



## The Paris *Jihad*, Ready or Not, Has Begun, and Will Widen

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### Executive Summary

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- \* The *jihadi* murders at the French satirical weekly, *Charlie Hebdo*, on January 7, 2015, and the series of concurrent terrorist strikes were inevitable and long anticipated.
- \* The Kouachi brothers are French. They are France-born second/third-generation Muslim-Maghrebis who were nurtured and educated by the French welfare state. The Kouachi brothers are thus the real face of the up-and-coming younger generation of West European Islam.
- \* The escalation of Islamist-jihadist violence – the current wave of which has been spreading and escalating since the French intifada of 2005 – is uniquely Western in theological terms and has little to do with the concurrent jihads in Muslim lands.
- \* The radicalization, transformation, and organization of the Islamist communities in France have been indigent. The key to the Islamists' success is the intentionally self-inflicted building of mistrust and hostility in the name of establishing Islam and Islamic way of life. Consequently, although French citizens, younger-generation Muslims feel very alienated and are convinced they have no future in a modern Western France. In contrast, radical Islam gives their lives sense of meaning and belonging.
- \* Fearing cycles of violence and destructive riots, growing numbers of French local authorities have allowed the establishment of virtual Islamic zones that are no-go areas for police and government services, and where the Islamists have power to govern according to the Sharia while flaunting French law.
- \* The Islamist no-go areas provide fertile grounds for both the recruitment and the sustenance of a myriad of jihadist networks. The jihadists in Western Europe are organized in their own web of networks which are neither al-Qaida nor Caliphate/ISIS/IS. These networks are built around the inspiration by charismatic Imams in the Muslim neighborhoods and are professionally run by veterans of overseas jihads.
- \* In contrast with the brazen Islamist-jihadist ascent, French intelligence and security services are failing to rise to the challenge. The main impediments facing them have been the political correctness and timidity of the Government. Most important is the overall reticence by the French security authorities to confront the overall phenomenon of Islamist-jihadist radicalization of the Muslim community at large, and particularly the dominant rôle of the Mosque and Islam in this process. Simply put, the French liberal authorities fear more political face-off with inherently anti-French Islamist leaders than the alienation and jihadist radicalization of the next generation of French Muslim youth.



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## About the Author of this Issue

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Yossef Bodansky has been the Director of Research at the International Strategic Studies Association [ISSA], as well as a Senior Editor for the *Defense & Foreign Affairs* group of publications, since 1983. He was the Director of the Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare at the U.S. House of Representatives between 1988 and 2004, and stayed on as a special adviser to Congress till January 2009. In the mid-1980s, he acted as a senior consultant for the U.S. Department of Defense and the Department of State.

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*Yossef Bodansky*



## ANALYSIS

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*“The future must not belong to those who slander the Prophet of Islam.”*

— Barack Hussein Obama (address to the United Nations General Assembly, September 2012)

The *jihadist* murders at the French satirical weekly, *Charlie Hebdo*, on January 7, 2015, was inevitable and long anticipated.

So was the concurrent detonation of a car-bomb in front of a Paris synagogue, and so were the lethal clashes with Paris police on January 8, the hostage taking in a kosher market in Paris (where the hostage takers threatened to execute six hostages if the *Charlie Hebdo* attackers were harmed by police), and the random shooting near the Eiffel Tower on January 9. The attack on the *Charlie Hebdo* is a spark and a catalyst for a still-unfolding eruption of rage of the *jihadist* youth of France and Western Europe.

By late afternoon on January 9, 2015, both hostage situations had been resolved, with the *jihadist* hostage-takers killed by police.

A witness at the scene of the shooting told police that one of the shooters told the bystanders: “You can tell the media that it’s *al-Qaida* in Yemen.” Indeed, *Charlie Hebdo* and the key editors, writers, and cartoonists were for a long time on the “most wanted” list of the Yemen-based *Al-Qaida* of the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). They featured on the list of the most hated Westerners in the March 2013 issue of AQAP’s *Inspire Magazine*.

