The Islamist Threat to European Security

by Leslie Lebl

Growing Muslim populations in Europe affect European security in a variety of ways from changes in voting patterns and military recruitment; to the proliferation of Islamist groups espousing goals antithetical to Western values and interests; to the development of no-go zones where traditional Islamic law, or Shari'a, is replacing Western law; to Islamist attempts to influence and exploit European policies toward conflicts in the Muslim world.

Growing Muslim Populations

European attitudes toward Muslims are influenced by the expectation that Muslim populations in Europe, which have grown rapidly in the past several decades, will continue to increase in the future and constitute a greater percentage of the total population.[1]

With that in mind, in 2010, Muslims accounted for an estimated 5 percent of Europe's total population or almost 27 million out of more than 536 million people. While European Muslim fertility has declined, it still exceeds that of the native populations: By 2030, through immigration and natural increase, the total Muslim population is projected to grow by 44 percent to more than 38 million or just under 7 percent of the total population.[2]

While today's overall percentage of European Muslims seems relatively small, their impact is greater than one would expect as they are clustered in certain urban areas and in countries of strategic importance. Western Europe, where the growth in

The first Muslim fair in Brussels in 2012 (above) had more than 20,000 visitors. In Brussels, an estimated 22 percent of residents are Muslims, and the Muslim quarter is only a few underground stops away from the European Union headquarters. In London, Muslims dominate the borough of Tower Hamlets; in Paris, Clichy-sous-Bois; in Berlin, the Kreutzberg neighborhood. In both Malmö, Sweden, in the north and Marseilles in the south, Muslims account for an estimated quarter of the population.

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[1] For the purposes of this article, "Europe" is defined as comprising the members of NATO and the EU, as well as Switzerland. Turkey is excluded because it is a Muslim majority (and Middle Eastern) country.

[2] Numbers are derived from "The Future of the Global Muslim Population," Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C., Jan. 2011; "Europe in Figures: Eurostat Yearbook 2012," European Commission, Luxembourg, 2011; "2012 Revision of the World Population Prospects," U.N. Department of Economics and Social Affairs, New York, June 2013.

Muslim populations is expected to be the greatest, includes the three foremost NATO countries (Britain, France, and Germany) as well as Belgium, where NATO is headquartered. Belgium and France are projected to have Muslim minorities of greater than 10 percent by 2030.

The actual percentage of Muslims in some urban areas is quite high. In London, they dominate the borough of Tower Hamlets; in Paris, Clichy-sous-Bois; in Brussels, the commune of Molenbeek; and in Berlin, the Kreutzberg neighborhood. In both Malmö, Sweden, in the north and Marseilles in the south, Muslims account for an estimated quarter of the population. In Brussels, an estimated 22 percent of residents are Muslims.[3] In addition, Muslim populations already have a higher proportion of young people than does the surrounding populace. While long-term predictions are risky, no one expects the relative share of Muslims to decrease. It is much more likely to grow significantly, particularly in such major cities as Amsterdam, Brussels, Marseilles, or Stockholm.[4]

In a democracy, interest groups often shape security policy as they increase in size and influence. Muslims have already begun to influence European elections. They were the deciding factor in a significant number of constituencies in the 2010 British elections[5] and may also have decided the recent presidential elections in France where, of some two million French Muslims who voted, an estimated 93 percent, or 1.7 million, chose François Hollande, who received only 1.1 million votes more than former president Nicholas Sarkozy.[6] Belgian academic Felice Dassetto notes that the structure provided by mosques and Islamic associations in Brussels attracts politicians from various parties who are eager to win Muslim votes. So far, parties that clearly identify themselves as Islamic have attracted few votes, but that could change.[7] The Muslim influence will presumably expand as its population increases though it is unclear whether Muslim voting patterns will continue to be as unified.

Military Recruitment and Questions of Loyalty

Changing demographics will also affect the number and type of military recruits available, particularly for the three largest European countries already mentioned. Given the population drop in "ethnic Germans," the Ministry of Defense has already acknowledged, "Demographic developments make recruitment difficult for the Bundeswehr [the German armed

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3 Christopher Caldwell, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), pp. 132-3; *The Spectator* (London), Nov. 12, 2005; *The Brussels Journal*, Aug. 28, 2009; *The New York Times*, Dec. 4, 2005; Felice Dassetto, *L'iris et le croissant: Bruxelles et l'Islam au défi de la co-inclusion* (Louvain: Presses Universitaires de Louvain, 2011), p. 23.

