



Charlie Hebdo attack: 'False flag' debate intensifies

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Experts tell Anadolu Agency the fears that 'terror attacks' are being orchestrated to demonise Muslims 'must be considered seriously and investigated'



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Experts have said fears aired in discussions largely on social media and online about the [Charlie Hebdo](#) massacre being associated with "false flag" operations or western agents must be taken seriously after it emerged the two Kouachi brothers accused of the slaughter in Paris had been on British and US intelligence services terror watch lists for years.

Debate over possible motives for the attacks and concerns of possible "orchestration" intensified on Tuesday, a day after a story on a BBC-lookalike web page which raised questions about the authenticity of YouTube footage of the killing of a police officer by a gunman during the [Charlie Hebdo](#) shootings, went viral on social media.

Concerns increased after European media reported that both Cherif and Said Kouachi, who carried out the massacre at the Paris headquarters of the satirical magazine and were later killed in a shoot-out with police in a French village on Friday, had been identified as a "potential terror threat" and placed on a watch and no-fly list by British authorities in 2010.

UK daily The Guardian reported the brothers had been flagged in a U.S. database as "terrorist suspects" and barred from flying into the U.S. after they were identified as being part of a terror cell established in 2003 to send volunteers to Iraq.

The reports added to concerns over the nature and direction of the U.S.-led "war on terror" and motives behind the political and military construct, launched during the George W. Bush administration in the U.S. following the 9/11 events in New York in 2011.

'Europeans opposing wars'

Many online and social media users raised concerns over what many said were a pattern of U.S. and UK intelligence service involvement with the perpetrators of "terror" attacks.

Dr. Paul Craig Roberts, Associate editor at the Wall Street Journal and Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Treasury under the Reagan Administration, told Anadolu Agency on Tuesday that the events in Paris appeared to have been a "false flag" operation carried out with the involvement of Western intelligence agencies, in order to bring France "back into Washington's orbit" and to "realign Europe with Israel".

Roberts explained: "I don't say it was a false flag operation. I say it has the marks of a such.

"Another reason would be to get rid of the rising opposition in Europe against more Middle Eastern wars."

He went on: "Considering the number of journalists on war fronts who have been killed by Washington-funded and organized ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant), the uproar over the cartoonists' deaths has the appearance of orchestration.

"Whether or not it is a false flag operation, the shootings are clearly being used for a wider purpose or purposes, to create hatred against Muslims and support the 'war on terror', launched by then-U.S. President George W. Bush immediately after September 11."

'War with Iran'

His comments added to concerns long-debated on social media over comments made in 2007 by retired 4-star U.S. Army general Wesley Clark, the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO during the 1999 War on Yugoslavia.

Clark said in a video interview in 2007 with U.S. journalist Amy Goodman of Democracy Now that a classified memo referred to him by a general of the U.S. Joint Staff during the initial bombings of Afghanistan showed: "We're going to take out seven countries in five years, starting with Iraq, and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and - finishing off - Iran."

Daniele Ganser, director of the Swiss Institute for Peace and Energy Research (SIPER), told Anadolu Agency: "Researchers must try to find out whether the recent terrorist attacks in Paris were a false flag operation carried out in order to discredit Muslims globally and justify the bombing of Muslim nations, which has been going on for many years now and continues.

He explained: "During the Cold War, 'false flag' terrorist attacks were carried out in Europe by criminals linked to European secret services, the CIA and also NATO.

"A network of secret armies known as 'Gladio' prepared for secret warfare in case of a Soviet invasion."

'Britain manipulates radicals'

He went on: "During that time, the official enemy of Washington and NATO was communist Russia.

"In the absence of an invasion, criminals within the Gladio network carried out terrorist attacks in Italy and other countries and planted fake evidence in order to discredit the Communists."

Ganser observed that NATO countries have bombed several Muslim countries in recent years, including Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq and Syria.

Kevin Barrett, editor at U.S. war veterans' online news site, Veterans Today, said on Monday: "The British government has a long history of working with radical Salafi and Wahhabi figures, which it protects and manipulates in order to achieve its political objectives."

Spoof BBC story

Their comments came a day after a story on a BBC-lookalike web page which raised questions about the authenticity of YouTube footage of the killing of a police officer by a gunman during the Charlie Hebdo shootings in Paris last week went viral on social media.

The false story stated that a "video clip broadcast by news agencies across the world in relation to the recent events in Paris is now under scrutiny" referring to perceived anomalies in a YouTube video of the actual [Charlie Hebdo](#) massacre.

The web link pointed to the existence of what it described as "place markers" in the video of two gunmen killing a police officer - two dark lines at a right angle on the road where the gunmen's car is centered when the video begins, as well as a shoe positioned squarely in front of the car door from which the armed passenger exits.

The text suggested a break in the footage which appeared after the policeman was "apparently" shot in the head, showed after it restarted the passenger-side gunman returning to the vehicle, which then appeared to be sited slightly behind its original position - with a second dark line at right-angles to the road direction showing up more clearly by the offside front wheel.

U.S. military expansion

The gunman then picked up the shoe and carried it with him back into the car.

The text also quoted a "David Mayhew" saying: "If the video shows events as they actually occurred, then in my opinion it is most likely that the firearm shown is discharging blanks rather than conventional ammunition", describing him as a "forensic and ballistics expert".

The fake article concludes: "Whilst numerous theories have sprung up concerning this and other details, the general consensus among not just skeptics, but some major news agencies, is that the entire event was a 'False Flag' attack perpetrated by the CIA and/or Mossad in a "psy-ops" exercise to rouse hatred against Islam and support for what has been so far, a failing campaign in Iraq, Syria and the Middle East".

Such discussions mirrored authentic critics on the internet and social media sites who have repeatedly voiced concern over what the U.S.-led "war on terror" and the constant military expansion and warring led by the U.S. which has marked the post-9/11 period.