

A European's viewpoint

Europe's response to the jihadist terror threat



*BY DUSAN SIDJANSKI**

A multifarious threat requires a global response, particularly when it is posed by an army equipped with sophisticated weapons and a central command whose ambition is to create an Islamic State. The Jihad, justified by bellicose Islamism, exploits every form of violence against our societies, whose complexity, transparency and tolerance make them so vulnerable. Is the imperialist dream rearing its head after more than a thousand years of subservience, true to André Malraux's prediction : the 21st century will be dominated by religions ? But which religions ?

Euro MP Alain Lamassoure insists that two methods of retaliation are necessary : the setting up of a common database – Passenger Name Record (PNR) ratified by the European Parliament in April - containing information related to European travellers which will enable jihadists heading for training camps in the Middle East to be detected, and secondly a « European FBI ». These two initiatives would in fact supplement the instruments already in place : the Schengen Information System (SIS), the European warrant of arrest which was used in France after the Brussels terror attacks, Europol and Eurojust made up of prosecutors, judges and experienced police officers with the ability to form joint investigation teams, as for example the Franco-Belgian team. Unfortunately these instruments were unable to prevent the 63 attacks in France, 35 in the UK and 33 in Spain which took place between 2009 and 2013 and which targeted Paris, Copenhagen, Brussels, London and Madrid.

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Daech claims responsibility for these attacks perpetrated by cells dispersed throughout the EU and composed of European passport holders, often educated in Europe. Inspired and remotely controlled by Rakka, the attacks are autonomously executed by commando groups in densely populated urban centres. The most recent ones and the manner in which they were planned remind us of their European and even global dimension, while at the same time targeting Paris which has actively participated in the war against Daech.

The European Commission has imposed controls on virtual currency exchange platforms, the abolition of anonymous prepaid cards and more efficient information sharing between intelligence services to combat cases reminiscent of the Panama papers. But what can be done to deal with the ambivalent case of Turkey which is willing to cooperate regarding the migrant crisis in exchange for financial aid, while at the same time waging war on the Kurds and facilitating the trading of oil and arms ? Similar questions are raised in relation to Arab states suspected of supporting Islamists. These observations emphasise how such contradictory actions are inextricably linked, as well as the conflict of interests demonstrated by the internet giants.

As far as a European FBI is concerned, we should not forget that the powerful American FBI was unable to prevent the 9/11 attacks which were by far the most deadly in the history of terrorism with 2973 dead and 6291 injured. This does not mean that one should rule out the idea of a European federal police force providing the hope of greater security.

Even if the war against the perpetrators of these terrorist attacks is paying off to a certain extent, it will not be enough to counter the ideology in the form of Islamism which is spreading throughout Europe and Africa. This is where appropriate education and dialogue between cultures have an essential part to play. Respect from an early age for different beliefs and cultures, but above all respect for other human beings which can be found to slightly varying degrees in most religions and value systems.

The fight against fanaticism and its recruitment networks also implies an all-out effort to promote ideas and rallying projects in Europe and the Union in opposition to the extremist movements who are against our proclaimed principles. The threats assailing the EU require an overall approach and measures implemented within the framework of a political Union, which

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is the only means of guaranteeing solidarity and a really joint effort under democratic control.

How many more deaths will it take before a political Union is created ?