

Comment by Michael C H Jones
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The Muslim "problem"? Is there one, and if so how to deal with it?

I have refrained from commenting because I have no idea. However, worried that I will be, more hysterically than ever, accused by my Christian fundamentalist and arch John Howard/Tony Abbott North Shore "friends" of being anti-American, treasonous to Australian values and a supporter of terrorists - you know the normal, standard dribble from Murdoch's marauders and simply mad tag-team in the Daily Telegraph and Australian, I offer some thoughts with the proviso that like all intelligent, reasonable and gentle people I reserve the right to change my mind if new facts so warrant.

Historically the Jews always seem to have been persecuted - wholesale slaughter, deportations and even attempted genocide. One can both understand and excuse the survivors of the German holocaust but not their grandchildren.

On the other hand the Christians were only persecuted for about 300 years under the Roman Empire, then became the established religion, and gradually persecutors themselves not only of the Jews but any views that diverged from the Establishment, namely the Protestants in all their denominations. One of which was the Puritan sect that voyaged to the New World - America - not to escape 17th century England, rather to found a totalitarian religious regime where witches were declared and burnt. Escape was to the western wilderness and so the United States was born. There has always been, and there remains today, a puritan - dare we say neo-fascist strain in American fundamentalist Christianity. Onward Christian soldiers to civilize the world in America's free enterprise image.

But the Muslims/Moslems/Islam were different from the start, the sword swept through North Africa and up into Southern Europe, across the old societies of West/Central Asia and down the East African coast from the 8th century until at least the 16th century - I am not an expert on these dates. Convert or perish, except if you might be of use to the caliph as a money lender, slave or a harem member. Understandably the Christians took exception and again gradually proved better technologically at slaughter, especially from the 17th century. The Catholics regained Spain and port cities in North Africa and the Mediterranean Sea, The Russian Orthodox slowly took over after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and pushed the Mongols and Turks back into East and Central Asia, plus dusted up many of the Catholics in Eastern Europe.

However it was the Protestants, Henry's Church of England, in the new 1701 United Kingdom that really got things going internationally- White Men had to civilise all the other colours wherever. And White Settler populations in America, Africa, Australasia and so forth followed the example of Mother England and subsequently Uncle Sam. The Christian Crusades may have been a 300 years failure however the big "C" capitalism would bring fishes and wine to the world. And they succeeded. Not only were other regions and faiths, Hindu, Buddhist, Confucius, over-run and corrected in their errant ways, but malignant breakaway sects whether soft-hearted socialists or hard-men doctrinaire Bolsheviks were hunted down and eliminated. It was God's will and written in the book.

Something went wrong - the Muslims, soft and hard, did not succumb. The soft got on with their faith, peacefully resisting the cultural embrace of western values and traditions. The hard, usually the sons and daughters in their youthfulness, adopted more extreme measures across the centuries. However anarchism and nihilism are not new phenomena - Christian White 19th and 20th century Europe have

plenty of examples and the Weathermen in 1970s USA was a homegrown "bombing" movement. The hypocrisy of present day Anglosphere /western leaders is sickening.

So to the current crop of Muslim jihad-ists and particularly the ISIS Caliphate in West Asia.

To begin, and prudently, with the broader perspective. European, 19th century, colonial borders were only secured at the barrel of Mao's gun. The globe was carved up, and the boundaries of empire based on mountain ranges, rivers and seas, could never remain permanent. Take little Samoa in the South West Pacific. There was American Samoa and German Samoa pre-1914, then American Samoa and New Zealand Protectorate Samoa after 1918, the latter became Western Samoa which is now Samoa until it re-unifies/takes over American Samoa and reclaims various "English Settler" Islands like Swains Island. Get my drift?

West Asia, like Eastern Europe, Africa and even East Asia and South America are a hotch-potch of ill-considered and either disputed or soon to be disputed borders. The Syrian-Iraq ISIS Caliphate is just one such attempted redrawing of outdated maps. Ukraine is in its own way another. Ethnic groups, religious allegiances, clan loyalties all play their parts in peoples aspirations for freedom, non-US style. If the American form of multiculturalism should crumble watch the trend amongst their Hispanic citizens - Catalonia in Spain, Scotland in the UK and the French speakers in Canada. Whether these possibilities come to realities is irrelevant, the key point is that significant sections of the resident populations support these ideas/movements. The methods by which they are propagated is a separate question.

In dealing with ISIS we might fruitfully consider past Japanese leaders - Japan in the 1920s, 1940s and post say-1970s. The Shinto Kamikaze warrior/pilot was a fearful opponent - to die for the Emperor was the greatest honour. Hence what difference than to die in the Name of Allah - equally fearsome. Unfortunately there is no reasoning with these types of believers. No cutting of deals on spheres of geopolitical influence, or win-win trade negotiations, or old fashioned pork-barreling in Texas. You just have to kill the ones that come at you, neutralise as peacefully as possible their logistical supporters and try to persuade the broader populations of supporters by concrete benefits, not only material but spiritual.

So lets help ISIS redraw the boundaries of West Asia, that great arc of turmoil and death.

- 1) Greater Israel - a secular multicultural state where Jews, Muslims and Christians live harmoniously - bring in the Chinese as advisers !!
- 2) Two Muslim Caliphates - Sunni and Shia, thus doing away with Syria and Iraq, perhaps with capitals in present day Saudi Arabia and Iran !!
- 3) I acknowledge problems in Lebanon and Jordan, but perhaps examples of governance in Turkey and Egypt may be of assistance!! Then again Pakistan keeps flaring up - and it has nuclear weapons. A wild idea might be an amalgamation with Afghanistan!!
- 4) We must of course defuse any rivalries, present and future, in Central Asia between Russia, China and India - ask the Americans, Europeans and Australians to fly in \$1000 billion in aid!!
- 5) And "brief up" dramatically the Anglosphere naval and air power in the Western Indian Ocean - it will be in the interests of ASEAN to provide the logistical support!!

Fixed.