4 Daniel Pipes, "Muslim Populations in European Cities," DanielPipes.org, Dec. 29, 2007; Daniel Greenfield, "Inside France's Future Muslim-Majority City," *FrontPage Magazine*, July 31, 2012.

5 *Saudi Gazette* (Riyadh), Apr. 25, 2010, identified 82 out of 650 constituencies where the Muslim vote could be decisive.

6 Soeren Kern, "Muslim Voters Change Europe," Gatestone Institute, New York, May 17, 2012; Nidra Poller, "How Islamism Tainted France's Presidential Election," *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2013, pp. 81-6; *The Washington Times*, Apr. 19, 2012.

7 Dassetto, *L'iris et le croissant*, pp. 126-9.

forces]."[8] The problem became even more complicated after Germany discontinued the draft in 2011. While some authorities look to Germany's Turkish immigrant population as a new source of recruits,[9] others wonder how this will work in practice. For example, the warm welcome German-based Turks gave Ankara's Islamist prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during his 2011 visit may be cause for concern if their leadership endorses his call not to assimilate into German society.[10] The call by Bekir Alboga, a German-Turkish leader, at the 2013 annual German Islamic Conference (Deutsche Islamkonferenz) for equal treatment of Islam, more university faculties of Islamic theology, and wider acceptance of head scarves,

Changing demographics will affect the number and type of military recruits available in European countries. In Germany, for example, some authorities look to Germany's Turkish immigrant population as a new source of recruits while others wonder about the effects. The warm welcome German-based Turks gave Ankara's Islamist prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during his March 2011 visit prompted some concern when Erdoğan called for immigrants not to assimilate into German society. He urged immigrant children to learn Turkish first, then German.

along with an attack on German "Islamophobia" for causing tension between Muslims and Germans suggests that the prospects for assimilation are poor.[11] The Turkish government also rejected a proposal by German defense minister Thomas De Maizière to lift the requirement for Germans of Turkish origin to serve in the Turkish military if they served at least fifteen months in the Bundeswehr.[12]

The British and French military establishments are already assessing barriers to Muslim enlistment as well as constraints that Muslim soldiers may seek to place on possible military operations but have yet to come up with solutions. In a recent study, British analyst Shiraz Maher contrasted today's attitudes of Muslim soldiers with those in the past, particularly during World War I. Then, British Muslim soldiers remained loyal to the crown despite the fact that they were fighting Turkey, the Muslim empire that was home to the caliphate. Among other things, Muslim leaders of that time were successful in defining the conflict as a political, not religious, war.[13]

Making the case today for various British Muslims to fight other Muslims appears to be much more difficult. Currently, very few Muslims serve in the British armed forces: The percentage rose only slightly from .2 percent in 2008 to .3 percent in 2010.[14] British military authorities appear to

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8 "Defence Policy Guidelines," German Ministry of Defence, Office of the Minister, Berlin, May 18, 2011, p. 14.

9 *Rheinische Post* (Düsseldorf), July 13, 2012.

10 *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), Feb. 28, 2011.

11 Bekir Alboga, speech to the Deutsche Islamkonferenz, Berlin, May 7, 2013; Soeren Kern, "Muslims Demand Germany 'Make Islam Equal to Christianity,'" Gatestone Institute, New York, May 15, 2013.

12 Soeren Kern, "European Armies Recruiting Muslim Soldiers," Gatestone Institute, New York, July 13, 2012.

13 Shiraz Maher, *Ties that Bind: How the story of Britain's Muslim Soldiers can forge a national identity* (London: Policy Exchange, 2011), pp. 27-37.

14 Ibid., p. 78.

be battling accusations of low prestige and racism as well as repeated charges that they are engaged in a war against Islam.

Since France prohibits the collection of personal data on religious identification, no exact data is available on Muslim participation in the French armed forces. A study conducted in 2005, identifying Muslims indirectly via personal contacts, family names, etc., concluded that many Muslim service members were committed to the French military and to French political ideals despite continued discrimination.[15] However, the study reported concerns among more senior Muslim service members regarding the commitment and quality of younger recruits, many drawn from French ghettoes.[16] The French press reported a 2009 incident in which French Muslim soldiers refused to fight in Afghanistan[17] while the 2012 murders of soldiers of Maghreb origin by terrorist Mohamed Merah in Toulouse and a May 2013 attack on a soldier in Paris were presumably intended to discourage Muslims from serving in the French military.

