

Don't Say You Haven't Been Warned about Terror

by Michael Curtis

Few are likely to mistake New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio for the fount of political wisdom. Even those few must have been astonished by his response to the first of the two incidents in his city on September 17, 2016. In his mode of political correctness, he said that the explosion on that day of a device in the Chelsea section of New York that injured 29 people and caused extensive damage, was an "intentional act." He refused to acknowledge that the device was a bomb by an Islamist terrorist. One could draw the conclusion that it was really a Chinese firecracker that a joker used to intensify the usual cacophony on 23rd Street in New York on a Saturday evening.

Even for the politically correct it is now clear the various attacks or attempted attacks in two days, two in New York, one in Seaside Park in New Jersey, one in Elizabeth, NJ, were perpetrated by individuals linked to or influenced by Radical Islam. Fortunately, no one was killed in the explosions in New York and elsewhere, but the life of the city, its transit system, and its economy have been affected, if only temporally. In addition, the financial cost is high since, in addition to the physical damage, 1,000 additional NY State Police Officers and National Guard troops are being deployed to patrol bus terminals, airports, and subway stations in New York.

It is ironic that the major explosion took place a few days before the 71st annual meeting in New York of the United Nations General Assembly beginning on September 19, 2016. The U.S. as host country is responsible for the security of the thousands of dignitaries who are attending the meeting, little

more than a mile away from the scene of the explosion at 23rd Street.

The UNGA is due to discuss a number of important global issues, including climate change, and sustainable development. Nevertheless, recent events have made it even more imperative that the UN should spend considerably more time on what should be its immediate priority, responding to international terrorism. It is bewildering that though there are countless proposed definitions of "terrorism" by organizations and countries throughout the world, the UN has been unable to agree on any binding definition, and consequently unable or unwilling to propose solutions or get agreement to act against the evil of our time.

The problem is even more pronounced because the UN is supposed to be concerned to prevent and combat terrorism, even if undefined. The UN endorsed the Global Control-Terrorism Strategy, and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. In 2004 the UN Security Council in Resolution 1566 passed a non-binding resolution on terrorism. It has also been concerned with threats to international peace and security. But the lack of consensus among the countries on what behavior constitutes terrorism prevents action.

On the definition of, and the search for the cause and motivation of terrorist acts some clarity is appropriate. Many well-meaning humanitarian organizations often call for inquiry into the "root causes" of terrorism. As a starting point, they should be aware that terrorism is not to be equated with any of the suggestions that are in effect excuses for violence: armed struggle of people under colonial or foreign domination or occupation; the struggle for liberation and self-determination; the unlawful use of force; poverty, social and economic inequality; racial or religious discrimination; emotional and mental instability.

The reality, all too obvious in view of the recurring

atrocities aimed at killing innocent civilians, is that the overwhelming terrorism in our age is the result of Radical Islam, whether perpetrated by organizations that may or may not be state-sponsored, or by private individuals, so-called lone wolfs. It may be ISIS, or al-Qaeda, or the Nusra Front, or Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, or Al Mourabitoun and Boko Haram in Africa, or Ansar al- Shariah in Algeria, or one of the many Islamist groups in the Middle East and North Africa.

Or it may be individuals such as Nidal Hassan who killed 13 people at Fort Hood in November 2009, or the couple of Pakistani descent who killed 14 in San Bernardino in December 2015, or Dahir Adan, a Somali, who stabbed nine people in a shopping mall in St. Cloud in Minnesota, in September 2016, or Ahmad Khan Rahami, the 28 year old Afghan immigrant and citizen of the U.S. who is alleged to have committed the Chelsea explosion.

In all cases, whether or not the individual perpetrator was addressed as "soldier of the Islamic state," the objective was to same, to inflict maximum damage on western life and civilians in the name of Islam. The West has now appreciated that ISIS has been claiming responsibility for most of the terrorist acts of groups and individuals all over Europe and in the U.S. ISIS and its main competitor Al-Qaeda and other Islamist groups have declared they are at war with the West, and the US is the prime target, the main symbol of liberty, civil and human rights, and of the Enlightenment.

Indeed the most recent ISIS video is titled "So take warning,"

Contrary to President Obama, terrorism has not been contained. A number of actions are necessary to counter it. First, the next President of the US must exercise leadership and will power, and lead a coalition of interested foreign parties, that could include not only the democratic west but also Russia, Turkey, the Kurds and the Gulf countries That person

has to make clear that the US is responding to and giving priority to the war inflicted on western civilization, while maintaining the delicate balance between free expression and national security and protection of the population.

ISIS has survived on extortion, robbery, human trafficking, and oil, must be ended. So must the other groups especially al-Qaeda which cut ties with ISIS in February 2014 for tactical and personal reasons and now is anxious to reassert its influence.

A second requirement is to put maximum emphasis on the use of social networks. Cyberspace and new technology must be intensified against ISIS to counter its very effective online propaganda. Perhaps Twitter can be induced to prevent terrorists from misusing it, even removing accounts associated with ISIS from the social media.

A third issue is the controversial one of immigration. European countries are troubled by the problem and are seek to control their borders and turn away the many thousands of economic migrants, some posing as refugees, and some perhaps potential terrorists. British Prime Minister Theresa May has declared that the uncontrolled wave of immigrants into Europe is not in the best interests of the UK nor of the countries they have left.

The local state election on September 18, 2016 in Berlin has shown the backlash against the generous migrant policy of Chancellor Angela Merkel. The anti-immigrant party, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) founded only in 2013 has had a dramatic rise and won 13 % of the vote in the Berlin Parliament.

The candidates in the U.S. Presidential election, like the rest of the U.S. population in Chelsea and elsewhere, are aware of these issues. The question is whether they will use them to their electoral advantage.