On January 9, 2015, Caliphate senior official Abu Saad al-Ansari claimed responsibility in a sermon delivered during the Friday prayers in Mosul. He explained that the attacks in Paris were the first salvo in a major offensive against the West avenging the US-led “transgression” – air strikes – against the Caliphate’s forces. “We started with the France operation for which we take responsibility. Tomorrow will be in Britain, America and others,” Abu Saad al-Ansari stated. “This is a message to all countries participating in the [US-led] coalition that has killed Islamic State members.”

In London, Anjem Choudary, the Islamist preacher and spokesman for *al-Muhajiroun* (“The Emigrants”, a now-banned UK-based terrorist organization), immediately put the Paris attack in the context of Islam’s struggle against the modern liberal state. The conflict that bred the attack is not just over freedom of speech or expression, although the Kouachi brothers shouted “We have avenged the Prophet!” in reference to the cartoons of Prophet Mohammed frequently published by the *Charlie Hebdo*. On January 7, 2015, Anjem Choudary sent a series of Tweets that articulated his long-held views.

The Paris carnage was inevitable. “Muslims love the Messenger Mohammed more than their parents, children and even themselves! Why don’t people understand?” Choudary asked. “The West has been persistently defiling the Prophet’s honor. The West should have known by now what the honor of the Prophet means to Muslims after Salman Rushdie, Hirsi Ali, Theo Van Gogh & Terrance McNally,” he explained. “Freedom of expression does not extend to insulting the Prophets of Allah, whatever your views on the events in Paris today!” He urged the West to pay attention to the grievances of the Muslims in their midst. “If freedom of expression can be sacrificed for criminalizing incitement & hatred, Why not for insulting the Prophet of Allah?”



Ultimately, Choudary has long argued, all violence in the West should be examined in the context of the escalating struggle over the quintessence of the modern liberal state. Wherever they are, Muslims insist that they live under the absolute “divine law” as handed via the Prophet, and not under “the man-made laws” of Western democracy. “There is a conflict in the world between those who believe sovereignty belongs to man & those who believe it belongs to God!” Choudary tweeted on January 7, 2015. “May Allah allow all Muslims & non-Muslims [to] live together under divine law where the honor of citizens & Prophets is protected.”

For Choudary, the sole viable “divine law” is the Prophet’s *sharia*. Back in November 2014, Anjem Choudary demanded that the British Government return his passport and grant him safe passage to Syria. He wanted to travel there to see “what it is like under *Sharia* law” as enacted by the Caliphate. He claimed at the time that the pro-Islamic State protesters in London were “very good chaps” and that many of them were his students.

Other Islamist scholars sought to placate the Western media with vague and evasive statements. They followed the theme set by *Sheikh* Youssef al-Qaradawi, the venerable leader of the International Union of Muslim Scholars which is a cover for the Muslim Brothers. “We, scholars of the Islamic Nation, strongly condemn any action that sheds the blood of innocents, spreading corruption on earth, whoever the perpetrators are and whatever their religion,” he wrote. Al-Qaradawi then cited verses from the *Quran* that prohibit murder of innocents in order to claim that “our holy religion respects human life and safeguards it, prohibiting an attack, which is considered a major sin. It bans the indiscriminate killing of people.”

Conspicuously missing from al-Qaradawi’s statement was a clear assertion that the victims at the *Charlie Hebdo* were indeed innocent so that their killing was indeed shedding the blood of innocents that is forbidden by Islam. Simply put, al-Qaradawi and his followers made strong but abstract assertions about Islam’s abhorrence of unwarranted killing but intentionally refrained from defining the carnage at the *Charlie Hebdo* as a crime in accordance to Muslim law or any other criteria.

By nightfall, the French DST (*Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire*) claimed to have identified the perpetrators. The shooters were two French-Algerian brothers – Said Kouachi, 34, and Cherif Kouachi, 32 – and their driver was Hamyd Mourad, 18. The DST identified them so quickly because Said Kouachi left his identity card in the getaway car.

The Kouachi brothers are the average French Muslim-Maghrebi youth. They were born in the 10th *arrondissement* of Paris to a family of Algerian immigrants. Their parents died when they were children; the father died of cancer. They moved to relatives in Rennes (part of France’s depressed industrial northeast – *La Roubaix*) but were placed in foster care. They grew up and were educated while living on welfare. Both brothers moved back to Paris around 2000 and settled in the 19th *arrondissement*, a predominantly North African neighborhood in north-eastern Paris. Both brothers worked in low-paying jobs such as pizza delivery, shop attendants, etc. At that time, Cherif had girlfriends, smoked hashish and drank alcohol. Said was more traditional, but far from being observant or devout Muslim.