The threat of attacks by Muslim soldiers on other service members is unclear. This question could be particularly sensitive for Germany, which has seen the emergence of a Turkish-based jihadist group, the Islamic Jihad Union, which seeks European members. German intelligence and law enforcement agencies track individuals whom they identify as national security threats, but it is unclear what scrutiny military recruits receive.

Underlying these difficulties is the basic question of loyalty: Do European Muslims consider themselves true citizens of their new country and will they fight for it if necessary? A 2009 Pew survey on the question offers ambiguous results: Large majorities of French, German, and British Muslims consider themselves to be loyal to the state (80 percent, 71 percent, and 82 percent, respectively).[18] The non-Muslim citizen remains suspicious, however, with 44 percent, 39 percent, and 49 percent respectively skeptical of their Islamic neighbors' allegiance. A good part of that doubt is likely the result of the role played in these countries by the Islamists.

The European Islamists

European Muslims come from different countries and different traditions; some are religiously observant while others see their connection to Islam as cultural or even unimportant. Some are newly arrived while others are second or third generation descendants of immigrants. Still others are European converts to Islam. Despite this patchwork quilt, common behavior patterns are emerging throughout Europe and, in particular, characterize the sympathies of young second- and third-generation immigrants. A critical commonality is Islamism, defined here as a twentieth-century political ideology, based on religion, whose stated aim is to replace Western legal systems with Islamic law (Shari'a).

While applying any separate legal code is destructive of the state's monopoly on power, implementing Shari'a would be particularly destructive as it is fundamentally incompatible with Western law. It is based on inequality, rather than equality: Women

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[15] Catherine Withol de Wenden and Christophe Bertossi, "Les militaires français issus de l'immigration," Centre d'Études en Sciences Sociales de la Defense, Institut Français des Relations Internationales, Paris, CCEP 99 SOC, 2003/Mar. DEF/ C2SD/2003, 2005, no. 61.

[16] Ibid., pp. 151-8.

[17] *Le Figaro* (Paris), Jan. 14, 2009.

[18] "The Gallup Coexist Index of 2009: A Global Study of Interfaith Relations," Center for Muslim Studies, Washington, D.C., 2009, p. 20.

are not equal to men, nor are non-Muslims to Muslims; nor does it recognize such principles as freedom of speech, press, or religion. Moreover, as it is based on the Qur'an—considered to be the unalterable word of God—any dispute must, in the final analysis, be resolved by religious rather than legal, civilian, or political authorities.

Islamists have traditionally been divided into two groups, the violent and the nonviolent. Typically, the violent Islamist pursues jihad or holy war openly while his nonviolent counterpart publicly eschews it. Nonviolent Islamists usually engage in proselytization or *da'wa*, participate in democratic institutions, and are often viewed by the credulous as having accepted Western values.

The most influential of these so-called nonviolent groups is the Muslim Brotherhood (which for years retained the nonviolent label, despite the fact that its motto calls for jihad). Although relatively small in actual numbers, it is without a doubt the most vocal and prominent of the nonviolent groups. It dominates a wide network of organizations throughout Europe similar to the front organizations favored by past totalitarian movements. As analyst Lorenzo Vidino observes, while the core leaders typically belong to the Muslim Brotherhood, much of the general membership does not.[19] Typically, members of the Muslim Brotherhood can be identified through a combination of personal and financial ties as well as ideological statements and actions. Members can also be identified by an informal allegiance to Sheikh Yousef al-Qaradawi, considered by many to be the group's spiritual leader.

Exploiting the desire of European politicians and government officials to develop dialogues with Muslim communities in their midst, the Muslim Brotherhood has established a high profile in many Western countries. This desire plays directly to Islamist strengths: It defines individuals according to their religion, or community, rather than treating them as citizens and assumes a degree of cohesion among Muslims that they lack in reality. As a result, Islamist groups have been allowed to speak for a Muslim community they do not really represent and which may not even exist as a singular unit. In fact, they are promoting their own goals, creating a feedback mechanism that enhances their standing among fellow Muslims while simultaneously shaping government policies.

