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Good afternoon. My name is Jim Hoagland, and I write occasionally for the *Washington Post*. Nelson Cunningham and I want to offer you a few thoughts on the reaction in the US to the horrible events in Paris last Friday, a week ago. It almost goes without saying, of course, that the initial reactions and the enduring reaction by the American people and the American Government are of horror and revulsion at the barbaric savagery that was committed in the streets of Paris. We extend our sympathy to all those who were harmed in any way, and to those who, like many Americans, love Paris for what it is. Clearly, the killers hoped to change the nature of Paris with these terrible crimes. I am confident they will not succeed.

There are, of course, echoes of 9-11 in what has happened in Paris. It will change the way France looks at things and acts, just as it changed the ways the US looked at the world and reacted. We all have to guard against overreacting, but the need for action has become very clear. I have to point out at the same time that Americans, like other peoples, tend to fit what happens and brings change into their pre-existing beliefs and practices, and also in this case into their existing presidential campaign. Therefore, you will see a lot of things that would have been true before the killings but now are only more so.

There is the thought in the US, of course, that it could happen here, and that is why you are seeing intent interest paid to what Belgium, France, and indeed what Europe does, how the governments that have been attacked re-establish the trust of their populations. Looking at the front page of the *New York Times* this morning, for example, you will see stories on what France is doing to try to increase surveillance and security; the same is true for Belgium. That is one of the essential issues that Europeans will now face, that is, how people can feel safe again.

Regarding the context of our presidential campaign, these events are likely to inflame what is already a very serious debate over migration. It fans the flames of fear of the foreign that some candidates, and I would particularly single out Donald Trump on the Republican side, have used as issues for demagoguery. It also encourages more serious debate on questions like encryption of Internet traffic, and erases some of the 'Snowden effect' on the question of the balance of civil liberties versus those of national security. How safe are we and how safe can we be? There will be some rebalancing.

I tend to be a historical optimist, so I will look for some gleam of good news here, and there is the possibility that these events in Paris will make national security and foreign policy dominant issues in campaigns that up until now have largely ignored those subjects. However, this will become a serious debate. We saw the leading Democratic candidate for the nomination, Hillary Clinton, adopt in her speech a position somewhat much more advanced toward acting in the Middle East than President Obama has adopted. She urged the US in her speech yesterday to help establish a no-fly zone, and in other small ways such as at least being open to the idea of increased special military advisers from the US taking part in some future actions. She has edged herself away from the rather resolute positions taken by President Obama against significantly increased American action against ISIS and against other forces of evil in the Middle East region.

However, this is a highly emotional campaign, and this is a highly emotional subject, of course. We are now in the phase of primaries – it is about 70 days before the first primary is held – and this is a time when campaigners of both parties reach out to their base. They want to be sure to solidify people who might vote for them, who might think as they do, who might think at least as they promise they will do.

This will also change several key facts for France. French politics and policy matter in the US in a way they have not in some years. The burden now is very much on France to take a good portion of the leadership in the battle against ISIS, the battle against jihadist terrorism, and in the civil war in Syria. I want to outline a couple of suggestions that will come back to my idea that we tend to fit new news into existing patterns and suggest now is a time, for France particularly, to change a couple of its key tenets.



We have to recognise that Barack Obama is still President until 20 January 2017. This is the president who has said in the most telling sentences of his presidency that he ends wars and does not start them. This is the president whose National Security Advisor said two years ago, in essence, that no region, no matter how important it is, can absorb all of America's energies and attention. She was speaking in the context of the Middle East, and it was a way of introducing what has essentially been an effort by the Obama administration to minimise to every extent possible American involvement in the Middle East.

This is the moment in which France and all of the West could benefit from a change in what has been somewhat of a French attitude of taking distance from NATO. The French should take the lead in making these attacks a NATO matter, for one particular reason, which is that Turkey, a key player in whatever will happen, is a NATO member, and it is possible that with EU leverage on Turkey at a very low point, NATO could play a role in trying to get Turkey to play a more straight, more clear, more transparent, and frankly more honourable game in relationship to Syria.

When Hillary Clinton talks about a no-fly zone, it seems that that can only make sense if there are troops to protect a safe haven, a buffer zone, as Turkey in fact has proposed but never followed through on. Therefore, it is a time to think about trying to get a NATO mission to try to convince Turkey that it has a great deal to lose by not cooperating, and worrying less about the Kurds and more about ISIS. France is also aligned with the Sunni powers in the region on the question of Syria. I have in mind Saudi Arabia, the UAE and, as we have just heard, Qatar. France is also aligned much more with these countries on the Iranian nuclear deal than the US certainly is.

Therefore, France has some expertise, some influence and some leverage that it can use, and this is also true in Francois Hollande's outreach to Russia. France lines up more clearly than the US on a number of the questions that these events bring. It is perhaps time to bring a more constructive Russia into more serious conversations about what we do eventually about Syria, what we do about Bashar al-Assad, and seek help. General de Gaulle used to describe France as being equidistant between Washington and Moscow; today, the US is much more of the equidistant player, trying to work somewhat with Russia but not too much. John Kerry is trying to bring Russia along in a more constructive way. While the question of Ukraine poses a major obstacle, I do not see a chance of lifting sanctions because of what is going on in Syria, but my point really is that Russia is essential and that Iran is essential. The US has to come to a recognition of that, and France through its very firm positions can make that much clearer.

I am actually giving you an updated version of a plan that Jean-Davide Levitte presented at the World Policy Conference two or three years ago, and which I thought should have been endorsed immediately. I suppose it was three or four years ago. It was not about trying to work much more closely with Russia and seeking an endgame. I am just throwing these ideas out to get you to contribute some thoughts and to flesh out, or perhaps point out the problems, with these ideas. One of the wisest things Winston Churchill ever said, at the end of the day, was that Americans, after trying every other alternative, will eventually do the right thing. We are in a situation today where that may tend to be true.

I will now turn the floor over to Nelson Cunningham, who is a principal of McLarty Associates, a strategic advisory firm in Washington, and who can give you a much better picture of the domestic implications of the events in Paris than I can. I have tried to concentrate on foreign policy. McLarty Associates, as I say, is a strategic advisory firm and very much emphasises its bipartisan role, but Nelson has been part of the Democratic wing of the association. He has worked for Joe Biden and worked very hard on John Kerry's presidential campaign. He now serves on the Secretary of State's foreign policy board, and he is Vice President of the US Business Council. He is eager to give you his thoughts.