

The Barbarians are Behind the Walls

As of this writing, over 30 people are dead and nearly 250 wounded after bombings at the Brussels airport and a major metro hub.

ISIS has taken credit for the bombings, based on the report from their news agency, [Amaq](#):

“Islamic State fighters carried out a series of bombings with explosive belts and devices on Tuesday, targeting an airport and a central metro station in the center of the Belgian capital Brussels, a country participating in the international coalition against the Islamic State.

Islamic State fighters opened fire inside Zaventem Airport, before several of them detonated their explosive belts, as a martyrdom bomber detonated his explosive belt in the Maalbeek metro station. The attacks resulted in more than 230 dead and wounded.”

The New York Times believes the attacks “[underscore vulnerability of an open European society](#)”:

“The new attacks again underscored not only the weaknesses of Belgium’s security services, but also the persistence and increasingly dangerous prospect of what several intelligence experts described as a sympathetic milieu for terrorist cells to form, hide and operate in the center of Europe.

The attacks have set off a new round of soul-searching about whether Europe’s security services must redouble their efforts, even at the risk of further impinging on civil liberties, or whether such attacks have become an unavoidable part of life in an open European society.

At the very least, they have exposed the enduring vulnerability of Europe to terrorism in an age of easy travel and communications and rising militancy.”

And there is truth to the challenges of an open society, but is it the society being open that’s the problem or something else? While *The New York Times* doesn’t specifically refer to the failures of an open, multi-cultural society, it does have the following to report:

“The country of just 11.2 million people faces widening derision as being the world’s wealthiest failed state – a worrying mix of deeply rooted terrorist networks; a government weakened by divisions among French, Dutch and German speakers; and an overwhelmed intelligence service in seemingly chronic disarray.

It is also home to what Bernard Squarcini, a former head of France’s internal intelligence, described as ‘a favorable ecosystem: an Islamist milieu, and a family milieu,’ which played an important role in sheltering Mr. Abdeslam and also perhaps in Tuesday’s attacks.

‘It shows that they were in a neighborhood that can shelter cells for months, because it is a neighborhood that is favorable to them,’ he said, referring to Molenbeek, a Brussels district. It is where the Paris attackers lived and where Mr. Abdeslam was able to hide among family and friends.

The cultural code of silence in the heavily immigrant district, as well as widespread distrust of already weak government authorities, has provided what amounts to a fifth column or forward base for the Islamic State.

For weeks, intelligence operatives had warned that the next major terrorist attack on European soil was simply a matter of time. Even before Tuesday, Mr. Squarcini predicted that ‘there will be an even more serious attack’ because, he said, ‘there are already the people in place.’

Indeed, the presumed orchestrator of the Paris attacks, Abdelhamid Abaaoud, who lived in Molenbeek, boasted to his cousin before he was killed that '90' operatives were dormant, ready for another attack.

Some security and intelligence experts saw Tuesday's blasts as proof that Europe's open societies, even under states of emergency, will never be risk-free."

USA Today [reports](#),

"Belgium has one of the largest Muslim communities in Europe as a percentage of its population: about 6% of 11 million Belgians. It also is the largest contributor of fighters to Islamic State. More than 500 Belgian nationals have traveled to join the extremist group in Syria and Iraq, according to Belgian intelligence estimates."

Alas, what if it isn't the open society that is the problem, but rather a minority population within the society that is actually hostile to it? While the answer seems rather obvious, the subsequent conclusions may make many modern Americans and Europeans uncomfortable.

The reason for the discomfort is that an open society may be possible if the people are united in a cultural outlook that supports it. That also means the people have to be closed to the outside world to some degree – largely through blocking immigration – if they want to maintain such a culture. The rapid influx of individuals hailing from a very different cultural tradition who do not assimilate and are actually hostile to the dominant culture will be able to take advantage of the open society and cause chaos. And that is precisely what we're seeing.

It may very well be that we are watching the demise of the idea that multiple cultures can coexist within a single legal structure that creates an open society. For Belgium and much of the West, the reality is that the barbarians are not at the

gate, they are already behind the castle walls.