

Comment by Michael C H Jones  
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I have not commented on terrorism. Partly because I have not had time to re-study 19th century terrorism in Europe leading up to WW1, or the 1970s Weathermen into the USA, or the centuries old traditions of Islamic splinter groups from mainstream Sunni and Shia.

The current rivalry between IS and al Qaeda should be viewed in an historical context. Talking about Death Cults is repugnant, certainly when we have just "celebrated" the 70th anniversary of the US fire bombing of Tokyo in March 1945. Most Japanese men were in their armed forces, only the old, women and children were in the city - and so over two (2) million were killed, injured or made homeless. Was that war or terrorism? Dresden in Germany was Churchill's contribution to humanity. People remember and contrast these events with the posturings of Australian Conservatives. History tells us that when one side has all the weaponry and organisational structures then the other side turns to knives and terrorism. But history also tells us that eventually, as with the US and Iran presently, negotiations with the "terrorists" is inevitable.

What will be the outcome of these negotiations, say in 3/5/10 years? Peace perhaps? Certainly a further withdrawal of the post colonial hegemony of US/EU "culture" - for better or worse. Just look at city crowd scenes in Muslim countries during the 1950/60s and today. The real war is about the rights of women under Islam? Herein may lay the seeds of the ultimate clash between a new generation of al Qaeda and the IS with its provocatively murderous recent affiliate Boko Haram.

One thing I know - those with power seldom give it up voluntarily, rather they seek to institutionalised their power by the laws of the state, and finally use the coercive forces of state to gun down/jail their opponents. Should their opponents win, the cycle begins again - it's a Lord Acton phenomenon.

So the battle with terrorist groups is a hearts and minds struggle, a question of justice and how the 'good times' are spread evenly. To defeat al Qaeda and IS there needs to be justice now, not tomorrow. The Chinese have a culture and civilisation over 5000 years, they have demanded, and continue to demand, justice for historical wrongs. Future negotiations in global institutions are going to be fascinating. Likewise India wants it's place in the sun. African nations are despondent and confused, and the continent a fertile playing field for terrorists. Where is the great nation of Islam, the successor to the civilisation of the Ottomans for example? Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia are purportedly stable national governments, but are they really? In West Asia carnage - Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh - hotbeds for al Qaeda and IS. What does the pervebial West have to offer besides it's own mass murder?

There are litmus tests of sincerity. India with a muslim citizenry greater than most Islamic countries. China and Russia with sizable muslim minorities. All members of BRICS and members/participants in the essentially Eurasian SCO. The Anglo-sphere countries of the 5-eyes with their exclamations of Democracy and Human Rights - provided of course that you agree with us. Israel - despite UN Resolutions over more than 40 years still no Palestinian

State. How do you explain Jewish apartheid to Muslims, let alone the terrorists? How do you explain to Wasps a people who had six million of their own whipped out but appear to have no sympathy for up to ten million others that were whipped out by a democratically elected Nazi German government that by law/legally murdered up to 17 million men, women and children - and this was possibly the most civilised/cultured country in Europe/world?

So let's get real Tony. You are not with the post 60/70s also-runs at Sydney University befuddled with your Bob Santamaria version of Catholicism and play acting with the maoists of student politics. Parading in army bases in Afghanistan or wherever with Australian military personnel cuts no mustard with al Qaeda or IS. In this context Foreign Minister Julie Bishop may be a future beacon for womanhood in muslim countries, but currently she is a definite liability at any global forum. Your frontline is in the social media - the hearts and minds of 20 year olds who totally reject your values and attitudes, as, unfortunately for different reasons, does a majority of Australian citizens.

With Abbott as Australian PM there will be no end to the war on terrorism, but maybe and hopefully only a non-violent civil war of sorts in this country. A return to a civil war about values and attitudes and the nature of freedom and liberty and justice. This current leadership is a far greater threat than the terrorists.