

Calculating the Costs of Muslim Terrorism: La Braderie, For Example

by Hugh Fitzgerald

The mayor of Lille, in northeast France, [has just announced](#) the cancellation of La Braderie, the largest flea market in Europe, with 10,000 exhibitors and, last year, 2.5 million visitors. Martine Aubry, the mayor, and a Socialist stalwart, said that the safety of visitors could not be assured – “there are risks we cannot reduce.” By this she meant, of course, risks of an attack *by Muslim terrorists*. Only once before, during the goose-stepping German occupation, has La Braderie ever been called off. The cancellation of this gigantic event is a severe economic blow to those exhibitors from all over France who depend, for a significant portion of their year’s profit, on that Lille market, but also a blow to those ancillary businesses – cafés, restaurants, and hotels – that benefit from exhibitors and visitors alike. Thus do Muslim terrorists manage to inflict great damage on Western economies without firing a shot or swinging a scimitar.

Of course, the same Islamic threat exists for every large public event in France. And like the Mayor of Lille, other officials, with other fairs, will not want to be held responsible for deaths from terrorist attacks. Since it is clear that the security services cannot possibly protect people always and everywhere, especially when there are large gatherings (and in Lille, officials say, the delivery trucks that would have had to negotiate the fairground’s labyrinth of lanes was a particular worry), it is better, from the politician’s point of view, to err on the side of caution – that is to say, of cancellation. Grumbling over lost sales can be overcome, but fury over lost lives cannot.

The calling-off of La Braderie likely signals a new phase in the war against the Infidels. Will the open-air Christmas markets also become targets? There's no need to ask, because they already have been – a plot against the Christmas market in Strasbourg was narrowly foiled back in 2000. And in 2014, an allahu-akbarring driver ran over people at the Christmas market in Nantes (the police still call the case “inconclusive”). And last year, the Christmas festivities in many places in France, including those that took place along the Champs-Elysees, were not cancelled outright, but considerably curtailed in time and space (and on the same boulevard, at New Year's Eve, a video of fireworks, rather than fireworks themselves, was shown). Christmas markets are clearly a target for ISIS and its willing collaborators, for not only are they symbols of hated Christianity, but they conveniently attract large numbers of potential victims to one place.

And what about Germany, where Christmas markets play such a large role in the economy, and in the nation's sense of itself? These Christmas markets actually run almost a month, opening in late November and closing only on Christmas Eve. So far, they have taken place without any change. Certainly none have been cancelled. But there is anxiety in the air. The fact that they are so much a part of German and Christian identity makes them, for that very reason, especially antipathetic to the Islamic State. The ones at Dortmund (3.5 million visitors) and Nuremberg (2.5 million visitors) in Germany, are the largest of the more than 2,500 seasonal markets in Germany that last year attracted a total of 50 million visitors. But a mood that should have been festive was grim, and the major Christmas markets reported declines of 20% in visitors in 2015. What will be the decline this year, after all the attacks in France, in Germany, in Belgium? And is there any reason to think that these markets will not become prime targets for ISIS, now that it has announced, in its Dabiq declaration of war, that it will be increasing its European

operations, and claims to have many agents already “operational in eighteen countries”? And as we saw in Nice, where large crowds assemble, a lone wolf can cause a lot of damage. How many of these markets will be curtailed, and at what cost, both in money and in the sapping of national morale? A headline last year about the Christmas markets captured the mood then: “Amid stollen and glühwein, terrorism fear haunts Germany’s Christmas markets.” Nothing that has happened since suggests that that fear is about to go away.

An Islamic attack in one country has repercussions elsewhere. The Paris attacks last November led the authorities in Brussels to impose a virtual lockdown: Municipal facilities across the city, such as sports and arts centres, libraries, and swimming pools, were all ordered to close. The Sunday morning market at the Gare du Midi, the Eurostar terminal – one of the biggest outdoor markets in Europe – was called off. The city’s metro system was closed down as shops shut, shopping malls were partly shuttered, professional soccer matches were cancelled, concerts were called off and music venues, museums, and galleries closed their doors for the weekend. This is not merely the future of Brussels, or of Belgium, but of much of Western Europe.

