

Jeffrey Herf: One way in which the West can and ought to defend itself is to wage a war of ideas with Islamism. After the attack on Charlie Hebdo and the Kosher supermarket in Paris in 2015, the Prime Minister of France Manuel Valls gave a speech in the National Assembly in which he became the first Western politician to say that we are at war with Islamism. And I think that's true and I think that to say so publicly has nothing to do with Islamophobia. It's not Islamophobia, it's simply realism. And so for the West to defend itself effectively, it needs to speak frankly about those people who say publicly they want to destroy us. In 1984, I published a book called *Reactionary Modernism*, which was a book about Germany in Weimar and Nazi Germany. What the reactionary modernists then argued was that Germany could become technologically modern while rejecting aspects of the liberal tradition. And what we are seeing, whether it's with Al Qaeda or ISIS or North Korea or Iran, are states and movements that want to become modern but not liberal. And I view that as certainly one of the central political developments of the 21st century. And so indifference is not an option. Every president of United States understands this perfectly well that technology is spreading around the world more rapidly than commonsense and liberal ideas. So speaking frankly about this is one thing that the West needs to do to defend themselves.