

## This is a War and We Have to Win It



Ten months ago, when a group of Islamist terrorists carried out the massacres at the Charlie *Hebdo* magazine offices and the Hyper Cacher supermarket, we were dismayed and shocked. The heart of Europe had been brutally attacked and we realized that Islamism had declared war to the West – although many of us knew it since 9/11. However, we did not expect that those evil forces would strike so soon in the same place, Paris, a city considered as one of the cornerstones of Western civilization. The trail of blood that Islamic State terrorists have left this time in Paris is 129 dead and 368 injured – and counting.

The Friends of Israel Initiative strongly condemns these savage terrorist attacks and we express our sincere condolences to the families of the victims and to the French people. We stand with you now and ever. The Islamic State's perpetrators murdered savagely and in cold blood innocent civilians who were just enjoying life in restaurants and concert halls. These attacks perfectly show the nature of the enemy we have to face. It is an enemy who does not value human life and who will not stop in the pursuit of its goals: To destroy the West and our way of life.

By attacking us in those places, the Islamic State is certainly trying to instill fear in us, but, as German Chancellor Angela Merkel has clearly stated, "Freedom is stronger than terror." In these dark hours, after this hard hit, our determination should be firm, as Tony Blair expressed the day of the London bombings in July 2005: "We shall prevail, they shall not."

What happened now in Paris also reminds us that the West is at stake. For many years we have believed that we would live with the peace and stability we have been enjoying for decades. However, the Islamic State has been clear with its threats; "This attack is only the beginning of a storm," as a spokesman warned while claiming the authorship of the perpetrated carnage. They perfectly know it is a war and we should not take much longer to become more aware of that. Western countries are at a turning point, a historical moment when leaders and societies have to reach a compromise with their values and their institutions and be ready to win.

In this regard, there is a Western, democratic, dynamic, and liberal country, which has been suffering the attacks of Islamism since its foundation. It is a nation that plays a key role in the future of the West, an example that we have to study at in order to learn how to get over the trauma of slaughter and to thrive despite the circumstances. That country is Israel. Today Israel is the main ally to win this war.

In this day in the history of infamy, Paris, the entire West, and Israel should keep united and determined: This is a war we have to win and the enemy must be defeated.

## Spotlight

### "EU Labeling Encourages Anti-Israel Movements"

The European Union guidelines that require labeling Israeli goods manufactured in the West Bank, Golan Heights, and East Jerusalem—areas the EU considers "occupied territories"—are finally to be applied despite it was planned since 2003. The products must be labeled with the term "settlement," or "its equivalent," or "product of West Bank (Israeli settlement)." Besides that; according to international law those territories are "disputed," not "occupied;" this European policy is discriminatory and unprecedented: It targets Israel while ignoring more than 200 disputed territories worldwide, such as Western Sahara, Tibet, or Kashmir, among others. This step that the EU Commission took is another Western short-sighted contribution to the international isolation of Israel, which is the West's main ally in the currently chaotic Middle East.

This move undoubtedly seeks to put pressure on Israel for the stagnation of the conflict with the Palestinians — while taking no action against Palestinians who incite and perpetrate murders, as U.S. Senator Marco Rubio has pointed out. Though the World Trade Organization agreements guarantee non-discrimination in trade, the EU has decided to follow the anti-Israel movement's recipe, such as the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS), which pursues the destruction of Israel by commercial means. The French Supreme Court confirmed last October that BDS campaigns are illegal and discriminatory.

Thus, labeling Israeli goods as such supposes an arbitrary measure against a truly good friend who besides needs our help. As the U.S. House of Representatives has stated in two bipartisan letters; signed by 36 senators and 34 House representatives and addressed to Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy; this labeling promotes a de-facto boycott of Israel and also worsens the conflict with the Palestinians. In the words of the senators: "The proposed labeling guidelines play into the narrative of the BDS movement, which is an effort to delegitimize Israel rather than promote a resolution of outstanding

issues between Israel and the Palestinians.” This view is shared by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the ruling party in Germany. Prominent CDU member Jurgen Hardt has said that, “in this case there foremost is a danger of a stigma. An anti-Israeli movement might exploit the decision and put it to use on anti-Israeli campaigns.”

Since its establishment, the Friends of Israel Initiative has been dealing with the EU Commission on this issue. In this regard, in October 2013, FOII’s Board members sent a letter to the then High Representative Catherine Ashton warning her that the responsible policy towards the conflict was to support the launch of an engagement, outreach, and dialogue effort with Israel based on joint values, mutual respect, common interests, and shared benefits, and not single out Israel, or enhance anti-Israel policies such as the commercial boycott. Sadly, the labeling guidelines actually make the postulate of the boycott of Israeli products acceptable, while boosting the Palestinians to carry on with their attitude, aimed to incitement and violence instead of dialogue and coexistence. In addition, by pressuring Israel and demanding nothing of the Palestinians, the EU is losing a key position in the peace process by siding with one party.

