

Five Myths Regarding the Paris Terror Attacks

By [Washington's Blog](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Terrorism](#)

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As usual, the politicians and talking heads are all talking their own book, using the Paris terror attacks to push their own agendas.

As shown below, they're spouting nonsense.

Mass Surveillance Won't Help

The NSA and other spy agencies are pretending that the Paris attacks show that we need more mass surveillance.

But the New York Times correctly [points out](#) in a scathing editorial that mass surveillance won't help to prevent terrorism:

As one French counterterrorism expert and former defense official said, this shows that "our intelligence is actually pretty good, but our ability to act on it is limited by the sheer numbers." In other words, the problem in this case was not a lack of data, but a failure to act on information authorities already had.

In fact, indiscriminate bulk data sweeps have not been useful. In the more than two years since the N.S.A.'s data collection programs became known to the public, the intelligence community has [failed to show](#) that the phone program has thwarted a terrorist attack. Yet for years intelligence officials and members of Congress [repeatedly misled the public](#) by claiming that it was effective.

In reality, top security experts agree that mass surveillance makes us [MORE vulnerable](#) to terrorists.

Indeed, even the NSA has previously admitted that it's collecting [too MUCH information](#) to stop terror attacks.

Encryption Isn't What Made Us Vulnerable

The spy agencies are also pretending that encryption made it impossible to stop the attacks.

But Tech Dirt [notes](#):

Most of the communications between the attackers was [conducted via unencrypted vanilla SMS](#):

"...News emerging from Paris — as well as evidence from a Belgian ISIS raid in January — suggests that the ISIS terror

networks involved were communicating in the clear, and that the data on their smartphones was not encrypted.

European media outlets are reporting that the location of a raid conducted on a suspected safe house Wednesday morning was extracted from a cellphone, apparently belonging to one of the attackers, found in the trash outside the Bataclan concert hall massacre. Le Monde reported that investigators were able to access the data on the phone, including a detailed map of the concert hall and an SMS messaging saying “we’re off; we’re starting.” Police were also able to trace the phone’s movements.

The reports note that Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the “mastermind” of both the Paris attacks and a thwarted Belgium attack ten months ago, failed to use any encryption whatsoever (read: existing capabilities stopped the Belgium attacks and could have stopped the Paris attacks, but didn’t). That’s of course not to say batshit religious cults like ISIS don’t use encryption, and won’t do so going forward. Everybody uses encryption. But the point remains that to use a tragedy to vilify encryption, push for surveillance expansion, and pass backdoor laws that will make everybody [less safe](#) — is nearly as gruesome as the attacks themselves.

7 of the 8 Terrorists Were *Known* to U.S. or French Intelligence Agencies

Just as with 9/11, the Boston marathon bombings, and other recent attacks, governments are pretending “it wasn’t foreseeable”.

But CBS reports that law enforcement sources say that [7 of the 8 terrorists](#) were known in advance to U.S. or French intelligence services.

The New York Times [confirms](#):

Most of the men who carried out the Paris attacks were already on the radar of intelligence officials in France and Belgium, [where several of the attackers lived](#) only hundreds of yards from the main police station, in a neighborhood known as a haven for extremists.

Escalating War Against ISIS Is *Not* the Only Option

I’m all for killing members of ISIS.

But given that [the U.S. and its close allies – Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Qatar and Bahrain – are massively supporting ISIS](#), stopping the arming, feeding and logistical support is even more important if we want to stop these crazies.

None of the Terrorists Were Syrian

None of the Paris terrorists were Syrian. [All of them were European nationals](#).

The [German Interior Minister suggests](#) that the Syrian passport found at the scene of the terror attacks was a “false flag” by ISIS meant to force countries to seal their borders against further refugees.

Why would they do this? Numerous security experts suggest that refugees fleeing ISIS' "Caliphate" is a PR disaster for ISIS. After all, happy fundamentalist Muslims wouldn't flee utopia, would they?

But we do take the [risk of infiltration of refugee groups by terrorists](#) very [seriously](#). Indeed, the Telegraph [reports](#) today:

The mastermind of the Paris attacks was able to slip into Europe among Syrian migrants, it emerged last night, as police on the continent admitted they are unable to monitor thousands of suspected jihadists.

It has emerged that Abaaoud, and at least two of the Paris terrorists took the migrant route via Greece, intensifying fears that terrorists are able easily to exploit the refugee crisis to get to Europe.

Specifically, many of the Paris terrorists were European nationals who went to fight for ISIS in Syria, and then they slipped in with the refugees coming from Syria to get back into Europe.

So those saying that the civilians fleeing war and mayhem in Syria are all terrorists are wrong ... but so are those saying that the massive refugee flow poses no danger.

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