

# THE CARAVAN

A Publication of the Hoover Institution on Contemporary Dilemmas in the Greater Middle East

## HOW SHOULD EUROPE RESPOND TO ISLAMISM?



The past several months have seen Europe reeling from ISIS attacks in Paris and Brussels. The European security forces have been called to task for their lack of coordination – this compulsion to keep secrets from other services has led in part to the success of these terror attacks. And these attacks come as reminders that the challenge of Islamism has a global character and is not restricted to the Middle East. The European situation is exacerbated by the migration crisis, the erosion of national sovereignty, and the rise of populist movements. To this effect, the Caravan has enlisted a wide range of thinkers who have identified and mapped out these maladies and dilemmas that face our global community today and in the future. We begin with Russell Berman, and after that will come contributions from Ted Bromund, Fabrice Balanche, Reuel Marc Gerech, Piotr Kosicki, Jeffrey Herf, Olivier Decottignies, and Charlie Hill.

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# SECURITY, STRATEGY, AND VALUES

by Russell A. Berman

ISIS terrorism in Paris and Brussels underscores the global character of the Islamist threat, but this should surprise no one, given the history of Islamist violence since September 11, 2001: Bali (October 12, 2002 and October 1, 2005), Madrid (March 11, 2004), London (July 7, 2005) Mumbai (November 26-29, 2008), Fort Hood (November 5, 2009), the Boko Haram kidnappings (April 14-15, 2014), Paris (January 7, 2015) and many more. Islamism poses an ongoing challenge to international order: it is not only a problem for the Middle East. Yet the attacks in Paris and Brussels took place at a moment of particular vulnerability for Europe, marked by domestic political instability, the challenges of mass immigration, and the ongoing friction on the border with Russia. These factors amplify the significance of the Islamist threat, which requires a multidimensional response in terms of domestic security, international strategy, and the war of ideas.

The events in Brussels firstly highlighted domestic security flaws in the police apparatus and intelligence gathering capability, failings due in part to the unique dysfunctionality of the Belgian state. (Anyone who advocates a binational state for Israel and Palestine need only look at Belgium's inability to forge a genuine union of French and Flemish speakers to find an irrefutable counter-example.) Yet there were also serious deficiencies in security coordination and surveillance strategies on a European level. For all of its bureaucratic integration, which has made the EU notorious, responsibility for security remains fragmented and dispersed, reflecting the persistence of claims on

national sovereignty, despite the rhetoric of a single Europe.

Developing an effective security regime would be an appropriate task for NATO, that in any case still needs to mature into the era of cyber warfare and surveillance. It is through NATO that the US could provide leadership on the security front. Without American leadership, European security will remain fragmented and inadequate to the task.

Secondly, beyond questions of counter-terrorism, the Islamist threat—including both the real danger of radical networks and the perceived dangers imputed to mass immigration—has had an international strategic impact by contributing to interstate conflicts, in the still unresolved debate over whether immigrants to Germany might be resettled in other EU countries. In addition, immigration has fueled a widespread anti-EU sentiment, thereby weakening Europe's capacity to act. Terrorist violence especially has fed the anti-immigrant populist movements—the National Front in France, the Alternative for Germany and PEGIDA (which stands for Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West), the Freedom Party in Austria, and similar movements elsewhere, including support for the “Brexit” vote in June for the UK to leave the EU.

Anti-immigrant anxieties represent responses especially to the mass immigration from Syria, itself a direct result of the violence of the Assad regime and the intentional target choices of the Russian bombing campaign. One

cannot discount the likelihood that Russian strategy in Syria purposefully involved inciting the immigration to Europe precisely in order to burden the EU with political and social problems. A Europe occupied by the consequences of immigration may well lose its will and capacity to resist Russian ambitions to rebuild the sphere of influence in Eastern Europe that it lost at the end of the Cold War. In other words, Islamism and Muslim immigration have been exploited and mobilized in a higher level international competition between Moscow and the West.

Precisely because of this context, the conflict with Russia, US leadership is indispensable. A Europe enervated by the impact of immigration will only serve Russian strategic interests in a manner consistent with Soviet efforts in the Cold War to neutralize Europe: Russia prefers weak powers on its western border. Yet two can play this game. Russia faces its own Islamist vulnerabilities in the southern tier of post-Soviet space, from the Caucasus to Kazakhstan, where the mere threat of US support for irredentist forces might constrain Moscow's ambitions elsewhere.