Like many Muslim youths in Paris, the Kouachi brothers started gravitating to radical Islamism in 2002-03 as a result of the wave of Islamist incitement in the aftermath of 9/11. The open anti-US hostility of the French Government and media to the invasion of Iraq made it safe and easy for the Islamist *imams* to openly call for Islamist-*jihadist* revival under the guise of anti-US incitement. The trend started in the depressed industrial north-east, known by the Islamists as *La Roubaix* after the most depressed and poor city in France.



It was in the dense slums of *La Roubaix* that veterans of the *jihads* in Afghanistan-Pakistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Chechnya first came into the open and started urging the youth to follow in their steps and go fight the US-led invasions of Muslim lands. The trend quickly spread to the greater Paris. The 19th *arrondissement* became one of the Islamist centers of activity. By then, the Kouachi brothers were attending the neo-*salafist* Addawa mosque. Larbi Kechat – the Addawa mosque’s *imam* – is a Syrian *jihadist* who was repeatedly put under house arrest and given deportation orders for incitement. He is still in Paris. In a 2006 sermon, Kechat called for the death punishment against the Dutch artists who drew Mohammed cartoons.

Cherif Kouachi was the first brother drawn to Islamist activism. He would later claim that he was affected by the media reports about the prisoner abuses in Abu Ghraib. By 2005, the DST had identified Cherif as a prominent member of “the Buttes-Chaumont network” in the 19th *arrondissement*, a group which was indoctrinating and recruiting French-Maghrebi youth to fight the *jihad* in Iraq in the ranks of Abu-Musab al-Zarqawi’s *Al-Qaida* in the Land of the Two Rivers organization. Both brothers also participated in the Paris *intifada* (riots) of October-November 2005. Cherif was arrested in the dragnet which followed the November 2007 riots, and, in 2008, was sentenced to three years in prison for his rôle in the recruitment and dispatch of youth for the *jihad* in Iraq. Cherif served only 18 months in jail and the remainder of his sentence was suspended.

Following his release in 2010, Cherif moved to Leclerc (north-central France) and worked as a fish vendor in a local supermarket. The extent of his involvement in the *jihadist* movement at the time is not clear. Nevertheless, Cherif was arrested in May 2010 by the DST after an attempted prison escape of Smain Ait Ali Belkacem, an Algerian terrorist of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) who led the October 1995 bombing of the Musée d’Orsay rail station in Paris which killed eight people and wounded 20 more. Cherif and two other members of “the Buttes-Chaumont network” were part of a seven-man team assembled to aid the escape and disappearance of two senior terrorists. Both brothers went underground soon afterwards.

Said Kouachi traveled to Yemen in 2011 and received military training for a few months. He returned clandestinely to France. The Kouachi brothers vanished in 2012. They spent a long time in Syria fighting in the ranks of the dedicated *Kitaeb* (Battalions and Brigades) of the European *jihadists*. They returned to France clandestinely in Summer 2014, trained and indoctrinated.

On the morning of January 9, 2015, the Kouachi brothers were cornered by the French security forces in a printing factory in Dammartin en Goelle, very close to the runways of the Charles de Gaulle Airport. They were preparing for a “spectacular” martyrdom attack on the airport when surprised by police. They held at least one hostage. The Kouachi brothers told the police negotiator that they “want to die as martyrs”. Their wish was granted when police assaulted the building, killing the two hostage-takers and freeing the hostage. Simultaneously, police assaulted the kosher supermarket in Porte de Vincennes, killing the *jihadist* – who was apparently linked to the Kouachi brothers – freeing some hostages, but with four or five hostages killed by the hostage-taker, identified as Amedy Coulibaly, 32, of North African origin, and known to security agencies.

Another figure, Hamyd Mourad, 18, who was identified as a possible accomplice to the Kouachi brothers in the *Charlie Hebdo* attack, is not a French citizen. His nationality is unknown and he is believed to be a child of illegal migrants. Until recently, he was a high school student in Charleville-Mezieres, near Reims and part of *La Roubaix*. Reportedly, Hamyd Mourad was homeless after graduation and relied on the generosity of Islamist charities. Other reports identify Mourad as the Kouachi brothers’ brother-in-law. However, Mourad turned himself in late night in Charleville-Mézières, some 230 km northeast of Paris near the Belgium border. He presented an ironclad alibi. So the identity and whereabouts of the third man are far from clear.



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The Kouachi brothers are French. They are France-born second/third-generation Muslim-Maghrebis who were nurtured and educated by the French welfare state. During the attack, they spoke with no accent. They pronounced the names of the key people in the *Charlie Hebdo* correctly as they worked their way through the offices to find and execute them. They also knew Paris traffic patterns and back roads very well as demonstrated by their successful escape. The Kouachi brothers are thus the real face of the up-and-coming younger generation of West European Islam.

Anybody who watched crowds of young Muslims in France – from the cycles of burning cars and pelleting Police with stones, to defiantly clashing with passers-by on Fridays while blocking city streets for public prayers, and to celebrating in May 2012 (clad in Moroccan, Algerian and Tunisian, but NOT French, flags) the election of François Hollande as president of France – could not have missed the transformation. These youth were shouting repeatedly “*Allahu Akbar!*” and “*Ina’al about ya France!*” The literal translation of the latter is “We put your father/ancestor under our shoe/boot, France.” This is the expression of the worst possible humiliation, degradation and enslavement in Arabic. A colloquial translation would be “Fuck France!” And these are youth who – when angry at work, in traffic, or by everyday frustration – are as likely to use the quintessentially French “*merde*” [Shit] as the Arabic classic “*Kus Emmek*” or “*Kus Ukhtak*” [loaded references to the sexual morality and attributes of one’s mothers and sisters respectively].

Yet, official France, and the rest of Western Europe for that matter, has adamantly refused to face and acknowledge this flagrant display of hostility and disdain. Official France remained unwaveringly committed to the politically correct interpretation that each and every Muslim youth eruption is “*une émeute populaire*” [a popular/grassroots riot] engendered by socio-economic inequality and sense of discrimination by disenfranchised youth. This refusal to face the reality prevented effective addressing and containing of the looming threats. In the name of liberal tolerance and compassion, “multi-cultural” Western Europe, largely led by France, thus helped create and nurture the monster which now sets it aflame. The escalation of Islamist-*jihadi* violence – the current wave of which has been spreading and escalating since the French *intifada* of 2005 – is uniquely Western in theological terms and has little to do with the concurrent *jihads* in Muslim lands.

The West European, and increasingly US-Canadian, Islamist-*jihadi* milieu is neither *al-Qaida* nor Caliphate (Islamic State). It is a unique Islamist-*jihadi* framework stemming from the reality and objectives of Islam in the West. The foundations of current framework go back to the early-1990s when Hassan al-Turabi’s Sudan (the source of Sunni Islamist ideology-theology and outreach to the veterans of Afghanistan) and Iranian intelligence (the source of professional expertise, unique equipment and funds) jointly launched the building of long-term Islamist subversion of, and presence in, the heart of Western Europe.

This undertaking received a huge boost from the US-led Western intervention in the Balkans in the 1990s on the side of the Bosnian, and later Kosovo, Muslims. Consequently, both Muslim youth from Europe and highly experienced *jihadi* cadres from the Middle East and Afghanistan-Pakistan converged on the former Yugoslavia. With the benign endorsement of Western governments, the European Muslim youth were indoctrinated, trained and recruited by the *jihadi* cadres. They would lay the foundations for today’s Islamist-*jihadi* milieu when they returned home from their stints at *jihad*.



No less important, if unknown, is the concurrent success of former Soviet and East German intelligence officers to convince the trendy Gauche of Western Europe to embrace Islamism as their new cause celebre. In the early-1990's, the Gauche élites were in quest for a cause as the pro-Soviet Third World “revolutions” were fading and the Soviet Union itself was disintegrating. In early 1991, Yevgeny Primakov (after his visit to Baghdad in February 1991) launched a last ditch Soviet effort to promote Islamism in order to frustrate the seeming US pre-eminence in the post-Gulf War Middle East.