This pattern is clear if one looks at the umbrella groups with whom European governments discuss issues related to Muslims:

- The British government encouraged the establishment of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) in 1997[20] and then worked closely with it, in particular to combat Islamist terrorism, but ignored the links of MCB leaders to Islamist organizations such as the Pakistani-based Jamaat-e-Islami and the Muslim Brotherhood.[21]
- The French government organized an Islamic umbrella organization in 2003—the Conseil français du culte musulman or French Council of the Muslim Faith—but one of its key members is the Union of Islamic Organizations in France, a group

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[19] Lorenzo Vidino, *The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 42-53.

[20] David Rich, "The Very Model of a British Muslim Brotherhood," in Barry Rubin, ed., *The Muslim Brotherhood* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 122.

[21] Vidino, *The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West*, pp. 122-3.

affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood.[22]

- The German Islamic Conferences convened by the German interior ministry include the Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland (Central Council for Muslims in Germany) as one of its five Muslim organizations. The Central Council includes the Islamic Community in Germany, which in turn grew out of the Islamic Center in Munich set up by Said Ramadan, son-in-law of Muslim Brotherhood founder, Hassan al-Banna.[23]
- The European-wide umbrella organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe, moved its headquarters to Brussels in 2007.[24] Thus, European Union officials meet regularly with senior Brotherhood officials.

Islamist groups do not monopolize contacts with European governments. Moderate leaders such as former grand mufti of Marseilles, Soheib Bencheikh, are still important as are national networks set up by Moroccans, Algerians, and others. But the Islamists have connections to the deep pockets of Saudi and gulf state funding and have by far the most powerful linkages to the Muslim world.

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[22] Farhad Khosrokhavar, "The Muslim Brotherhood in France," in Rubin, ed., *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 138-9.

[23] Guido Steinberg, "The Muslim Brotherhood in Germany," in Rubin, ed., *The Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 149-52.

[24] Ibid., p. 157.

Parallel Societies and No-go Zones

But can the Islamists' goals coexist with those of the Western societies, among whom they live, and do these goals advance Western strategic interests? An examination of Islamist-dominated communities within Europe proper provides a categorical no.

Firstly, there is the value of tolerance of others' viewpoints, at the very least an aspiration of all Western societies. As articulated by Ali Kettani, one of the first Muslim writers to actively explore the ramifications of Muslim communities in the West, "Believing that all religions are the same is the first sign of religious assimilation" and needs to be discouraged. Instead, he wrote:

> A Muslim community should try to move from a position of mere defensive concerns, and try to spread the message of Islam outside the community. If successful, such a community would grow constantly in influence and numbers as to become a majority community in course of time. To become a "successful community" should be the aim of every "Muslim minority." This is an ideological necessity without which the entire presence of the minority would be Islamically unacceptable.[25]

Rather than demonstrate hostility toward non-Muslims, Muslims were to engage with them and seek to convert them to Islam. But this proselytization for a different outlook or behavior based on religion was not to be restricted to the relatively benign arena of one's personal

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[25] M. Ali Kettani, "The Problems of Muslim Minorities and Their Solutions," in *Muslim Communities in Non-Muslim States* (London: Islamic Council of Europe, 1980), pp. 103-4.

spiritual development. Rather, the ultimate goal was to change the politics of the host country:

> Eventually, the community may seek to gain political rights as a constituent community of the nation. Once these rights are obtained, then the community should seek to generalize its characteristics to the entire nation.[26]

In other words, Shari'a should replace Western law, and Islam should dominate. This matches the contemporary vision of Muslim Brotherhood spiritual leader Qaradawi as expressed on Qatar television in 2007:
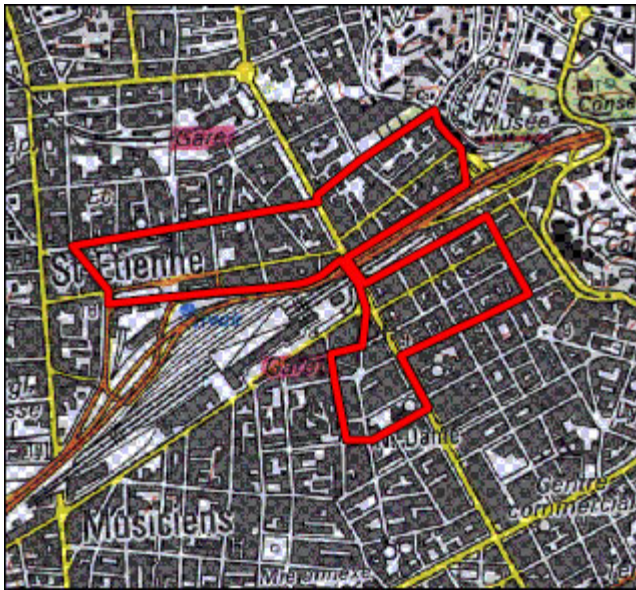
A "Zone Sensible Urbaine," or no-go-zone, Nice, France. The French government now posts online a list of more than 750 no-go zones where an estimated five million Muslims live. Tourists and non-Muslims are urged to avoid these areas, over which the French state has lost control and where French law does not apply.