Islamism poses a threat internationally, and especially in the West, not only because of the terror networks or the geostrategic implications but, thirdly, because of the power of its ideological vision. We are in a war of ideas. The proponents of Islamism project a compelling critique of western modernity that falls on fertile soil among alienated immigrant youth in European ghettos. Against a perceived western decadence, it offers clear values, binding allegiances and a narrative that nurtures resentment and blame.

That narrative depends less on traditional Islamic contents than on the garden-variety animosity to the West that circulates through radical circles, left-wing populist parties and parts of academia. The Syrian immigrants who make it into a university in the UK or

the US in pursuit of education, integration and upward mobility, are likely to encounter an anti-imperialist milieu of political correctness that encourages them to hold the West in contempt and to dwell on their grievances, imagined or real, rather than their own prospects for individual advancement. In addition, while some Middle East immigrants no doubt arrive in the West carrying with them the habitual anti-Semitism to which they have been exposed for years, it is more worrisome that they will find their anti-Semitism endorsed by members of the engaged professoriate and their student followings in American and European universities. The ideological threat of Islamism has less to do with genuine Muslim traditions than with the critique of the West purveyed by progressive intellectuals.

This is where the war of ideas has to be waged. To counter the alliance of Islamism and western anti-imperialism, a robust defense of the West and its open societies is crucial: societies that welcome immigration with the expectation that they embrace the democratic values of tolerance, freedom of expression and individual responsibility. However, as long as vocal members of the intellectual class remain hostile to classic liberal values, Islamists will find their own hostility to the West reaffirmed. As important as it is to pursue security coordination and international strategy, the Islamist threat will not be defeated until the West mounts an unequivocal defense of its own values.



**Russell A. Berman**

Russell A. Berman, the Walter A. Haas Professor in the Humanities at Stanford University, is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and a co-chair of the Working Group on Islamism and the International Order.



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# HOW SHOULD EUROPE RESPOND TO ISLAMISM?

by **Ted R. Bromund**

In this era of mass and uncontrolled migrant flows, Adam Smith's 1776 classic on *The Wealth of Nations* offers insight into the nature of the challenge posed by Islamism. Far from being a mere manual of economics, Smith's work reveals how competition promotes progress across society and government, and how it created the modern state and the modern international state system.

In the second volume of *Wealth of Nations*, Smith examines the expense of defense, the first charge on the state. Eying the rise of the professional army, he points out that "such an army, as it can best be maintained by an opulent and civilized nation . . . can alone defend such a nation against the invasion of a poor and barbarous neighbor." Professionals are superior to roving bands; the arrival, as the result of the competitive pressures within the system, of Western military professionalism put an end to the terror of invasion from the East. Or so Smith argued.

Smith's treatise is, in part, an extended commentary on the rise, through competition, of the modern state as a defense against disorder. It is precisely because Europe's nations are no longer modern states that they find responding to Islamism such an intractable problem. The first necessity for any state, as Smith argued, is to be able to control and defend its own borders. But across most of the European Union, the standard of border control is effectively that of its least capable member, i.e. Greece.

This left Europe exposed to the over one million migrants who crossed into the continent in 2015 alone, with incalculable consequences for Europe's security, prosperity and social fabric. The repatriation deal that the EU has cut with Turkey, in exchange for concessions on Turkish travel and accession to the EU, is a sign of Europe's retreat. It is not a new thing for Europe to pay tribute in the Mediterranean: the Barbary States knew something of exacting it too.

If Islamism's first challenge to Europe is to its uncontrolled borders, the second, and far more serious, is to its society and culture once those borders have been crossed. Over the coming years, we can expect to see all manner of pleas for a unified European approach to combatting Islamism. What we will not see is any serious effort to deprive Islamism of a measure of its ideological legitimacy by defeating it on the ground in the Middle East.

Nor, as my colleague Robin Simcox points out, is there any likelihood that Europe can advance toward the shared-intelligence utopia that European politicians – especially those who want to transfer ever-more power to the EU – invariably called for in the wake of the latest terrorist atrocity. The reasons for this are many, but the central one may be that sharing intelligence requires a sense that both partners are in it together, and the EU has been far more successful in creating an overarching bureaucracy than it has a shared European demos, a body politic common to everyone who lives in Europe.

