

Editorial: Paris attacks – What is the sensible response to this horrific act?

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After the terrorist attacks on Charlie Hebdo in Paris in January, it was clear that France wasn't immune to acts of violence motivated by a warped interpretation of Islam. It was also foreseeable that that risk would increase with France's participation in the launching of airstrikes against Islamic State in Syria as well as Iraq. Still, Friday's orchestrated carnage in Paris – for which Islamic State has claimed responsibility – came as a shock.

As with 9/11 and other acts of terrorism, the multiple attacks that killed more than 120 people in the French capital will (and should) lead to an inquest into whether internal security and intelligence collection were adequate. In his comments, French President Francois Hollande went further, describing the attacks as an "act of war" and promising that France would use "all means anywhere, inside or outside the country" to defeat Islamic State.

For Americans, those words were reminiscent of President George W. Bush's declaration after 9/11 that the U.S. would act if the Taliban government in Afghanistan didn't end its support for Al Qaeda and other terrorists. Soon afterward, with support from Congress, the U.S. invaded Afghanistan, and American troops remain in that country to this day, albeit not in a combat role.

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