The conquest of Rome—the conquest of Italy and Europe—means that Islam will return to Europe once again. But must this conquest necessarily be through war? No. There is such a thing as a peaceful conquest … The peaceful conquest has foundations in this religion, and therefore I expect that Islam will conquer Europe without resorting to the sword or fighting. It will do so by *da'wa* and ideology.[27]

Thirty years after Kettani's writing, the results of this effort are both impressive and disturbing but far from peaceful:

- The French government now posts online a list of more than 750 *zones sensibles urbaines* or no-go zones where an estimated five million Muslims live.[28] Tourists and non-Muslims are urged to avoid these areas, over which the French state has lost control and where French law does not apply.
- A senior German police commissioner reported that there were areas where the "power of the state is completely out of the picture."[29] In 2010, the police union in North Rhine-Westphalia brought in Turkish police

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26 Kettani, "The Problems of Muslim Minorities and Their Solutions," p. 105.

27 "Qaradhawi: Islam's Conquest of Rome,'" Qatar TV, July 28, 2007, trans. Middle East Media Research Institute, Washington, D.C., video no. 1592.

28 *Atlas des Zones urbaines sensibles,* SIG du Secrétariat général du CIV, République Francaise, Paris, accessed Dec. 27, 2013.

29 *Der Spiegel*, Jan. 8, 2011, author's translation.

to help control Turkish populations in major cities.[30]

- The Netherlands government, under the pressure of a court order, published its list of 40-50 no-go zones in major Dutch cities.[31]
- In the United Kingdom, Islamist leader Anjem Choudhary has launched an Islamic Emirates Project naming a dozen British cities or parts of cities as territories that should be brought under Shari'a rule under the motto: "The end of man-made law, and the start of Sharia law."[32]
- In Brussels, the Muslim ghettoes are becoming dangerous for non-Muslims as well as for women who venture into the cafes or date non-Muslim men.[33]

Indeed, Islamist "morality police" in numerous European cities now seek to prohibit women in short skirts, prostitutes, homosexuals, or people consuming alcohol in areas they designate as Muslim. Former Islamist Maajid Nawaz, now head of the British counter-extremism think tank Quilliam, notes that Islamists as well as far-right groups are seeking to "enforce their version of law in neighbourhoods." He links the Islamist enforcers to a wider pattern of al-Qaeda resurgence and jihadist activity in many countries and worries that "the Islamist world view is an entrenched default position even among many non-devout British Muslims."[34]

But the constrictive values of European Islamists are not limited to their co-religionists. The next step is to dominate surrounding non-Muslim communities. Some moves may seem innocuous such as demands that schools or prisons serve food meeting Islamic requirements or that public swimming pools provide segregated hours for women. Blocking streets for public prayers is a step further along the path; law-abiding citizens are being told in essence that the streets, at least for that period of time, belong to one group alone.

An even more alarming transfer of power from the state to an assertive minority is the increase in street crime in Muslim-majority areas (and not only those areas) because authorities fear exacerbating tensions or, worse, fear for their own safety. Oslo police authorities have reported that the majority of identified rapes in 2011 were committed by males of "non-Western background."[35] British courts tried cases in 2012 and 2013 in which "Asian" gangs lured pre-teen and teenage girls off the streets and made them sex slaves whom they hired out.[36] "Non-Western background" and "Asian" are two common euphemisms for "Muslim"; this recourse to circumlocution indicates how far the Islamists' campaign of intimidation and dominance has already succeeded. These actions reflect the criminal desires of the perpetrators, but they exist in tandem with

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[30] *Die Welt* (Hamburg), July 19, 2010.

[31] Soeren Kern, "European 'No-Go' Zones for Non-Muslims Proliferating," Gatestone Institute, New York, Aug. 22, 2011.