The EU has, though certainly done its best, in the name of its assault on nationalism, to diminish the separate national identities of Europe. But it is very hard to see how the European nations are supposed to make migrants into citizens, or to advance a positive appeal against Islamism, without the aid of nationalism as a counter-ideology. Europe desperately needs to build loyalties which rise above localism and tribalism. The EU's most important legacy will likely be the suicidal contribution it has made to the erosion of those national loyalties in precisely the era when they were needed to serve the cause of building liberal, pluralistic, and patriotic European democracies.

The idea that nationalism can be a positive ideology is discredited in Europe, but without it, assimilation rests on the shaky foundations of unmitigated social tolerance and unlimited welfare payments. The experience of Sweden, for one, suggests this is not enough. As Nima Sanandaji points out, it has “gone from being a nation which successfully integrated the foreign born into the labour market, to one where many immigrants are trapped in long-term dependency on benefit payments.” Employment is one of the most effective pathways to assimilation, for the simple reason that it is hard to have a job that does not involve regular contact with people outside your ethnic, cultural, and religious community. So Europe doesn't just need nationalism: it needs jobs. A large touch of the Smithian free market would not go amiss in Europe, for the further the state departs from the classic duties set out by Smith and moves toward the post-modern ideal of complete social protection, the worse it performs.

The challenge of Islamism comes at a historically awkward time for Europe: this is an era not of nation-making, but of nation-breaking. From Great Britain, to Spain, to Italy, to Belgium, there is palpably more energy being devoted to splitting up existing nation states than there is to building loyalty to them. In any competition with ISIS – which like the EU also views nationalism as an unalloyed negative, wants to dismantle borders, and seeks to create a super-state – the EU looks like the weaker horse, because unlike the EU, ISIS genuinely believes in spreading its values and in the utility of hard power.

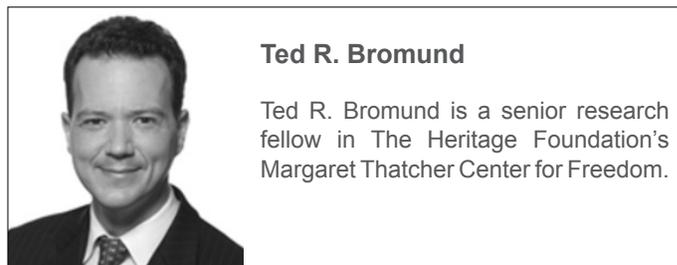
True, Europe would always have found dealing with Islamism a difficult proposition, simply because, since the early seventeenth century, it has been primarily a place that people left, not one they emigrated to. It has not been shaped by mass immigration and assimilation. But that is not the end of the burdens imposed by Europe's history. The decline in Europe's self-confidence after the

Second World War – it is symptomatic, yet startling, that a recent Gallup survey found only 18 percent of Germans, 20 percent of Italians, and 21 percent of Spaniards were willing to fight for their country – and its near-complete secularization means that there has never been a worse time for Europe's post-modern states to face the challenges that Smith assumed had been conquered.

What can the U.S. do about this? Relatively little, sadly. It could – though there is no sign it will – put greater pressure of all varieties on the promoters of Islamism in the Middle East. It could – though again, there is no sign it will – seek to close the Mediterranean to the human traffickers of the Levant, and thereby eliminate a weapon (and make no mistake about it: mass migration is a weapon) that will be wielded against Europe again and again until it is shown not to work.

Above all, if the fundamental need is for Europe to rebuild modern states that can control their own borders and make their own citizens, the U.S. could stop supporting the forces in Europe – centered in Brussels – that believe that Europe's future is (and must be) to become ever more post-modern. But as President Obama's recent intervention in the Brexit referendum in Britain shows, this thought, too, is miles away from becoming U.S. policy.

One of the great strengths and terrible weaknesses of Islamism is that it rejects most of the modern insights – including those of Adam Smith – about the origins of wealth, the nature of military power, and the structure of the limited state and the world it made. Faced with a determined and modern foe, these weaknesses should be crippling, for as Smith recognized, modernity was about mobilizing power in a competitive system. Against a pre-modern movement like Islamism, the power of the modern West should be irresistible. But this assumes that the West is in fact modern. As long as Europe continues to set its face against the modern vision that its own thinkers and statesmen devised, its response to Islamism will continue to be ineffective, piecemeal, belated and riddled with the doubts that belong to those who are certain that they do not know what they know, or who they are.