Now, after the attack in Nice, perhaps future Bastille Day celebrations in France will be abridged, or take place under conditions of such tight security as to leach any celebratory mood out of what is supposed to be a national celebration. After all, ISIS is given to choosing symbolic targets. Bastille Day celebrates the despised secular state of the Infidels, their meaningless Revolution, their pointless pride in something that has nothing to do with Islam. ISIS would want to flaunt its power and taunt the French by attacking the same celebration again and, if possible, in the same city, to emphasize its ability to strike anywhere. If you were mayor of Nice, and were threatened by ISIS, what would you do about Bastille Day in 2017? Cancellation makes political sense. But

if a country cannot celebrate its most important national holiday in the way it wants to, the damage to that nation's morale, to its sense of itself, is profound. This, too, is a victory for Islam. And already, in Marseille, France's second-largest city, a number of events, including the mid-August flyover of the "Patrouille de France," an air team that streams the French colors across the sky, have been cancelled "for security reasons." One wonders if the cancellation means that Muslim terrorists now have the means to bring down planes with ground-to-air missiles. Asked about this cancellation of the flyover, Prefect Laurent Nunez told the AP that "this is absolutely not a surrender to terrorism." Of course not.

La Braderie's cancellation was quickly followed by another, also for security reasons, this one being the European road cycling championships, which were due to be held in Nice from September 14 to 18. Nice's mayor said that "given that it was an event that would have required a large police presence, and that we have not received any guarantees about their deployment, the cycling championships that Nice was due to hold in France's name are cancelled." And even before that, several major soccer matches had been cancelled – including a Dutch-German friendly in Hannover and a French-German friendly at the Stade de Paris – because of fears of attack in the first case, and an actual attack, by three suicide bombers, in the second. All over Europe, those putting on sports events now have to worry about the possibility of such attacks, and while there is brave talk about everyone conducting "life as usual," few in France believe that that will ever again be possible. The police are everywhere, and everywhere stretched thin, and it becomes more difficult to pretend that life can go on as before. The list of targets lengthens: Patriotic flyovers and Bastille Day celebrations, cycling championships and soccer matches, Christmas markets and open-air markets of every type, train stations and airports, churches and synagogues, cafes and nightclubs, have been or are deemed likely targets. First a little, thence to more: More

insecurity, more attacks, more shutdowns of events *in medias res*, and more cancellations before they even begin. This is a siege, conducted by Muslims in the midst of what they regard as Dar al-Harb, successfully sowing fear, and transforming daily life. And yet, for reasons few can fathom, more Muslims are still being allowed into Europe, and to settle, by the millions, in what they regard as Dar al-Islam. Who is sanctioning this, and why?

The economic impact from the mere threat of Islamic terrorism is staggering. The cancellation of La Braderie affects 10,000 exhibitors, 2.5 million visitors, with attendant losses to ancillary local businesses that would have served visitors and exhibitors alike. Similarly, when a sports event, a music festival, an observation of a national holiday, is cancelled, or a whole city put on lockdown (as happened in Brussels after the 2015 Paris attacks), the circle of losses widens. When La Braderie was called off, tourists took note of the Lille Mayor's admission that "there are risks we cannot reduce." This led to plane and hotel reservations in France being cancelled, or in some cases, apparently not being made in the first place (judging by what could be predicted from last year's figures). The French government has just announced that for all of France, the number of hotel stays has dropped 10% over the past year. The luxury Parisian hotels have been the hardest hit, so the reduction in hotel revenues is far more than 10%. And that figure was arrived at *before* the truck massacre in Nice on July 14 and the decapitation of the elderly priest in Rouvray. By this fall, we should know the full effect on French tourism of those latest Muslim atrocities; it won't be good.

Some of the effects on tourism immediately after attacks have been quite dramatic. Airline bookings to France after the attacks at the Bataclan nightclub plunged by 50%, and though they have recovered somewhat, they are still down by about one-third. The union representing the Paris nightclub,

theatre, restaurant and bar owners says “activity remains up to 40% lower [in the last two months of 2015] than in the last two months of 2014, **with tourist revenues down 60-80%**. Those declines are even more damaging because of affected businesses also being forced to boost security spending.”

