

Paris pays price of Mideast meddling

Sole blitz has come to lovely Paris. In recent weeks, spectacular terrorist bomb attacks have killed at least eight people and wounded another 150. It's shockingly like watching a beautiful woman being punched in the face.

Why has Paris suddenly become a target of terrorism? From the media, comes the standard view that such attacks are yet more random violence produced by crazed Mideasterners. Innocent Parisians are suffering in much the same way they might fall prey to an unknown killer virus.

This is dead wrong. French civilians are innocent, of course, but the government of France is by no means an innocent victim of Mideast violence — it is an active participant. What we are now seeing in Paris, as I have long feared, is the spread of Mideastern warfare to Europe. The next step will be to North America.

Most of the recent bombings were likely staged by Iranians or their Lebanese Shia and Christian allies. Dreadful, yes, but also predictable. Iran is locked in a bloody, six-year war with Iraq. France is one of Iraq's largest arms suppliers and financial supporters. Without French help Iraq could not go on fighting.

The Mirage aircraft that have been bombing Iran's oil terminals and cities come from France. The Exocet missiles used to attack tankers berthing at Iranian ports come from France. French military and intelligence advisers help Iraq. The French, in fact, have made no secret of their desire to gain control of Iran's oil fields through their Iraqi proxies.

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Is it so astonishing that Iranians, who have French bombs falling on their heads from French aircraft, are bombing back? Innocent civilians are being killed daily in Iran, just as in Paris. Nor should we forget that Iran is the victim of aggression: Iraq attacked Iran with the active encouragement of France and the CIA. Half a million Iranians have died in this war.

France is also up to its ears in the Lebanese civil war, supporting the Christian rightists against Shia and Druze forces. Those French "peacekeeping" forces getting shot up in southern Lebanon are there to keep Shia areas under control. They are no more genuine peacekeepers than were the U.S. Marines sent in 1982 to prop up the right-wing Gemayel minority regime.

Never mind the rights or wrongs of Lebanon or the Gulf War. France — and the U.S. — made conscious decisions to get involved in both conflicts for reasons of politics and economics. Meddle in other people's wars and you must expect to get burned.

Can we then doubt that America will be next, as terrorist groups recently threatened? The U.S. is even less an

innocent bystander to Mideastern turmoil than France. America helps bankroll Iraq's war effort. U.S. satellites photograph Iran and provide Iraq with target data for air attacks. Washington is working hard to mount a punishing economic and military boycott of Iran. The CIA is trying to subvert the Khomeini regime.

In Lebanon, American money and arms keep the minority Gemayel regime in power. The Israeli planes that regularly bomb Lebanon are made in America; so is the money that supports Israel's mighty arsenal. To most Mideasterners, America is the real enemy behind their enemies; the Great Satan afflicting their region. Americans may see Iran as a terrorist nation, but Iranians and many Lebanese also see America in precisely the same way.

We will not be able to suppress terrorism until we face facts. Complaining about stinging hornets when you are kicking the hornet's nest hardly makes sense. Mideasterners can be expected to bomb and shoot back as long as French and American bombs fall on the Mideast — and maybe even longer.

More innocent people on all sides will die unless the murderous cycle of revenge and reprisal can somehow be broken. Recall that the only surviving killer in last year's Rome airport massacre was a young Palestinian. Both of his parents had been murdered in 1982 at the Shatilla refugee camp outside Beirut by Lebanese fascists who were allies of Israel. He was taking vengeance on Israel and America — and the world. Horrible but not surprising. After all, in the Mideast the deepest of all passions is the passion for revenge.