

Good Terrorist, Bad Terrorist

The West's Double Standards and Hypocrisy

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The French military operation in Mali has brought to the fore the blatant double standards in the approach of certain Western nations to the whole question of terrorism. In the case of Mali, France, with the support of Britain, Germany and the United States, has committed itself to combating diehard militants who are determined to use violence to establish their power and authority. Yet in Libya, these countries and their allies in West Asia and North Africa (WANA) had no compunctions about colluding with militant groups to oust Muammar Gaddafi in a bloody and brutal campaign which killed tens of thousands of people in 2011.

Their hypocrisy becomes even starker in Syria. Western powers and groups from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Turkey have been providing funds, logistical support and sophisticated weapons to rebels within Syria and mercenaries from a number of other countries, to overthrow the Bashar al-Assad government. Many of these armed groups, like their counterparts in Libya and Mali, justify their acts of terror and violence in the name of Islam — albeit a distorted and perverted interpretation of the religion.

Different armed groups in Iraq at different times in the course of the US led occupation of that country have also, it is alleged, received material assistance from countries in the region and the US. It is an established fact that the US under Ronald Reagan gave enormous financial and military aid to so-called “jihadist” groups fighting the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The US has often condoned acts of terror perpetrated by its close ally, Israel, against Palestinians and other Arabs. Indeed, the US itself is regarded in some circles as a “terrorist state”, given its record of killing innocent civilians in various parts of the world, including Latin America, West Asia and Southeast Asia.

What this shows is that there is terrorism that is condoned and terrorism that is condemned by Western powers and other states. If violence serves their interests, it is acceptable. If it doesn't, the militants are targeted. In other words, there are ‘good terrorists’ and ‘bad terrorists’.

One of the main reasons why the militants in Mali have to be defeated — from France's standpoint — is because France imports huge amounts of uranium from that country for its nuclear plants that generate 80% of its electricity. It is not because France abhors violence or seeks to protect human life! Besides, France wants to maintain its hegemonic grip upon West Africa and parts of North Africa at a time when resource rich Africa is becoming increasingly important to the global economy.

The ulterior motives for Western military action in Libya; for their covert operations in Syria;

for their hobnobbing with militant groups in Iraq; and for their collusion with Jihadists in Afghanistan have been exposed in numerous studies. There is no need to repeat them here. Suffice to note that that they have very little to do with defending human rights or upholding democracy. It is the overwhelming desire to perpetuate their military, political, economic and cultural hegemony over the world which is the real reason why the US and its allies seek to crush terrorism in one instance and consort with it in another instance.

Why is it that this irrefutable truth about the attitude of the centers of power in the West to terrorism is not widely known? Why is it that citizens in Western democracies who are supposed to be informed and educated are not ashamed of the double standards and the hypocrisy that surround the war on terror? One of the primary reasons is because the media — both the old and the new — does not want to tell the whole truth.

More often than not, the media regurgitates the propaganda put out by the centers of power in the West. If it is the 'bad terrorists' that say French troops are pursuing, the latter are projected in the media as heroes on a noble mission, without any analysis of the root causes of the conflict or what the motives are for launching the assault. If, on the other hand, it is the 'good terrorists' sponsored by the West who are responsible for some merciless slaughter somewhere, their barbarity is either played down by the media or the whole incident is turned and twisted to present the adversary as the perpetrator of the killing.

This has been happening in the case of Syria. In one of the most recent episodes the 'good terrorists', the rebels, claimed that the horrendous attack on Aleppo University on 15 January 2013 that killed 87 people, many of them students, was the work of the Bashar government. This was the story that most media carried though a number of newspapers and television channels also reported the government's denial. However, when evidence emerged that showed that the 'good terrorists' were the actual culprits and independent journalists and student groups in Syria, apart from a number of foreign governments, condemned the 'good terrorists' for their savagery, very few media outlets gave any prominence to their remarks.

It is through distorted reporting and analysis of this sort that the media conceals the double standards and hypocrisy of the centers of power in the West. This is why we should on our own look for alternative sources of news and analysis and use the information at our command to challenge the powerful to be honest and consistent about the fight against terrorism.

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