

BERLIN ATTACK

THE FAILURE OF GERMAN SECURITY EXPLAINED BY THE WEIGHT OF HISTORY

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The Berlin tragedy was (and no doubt will still be) an opportunity for the extreme-right and populists across Europe to attack the migrant welcoming policy promoted by Chancellor Angela Merkel. **It is a wrong and bad judgement.** Of course, the 2015 influx of “Syrian refugees” was exploited by IS, and maybe by other criminal or terrorist organizations, to plant terrorists or rejects in Europe. This was the case for those who attacked Paris on November 13, 2015, or Brussels on March 22, 2016. Others have since been arrested—in Salzburg, Paris, or elsewhere. But how many are we talking about? Approximately twenty have been identified (and are either dead or in prison); European intelligence agencies estimate that a couple dozens of jihadists were able to enter the continent between the summer and fall of 2015 by impersonating refugees.

It is a lot, but it is a drop of water in comparison to the hundreds of thousands of people that were welcomed. Of course, this welcome has and will cause societal, cultural and assimilation problems but that is another issue. **With regard to terrorism, the threat is “interior” rather than exterior or imported:** it is the thousands of Salafist jihadists, born in Europe and attending our schools. Pure products of our society.

No, the real German problem is the complete failure of a security system of which the merits have, until recently, been extolled to us.

“Complete failure”: we will be criticized as making a hasty judgement, but it is unfortunately the truth. **How can one explain how Anis Amri, the main suspect in the investigation of the attack, was able to escape?** German intelligence was aware that he had been **sentenced in Italy for common law offences.** They knew that he had brought in various asylum seekers into West Germany under different identities. Even more strikingly, **the man had been arrested, this summer, in Friedrichshafen, with forged identity cards.**

They also knew that he was in contact with IS: he had been in contact with “Abu Walaa”, a preacher of hate considered like one of IS’ main proselytizers and recruiters in Germany, and been housed by one of his accomplices (both men had been arrested last November). **He was considered a “dangerous Islamist” and had tried to recruit volunteers to conduct attacks last March while under surveillance.**

And, despite a case-file that would have earned him jail-time anywhere else, he was still set free.

Granted, an investigation was launched, and we were told that the man was closely “followed”. Clearly, not close enough. Authorities say that the inefficient coordination between various involved federal and regional services is to blame for the inability to make a decision to put Amri behind bars.

Another bothersome question: **how can Germany explain that, because of lack of security cameras, no footage with images of the truck driver that ran over more than 10 people Monday night are available?**

Beyond certain systemic failures and the “libertarian” influence of certain political and “humanitarian” arenas that are hostile to all surveillance, **the culprit for the attack is the German “shyness” in matters of security.**

One can understand the origin of this “prudence”: **with regard to security, Berlin’s two historical references are the Gestapo and the Stasi. Germans seem to be more wary of their own security forces than those that threaten their lives.**

What we do not understand, is that despite Germany’s eminent democracy, this double guilt complex seems to be paralyzing public action despite Europe being threatened by the largest security risk since WWII.

Monday, Germany paid the price of its pusillanimity with blood and tears. We can only hope that it learned its lesson. For Germans, as for us: **in a Europe with open borders, the person who attacked Berlin a couple of days ago (and who, being Tunisian, is francophone) can, tomorrow, attack Brussels or Paris.**

In the face of a global threat, **our response must be unmitigated, collective and firm. To back away from this truth is to eat out of the palm of terrorists; and pave the way for extremists and populists that dream of destroying the European model.**

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