslims both in France and around the world. An infinitesimally tiny sampling of what I found on the internet:

My name is Rha. I am Muslim. I condemn this [#ParisAttack](#) . Over 1.5 billion Muslims do. [#Prayforparis pic.twitter.com/sBsNx0DnQw](#)

– DAY6 OUTFITS (@day6_outfits) [Nov. 14, 2015](#)

I am Muslim. I WON'T apologize for something I'm not responsible for. Terrorism has no religion. THIS is my religion. [pic.twitter.com/qJr8o8OXhP](#)

– (@dulsetsabr) [Nov. 14, 2015](#)

As a Muslim,I am against the Islamic State.Their actions are not taught by Islam nor by The Prophet Muhammad(ﷺ) [pic.twitter.com/yK8MrhfcSY](#)

– Razi (@StudentOfAhmad) [Nov. 14, 2015](#)

The question and challenge is of course, how do civilized people living in civilized nations - (and regardless of what so many wingnuts say, we still make up the vast, vast majority of the planet) - what do we do, how in the hell do we respond to ISIS, Boko Haram, the Haqqani Network and Ansar al-Sharia in particular and global terrorism in general? Is this the [new normal](#)? Will we always have Paris? Or [Peshawar](#)? Or [Gamboru Ngala](#)? Or [Ankara](#)? Or [Oklahoma City](#)? As Esquire's Charles Pierce noted in a piece [published yesterday](#), "France's retribution will be swift and harsh, as will the inevitable reaction, as will the retribution for the reaction."

Although I - unlike many armchair generals, chicken hawks, conspiratorial blowhards and presidential wannabes - have neither the answer nor the strategy for eradicating global terrorism, I do know that it will never come about by either Rambo-like rhetoric or 20th century thinking. We, the civilized people of planet earth must bind together as one, put aside historic animosities and myths and misconceptions, and work as one to come up with a viable solution.

By the way, between the end of the previous paragraph and the beginning of this one, I have spent nearly half an hour on the phone speaking to my dear friend Dr. Rene Arav in Paris. Rene is France's longtime delegate to the [Council of Europe](#). He informs me that he and his family are saddened, safe, and ready to

do whatever it takes to rid Europe and the rest of the civilized world of the pandemic currently afflicting us. And, he wants one and all to know that "We will always have Paris" is not a question; it is a statement of fact.

Rien de plus sublime.

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