**Ted R. Bromund**

Ted R. Bromund is a senior research fellow in The Heritage Foundation's Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom.



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# FRANCE REFUSES TO SEE ISLAMISM AS A CULTURAL PROBLEM

by Fabrice Balanche

Despite the terrorist attacks of November 13, 2015 in Paris, the French government refuses to acknowledge the link between terrorism in France, the crisis in the Middle East, and the complacency towards the threat of political Islam on the domestic scene. The truth is that the jihadists who hit Paris and then Brussels on March 22, 2016, had been indoctrinated in the Salafi ideology sponsored by Saudi funded mosques, indirectly financed by private donors in the Gulf, and tolerated by Turkey - the country through which they pass to Europe. Moreover, these jihadists operated out of sympathetic "immigrant" communities in Paris and Brussels. When French President Francois Hollande decorated Saudi Crown Prince Mohamed Bin Nayef with the Legion of Honor last March, voices were raised to denounce the award's recipient in the post-attack environment. But the French Prime Minister asserted "France must assume its strategic relationship with Saudi Arabia." Thus, to keep favor with its most lucrative arms client and to maintain other contracts, France should refrain from any criticism of the Saudi political system and its dangerous links with radical Islamism. The responsibility of Saudi Arabia in promoting Salafism is a topic constantly sidestepped by western governments, who should be pressing the Saudi government to "de-salafize" its educational system and prevent it from graduating tens of thousands of new radical Imams each year who then sweep throughout the world, including France, to preach the hate of the "*kafir*" (infidel and generally non-Salafi).

Perhaps France, like other western countries, is really a prisoner of its geopolitical relationship with Saudi Arabia; that is why it's so difficult to combat foreign sources of evil. But French authorities could at least attempt to address the internal causes. Unfortunately, radical Islam, including Salafists or the Muslim Brotherhood, has influential support within France thanks to a strong group of Islamic-leftist intellectuals. They have achieved the synthesis between Edward Said and Sayyid Qutb. For them, Islamic terrorism is the consequence of autocracies prevailing in the Arab world, especially Egypt, Algeria and Syria, and of western support for Israel. The protection of Israel and the absence of foreign intervention against Bashar al-Assad belong to the same western plot against the Muslim world. This mix of conspiracy theory and lack of reflection on the internal causes of the failure of development and modernization in most Arab countries allows them to synthesize Islam and the world revolution. The former Trotskyist militants bring their experience and their ideological baggage to the Islamists. Their speeches manage to convince local politicians anxious to win the "Muslim vote" in the elections.

In a recent interview (*Le Monde*, April 2, 2016) the philosopher Elisabeth Badinter, denounces the position of the French left towards sectarianism; she describes the left as split in two. On the one hand there is a respectable ideological stance, while on the other, political - and less respectable - motivations. Upholding the right of everyone to be different, some people, she says, think that all

cultures and traditions are equal and therefore we have no right to impose anything. So, the wearing of the burqa, segregation and gender inequality, and refusal to submit to the laws of the Republic, under the pretext that only the laws of God are acceptable, should be therefore lawful on French territory. Regarding the political motivations, Badinter is referring to those promises to build a mosque or to serve 'halal' meals in public schools in exchange for Muslim votes.

According to a study by the French Poll Institute in 2012, the Socialist candidate in the presidential election, François Hollande, received 86% of the Muslim vote. This disproportionate share of the Muslim vote clearly enabled Hollande to prevail against the center-right candidate Nicolas Sarkozy, who lost with 48.4% of the vote. The Muslim voters are considered a 'reserve of votes' essential to the Socialist Party, since most of the "Gallic" popular vote is driven to the National Front (27% of the vote in the regional elections, in December 2015). Within the "original" French population, the Socialist Party receives votes from civil servants anxious to preserve their social gains, and wealthy urban liberals living in city centers. The same calculation was made by the Belgian Socialist Party which voted in 2004 for the immigrant vote in municipal elections, enabling it to win in large cities like Brussels and Antwerp in the 2006 election. Long-term integration policy is sacrificed for short term electoral interest.

A serious integration policy requires long-term planning, but primarily, it involves asking difficult questions about the fraught integration of Muslim populations. Islamism and ghettoization are not only the result of economic difficulties, but also a cultural gap. The fight against Islamism must start firstly in schools (primary and secondary) which long served as the nation's crucible, but no longer fulfills this function. Since the 1980s new teaching practices (little knowledge and lots of fun activities) and laxness have all but destroyed the education system in populous suburbs and especially those areas where immigrant populations

are concentrated, despite the profusion of resources allocated by the state. In the "suburbs of the Republic," according to the political scientist Gilles Kepel, a low level of knowledge is delivered and any form of discipline banned in order to defuse conflicts: "Ducking, simplify and flatter" are the three magic words of today's teaching methods.

The theoretical goal of the "new pedagogy" was to promote another form of learning to prevent school failure for socially disadvantaged children. But it has only amplified the phenomenon of inequality, because this inadequate education fails to prepare students for the demands of the post-industrial economy because unskilled jobs are declining with deindustrialization in France. The predominantly Muslim neighborhoods have become communities with a parallel economy where drugs and weapons trafficking meet. Salafi preachers justify the crimes of these lost youth by saying they are victims of discrimination against Muslims by the "kafir" political system. Unfortunately, this rhetoric of victimization is furthered by the well-meaning speeches of leftist politicians and intellectuals. In this mix, it is easy for both extreme-right populism and radical Islamism to develop. These are the two faces of the decadence of the French republican model, but Belgium, Netherlands, United Kingdom and other western European countries are facing the same phenomena. While France and other countries refuse to recognize Muslim sectarianism as a threat, international jihadists will continue to emerge from Bradford, Molenbeek and Saint-Denis.



**Fabrice Balanche**

Fabrice Balanche is an associate professor in political geography and research director at the University of Lyon 2, and a visiting fellow at The Washington Institute. Balanche has spent ten years in Lebanon and Syria, his main areas of study, since first engaging in fieldwork in the region in 1990.



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# THE BATTLE FOR EUROPE

by Reuel Marc Gerecht

In 2004 Gilles Kepel, the noted French scholar of the modern Middle East and Muslims in Europe, wrote:

The bombings in Madrid on March 11, 2004, established Europe as the new frontline for terrorist attacks. Before 9/11 Europe had provided a sanctuary where Al-Qaeda's planners could complete preparations for the world-shattering operation they had conceived in the mountains of Afghanistan. But with the events in Madrid in spring 2004, Europe emerged as the primary battlefield on which the future of global Islam will be decided.

Do the recent attacks in Paris and Brussels confirm Kepel's assessment? Beyond these lethal onslaughts, according to French and German internal-security officials, are dozens of near-misses that luck and good police work prevented. Is Europe really the primary laboratory of "global Islam," a highly Westernized, militant version of the faith that lends itself easily to jihad? Or is globalized Islam similar to the radical leftist movements in Europe of yesteryear, which though often independent of the Soviet Union used the same air as the USSR. Once the Soviet state started to wither, these radical leftist movements evanesced.

If the Soviet parallel applies, then globalized Islam is primarily fed by radical Islamists in the Middle East and, more perplexingly, Saudi Arabia, the mothership of Wahhabism and Salafism, both religious reform movements searching for authenticity and legitimacy only in the practices of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. Although most jihadists have not been

fundamentalists, most Sunni jihadists have given a nod to the Wahhabi–Salafi world view. Their personal war inevitably gets elevated into a universal struggle between "pure Islam" and the living *jāhiliyya*, the realm of disbelief.

Or is contemporary Muslim militancy a dynamic combination of both the radicalization of Islam and the Islamization of Western radicalism? This question—where one puts the emphasis on the component parts fueling this anti-Western terrorism—is a raging battle among European scholars and intellectuals, pitting the views of France's two most famous students of Islamic militancy, Kepel and Olivier Roy, against each other.

The radicalization of Islam (Kepel) and the Islamization of Western radicalism (Roy) have practical ramifications. Stressing the former gives Westerners the hope that if the cancer within Islam can be isolated and cut out or shrunk by some kind of intellectual and social chemotherapy, the appeal of violence will diminish. Imperfect but useful historical parallels in Islamic history might offer some idea of how to extinguish today's fervor.

