

The Passy Press[®]

Letters to the Editor

From: Mike Wyly <mwylr@undisclosed.com>
To: Nick Gardiner <enpg@thepassypress.com>
Sent: January 2, 2017 at 4:05 PM
Subject: Robert Hardy Essay, December 2016

Dear Sir,

Robert Hardy's essay, "Wanted Dead! The Islamic State and How to Defeat It" is a refreshing read. He presents viable solutions instead of the popular laments: "We caused the terrorism that now confronts us", and "The more we do the worse it will get". The first and the fourth in his list of options, (1) "replace Salafi Jihad ideology with another" and (4) "monitor mosques and Muslim religious schools in the West" could be realistically implemented within the year. The first needs to be preceded by some very thorough study, and the fourth will have to break through some predictable political resistance. The second and third of Mr. Hardy's four proposals, (2) "support the Islamic State to attack Iran", and (3) encourage the Islamic State and Al Qaeda to fight each other, will be more problematic to initiate. They reflect sound thinking, however, and are worthy of consideration.

Pundits, journalists, as well as politicians already seated and soon to be seated, range from "Bomb them back to the stone age" to launching off on what has proven to be the most self-inflicted casualty-producing form of infantry combat ever, attack of a built-up area (witness current operations in Mosul).

I, as can a lifetime infantryman, can assure you that bombs, bombs, and more bombs, do not bring the results desired. In my two tours in Vietnam we were glad to have air support when we needed it but the battle had to be won on the ground. Bombs alone, do not cause the enemy to fight less hard or surrender.

Number One on Mr. Hardy's four-point list is what the U.S. did to defeat communist ideology in the Cold War: formulate an ideology that can appeal to the personalities and interest groups that are current targets of "radicalization", and thereby "replace the ideology of the enemy." We promulgated our ideas as quickly as we defined them through Radio Free Europe, Voice of America, and other venues. We backed up our words with a strong military arsenal and won over Europe and the Eastern Block.

We can learn from the experience of undermining communist philosophy. Yet, there are earlier models even more relevant.

Replacing extremist Islamic ideology has been done before. In 1923 Mustafa Kemal Ataturk succeeded in transforming the Ottoman caliphate into a secular republic. His successor, as President of Turkey, Ismet Inonu, carried the intellectual revolution further to where, following World War 2, we found modern Turkey to have become one of our strongest and most dependable allied republics in NATO. To say that Ataturk and Inonu “westernized Turkey” would be an exaggeration. The roots of the Turkish population’s core beliefs remained ensconced. Turkey’s framers knew where those roots lay; and anything we do now to “tame” our current adversaries must identify and retain the fundamentals of the culture. Today’s President Recep Erdogan of Turkey has downplayed the secularization in the course of the last five years and this is seen as problematic by some Western policy-makers including our own. But it may be that Mr. Erdogan’s changes are a useful model in today’s age for making change palatable to the target audience.

Number Four on Mr. Hardy’s list, monitoring mosques and religious schools, must start without delay regardless of whether or not the rest of his proposals are adopted. We cannot continue on with the opportunity for enemies of our country to plot and plan in our homeland in designated “safe” areas behind closed doors. Yes, there will be political resistance; but, it is too serious a matter to ignore. What’s more, peace-loving Muslims, the *truly* peace-loving of whom there are millions, will support us. They, more than anyone, have much to lose if safe havens for terrorists persist behind the walls and doors of their own schools and places of worship. Also, it is they who can best help us find that “replacement ideology”.

Mr. Hardy’s second and third points deserve attention, too. However, support of one adversary’s attacking another demand covert planning and implementation in order for them to work. Mr. Hardy’s require careful analysis and may well be altered, modified, and integrated with like strategies. But they reflect *the kind* of thinking so necessary in today’s world.

A *sine qua non* in defeating Jihad is gaining the active support of non-violent Moslems. Among historic models for study is Poland’s Solidarity Movement under Lech Walesa, transforming a powerful Soviet supporter into a staunch U.S. ally. “Workers of the World unite!” was the watch word of Marx and Lenin’s 1848 Communist Manifesto. Lech Walesa, son of a carpenter, himself an electrician and shipyard worker and union leader, personified a worker of the world, united. But it was the anti-communist cause he was elicited to so effectively serve. Walesa, himself held that it was the Catholic Church and Pope John Paul II that, as the stronger ideology, defeated Soviet communism, and it is just such a combination of doctrines we should seek in our quest to replace the scourge of Jihad.

U. S. Military action, though not a topic in the essay, must always be a real possibility in the eyes of our adversaries. The capability to confront force with force should circumstances demand is always essential. The exact conditions that might require it are many. But when called upon, U.S. military actions to curtail a terrorist enemy must be swift, decisive, and rapidly extractable. Military training to respect the local populace will be more important than ever.

It is definitely time for a new look, such as Mr. Hardy's, to be incorporated in U.S. strategic planning. Terror must not be allowed to become part of the American scene. Two times on return from infantry combat in Vietnam I experienced the wonderful realization that here, on this ground, in this land, I was safe. It is a part of our heritage that has been fought for and won, and one that we must be ever vigilant to preserve.

Sincerely,

Michael Wyly

Michael Wyly, Colonel Michael D. Wyly USMC (Ret) and was Executive Director, CEO and Founder of The Bossov Ballet Theater in Maine. He is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy