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# Charlie Hebdo: a turning point in world politics? What Europe can do

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## The Current Column

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# Charlie Hebdo: a turning point in world politics?

## What Europe can do

Bonn, 21 January 2015. Up until a few days ago, when we heard "Paris 2015" we thought of the climate conference in the French capital at the end of this year. Following the terrorist attacks on Charlie Hebdo and a Jewish supermarket, "Paris 2015" is becoming synonymous with fears of a jihadist movement with global reach. The attacks raise many questions regarding domestic policy: How can we develop an intelligent immigration and inclusion policy to prevent the radicalisation of young Muslims in Europe? How do we avoid putting Muslims and Islam in general under suspicion? What can we do to stop attacks against Jewish and Muslim institutions? Are those advocating for an open society maintaining the upper hand over extremist and right-wing populist reactions to the events in Paris that pose a threat to democracy?

At the same time, the Paris attacks present a challenge to Europe's foreign relations. The attacks took place in the context of the so-called Islamic State's reign of terror (which threatens to spread from the Mediterranean to Pakistan), Al-Qaeda, the activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria, jihadist groups in Yemen, Mali and the Philippines. Jihadism is a transnational movement that is difficult to monitor as a network. With its simple concept of identity, radical solutions, glorification of violence and revolutionary pathos, it captivates young people in the Middle East, Pakistan, and even Europe. And its appeal is not limited to outsiders; let us not forget that the 9/11 attackers were well-educated individuals.

### Europe faces three key challenges.

Firstly, like Stalinism and Fascism in the 20th century, jihadism represents a concept of world order that seeks the destruction of its political opponents, which in addition to "the West", also include any Muslims that fail to recognise its fundamentalist claim to power. It is therefore necessary to combat terrorism by coordinating our efforts at international level while avoiding the mistakes of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo, which merely fanned the flames of Islamic fundamentalism. We will only succeed in stemming the tide of jihadism if both Europe and the West as a whole engage in wide-ranging dialogue with Islamic faith representatives, governments, social groups and intellectuals, difficult though this will no doubt be. The relationship between "the West" and "Islamic societies" is characterised by mutual prejudice, ignorance, lack of knowledge and, in many cases, rejection. Muslims account for some 25% of the world's population. Seeking to reach agreement with them on the fun-

damental values of shared life in a closely connected global society is also a key element in the achievement of a world order based on cooperation. It is necessary in this context to take into account the diversity of the Islamic world. Indonesia and Tunisia are promising democracies, and Jordan and Morocco are enlightened monarchies, but Saudi Arabia has just sentenced a liberal blogger to ten years in prison and 1,000 lashes. Interpretations of the Koran and its role in shaping society vary greatly. Developing a strategy for rapprochement with Islamic societies would be a major undertaking on a par with Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*.

Secondly, it must be ensured that, in dealing with jihadism, the international community does not end up limiting its policy activities to security matters and the fight against terrorism. This is relevant, for example, in the context of the upcoming G7 summit, which is taking place under Germany's presidency. The 21st century is the century of the global commons, global system risks and development opportunities. We cannot afford to procrastinate when it comes to protecting our planet, domesticating global financial markets, fighting poverty, developing global data-protection regulations and upholding civil rights in our digital age. These are the great issues of humanity on the agenda for 2015 in the debates about global sustainable development goals and a climate agreement, and we must do all we can to achieve progress on them.

Thirdly, this is a major opportunity for German development policy. Several months ago, German Development Minister Müller made it one of his priorities to reorder cooperation with the MENA region, which includes crumbling societies such as Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, nations that were caught up in the now withered Arab Spring such as Egypt and Libya, countries on the path to democracy such as Tunisia, and regional powers such as Saudi Arabia and Iran. The whole region is undergoing a period of upheaval. Determining how international cooperation can counteract the accelerating trend of state failure and the spread of jihadism, and how it can play its part in successively overcoming authoritarianism and corruption is a task of gargantuan proportions. Development, foreign and security policy strategies for this neighbouring region must be closely coordinated. Germany is limited in what it can achieve on its own, which is why Minister Müller should develop his special initiative for the MENA region into a European one.