

# Couillard Comes to His Senses

by Hugh Fitzgerald



While Justin Trudeau descends ever further into folly – “[a recent news item in the Globe and Mail](#):

*Quebec’s Premier has sent “a shock wave” through his province’s Muslim communities after he linked the lone-wolf attacker who stabbed a Michigan police officer to the wider Islamic religion.*

*Philippe Couillard, long seen as an ally in Quebec’s mainstream Muslim communities, has for years taken pains to avoid linking the broader Islamic faith to terrorist attacks, including those perpetrated by Quebeckers on Canadian soil. The Premier’s political opponents have often accused him of being soft on Islamist terrorism.*

*On Thursday, one day after a Quebec man was accused of*

*wounding a police officer while shouting the Islamic phrase “Allahu Akbar” (God is great) in an airport in Flint, Mich., Mr. Couillard dramatically shifted approach.*

*A reporter pointed out terrorist attacks have often triggered a spike in assault, vandalism and name-calling against Muslims in Quebec and asked the Premier if he had a message to Quebeckers.*

Note how expectant and eager the reporter was that the “message” the Premier would offer “to Quebeckers” would not be an attempt to reassure the Infidel targets of Muslim terrorists that security concerns were paramount and Muslim terrorism would be stamped out. Instead, the reporter expected Couillard to offer a reassurance to Muslims themselves. How disappointed he must have been when Prime Minister Couillard, in the past considered to be among the best friends of Quebec’s Muslims, did not speak according to plan.

This is what Premier Couillard replied:

*“You cannot disconnect this type of event, terrorism, from Islam in general,” Mr. Couillard said. “I think President [Emmanuel] Macron yesterday was very eloquent about this when addressing the Muslim community in France. He told them it’s also your responsibility to act on the theological front to explain to your people that this is not part of the religion, that it’s contrary to the teachings of the religion.”*

It’s hard to know what Couillard – or Macron – really think. Does Couillard believe that “this” – meaning terrorism by Muslims – is not “part of the religion” of Islam, or does he know perfectly well that it is not just part of it, but a central weapon in the worldwide Jihad against the Infidels? And if he does, is he simply trying to put Muslim leaders in a bind, by telling them they must “explain to your people” (a telling phrase, signifying a recognition that Muslims are not

“our people,” they are not fully integrated, they remain a people apart, not because the Quebecois shun them, but because they refuse integration themselves) that this “is not part of the religion, that it’s contrary to the teachings of the religion”? But how can Muslim leaders really be expected to tell their “own people,” as Couillard and Macron insist is their responsibility, what for them is an obvious untruth? It’s one thing to mislead Infidels with such falsehoods, but quite another for Muslim leaders to tell “their own people” such things. Muslims know perfectly well what the texts and teachings, of Islam contain. That is, they know that violence and terrorism are “part of the [Islamic] religion,” and are not “contrary to the teachings of the religion.”

Can it be that Couillard and Macron really believe that terrorism “is not part of the [Islamic] religion, that it’s contrary to the teachings of the religion”? Or do they mean something like “you’d better start teaching that terrorism is contrary to the teachings of your religion – Islam – whatever you really think, because otherwise even we will abandon you. But how you do it is your own business.”?

Perhaps the defection of Premier Couillard will be taken as a warning by Muslims that, unlike Prime Minister Trudeau, not all politicians in Canada are limitlessly gullible. Even those who were friendliest to them, who could be counted on always to defend them, like Couillard, are getting fed up. Almost every day brings fresh news of some Muslim atrocity somewhere in the world. Just in the last few weeks, there have been attacks in London, Manchester, London again, Paris (twice), Brussels, the Philippines, Israel, India, Kenya, and Michigan, the attack that apparently was the last straw for M. Couillard.

The Muslim leaders know, and so do “their people,” that terrorism is part of their religion. Are some of them, the so-called “moderates,” disturbed enough by the defection of M. Couillard to realize that they have somehow to dampen the

appeal of that terrorism? For years they have been playing a game of let's-pretend about Islam, claiming that the calls in the Qur'an for terrorism and other Jihad verses preaching violence must be "contextualized." That's a game played to mislead credulous Infidels. Some of those "moderates," realizing they are losing support among those who, like Premier Couillard, they once could count on, should perhaps now try not to persuade not Infidels but, rather, fellow Muslims, to believe in the "contextualization" of the Jihad verses, including those that specifically mention terror, in the Qur'an.