[32] Soeren Kern, "Britain's 'Islamic Emirates Project,'" Gatestone Institute, New York, July 21, 2011.

[33] Luckas Vander Taelen, "De Getto's van Brussel," *De Standaard*, Sept. 30, 2009. See "Brussels: The Ghettos of Brussels," *Islam in Europe Blog*, Sept. 30, 2009.

[34] National Secular Society, London, Jan. 31, 2013.

[35] "Norwegian TV Station Presents Latest Figures on 2005-2010 Assaults in Oslo," *European Union Times*, June 2, 2011.

[36] *The Huffington Post* (New York), Mar. 28, 2012; *The Telegraph* (London), Jan. 17, 2013.

Shari'a provisions on non-Muslim women and their lack of value.

Indeed, according to press reports, the streets of some European cities are increasingly controlled by Islamic gangs.[37] The gangs themselves may simply be engaging in criminal activity and use no-go zones as a convenient refuge or base of operations. Their connection to Islam may be purely pragmatic. As one British gang member put it, "The reality is that Asian gangs don't give much of a toss about religion, but with Islam comes fear, and with fear comes power."[38] But such power ought to belong to the state and its representatives alone. A breakdown in authority of this fashion bodes no good for European society as a whole.

The Muslim Association of Britain, linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, turned out an estimated crowd of 100,000 in April 2002 in London to protest the Israeli foray into Jenin. Such groups as the MAB are capable of enhancing the Islamist influence and political power in Europe.

Manufacturing and Exploiting Crises

While the existence of no-go zones in and of itself poses a substantial challenge to the internal security of West European countries, the true challenge is even greater as Islamists also seek to change more than just domestic mores. The Danish cartoon crisis of late 2005-early 2006 illustrates this plainly.

While the rage of Muslims over the supposedly blasphemous depictions of Muhammad is well-known, what is less acknowledged is that two Danish imams with connections to the Muslim Brotherhood traveled to various Muslim countries at this time, promoting outrage (and worse) against the cartoons and adding new, highly offensive ones to make their case even stronger. Among others, they met with Qaradawi. Eventually, the Arab League and Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), representing fifty-six Muslim countries, decided to back the imams, and an international firestorm erupted.[39]

Individuals connected with the cartoons faced assassination threats. Turkey, led by the Islamist Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, extracted a groveling promise to work with the Muslim world from former Danish prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen as a precondition for him to become NATO secretary general.[40] Rasmussen's offense was to have defended the freedom of the press of his country during the controversy. Thus the European Islamists, working with Muslim governments, were able both to manufacture a crisis and then force a senior European politician to do their bidding.

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[37] *The Sun* (London), Feb. 15, 2010.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Pernille Ammitzbøll and Lorenzo Vidino, "After the Danish Cartoon Controversy," *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2007, pp. 3-11.

[40] Daniel Pipes, "Does Turkey Still Belong in NATO?" DanielPipes.org, Apr. 6, 2009.

The impact on foreign and security policy by the Islamists who claim to represent Europe's Muslims is only beginning to emerge. Muslim leaders' chief concern so far appears to be European policies toward Muslims and Muslim countries, as well as the Arab-Israeli conflict. But what must be borne in mind is that most of the countries whose instability can affect Europe are Muslim.

It should be added that while Islamists have become increasingly active, the foreign policy positions they espouse have also been advocated by others, making their specific contribution to outcomes unclear. What is certain, however, is that their engagement has greatly benefited them, demonstrating that these groups are capable of both considerable policy flexibility and of enhancing Islamist influence and political power in Europe.

Take the response to the outbreak of Yasser Arafat's war of terror (euphemized as the *al-Aqsa Intifada* after the mosque in Jerusalem) in September 2000. While the umbrella Muslim Council of Britain was reluctant to endanger its standing with the government and the British establishment by plunging into the fray, the smaller Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, had no such qualms. In April 2002, it turned out an estimated crowd of 100,000 in London to protest the Israeli foray into Jenin which, despite all evidence to the contrary, was widely labeled a massacre.[41]

