



(From Left) Women comfort each other the Monument a la Republique, in the Place de la Republique in Paris yesterday, two days after a series of deadly attacks; candles and a small statue of the Eiffel Tower are placed at a memorial close to the Bataclan concert hall, a site of terror attack on Friday.



PHOTO: AFP

AFTERMATH OF PARIS CARNAGE

Panic in Paris after shooting report

Panic broke out in central Paris near the scene of some of Friday's attacks as police deployed in the area, but it appeared to be a false alarm. Reports of shooting sent people running on the Place de la Republique, where thousands had gathered yesterday in mourning and solidarity after France's worst ever attacks. But police told AFP they could not confirm reports of shooting.

AFP, Paris

Iraq gave alert before attacks

Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari has said his country's intelligence services shared information they had which indicated that France, the United States and Iran were among countries being targeted for attack. Though he did not specify the threat was from Islamic State militants.

REUTERS, Baghdad

UK deploys special forces: report

Special forces have been deployed to back British police after Paris attacks that killed 129 people, British newspapers reported yesterday, as part of a wider boost in security measures. Unsourced British media reports said special forces were dressed in plain clothes and supporting police at busy public locations. Interior minister Theresa May did not deny the reports.

AFP, London

'Focus less on rights, more on security'

Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Yaalon yesterday said that European nations must reduce their focus on human rights in favour of more security to avoid a repeat of the Paris attacks. "In Europe, the balance between security and human rights has until now leaned in favour of human rights, but there is no longer any choice," Yaalon told army radio. "The balance must now be tipped toward security to defend democracy."

AFP, Jerusalem

OIC urges joint action against terrorism

The world's top Islamic body urged joint action against terrorism yesterday, condemning "in the strictest terms" the Paris gun and bomb attacks. The 57-member grouping's head Iyad Madani said he "condemned the attack in the strictest terms" and voiced his "firm rejection of any terrorist act" that undermines "universal human values including the values of freedom and equality that France has consistently promoted". The OIC is based in Saudi Arabia's port city of Jeddah.

AFP, Jeddah

Obama vows to eliminate IS

Meets Putin, urges support, agree on need for political transition, ceasefire in Syria

REUTERS, Belek

day and a half ago," Obama said.

"We will redouble our efforts, working with other members of the coalition, to bring about a peaceful transition in Syria and to eliminate Daesh as a force that can create so much pain and suffering for people in Paris, in Ankara, and in other parts of the globe," he said, using the Arabic acronym for Islamic State.

Obama huddled with Putin during a working lunch and the two agreed on the need for a Syrian-led transition including UN-mediated talks, the White House officials said.

Putin and Obama talked "extensively", Russian news agencies cited top Kremlin foreign policy adviser Yuri Ushakov as saying.

"Strategic objectives relating to the fight against the Islamic State are, in principle, very similar, but there are differences on the tactics side," he said.

Their meeting builds on progress in Vienna, where foreign ministers on Saturday outlined a plan for a political process in Syria leading to elections within two years,

although differences over Assad's fate remain.

The United States, Turkey and their allies want Assad out. Russia, Iran oppose that.

The Paris attacks again demonstrated how Islamic State poses a threat far beyond its strongholds in Syria and Iraq.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he welcomed the renewed sense of urgency to find a solution to the war in Syria after the Paris attacks, adding the world had a "rare moment" of diplomatic opportunity to end the violence.

Obama wants to coax other European and Middle Eastern countries into more tangible steps to show their military commitment and was due to hold a bilateral meeting with Saudi Arabia's King Salman. Last month, the two leaders affirmed the need to cooperate against Islamic State.

Obama said he also discussed in a meeting with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan coordinating efforts to fortify the border with Syria, which Islamic State has used to smuggle supplies and foreign fighters.

It remains to be seen, however, whether

Washington itself has an appetite for much deeper involvement after already stepping up air strikes and committing small numbers of special operations troops to northern Syria to advise opposition forces in the fight against Islamic State.

The Paris carnage also poses a major challenge for Europe, with populist leaders rushing to demand an end to an influx of refugees and migrants from the Middle East and Africa.

In a diplomatic coup for Europe and for Turkey, the G20 leaders will agree that migration is a global problem that must be addressed in a coordinated way, according to a draft communiqué seen by Reuters, although it has yet to be accepted by all and is due to be published today.

Europe and Turkey, the most-heavily hit by the crisis, had been pushing for the G20 to recognise the issue as a global problem and help to deal with it financially, despite opposition from China, India and Russia. A million migrants from the Middle East and Africa are expected to come to Europe this year alone.



World leaders including China's President Xi Jinping (front row, L-R), Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan, US President Barack Obama participate in a family photo with fellow world leaders at the start of the G20 summit at the Regnum Carya Resort in Antalya, Turkey, yesterday. Inset, Obama discusses world affairs with Putin by the sidelines of the summit.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Don't give in to base reactions

Junker warns EU countries on refugees

AFP, Belek

European Union countries should not give in to base reactions of rejecting refugees after the Paris attacks because the shooters were criminals, not asylum seekers, European Commission head Jean-Claude Juncker said yesterday.

Top Polish and Slovak officials have poured cold water on the EU refugee relocation plan right after the attacks late on Friday that killed 129 people, saying the violence underlined the concerns of Europeans about taking in Muslim refugees.