Over the next years, the campaign was taken over by former Soviet intelligence officers (mainly from the Baltic States) who identified with the Chechen cause and sought to build anti-Russia sentiments in Europe, and later also by former Soviet and East German intelligence officers who sought to help the *jihadist* trend in Bosnia neutralize the US-led Western influence. By the turn of the 21st Century, this stroke of genius will have decisive impact on the European accommodation of both the growing migration and the rise of Islamic radicalism in their midst.

Starting the Autumn of 2004 and during 2005, the Islamist-*jihadist* movement underwent the most profound evolution of its onslaught with the Muslim world as well as against the West. This evolution is the most important development since Osama bin Laden’s original articulation back in 1998-9 of the logic of uncompromising *jihad* and the imperative to strike out at the heart of the West. The spectacular strikes of September 11, 2001, were the implementations of this first phase in the global Islamist *jihad*. The transformation of 2004-05 focused on the launching of an uncompromising Islamist-*jihadist* surge against all the foes of Islamdom – internal and external alike – in the form of a global and irreversible offensive. It is a total war in which, as far as Islamdom is concerned, there can be no coexistence, or even compromise, with their hated foes. Elaborating on this *jihadist* surge in August 2005, Zawahiri stressed that the center of the *jihad* has moved into the heart of the West. He envisaged a campaign of retaliation for all of the West’s transgressions against Islam.

The deliberations about the implementation of the new *jihadist* doctrine would prove crucial to the rise of European Islamism.

Initially, the *jihadist* uppermost leadership committed to a new cycle of spectacular strikes to include the likely use of WMD and received *fatwas* authorizing the infliction of carnage upon Western civilians. *Jihadist* leaders warned that such spectacular strikes would have dire effect on the development, consolidation and radicalization of the Islamist communities in West Europe and North America. They feared that any major strike would provoke the Western security authorities into conducting post-attack dragnets that, in turn, would harm the Muslim communities and reverse the achievements of recent incitement and radicalization.

These warnings led to a clairvoyant decision by Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and the rest of the *Shura Kabira*, then in Pakistan, to forego the then planned spectacular strikes in favor of protecting and further developing the all-important Muslim communities at the heart of the West. The new importance and capabilities of Islamist grassroots mobilization were first demonstrated to friends and foes alike in the Paris *intifada* of October-November 2005.

Since then, the radicalization, transformation, and organization of the Islamist communities in Western Europe have been indigenous. A cadre of highly trained *imams*, intelligence operatives, and community organizers capitalize on the economic and social decay in order to alienate and radicalize the Muslim communities. The key to the Islamists’ success is the intentionally self-inflicted isolation and segregation of the rapidly growing disenfranchised Muslim communities from the rest of society: building mistrust and hostility in the name of



establishing Islam and Islamic way of life. Consequently, although French citizens, younger-generation Muslims feel very alienated and are convinced they have no future in a modern Western France. In contrast, radical Islam gives their lives sense of meaning and belonging.

Islamist leaders subject the population – mainly France-born (or European-born) youth and recent converts – to incessant pressure to isolate themselves from society in the name of maintaining Islamic way of life. The emphasis is on mundane aspects of daily life such as access to *halal* food, outdoor prayers (which block streets for traffic), Muslim dress code, etc. In order to eradicate Western influence, the Muslims created a separate school system in order to completely cut off their children from non-Muslim students. Graduates of these Muslim schools are unskilled and can't find but low-paying menial jobs. The Islamist leaders then point out to the gaps between their communities and the rest of urban France, and urge the frustrated youth to rebel against the ensuing destitute and injustice. Muslim youth have taken to widespread car burnings. French police estimates that 40,000 cars are burned in France every year by Muslim gangs.

Fearing cycles of violence and destructive riots, growing numbers of French local authorities have allowed the establishment of virtual Islamic zones that are no-go areas for police and government services, and where the Islamists have power to govern according to the *Sharia* while flaunting French law.

The Islamists' theme is that Western society must accept and subsidize them through welfare as a form of *jizya* (the tax money conquered non-Muslims have to pay their Islamic rulers as proof of their submission). Islamist leaders argue that the enclaves where *sharia* law is supreme, being the embodiment of governance by divine law, will ascend to national power and ultimately coerce the infidels to submit to them. Islamist leaders even talk openly of ultimately ruling France and Europe according to the *sharia* law. The Islamist leadership has thus intentionally created pressure cookers of isolation and hatred.