Regarding the Palestinians, the labeling is not a good policy for them either. As the expert Dan Diker has asserted, labeling the products will harm mostly Palestinians who work in the territories. For example, Soda Stream left the Maale Adumim settlement (West Bank) and move out to the Negev desert due to the boycott actions against them. Along the way, close to 1,000 Palestinian workers (there were around 4,000 Palestinians in the Soda Stream’s workforce) lost their jobs. They used to earn four times more than the average in the West Bank monthly in addition to all Israeli working benefits. Considering that the products to be labeled amount to less than 1 percent of Israel’s annual exports to European members, the first economic impact of the labeling will fall on the Palestinians. Although many in the West see the settlements as the main obstacle for peace, in the settlements there are not only altercations, but also coexistence through trade and work between two peoples. It is worth noting that, in accordance with the Oslo Accords, the final status of the settlements has to be agreed by both sides; Israeli negotiators are still waiting at the table.

In sum, labeling Israeli goods is a misguided and discriminatory policy that boosts boycott and stigmatization against Israel, does not promote the peace process, and harms mainly the Palestinians.

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## FOII’s Activity

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### Op-ed’s after the Paris attacks

#### **Richard Kemp**

*The Times*, November 16

[\*\*\*This Is No Time for Fear. Islamic State Must Be Crushed.\*\*\*](#)

“We need to learn lessons from the 2004 Madrid attack.”

#### **Rafael Bardaji**

*El Mundo*, November 16

[\*\*\*Hashtags and Statements Are Not Enough\*\*\*](#)

“Like it or not, the group led by Caliph Ibrahim operates as a State, exercises its power as a State, gets fed as a State, and defends itself as a State.”

#### **Rafael Bardaji**

*Expansion*, November 16

[\*\*\*Europe Is Not at War, the Islamic State Is\*\*\*](#)

“The countries continue approaching the issue as a criminal problem, as one of radical minorities. But the Islamic State has actually decided to declare war.”

#### **Andrew Roberts**

*POLITICO*, November 14

[\*\*\*Boots on the Ground to Hunt ISIL\*\*\*](#)

“This is a war, and must be fought like a war.”

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## Report on Iran-Latin America Relations

During the last decade, the presence of Iran in Latin America was evidenced by the increase in economic exchanges, cooperation on energy and defense and political and cultural ties. To this concern, Federico Pinedo analyzes the roots of this presence, its reach in several countries and the rise of the Iranian proxy Hezbollah’s activity in the region.

[Check out](#) the Fernando Pinedo’s working paper on this issue (Spanish version)

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## Report Launch: “Israel: a Vital Asset of the West”

On November 18 in the House of Commons, under the organization of the Henry Jackson Society and hosted by the MP Mr. Guto Bebb, Jose Maria Aznar presented the major report ‘Israel: a Vital Asset of the West’ produced by the Friends of Israel Initiative as one of its main projects for 2015.

During his speech, Aznar made many important remarks on the Israel’s worth to the world, the future of the West and the importance of Israel in this regard, and the historical moment that we are witnessing



Among other assertions, Aznar underlined that:  
'We are at an historic turning point...we must stand with our closest allies and not isolate those who are vital assets'  
'Israel is more important now than at any other time....shared values and military/technological cooperation are essential'  
'Israel is most important strategic partner in the Middle East for the west...having a strong Israel is more important than ever'  
'Israel does not give up the pursuit of peace and prosperity despite many setbacks...but such a resilient nation also has problems'  
'Our future is alongside Israel, not apart from her'

[Download](#) the report.

## Irving Kristol Award

Last November 9, at the National Building Museum in Washington, Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu received the 2015 Irving Kristol Award; and FOII was there to welcome it.

The annual award is the American Enterprise Institute's highest honor, given to individuals who have made exceptional practical and intellectual contributions to improve government policy, social welfare, or political understanding. AEI President Arthur C. Brooks was clear regarding the reasons of the decision: "Israel serves as a reminder that a commitment to free enterprise, democracy, human dignity, and the courage to defend one's values are the best model to lift up all people. For this and his many other contributions, we are pleased to present the prime minister with the 2015 Irving Kristol Award."

A FOII delegation formed by the former Foreign Minister of Canada, John Baird, Ambassador John Bolton, Robert Agostinelli and FOII's Executive Director Rafael Bardaji attended the AEI's event and accompanied, with more than 2,000 other participants, the Israeli PM at such a special soiree.

"We are at war"  
François Hollande

## Help Us Now

Your contribution is all the more welcome now that the Friends of Israel Initiative is up and running and you can be rest assured that it will be put to effective use to further the cause.

[Donate to Friends of Israel Initiative](#)

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