"We should not mix the different categories of people coming to Europe," Juncker told a news conference on the sidelines of a G20 summit of world leaders in the Turkish coastal province of Antalya.

One of the attackers in Paris has been identified as having entered the EU through the Greek island of Leros on Oct 3, 2015, with other refugees. On entering, he was identified and fingerprinted according to EU rules.

"The one responsible for the attacks in Paris... he is a criminal and not a refugee and not an asylum seeker," Juncker said.

"I would invite those in Europe who try to change the migration agenda we have adopted -- I would like to remind them to be serious about this and not to give in to these basic reactions that I do not like," Juncker said.

Poland's new Europe minister Konrad Szymanski said on Saturday his incoming government did not agree with Poland's commitment to accept its share of an EU-wide relocation of immigrants, and now, "in the face of the tragic acts in Paris, we do not see the political possibilities to implement (this)."

On Saturday Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico said: "We have been saying that there are enormous security risks linked to migration. Hopefully, some people will open their eyes now."

But Juncker said there was no need to change Europe's plan to relocate 160,000 refugees around Europe, as agreed earlier. "I see the difficulty but I don't see the need to change our general approach," he said.

A wrong response may create countless more terrorists

We must destroy Islamic State but not play into their hands

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The worst response to a tragic and horrific attack like that on Paris on Friday night would be one that strengthens IS. When President Francois Hollande said we are at war with IS, he was right. But it is a war we can only win if we don't get provoked into the response they want from us; the response they expect.

Parisians are sadly becoming all too used to this kind of violence. It was only in January this year when the attack on Charlie Hebdo left most of its staff dead or maimed. And now this, an attack so ferocious and brutal that Paris may take years to recover. Seven years ago, to this very month, gunmen also ran amok in Mumbai and unleashed terror that was to last four days and claim 164 lives. This is global war, and it could be very well be a general war.

IS are doing this to provoke us. They want us to attack them on their soil: in Iraq and Syria. They want to see western troops back in those lands because the chaos and backlash that would create would play directly into their hands. It would create countless new recruits for them.

IS are also doing this to create division and exploit tension in our modern multi-racial societies. They want western Muslims to feel unwanted in their homes in Europe, and to instead join them in Syria. They want western Muslims to feel that they can only truly be at home at the "IS Caliphate".

IS want to see western countries become closed, authoritarian societies where we live in fear of them and their capa-

bilities. They hate what we stand for and they want to provoke us into changing that.

The temptation to react to IS in the way they want will be strong in the aftermath of Paris. Francois Hollande says our response to IS must be "merciless" - and we agree - but it must also be strategic so we don't fall into their trap.

We must stand for our values: liberalism, secularism, openness, free speech and equality: those are the values we swear by and those are the values we must now strain every sinew to live by.

When Chancellor Angela Merkel said Germany would offer shelter to Syrian refugees earlier this year, IS released a dozen videos in panic, encouraging Syrians to come back. But the damage was done. Syrians saw that Europe was more willing to offer them refuge and dignity than many Muslim states. That they were not heading to the so called IS Caliphate

was a slap in the face.

The attacks in Beirut and Paris is their response. They want us to brush away humanity and compassion with suspicion and division. By following that script we do exactly what IS want us to do. The destruction of the IS Caliphate must happen, but it must come from a Muslim-led force. After all, ordinary Muslims have been its biggest victims.

That isn't to say we must do nothing. We have to challenge Islamism and its sympathisers in the west, and we have to stand for our values. There's also no doubt we must win the war against IS. But we cannot win if we're provoked into the response they want. We cannot win with a response that strengthens them rather than weakens them.

US DEMOCRATIC DEBATE

Clinton urges war on IS, not Muslims

AFP, Des Moines

White House hopeful Hillary Clinton called for global unity to crush the Islamic State group, as the carnage in Paris took center stage at Saturday's Democratic presidential debate.

The three candidates began their debate with a moment of silence for the victims in France, bringing Friday's horrific attacks a ocean away to the forefront of the 2016 race as they dominated the first half hour of the political showdown.

Clinton, liberal US Senator Bernie Sanders and former Maryland governor Martin O'Malley united in calling for the destruction of the jihadists accused of massacring at least 129 people in the French capital.

"We are not at war with Islam," said the former secretary of state, choosing her words with care as she warned ordinary Muslims should not be viewed as a threat. "We are at war with violent extremism."

"Our prayers are with the people of France tonight, but that is not enough," she said, calling for global resolve to defeat IS, "a barbaric, ruthless, violent jihadist terrorist group."

Clinton struck a sharp contrast to Obama's comments in an interview aired on Friday that IS had been contained, saying it "cannot be contained, it must be defeated."

Clinton said American leadership was critical in the effort to destroy IS, but added: "this cannot be an American fight."

Sanders linked Clinton's US Senate vote authorizing the Iraq invasion to the regional chaos that followed. He called it "one of the worst foreign policy blunders in the modern history of the United States."

"I would argue that the disastrous invasion of Iraq unraveled the region immensely, and led to the rise of al-Qaeda and to ISIS," said Sanders, a US senator from Vermont.

Clinton is leading the race with more than 54 percent of the vote, according to a RealClearPolitics average. Sanders is at 33 percent, while O'Malley is languishing at three percent.