Over the past decade, the liberal West made the process possible in the name of political correctness and multi-culturalism.

In Paris, for example, the Addawa mosque is still led by Larbi Kechat. The council of the mosque now includes the three radical Islamist luminaries: *Sheikh* Youssef al-Qaradawi, Said Ramadan al-Bouthi (from Syria) and Omar Abdelkafy (from Egypt). Before leaving office in April 2014, Bertrand Delanoé (the Socialist mayor of Paris) approved a 2001 plan to make the Addawa mosque "the largest in Europe". Indeed, the number of believers attending prayers and Kechat's firebrand sermons has recently increased to the point that they now use an abandoned clothing factory as interim mosque. Little wonder that the French Government, and other West European governments, now acknowledges that they have lost control over the situation and can't restore governance over the no-go areas or reintegrate the alienated radicalized Muslim youth back into society.

The Islamist no-go areas provide fertile grounds for both the recruitment and the sustenance of a myriad of *jihadist* networks. The *jihadists* in Western Europe are organized in their own web of networks which are neither *al-Qaida* nor Caliphate/ISIS/IS. These networks are built around the inspiration by charismatic Imams in the Muslim neighborhoods and are professionally run by veterans of overseas *jihads*. These networks are increasingly brazen.

In mid-October 2014, the police in Strasbourg was called in to deal with a group of *jihadists* training with fake machineguns in a city park while shouting *Allahu Akbar!* When police arrived, seven of the *jihadists* accosted them for being "infidels" and warned the police to stay away for they – the *jihadists* – were readying to "avenge [their] dead Muslim brothers".





It is only in the overseas *jihad* fronts that the European *jihadists* come in contact with the *al-Qaida*- or Caliphate-related entities. In Western Europe, operatives and cells of the various *jihadist* entities in Muslim lands float through the in-place *jihadist* networks, enjoying their support and contributing to their know-how and operability. Hence, the European *jihad* is a European phenomenon which is quickly adapting and crossing the Atlantic into the United States and Canada (and into Australia, for example).

Meanwhile, a growing number of Muslim youth from Western Europe are fighting in the foreign *jihad* fronts, most notably Syria-Iraq, Yemen, Chechnya, and increasingly sub-Saharan Africa. The European *jihadists* are so numerous in the Syria-Iraq front that they established their own *kitaeb* (battalions and brigades) in the ranks of several *jihadist* entities but mainly the Caliphate under Abu-Bakr al-Baghdadi. Nevertheless, there is misunderstanding of the rôle of foreign *jihads* in the evolution of European *jihadism*. These European *kitaeb* are crucial because they serve primarily as training and combat proving schools for would-be leaders and commanders of the *jihadist Intifada* in Western Europe.

The focus in these *kitaeb* is on the individual *jihadists* from Europe. They are provided with advanced training, combat experience and networking with like-minded *jihadists* from the same areas. These *jihadists* do not receive ideological-theological frameworks and motivations. There is no doubt they are highly motivated, for they made it to the *jihad* fronts where martyrdom is likely. The theological and ideological leaders in the Muslim lands where the *jihad* fronts are focus on the establishment of Islamist entities where Muslims dwell. In contrast, the European *jihadists* focus on fighting, rebelling against, and avenging predominantly infidel societies with immense economic cultural enticement for the Muslim minorities in their midst.

Therefore, Western bombing the Caliphate in Syria and Iraq has no impact on the European *jihad* except for the occasional killing or maiming of a European *jihadist* who therefore won't return home. The sole notable exception is the attempted target killing by the US, in late-September 2014, of David Drugeon, a French intelligence officer who defected to *al-Qaida*. Drugeon's safe house was among the targets of the first wave of US air strikes. There are conflicting reports on whether he was killed in the bombing.

Meanwhile, hundreds of combat veterans are making their way back to their home countries.

In early April 2014, Britain's Security Service, MI-5, warned that the return of trained and combat hardened *jihadists* from Syria-Iraq was "the most significant development in global terrorism." Because of the efforts taken by the senior *jihadists* to conceal their travel, MI-5 and other European security services have immense difficulties discovering the returnees. In France, the situation is more grave because about one-third of the French *jihadists* are recent converts to Islam who, upon return, can easily blend into the non-Muslim society. In most other Western European countries only 10 to 15 percent of the *jihadists* are converts.

