

# ONE PAGE Update on the Middle East *by Fr. Dave Heney*

## What do ISIS, Al Qaeda, and Iran want?

They all remember a time shortly after Mohammed when all of the Middle East, North Africa, Spain, and even southern France was one Islamic country, called the Islamic Caliphate. *They want it back ...and the rest of the world as well!*

**ISIS** (*Islamic State of Iraq & Syria*) seeks to restore the Caliphate by first capturing land and cities in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, North Africa, and Libya. However, they have never faced a modern military. Their success comes mainly from capturing desert areas, isolated cities and towns, and killing non-radical Muslim men, women, and children in horrific ways.

**Al Qaeda** (*the base*) seeks to restore the Caliphate with occasional terror attacks against the US and Europe, (*9-11, Fort Hood attack, and the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris*).

**Iran** seeks to restore the Caliphate using the power of a wealthy radical Islamic state, modern military capability, nuclear terror, and devious diplomacy. It supports the Assad Regime in Syria, the Iraqi government, and the *Hezbollah* terror group in Lebanon and the *Hamas* terror group in Gaza that both seek the destruction of Israel.

All three adopt the *strictest* form of Islam with the *harshest* punishments for even the slightest infractions. ISIS and Al Qaeda are Sunni Muslims and Iran is Shia Muslim. All compete against each other for dominance and the right to rule the Caliphate.

## What was the Brussels attack all about?

Because of effective US military action, ISIS has suffered about a 30% loss of land it once controlled, along with resources used to pay and supply their soldiers. To avoid appearing weak, they have recently adopted Al Qaeda methods of terror attacks in foreign lands (*San Bernardino and Brussels*). They believe widely televised horrific events convey power. ISIS and Al Qaeda compete with each other now in terrorism and so we can expect more in the future. Both took advantage of the Syrian refugee crisis to embed their agents in the West.

## Why aren't Arab nations more involved?

Most Arab nations believe *Iran* is the greater threat. After all, ISIS is a *land army* surrounded by a vast empty desert. It has no air force or navy to project power. Iran has a modern army, air force, navy, and *modern long range missiles*. Iran is much more capable of restoring the Caliphate. Moreover, recent Russian intervention in Syria successfully propped up the Pro-Iranian Assad regime. Unlike Iran, most Arab armies are not capable of modern combat without the leadership of a super power like the US or Russia.

## How can ISIS, Al Qaeda, and Iran be stopped?

1. Engage Muslim leaders worldwide to *continually delegitimize* radical Islam.
2. Show *consistent American leadership* to Iraqi Arab Tribal armies *for them* to engage ISIS.
3. Continue targeted destruction of ISIS infrastructure to stop ability to take and hold land.
4. Publicize losses of ISIS so they are seen to be the weak force they actually are.
5. Strengthen multi-national intelligence sharing about terror networks.
6. Strengthen the vetting of Middle East refugees to the West.
7. Renegotiate the Iran Nuclear deal to change Iranian behavior.
8. Never let any terrorist event actually cause you to feel terror! (*Keep calm and carry on*)