

Introducing François Fillon (Part II)

by Hugh Fitzgerald



In Fillon's book "Conquering Islamic Terrorism," there is nothing about limiting the Muslim presence in France, which has created a situation, for the indigenous French and for non-Muslim immigrants, too, that is far more unpleasant, expensive, and physically dangerous than it would be without that large-scale presence. His view of Islam is clearly still a work in progress, but he is asymptotically approaching the views of Marine Le Pen. Perhaps we can offer him a few suggestions as to how to keep Muslim numbers down in France, and outside France, too.

First, Fillon might discuss internecine wars within the Camp of Islam, sectarian and ethnic, and how these help the West by using up Muslim energies and assets (men, money, materiel). Right now, in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, Sunnis and Shi'a are engaged in hot wars. Ideally, these wars will simmer for a long time. Nor should the West, in a mistaken attempt to spread "democracy" in Muslim countries where despotism is the default regime, try to hold in check those Muslim rulers who, like Al-Sisi in Egypt, use ruthless methods in order to fight the Muslim Brotherhood and other fanatics. Ataturk, after all, was ruthless in dealing with Muslim clerics as he attempted to, and did, secularize post-Ottoman Turkey; one wonders if a new Ataturk, using the same methods as Kemal Pasha, were to arise today, would the West support him, or deplore his means as unjustified, no matter how laudable the ends?

Finally, since 80% of the world's Muslims are not Arabs, the West could help non-Arab Muslims recognize Islam as a vehicle

for Arab supremacism. This is possibly the most important way to weaken the hold of Islam on non-Arabs, to begin to make them resent, and then to doubt, Islam. One simple way would be to subsidize the mass dissemination of translations into the major languages of Muslim Believers – Arabic, Urdu, Persian, Bahasa, Tamazight, Turkish, Malay, Kurdish – of such works as, for example, “Islam: The Arab National Movement,” by the late Anwar Shaikh. Shaikh’s study shows all the ways in which Islam favors and promotes the Arabs at the expense of non-Arab Muslims. Because Allah chose to deliver his message in Arabic to a seventh-century Arab, because Muslims should read, recite, memorize the Qur’an in Arabic, because Muslims must turn toward Mecca in prayer at least five times a day, because Muhammad the Perfect Man and Model of Conduct was Arab, because the Qur’an was written in the Arabs’ language, and it is only in that language that it ought, ideally, to be read, and Arabs are its only trustworthy transmitters, because the earliest Muslims, whose customs and manners, written down in the Hadith, constitute the Sunnah, were all Arabs, because the Arabs were the first to conquer vast territories for Islam – all this naturally produced a feeling of superiority in the Arabs. And wherever they conquered, along with Islamization, Arabization followed. That word describes two different things: first, the physical movement of Arabs into what were non-Arab lands, as in northern Iraq, where Saddam Hussein moved Arabs onto lands taken from the Kurds, in an attempt to change the demographics of the area, to “Arabize” it. But the Arabization that takes place even in Muslim lands without Arabs is different, and describes the change in the non-Arab population that follows Islamization: they forget their original identity, and instead take Arab names, assume Arab identities, and Arab lineages, and try to become, culturally, “Arabs.”

Among the outward and visible signs of this, think of how many Muslim non-Arabs have eagerly given themselves not just Arab names and false Arab pedigrees, but copied Arab dress and

customs of the seventh century. (Imagine, under British imperialism, someone in sub-Saharan Africa wearing a suit, carrying an umbrella and wearing a homburg, and calling himself Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper.) They wanted the prestige of being thought "Arab." In Pakistan, to take an extreme case, millions now claim to be "Sayids" – that is, descendants of the Quraysh, the Prophet's tribe.

These facts, impossible to deny, and now made difficult to overlook, can be spread far and wide in the West, and though many non-Arab Muslims will try to ignore them, many others will hear, take in, and recognize, despite themselves, the truth of these observations. Some of those non-Arab Muslims, as they inwardly acknowledge the accuracy of the charge that "Islam is a vehicle for Arab imperialism," may find their faith affected. It's a lapidary description that ought to be repeated on every possible occasion, and especially in debate with Defenders of the Faith. It will cause them to sputter in rage, but they have no effective rebuttal, because it is so undeniably true.

Those non-Arab Muslims most recently mistreated by Arab Muslims, such as the Kurds (182,000 killed by Saddam Hussein's Arabs) and the Berbers (subjected to the Arab cultural imperialism in North Africa that for a time made it illegal even to use Tamazight, the Berber language) may be among the first to recognize that Arab supremacism is not tangential, but central to Islam, and Islam's hold over them might weaken. Ibn Warraq reports that the Berbers now "speak their own language, and have in recent years tried to reclaim their pre-Islamic Berber culture and identity, and resent being called 'Arab.'" Some may jettison Islam altogether, as has already happened with tens of thousands of Berbers both in North Africa and in France. The French state could help support the efforts of those Berbers who want to "reclaim their pre-Islamic Berber identity" by spreading information about the forced "arabization" that followed upon islamization.

But Fillon makes none of those suggestions in his book about “conquering” Islamic totalitarianism. He doesn’t want to take Islam itself head-on, to try to reduce its appeal and the number of its adherents, by undermining the hold of Islam itself on so many millions of minds. His proposals are directed at more effectively fighting not Islam, but terrorism. Fillon is a Conservative Catholic. He sees Bashar al-Assad, for all his faults, as the protector of Christians in Syria, and certainly far preferable to the Islamic State. He has spoken of the need to collaborate with Russia because of its willingness to fight not just the Islamic State but also, through its support of Assad, other Sunni *takfiris*. Russia may be an enemy to the West in all sorts of ways, but Fillon is not the only Western leader who sees Russia as an ally against the most fanatical Muslims and, in Syria, willing to fight to protect the Alawites, who in turn protect the Christians.

When it comes to Islamic terrorism and immigration, Fillon rejects the modish prattle about multiculturalism, the assertions that “Islam in no way contradicts the values of the Republic,” and instead promotes “assimilation” to the French identity: **“France has a history, a language, a culture. Of course this culture and language have been enriched by the contributions of foreign populations, but they remain the foundation of our identity.”** When asked if France is already a multicultural nation, Fillon has been unequivocal. “No. In any case, that is not a choice we made. We did not choose communitarianism (social division) and multiculturalism.”

On Islam, he is certainly on the right track, but needs to be bolder in his suggestions, going beyond better methods of investigation, and swifter means of punishment. He should unembarrassedly discuss how to reduce Muslim numbers. both in France, and in Muslim lands, by identifying and exploiting pre-existing fissures, especially that – I intend to repeat on every conceivable occasion – between Arab and non-Arab

Muslims. At this point, there is nothing to be gained by staying away from such topics; solicitousness for Muslim sensibilities has gained us nothing. The propaganda war is on, and one-sided; the West still has not gone on the offensive to weaken and diminish the Camp of Islam. In the war with the forces of Islam, for the West it's time to enroll the truth.

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