The following September, as Saddam Hussein refused to comply with international demands to come clean on Iraq's non-conventional weapons arsenal, the MAB partnered with the far-left Stop the War Coalition (StWC) to mount a large joint demonstration in Trafalgar Square. Subsequently, StWC went on to organize more than twenty rallies, including a huge February 2003 demonstration against the imminent Iraq war.[42] The MAB skillfully exploited resistance to the unpopular war in Iraq, a powerful issue because it directly affected British citizens, while fomenting further opposition to Israel, a cause that has continued long after Britain withdrew its forces from Iraq. The MAB had to counter opposition from other Islamists to any political engagement with non-Muslims as well as protests from some of its activists who felt exploited by the "secular white Left."[43] However, the collaboration rested on the firm ideological conviction that "anti-Zionism and opposition to Western foreign policy were the founding principles of the left-Islamist alliance and remains [*sic*] its energizing core."[44]

And there were practical benefits, too. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), normally a marginal actor, was particularly delighted with the MAB's ability to turn out large crowds of truculent demonstrators. From a small group with 400 members, MAB catapulted to prominence and found political legitimacy. The concrete embodiment of this new-found legitimacy was the emergence of the Respect Party, which included members of the MAB, the Muslim Council of Britain and the far-left SWP. The Respect Party did well in the May 2007 elections although it subsequently fell apart in the 2010 general elections.

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[41] Vidino, *The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West*, pp. 140-1; Hersh Goodman and Jonathan Cummings, eds., *The Battle of Jenin: A Case Study in Israel's Communications Strategy* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, 2003), pp. 10-1.

[42] *BBC News*, Feb. 16, 2003.

[43] Richard Phillips, "Standing Together: The Muslim Association of Britain and the Anti-war Movement," *Race & Class*, 2008, no. 2, p. 109.

[44] David Rich, "The Very Model of a British Muslim Brotherhood," in Rubin, ed., *The Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 123.

While the MAB's antiwar activities pitted it against the British establishment, by February 2006, some of its members had formed a new organization, the British Muslim Initiative (BMI). With Qatari funding, the new outfit has organized annual meetings of IslamExpo, a large cultural gathering that attracts tens of thousands of British Muslims and presents it as mainstream.[45] BMI has also established an Arab television channel, al-Hiwar, which boasts some two million viewers in Europe, the Mideast, and North Africa.[46] Its chairman Azzam Tamimi, in the past, expressed his willingness to become a suicide bomber.[47]

In mid-2009, a new Islamist entity emerged. The Middle East Monitor (MEMO), a public relations and opinions website and activist organization is led by Daud Abdullah, a former deputy secretary general of the Muslim Council of Britain; Tariq Ramadan, grandson of Brotherhood founder Hassan Banna, is an adviser. In a relatively short time, MEMO has acquired considerable respectability, with some of its concrete foreign policy initiatives gaining traction. It organized a trip for mainstream journalists in May 2010 to Syria and Lebanon, which prompted an interview with Hamas leader Khalid Mashal by *The Guardian*. It was also a strong proponent of the effort to bring alleged Israeli war criminals to justice, an initiative that complicated relations between the British government and Israel when Israeli

government and military officials canceled trips to the U.K. to avoid arrest.[48]

Thus, despite fissiparous organizational structures, shifting alliances, and occasional criticism for their radicalism, Islamist organizations have used Middle Eastern conflicts to improve their standing, gaining recognition as the face of Islam and acquiring influence with the British government and establishment.

NATO's Libyan Intervention

In contrast to their positions vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict or Western intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan, European Islamists supported NATO's 2011 intervention in Libya. While organizationally they benefited from opposition to Israel and to the war in Iraq, support for NATO actions in Libya may have benefited them even more.

The beginning of the revolt against Mu'ammar Qaddafi on February 17, 2011, was anything but accidental. This date was deliberately selected to commemorate protests in Benghazi five years earlier in response to the Danish cartoons of Muhammad.[49] As this anti-Qaddafi wave of protest ensued, Qaradawi issued a *fatwa* (religious edict) "obliging any Libyan soldier who had the opportunity to do so to assassinate the leader"[50] while the British Muslim Brotherhood openly supported its fellow Islamist groups in Libya. Abdulmonem Hresha, an exiled member of the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood, welcomed

[45] Phillips, "Standing Together," pp. 107-8; Rich, "The Very Model of a British Muslim Brotherhood," p. 129.

[46] Ehud Rosen, "Mapping the Organizational Sources of the Global Delegitimization Campaign against Israel in the UK," Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2010, p. 27.

[47] Shiraz Maher and Martyn Frampton, *Choosing our friends wisely: Criteria for engagement with Muslim groups* (London: Policy Exchange, 2009), p. 13.

