
After Paris: Hypocrisy and Mendacity Writ Large

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The decision of the Spanish courts to issue the warrant for the arrest of Mr Netanyahu and other Israeli officials, over the assault of the Turkish civilian vessel the Mavi Marmara in 2010, as it was attempting to ferry humanitarian aid to Gaza, has been one of the few moments of clarity amid the ocean of bullshit that has flowed since the horrific events of Paris.

The cultivation of national grief by a political elite whose policies created the conditions out of which this monster emerged has been of the most nauseating kind, even for them. Monuments lit up in the colours of the French tricolour over the mass murder of innocents in Paris have merely emphasized the lack of any acknowledgement of the repeated acts of mass murder committed against the Palestinians by Israel.

The double standards, this categorizing of human beings in order of importance according to ethnicity and nationality, is evidence of the long journey that still lies in front of the West before, to paraphrase Frantz Fanon, those “germs of rot” left behind after an epoch of Western colonialism and imperialism are “removed from their minds.” Only when those same monuments are lit up in colours of Palestine, which given the ever rising extremism of Netanyahu’s Israel dictates that they are lit up on a near permanent basis, will we know we are moving towards a world in which the racist disregard for the humanity of the ‘other’ is replaced by the universal application not only of international law but also solidarity for all victims of injustice.

The categorical imperative of our time must be to resist this hierarchy of the innocent, else allow

a human caricature such as Netanyahu to prosper. The life of a Palestinian child, born into a world of injustice in Jabaliya refugee camp in Gaza, is every single bit as precious as the life of a child born into affluence and privilege in Paris. In fact there is a case to be made that the role thrust upon Palestinian children as a living symbol and reminder of the bankruptcy of what passes for Western civilization elevates their importance beyond compare.

The rotten narrative that has emerged vis-à-vis refugees fleeing destabilization and chaos – wrought, in the last analysis, by the West’s hegemonic role in a region it has long regarded as a chessboard upon which its governments and peoples are pieces to be pushed around and removed at its whim – is also evidence of the racist foundations of our culture and collective worldview. A veritable parade of mainstream politicians and political commentators has taken to the airwaves to rail against providing succour and sanctuary to desperate people, lumping them all in the box marked ‘potential terrorist’ without as much as a flicker of hesitation or doubt.

When it comes to the pressing priority of confronting the undoubted menace confronting the world in the shape of Daesh, there is no room for equivocation. Their willingness, ability, determination, and intention of slaughtering all deemed *untermenschen* demands an overwhelming and calibrated response with the objective of eradicating firstly their physical presence, after which, in a process that will take far longer, the ideology that fuels its support. Alas, even here, initial hopes of a new understanding of the dimensions of the crisis have given way to the same old myopic refusal to change course.

Assad must go continues to be the refrain, and as it has throughout it resounds with the imperial hubris responsible for destroying Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya ever since George W Bush emerged from his bunker three days after 911 to declare war without end. Russia’s determination to stand by the Syrian government, and in so doing uphold the principle of national sovereignty, marks a clear difference between an attempt to arrest a status quo of US unipolarity, under which Arab countries are regarded as the disposable property of Washington, and instead chart a course towards that foreign land otherwise known as stability.

If Assad were to signal his intention of acquiescing to Obama’s demand of stepping down as a precondition of ending what is not a civil war in Syria but an invasion of the country by religious fanatics, it would constitute a grievous betrayal of the Syrian people and all they have suffered in the course of struggling to forestall the country’s complete collapse. The Syrian Arab Army would likely disintegrate and the country’s state institutions would collapse. Such a scenario would conform to the ‘we had to destroy the village in order to save it’ school of thinking, with all the consequences it describes.

That statecraft is a dying craft is no longer in doubt, with the observation that in life some people leave a mark while others leave a stain able to be extended to include governments and nations. For a world mired in economic, geopolitical, and societal chaos, the tragedy is that the stain being left by the West is one that may never be erased.

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