Let’s not forget that even as tourist revenues decline, the cost of increased security continues to grow all over Europe, with no end in sight. Governments, private businesses, and even individuals have been affected. These include people who are outspoken on the subject of Islam – for example, Marine Le Pen, Eric Zemmour, Geert Wilders, Lars Vilks – who have all had to pay for their own protection. Similarly, the kind of businesses that have been targets of Muslim attacks in the past now have a felt need for more security, and have to pay for much of it. *Le Figaro* has to pay a much larger amount for guards because of what happened to *Charlie Hebdo*. The nightclubs and concert halls now have to post more guards inside their premises because of what happened at the Bataclan, Because of the attack on the kosher market, the Jewish delis on the rue des Rosiers feel compelled to pay for extra security beyond the police patrols on the street. And as a consequence, all these businesses are now less profitable. Finally, the national and local governments keep having to increase the numbers of police (and soldiers) needed to patrol the streets or to stand guard outside likely targets, as the list of those targets keeps lengthening. Last Christmas Eve in France, 120,000 police were deployed to guard churches and other public venues. Fifteen years ago, before Al-Qaeda’s attack in the U.S., about 20,000 of those police would have been deemed sufficient. Now the police and military are all over Paris and other major cities. Because of them, the look and atmosphere of daily life has changed: “Thousands of military and police reinforcements have been deployed across the city [of Paris] and country, with patrolling soldiers in purple berets, matching khaki uniforms and flak vests, automatic weapons gripped to their chests now a common sight.”

Anyone who visits France now is struck by the presence of heavily-armed soldiers and police at major tourist sites, thus reinforcing in the minds of tourists the image of a country in peril. Those deployments cost the state lots of money, both in direct payments to the forces involved, and indirectly, through the decision of foreign tourists to go elsewhere. How many billions of dollars has the Muslim terrorist threat already cost France over the past decade? And what will it cost, do you think, over the next decade? And the next? And what will that terrorism, or its threat, cost all the countries of Europe as the Muslim population swells?

The full cost of Muslim terrorism is fiendishly difficult to calculate. The last year for which figures have been given by the Institute for Economics and Peace is 2014; it calculated that worldwide, just the property damage (as from a suicide bombing in a building), and medical care and lost income for the injured victims, and loss of estimated future earnings for the dead, amounted to more than \$50 billion. That figure doesn't include the cost of more security, higher insurance premiums, or – most devastating of all – lost business of all kinds, when, because of fear of terrorism, events are cancelled, shops are shuttered, streets are closed, whole cities may be in lockdown (Brussels, Hanover), and tourism is in free fall.

One of the things the Western world needs, as part of fully understanding the impact of Islamic terrorism, is economists who will be able to recognize, collect, organize, and make sense of the data that will allow them to estimate the full cost of Muslim terrorism. We need researchers who, instead of bemoaning the inconvenience of the extra tens of millions of man-hours spent at airports, are able to assign a dollar value to the man-hours lost. And lost not just at airports, but wherever time-consuming security measures now must be imposed at hospitals, government offices, schools, corporate offices. Then they must calculate the *additional cost to the government*

for the extra police and military, standing guard outside or patrolling the streets around the most likely targets of Islamic attack, and the *cost to private parties* of extra security guards for open-air markets, sports events, concert halls, clubs, restaurants, cafes. And finally, they must calculate *the loss in business revenues* due to a decrease in tourism, even in the most out-of-the-way places. Not just in Paris and Provence, and the Riviera, but everywhere in France. One startling example of this: at Mont-Saint-Michel, the beautifully bleak medieval abbey situated on its own intermittent island off Normandy, that has always been one of the most important French tourist attractions, business slumped by 70 percent after the Nov. 13, 2014 attacks in Paris, and it has never fully recovered.

Not everyone is stirred to action by such phrases as “a clash of civilisations.” For some, it may be too abstract a notion. But if you start talking about the real cost in dollars of Islamic terrorism for the peoples of Europe, and figures such as \$500 billion or \$1 trillion (over a decade) are justifiably invoked, you are likely to command attention. Whatever else it is, Muslim terrorism should also be blamed for much of the current economic distress in Europe. For that understanding can only help, at this point, the clear-sighted likes of Wilders and Le Pen to overcome the myopic acquiescence of the Merkels and the Mays.

First published in