

Enough is Enough: the Fight against Terrorism

by Michael Curtis



Iconic London Bridge is not falling and must not fall down, my fair lady. The attack on innocent citizens in the area on June 4, 2017 makes it a symbol of the need for the struggle of civilization against Islamic barbarism to continue. That struggle requires changes in policies of Western democracies. The soft power of humanity so far is not sufficient to eliminate Islamist dominated terrorism, to prevent, detect, and destroy it.

Britain is fully aware of the urgent need for change. It has suffered an attack by vehicle and knives in London on March 2017 when five were killed, the attack in Manchester at a concert on May 22 when 22 were killed, and now the latest manifestation of evil on June 3, 2017 when three terrorists used a van to mow down pedestrians on London Bridge and then stabbed people at random in bars and pubs in nearby Borough Market which is always busy on a Saturday night. The three

murdered 7 and injured 48 before being killed by London police. The motive was unmistakable as one of the villains while stabbing an individual shouted, "This is for Allah."

Enough is enough. An Islamic terrorist is not a freedom fighter, but an evil murderer, seeking the most deadly venue, and must be recognized as such. It is insufficient to respond to these Islamist murderers by limited remarks as did new French President Emmanuel Macron with "My thoughts go out to the victims and their loved ones," and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, "Awful news..we're monitoring the situation." Trudeau, like the character Fagin in Lionel Bart's musical *Oliver*, is apparently "reviewing the situation to see if a fellow can be a villain all his life."

What is frightening are three things. One is that the murderers were obeying the ideology and instructions of major Islamic terrorists, especially ISIS calling for killing non-believers, "Crusaders," by using weapons, fire, and vehicles in shopping malls, restaurants and clubs. The killers attacked soft targets not with bombs that may need technical skill of some kind or even guns, but by vehicle and knives.

The second is the apparent considerable network of support for the killers; more than 12 people have so far been arrested in connection with the attack on June 3. The third aspect is that the attack came during Ramadan, giving the lie to the supposed peaceful religious nature of life and faith. In cynical fashion one of the killers even wore an Arsenal shirt, the emblem of the London soccer club perhaps dear to many of the victims.

President Donald Trump may have been too quick to condemn London Mayor Sadiq Khan and perhaps to misunderstand his remark after the attack, "no reason to be alarmed," and his suggestion there were more important things to worry about. But Trump's remark did not deserve a response such as that from CNN's Reza Aslan that Trump's renewal of call for a

travel ban was a “piece of s...” and that the President was an embarrassment to the US and to humankind.

The truth is otherwise. One does not have to be in accordance with Trump’s tweets to acknowledge certain facts. The Islamist terrorists, a minority of the Muslims in the world, are extremists who are the embarrassment to their own religion and to humankind, and are believers and activists in favor of creating a way of life incompatible with western democracy. They reject systems based on the rule of secular law, and advocate Islamist rule to be established by jihad, holy war and terrorism.

Meaningful action is essential. It is well meaning for citizens to proclaim “we are defiant” or we “stand united, and, after the Manchester murders on May 22, to carry a bag with a bee, the symbol of Manchester. Equally, vigils and moments of silence are appreciated. Yet, the real need is for further controls to obtain security. Inevitably that brings up the question of control of speech and action, always a controversial matter in democratic societies. The first issue is to ascertain if western democracies have been too tolerant of extreme views that call for their destruction, and the degree to which they should go to defeat extreme Islamist ideology. How extreme should the Western response be?

This raises a number of questions. Western leaders should consider certain options. First, there should be greater emphasis on and popular awareness of the evil nature and danger of Islamist ideology. Actions might include closing Islamic only schools, and investigating the behavior of mosques, and radicalization in them.

Much use is now being made by Islamists of social networks. Is it time for Internet companies to regulate cyberspace and to eliminate extreme expressions and messages on line? “Safe space” on the networks for proposals and plans for terrorist attacks should be ended. Is present software capable of doing

this?

More drastically, a number of actions may be helpful. Should a country like Britain round up and imprison all those, currently 3,000, on the country's terror watch list. Indeed, Scotland Yard suggested this after the 7/7 attacks, the events in July 2005 when four British Muslims suicide bombers killed 52 people when assaulting London's transport network. Security officials cannot cope with the number of potential killers who should be removed from the streets. In any case, there should be tougher sentences for terrorist offenders.

According to estimates, about 650 jihadidsts who had gone to fight for ISIS in Syria were allowed to return to Britain. A case can be made that they should be sent back to Syria. This also suggests greater military action by Britain and the US in Syria and Iraq against ISIS which has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

The complex issue of possible deportations of undesirable immigrants must be discussed and the whole question of allowing immigration must be reexamined.

President Trump has called for federal courts to remove the block on his executive orders for a travel ban from countries likely to export terrorists to the West. In opposition, former Ambassador Susan Rice counters there is no evidence that banning Muslims or banning entrance into the US of Muslims from a particular group of six countries would make the US safer. Yet, it is hard to agree that Trump's proposed actions would really alienate the very communities whose cooperation is needed in the fight against terrorism. Those communities have so far contributed little to the fight. Even children know that it is better to be safe than sorry.