Reeling from the seeming defection of M. Couillard, some Muslim leaders might be ready for such a volte-face. For Couillard's defection from the camp of defenders of the faith was truly disturbing:

*Samer Majzoub, president of the Montreal-based Canadian Muslim Forum, said the Premier's words "have honestly caused a shock wave."*

*Usually, Mr. Couillard is a very understanding person. Putting the responsibility of one man's actions on an entire community ... we didn't expect that from a person who we truly believe is open-minded and who has backed us up in the past."*

*Shaheen Ashraf, a Quebec board member of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, said she "is very disappointed" in the Premier for putting the onus on her community.*

*"You don't think we try?" Ms. Ashraf said. "You can tell the community Islam is a religion of peace until the cows come home and there will always be people who don't want to hear you."*

All these shock waves, all this disappointment, all this unexpected truth-telling from someone whom "we [Muslims] truly believe is open-minded and who has backed us up in the past"

certainly can shake things up. Perhaps M. Couillard has had it up to here with making excuses for Islam. At least he would like Muslim leaders “to explain to your people that this is not part of the religion, that it’s contrary to the teachings of the religion.” Whether that is true or false, many Infidels, and “moderate” Muslims alike will agree that it is best to act as if it were true, as if terrorism is “contrary” to “the teachings” of Islam, giving some Muslims a possible way out – call it a willful misunderstanding – of the most disturbing aspects of their own faith.

Ms. Ashraf herself reveals, in casual passing, that this “religion of peace” business offered for Infidel consumption is not accepted by Muslims – “we [the Muslim leaders] can say it is ‘until the cows come home’” but “there will always be people” who “don’t want to hear you.” How many? One or two, or quite a few? We all know the answer to that. Perhaps the question ought to be a different one. Perhaps Shaheen Ashraf should ask this of those Muslims who listen to her: “Why should non-Muslims be expected to permanently welcome us, Muslims, into their lands, and endure our demands, and the generous benefits we lay claim to and receive, and our Stealth Jihad, and our terrorism, and the huge security expenses our presence requires, while we do not even try to find a way to remove the murderous sting from those many dangerous verses in the Qur’an? Yes, it’s up to us to interpret away the malevolent meaning of more than a hundred verses, through the only possible way, making true the very falsehoods we have been feeding the Infidels (as when we insist that ‘you have to realize this verse – 9:5, 9:29, 2:191-3, 47:4, 8:12 and so on – pertains to a specific context’), to explain away those Jihad verses. We will find a way to limit the application of these verses to a specific context, some 1400 years ago, when Muhammad was fighting against a series of local enemies whose identities we should be able to unearth.”

This will, of course, be opposed by many Muslims. But more than a few Muslim leaders surely realize that when even a man like Premier Couillard has declared it incumbent on Muslim leaders to explain that terrorism "is not part of the religion, that it's contrary to the teachings of the religion," then he has to be listened to, and his counsel followed by Muslim leaders. It will not do to have him reluctantly conclude, as he would otherwise have to, that terrorism is NOT contrary "to the teachings of the religion."

How long will the increasingly implausible excuses of Muslim defenders continue to be accepted? Those Muslims who are repelled by terrorism, but who also recognize that it's part of Islam, have to figure out how to "reform" Islam in a way that will leave enough of it intact to satisfy Believers, but that strips the Qur'an of its deepest malevolence. What "moderate" Muslims have to understand, and accept, is the need for that very "contextualization" that they always bring up to explain away the Jihad verses. This is the only kind of "reform" of Islamic texts that may be possible. Yes, those Muslim leaders should be asked to relate every Jihad verse, and especially those that invoke the need to "strike terror" in the hearts of the Infidels, to a specific time and place and enemy, in Arabia 1400 years ago. And then they must work to have Muslims accept as "the real Islam" that which we are perfectly aware is, for now, only the pretend-Islam that is fed to Infidels by defenders of the Faith when they engage in "contextualizing" away, as descriptive rather than prescriptive, so many violent verses in the Qur'an. Expressed otherwise, as Wallace Stevens put it, "let Be be finale of Seem."