[48] Rosen, "Mapping the Organizational Sources," p. 34. This provision of law was repealed in 2011: See "UK amends law that allows arrest of Israeli officials," *YNet News* (Tel Aviv), Sept. 15, 2011.

[49] John Rosenthal, "The Libyan Revolution: Democracy of 'Purity of Islam'?" *The National Review*, Nov. 15, 2011.

[50] CNN, Mar. 25, 2011.

NATO air strikes in the group's name while Amin Bilhaj, then president of the Muslim Association of Britain, was identified as "a leading figure in the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood."[51]

Islamist connections to the Libyan opposition proliferated. Sheikh Ali Sallabi, one of Qaradawi's close associates in Qatar, oversaw the emirate's support to the rebels and is now the leader of Libya's Islamist movement.[52] Sallabi supports basing Libya's next constitution on Shari'a, following the gradualist models of Islamists in Turkey and Tunisia.[53] Qaradawi also has ties to Sheikh Hamza Abu Fas, Libya's minister of religious affairs, who has attended meetings of two organizations headed by Qaradawi: the International Union for Muslim Scholars and the European Council on Fatwa and Research.[54] In November 2011, Hamza called for overturning an existing law that allowed a first wife to veto marriage to a second wife, advocated for thieves to have their hands amputated as dictated by Islamic jurisprudence, and called for only Islamic-sanctioned banking in Libya.[55] Not only has Hamza been linked to the al-Qaeda-connected terrorist group, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), but "at least three al-Qaeda-linked militants … played leading roles in the anti-Qaddafi uprising … one of them, the historical leader of the LIFG Abdul Hakim Belhadj, would emerge as the military governor of the Libyan capital."[56] A number of Egyptian and Libyan sources have alleged that the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, including Brotherhood leader and former Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi, played a direct role in the September 11, 2012, terrorist attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi.[57] So far there have been no such allegations regarding the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood, but there is little doubt that their ties to terrorist organizations helped foster a favorable environment in Libya for such an attack.

While it may be premature to conclude that Islamism has triumphed in Libya, there is no doubt that leading European Islamists saw an opening and pursued it in an intelligent and coordinated fashion, positioning themselves to play a dominant role in post-conflict Libya while enhancing their standing with the British and French establishments.

Conclusions

The European experience with parallel societies and no-go zones suggests that accommodationist trends and demands for Islamist prerogatives have the potential to seriously damage the internal security of European states and greatly constrain their ability to participate in NATO operations in Muslim countries. If these trends continue, European military organizations will be increasingly unsure of the loyalty of their service members while governments will face continuing pressure to extend Muslim enclaves and impose Shari'a more broadly. European governments may either decline to participate in crisis management operations in Muslim countries or do so only if European Islamists decide that such operations are acceptable.

[51] Ibid.

[52] *The Telegraph*, Nov. 10, 2011.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Daniel Greenfield, "Meet Libya's New Islamist Boss," *FrontPage Magazine* (Sherman Oaks, Calif.), Nov. 10, 2011.

[55] *The Australian* (Sydney), Nov. 7, 2011.

[56] Jonathan Rosenthal, "The Islamist Plot: The Untold Story of the Libyan Rebellion," *National Review*, Feb. 17, 2012.

[57] Raymond Ibrahim, "Behind Benghazi: Muslim Brotherhood and Obama Administration," *Human Events*, Aug. 16, 2013.

The first step in solving these problems is to acknowledge them. Several years ago, the leaders of France, Germany, and Britain conceded that the policy of multiculturalism, which paved the way for separate, internal Muslim societies, had failed. But now European leaders must publicly articulate the reasons why all citizens and residents must adhere to European laws rather than Shari'a. They must then reassert their authority in all no-go areas within their territory.

European governments should also state openly their opposition to Islamist goals, including the establishment of a global caliphate (whether called by that name or not), and they must stop the entrenched practice of assuming that Islamists speak for all Muslims. Further, as they explain that the imposition of Shari'a would negate centuries of Western progress in human and civil rights, they must vigorously enforce those rights for all those now residing in their countries. And they must address the sensitive topic of immigration policy, rather than shy away from it. An open discussion of Islamist goals would also help to clarify the objectives of any proposed crisis management operations, making it more likely that future operations would in fact promote freedom and democracy rather than Islamist interests.

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