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Analysis: Will France invoke NATO's Article 5 to declare war on Islamic State?

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The lack of a declaration of war from Hollande and NATO is a window into the courtyard of the EU's gingerly foreign policy posture.

To confront comprehensively the Islamic State terrorist attacks on French soil, there have been calls for France's President François Hollande to invoke Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, which ensures mutual defense for its members, but neither Hollande nor the military alliance has activated the provision.

The lack of a declaration of war from Hollande and NATO is a window into the courtyard of the EU's gingerly foreign policy posture.

In short, it can be argued the EU failed to internalize the oft-quoted comment from the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky: "You may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you."

Rewind to 2001. After a group of al-Qaida terrorists smashed planes into the World Trade Center and Pentagon, killing nearly 3,000 Americans, NATO triggered Article 5 to announce military support for the US in the event the US chose to wage war against the terrorists.

Article 5 states that "an armed attack" against European and North American members, as well as Turkey, "shall be considered an attack against them all." As a result, NATO members are obligated to impose military force on a NATO adversary.

Republican presidential candidate Marco Rubio is ahead of the Europeans, saying Sunday: "We should invoke Article 5."

However, the French-born Israeli political scientist Dr.

Emmanuel Navon told The Jerusalem Post on Sunday that Hollande has a "stronger case for article 5" because NATO members UK and US are already fighting Islamic State.

Navon, the director of the political science and communications departments at the Jerusalem Orthodox College, and teacher of international relations at Tel Aviv University and the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, said Hollande could "initiate troops on the ground" to bolster his

article 5 case for NATO involvement.

And he remained skeptical of a French unilateral move.

“Hollande would not have the spine to go it alone in Iraq and Syria without the US,” said Navon.

Turkey invoked Article 4 of the NATO treaty in 2012 because Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan considered his country threatened by Syrian regime ballistic missiles. The less potent Article 4 calls for consultation of military matters rather than actual military action. NATO complied with a deployment of American, Dutch and German Patriot missile interceptors in southern Turkey.

There is a kind of foreign policy cognitive dissonance within the EU with Hollande saying Islamic State committed an “act of war” against his country and declaring that France will fight ISIS in a “merciless” manner but he has not mobilized the French army for combat in the Syrian and Iraqi war theaters.

Germany's president, Joachim Gauck, views the coordinated terrorist attacks as a “new form of war.” His country's foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, has stated that France “does not stand alone,” but offered no German troops or fighter jets to eliminate Islamic State combatants. At least one German was murdered in the Paris attacks.

The NATO alliance, for all the criticism of its European impotence, could certainly regenerate itself and breathe fire into an alliance troop mobilization of at least 500,000 soldiers to wage war in the Middle East against ISIS.

The collateral benefits of a newly invigorated NATO is the message it would send the leading state sponsor of terrorism, Iran, and its subsidiaries Hezbollah and Syrian President Bashar Assad. It is worth recalling that a joint Iran-Hezbollah operation murdered five Israelis and their Bulgarian bus driver in 2012 in Burgas, Bulgaria.

France was a long-standing opponent of including Hezbollah in the European terrorist list.

After Hezbollah invaded Syria in 2013, France agreed to merely sanction Hezbollah's military wing, and Hezbollah still operates its so-called political operations in France.

Garry Kasparov, the world's greatest chess player and author of the new book, *Winter is Coming: Why Vladimir Putin and the Enemies of the Free World Must Be Stopped*, neatly captured France's posture in a tweet that went viral: “You cannot have Libert ,  galit , Fraternit  without S curit .

Passive defense doesn't work.

Go after the murderers & all who support them.”

Some of the responses to the wave of terror have been vigils, hashtags and ubiquitous French flag colors.

Bill Kristol, editor-in-chief of the conservative magazine *The Weekly Standard*, tweeted: “When I see the #PrayforParis hashtag, I can't help but think: Fine, pray for Paris – but pass the ammunition.”

France's government has been remarkably hawkish for socialists. After all, Hollande unilaterally

launched a ground operation to knock out radical Islamists in Mali in 2013, and was itching to launch missiles at Assad in Damascus in 2013 because of his use of chemical weapons. Lastly, Hollande's negotiators sought to secure the most concessions among the West from Iran during the nuclear talks.

Hollande's choice: Bring the war to Islamic State in Europe and Iraq and Syria, or wait again for Islamic State to bring the war again to France.

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