*Members of Montreal's Muslim community were at a loss to explain Mr. Couillard's change in tone, particularly coming just before this weekend's end to the holy month of fasting known as Ramadan.*

Why were they “at a loss to explain Mr. Couillard’s change in tone”? Could the incessant news of attacks by Muslims on non-Muslims, even just in the last month or so in several dozen cities around the globe, have something to do with that change? Is there a point at which even Prime Minister Couillard might become tired of pretending that Islamic terrorism has nothing to do with Islam? At the moment he has gone beyond the stage of offering reassurances to Muslims, but still appears to believe (it’s hard to know what, at this point, he really believes) that Muslim leaders have a duty “to explain to your people that this is not part of the religion, that it’s contrary to the teachings of the religion.” The next stage, of course, would be for him to recognize – it will take some serious study – that in fact terrorism is part of Islam, and is not contrary, in either spirit or letter, to the religion. And if enough of the couillards of the Western world, former defenders of Islam, reach that conclusion, and publicly proclaim it, then Muslims will be on their uppers.

*Community leaders said the Premier was a model of understanding and empathy after the January shooting at a Quebec City mosque that killed six people. Mr. Couillard, a former brain surgeon, worked in Saudi Arabia for several years and offered words of comfort in Arabic in the wake of the shooting.*

If he “worked in Saudi Arabia for several years,” then along with his fat Saudi salary, he surely must have observed the misogyny toward women, felt the deep hostility toward all non-Muslims, had even seen the mutawwa or religious police enforcing the Sharia on the streets, and grasped the totalitarian nature of Islam, especially of the ferocious Wahhabi sort. He cannot allow himself to be fooled forever about Islam. Which is why, although for a while he went along with the party line pushed by Justin Trudeau and the Liberals, he finally abandoned the ship of appeasement. He’d had enough.

Ms. Ashraf, unsurprisingly, attributes his change of tone purely to political considerations: "When Mr. Couillard was supportive of Muslims it caused an uproar and now he's trying to appease the public. He's pandering." As long as he held to a pro-Muslim line, he was fine. Once he began to sound a different note about Islam, though, according to Ms. Ashraf, that's when he was "pandering." Others might want to turn it around: before, M. Couillard pandered, just like Justin Trudeau, to Muslims, and now, mugged by the reality of so many Muslim terrorist attacks, he has stopped pandering, stopped pretending that Islamic terrorism has nothing to do with Islam.

Could the "contextualization" approach work? That is, could enough Muslims be persuaded to believe that the Qur'anic verses on Jihad are not meant to apply for all time but, rather, to specific campaigns and battles against specific enemies, in western Arabia, some 1400 years ago? It's impossible to say. It is possible to hope that some Muslims, although they continue to offer lame and even ludicrous excuses for Muslim terrorists (poverty, lack of education, resentment over non-existent "colonialism," etc.), and still insist, with straight faces, that terrorism "has nothing to do with Islam," might welcome having such a "contextualizing" interpretation imposed, or at least promoted by, reform-minded imams and scholars, people such as the outspoken Imam Mohammad Tawhidi in Australia. By accepting this interpretation, and persuading others to follow suit, these Muslims would be participating in deliberately re-fashioning the faith by a sort of textual prestidigitation, so that it will be possible for Muslims not merely to pretend, but actually to be able, to coexist with others.

Qari Asim, an imam in the northeast city of Leeds, and one of several hundred Muslim clergy in the U.K. who signed a pledge not to conduct funeral services for Muslim terrorists, apparently agrees that the most feasible approach at this



point would be to “contextualize” the Jihad verses, to put them into a “particular historical context’:

*In Britain, Mr. Asim says, Muslim leaders are taking up those cudgels. “We used to ignore those verses” in the Koran that urge Muslims to kill non-Muslims – the ones that Islamic State preachers seize on – he says. “But we need to talk about them and explain to students that they are part of the Koran but that they do not apply today because they refer to a particular historical context that is not the same today.”*

This language is astonishing, and most welcome, if only enough Muslims can be persuaded to believe what Qari Asim and his fellows are insisting must be believed. But could this ever come to pass, of treating the Qur’anic verses that call for killing non-Muslims as applying only to a particular context? Or is this merely a case of whistling in the dark by decent Muslims, without this view of the Qur’an having much chance of widespread adoption?

So far none of the signs are good. It seems an impossible task, this hoped-for “reform of Islam” of which even apostates such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali speak and write. “As long as there is this book [the Quran],” Gladstone is reported to have said, “there will be no peace in the world.” Very likely. But “contextualization” of the most dangerous verses – holding the apologists for Islam to their own assertions, when they defend the faith, that “those verses can only be understood in their specific context” (as Qari Asim insists, those verses “that urge Muslims to kill non-Muslims” are “part of the Qur’an ...that do not apply today because they refer to a particular historical context”) – could be tried. It must be tried, before the world is engulfed in the madness of Islam that has spilled over its historic banks, thanks to the millions of migrants, and is already wreaking havoc in Europe.

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