The primary mission of the returning *jihadists* is to organize, train and lead the radicalized youth, mainly in the no-go enclaves. The overall objective is to escalate the *jihadist intifada* through both spectacular strikes by few individuals which would engender greater isolation of, and confrontation with, the Muslim communities, as well as by unleashing large scale *intifadas* and widespread confrontations with the security authorities. The *jihadist* commanders assign special rôles for those *jihadist* youth who cannot or dare not travel to the *jihad* fronts. In November 2014, French *jihadists* fighting under the Caliphate admonished the youth at home who did not come to Syria-Iraq and urged them to strike out in France. "Allah says in the *Quran*: 'March forth, whether light or heavy.' What is your excuse? [If you can't travel to *jihad*,] then operate within France.



Terrorize them and do not allow them to sleep due to fear and horror. Kill them and spit in their faces and run over them with your cars.”

European *jihadist* leaders are convinced that the aggregate impact of these diverse eruptions of violence will be the increasing of pressure on the liberal modern state to further compromise with, and succumb to, the whims and demands of their radicalized Muslim minorities.

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In contrast with the brazen Islamist-*jihadist* ascent, French intelligence and security services are failing to rise to the challenge. To be fair, the other intelligence and security services of Western Europe are not doing any better. The main impediments facing the French intelligence and security services have been the political correctness and timidity of the Government. For example, in the few days before Christmas 2014, there were several attacks on Christians and Jews all over France. These ranged from a stabbing attack in a police station in Joué-les-Tours in the Loire Valley to attempts to run over Christians shopping for Christmas, most notably in Dijon and in Nantes. In all these incidents the perpetrators were shouting “*Allahu Akbar!*” while attacking. Nevertheless, the French authorities immediately declared all the perpetrators – both dead and alive – to have been “mental patients” and took the surviving attackers to hospitals. The French authorities refrained from launching terrorism investigations. The *jihadists* took notice.

Despite all-out efforts of the French security forces to infiltrate the Islamist-*jihadist* milieu, particularly since the March 19, 2012, *jihadist* attack on a Jewish school in Toulouse (where a teacher and three children were killed in cold blood), the French have been surprised again and again. While French intelligence was able to prevent several attacks, there has been a consistent failure to identify and neutralize the *jihadist* system; from incitement, to recruitment, to planning, to weapons acquisition, and to community support for the would-be attackers. This is because there is virtually no penetration of mosques, no spying on community leaders, no policing in the no-go zones for fear of political embarrassment. While individuals are arrested, there is no rolling back of networks and reversing of trends. The numerous important agents run by the French had short-term tactical achievements.

There were also glaring failures like the defection of David Drugeon and his escape to *al-Qaida* in Syria.

Ultimately, however, most important is the overall reticence by the French, and all other West European, security authorities to confront the overall phenomenon of Islamist-*jihadist* radicalization of the Muslim community at large, and particularly the dominant rôle of the Mosque and Islam in this process. The political fear of confrontation with the Islamist leaders leads to reticence to expand beyond a few test-cases the excellent Moroccan program to train and ordain moderate *imams* (including women) and place them in European mosques to fight and counter Islamist incitement and radicalization. Simply put, the French liberal authorities fear more political face-off with inherently anti-French Islamist leaders than the alienation and *jihadist* radicalization of the next generation of French Muslim youth.

So, in the aftermath of the carnage at the *Charlie Hebdo*, the French security forces picked up overnight all the known and suspected Muslim activists as well as a few veteran *jihadists* they know about. They bit them senselessly in the hope that one would inform on a higher up. Whether the French security forces get anything or not, all these guests of the Government will soon return to the streets humiliated, furious, and adamant on joining the organized *jihad* and not just the routine Islamist vandalism.



Little wonder, then, that growing numbers of desperate and despairing French youth pour onto the streets repeatedly shouting “*Allahu Akbar!*” and “*Ina’al abouk ya France!*”, burning cars and businesses, and increasingly also pulling triggers and throwing bombs with impunity.

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**Remarks:** Opinions expressed in this contribution are those of the author.

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