



Political correctness must die when it comes to terrorism

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It goes without saying that the American Left's infatuation with political correctness has undermined the First Amendment. When it comes to terrorism, political correctness simply should have no role. We've spent nearly seven years watching President Barack Obama contort himself in speeches to sever the obvious tie between radical Islam and terrorism. Over the last few weeks, his remaining credibility has run smack dab into his public statements. Just before the horrific Paris attack, President Obama [claimed that Daesh was "contained."](http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/14/politics/paris-terror-attacks-obama-isis-contained/) (<http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/14/politics/paris-terror-attacks-obama-isis-contained/>) Even after 14 Americans were shot dead in San Bernardino, California, by two people possessing an obvious cache of terrorist weapons (assault weapons, enormous quantities of ammunition, pipe bombs, and remote controlled detonators), President Obama [cautioned Americans not to jump to the conclusion](http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/261946-obama-possible-shooting-tied-to-terrorism) (<http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/261946-obama-possible-shooting-tied-to-terrorism>) that the attack was a terrorist one.



(http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/san_bernardino_terror_attack_islam_muslims_120515_500x293.jpg)

People stand by a pop-up memorial in San Bernardino, California December 4, 2015, following Wednesday's attack. Authorities are investigating the San Bernardino, California, shooting as an "act of terrorism", Federal Bureau of Investigation assistant director David Bowdich said at a news conference on Friday. Reuters

Terrorism is an act we must call by name without hesitation or fear of offending adherents to Islam.

Based upon news reports, it appears that political correctness cowed a neighbor from reporting suspicious activity at the home of Syed Farook and Tashfeen Malik. In the days before the attack, a neighbor noticed a large group of men coming to and from the house. The men looked Middle Eastern and their activity was unusual for the home. [It raised the suspicions of a neighbor, but she didn't call the police for fear of being called a racist](http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2015/12/02/authorities-search-redlands-home-tied-to-suspect-syed-farook/#.VmCbceJL59w.twitter) (<http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2015/12/02/authorities-search-redlands-home-tied-to-suspect-syed-farook/#.VmCbceJL59w.twitter>). I don't want to demonize the neighbor, as I can only imagine how much she is struggling knowing that her call could have prevented the attack. The neighbor's omission is the outcome of an environment in which political correctness has changed how people act regardless of whether their actions are proper or not.

As Thomas Jefferson famously noted in 1817, "Eternal vigilance is the price we pay for liberty." Political correctness undermines our eternal vigilance, thereby putting our very liberty at risk.

As [Mackenzie Eaglen and I wrote](https://www.aei.org/publication/paris-attacks-isis-still-dangerous-al-qaeda-group/) (https://www.aei.org/publication/paris-attacks-isis-still-dangerous-al-qaeda-group/) roughly a year ago:

The Daesh model of terrorism eschews the spectacular and instead implores followers to simply kill people, no matter how few. Followers are told to stay and fight at home if they cannot get to Syria. Behead someone at a shopping mall. Gun down police on the street. There are no bomb factories to reconnoiter, no cell phones to trace, nor mosques to infiltrate. This type of attack requires minimal coordination and planning, which makes it difficult to detect and stop. While Al Qaeda started pushing this attack model in 2010, it did not catch on. With Daesh, however, governments are already seeing followers accept the challenge.... Only by admitting that we cannot stop every lunatic, will the U.S. authorities help fellow citizens protect themselves if and when attacks do occur. Thorough preparation and the capability to respond to an act of violence are essential to minimize the threat, America's vulnerability to it, and the duration of its impact on the people, their way of life, and the economy."

It will be hard enough to stop Daesh's brand of Nike "Just Do It" terrorism, especially when the attackers [appear to have no red flags](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/05/us/for-woman-in-shooting-easy-passage-through-us-visa-process.html?_r=0) (http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/05/us/for-woman-in-shooting-easy-passage-through-us-visa-process.html?_r=0) in their backgrounds. Political correctness will make it even harder. If early reports are true, a review of the attack likely will show that our intel community should have picked up on at least one of the red flags that popped up over the last several months—the acquisition of large amounts of ammunition, the purchase of bomb-making equipment, social media activities, or cell phone usage. We must not let political correctness stop us from closing gaps in our intelligence. It is time America stop fighting a war with one and, in some cases, two arms tied behind Uncle Sam's back.

With Paris and San Bernardino, we've entered a new era where Europe and America must evolve our security apparatuses to meet the threat not just from foreign terrorists, but also from citizens who return from Daesh territories trained as cold-blooded killers and citizens who become radicalized by merely sitting at their computers watching jihadi videos aimed at inspiring them to act.

Let's make sure political correctness dies before more Americans do.

This article was found online at:

<http://www.aei.org/publication/political-correctness-must-die-when-it-comes-to-terrorism/>