Islam has often seen violent reform movements erupt. Sociologically, these rebellions undoubtedly were complex, propelled by what modern Western sociologists would call non-religious reasons. But they inevitably expressed the religious complaint that rulership or society was ethically misguided and in need of divinely-guided rejuvenation. Some movements succeeded spectacularly: the semi-Shiite Abbasid rising against the Umayyad caliphs in the 8th century, the Ismaili Shiite

Fatimid caliphate (909-1171) in North Africa and Syria, the Almohad caliphate (1121-1269) in North Africa and Spain, the Safavid Sufi holy warriors who converted Persia to Shi'ism in the 16th century, and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's Islamic revolution in 1979. Most of the militant irruptions, however, failed. Most were beaten back by military force. The most deadly and most millenarian to fail recently were the Mahdist revolt in Sudan in the late 19th century and the attack on Mecca's Grand Mosque in 1979. The former was routed by General Horatio Herbert Kitchener; the latter was put down by Saudi soldiers with French advisors.

Applying the past to the present could lead one to believe that "global Islam" today might be checked with rigorous police work in Europe and American military action in the Middle East. For the "radicalization of Islam" school, Saudi Arabia and, to a much lesser extent, Qatar, both conservative monarchies that propagate a militant fundamentalism abroad, remain conundrums. There really is no good historical parallel to such wealthy, ultra-conservative Sunni states, let alone one of them controlling the holiest sites of Islam, funding tumultuous missionary activity. Really good European internal security and steadfast and successful American military campaigns could still confront a situation where the intellectual high ground for faithful Sunni Muslims in Europe and the Middle East, post "victory," is dominated by the Saudis, who can't stop supporting Islamic militants no matter the blowback. The "radicalization of Islam" offers the probability of a protracted conflict in Europe against Islamic militants and pretty intrusive police surveillance against ordinary Muslims; it implies that American military action in the Middle East, at least against the Islamic State, is indispensable to Europe security.

The "Islamization of radicalism" school is perhaps even more depressing. Inherent in this outlook is that Europe has a massive assimilation problem with its Muslims, and that unless Europeans solve this, they will be plagued with recurring bouts of radical Islamic terrorism regardless of what happens in the Greater Middle East. Conversely, if Europe figures out how to successfully integrate Muslims into its old, profoundly secular societies, it can, more or less, escape the savagery that is shredding Arab lands. Good police work would still be required, but the police work needs to be patient and socially conscious, acutely attentive to the ultimate need to better assimilate European Muslims. This line of thought, needless to say, appeals to many on the European Left, who are more

comfortable blaming the dark side of Westernization, the rigidities of European culture, and the undeniable anti-Muslim bigotry within European societies than they are highlighting the troubles within Islam and Muslim cultures.

Emphasizing the Islamization of Western radicalism also throws into doubt the importance of American military action in the Middle East or French military action in Africa. If in Europe the primary battle is within, then wars against Muslim radicals abroad could do more harm than good. How Europe, in the throes of a continent-wide identity crisis and laden with poor economies with massive debt, is supposed to discover new and more effective methods of integrating large numbers of Muslims—and if the violence continues in Syria and North Africa, ever more immigrants—into its societies, isn't at all clear. Even the most progressive Europeans often have trouble describing exactly how a more open, absorptive Europe is going to be built, especially soon enough to make a difference for Muslims who are attacking in the name of the Islamic State and Al-Qa'ida.

No matter how one analyzes the European-Muslim predicament, one thing is unavoidable: European internal-security services are going to grow and integrate. Where once the French security services, easily the finest in Europe, always seemed a step ahead of violent Islamic militants, now they seem behind. Whether there is a bureaucratic explanation for this state (fewer Arabic-speaking officers inside the internal-security service, less talented magistrates running the investigations) that can be fixed, it doesn't change the fact that if the French are having trouble, then less-accomplished services—the Dutch, Belgian, German, Spanish, and Italian—are surely in similar difficulty. Americans can only wish them well. Europe is part of our frontline against foreign jihadists. However pleasing bombing Brussels and Paris may be to the holy-warrior set, striking New York and Washington is still probably much better.



**Reuel Marc Gerecht**

Reuel Marc Gerecht is a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies specializing in Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Islamic militancy, and terrorism. His most recent publication is *The Wave: Man, God, and the Ballot Box in the Middle East*.



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# A EUROPEAN CRISIS

by Olivier Decottignies

With the March 22nd Brussels attacks, the Islamic State did not merely hit Belgium: as *Dabiq*, the organization's gory and glossy online magazine stressed, it also struck Europe "at its heart." Indeed, the second bombing on that day, at the Maalbeek Metro station, took place on the outskirts of the so-called European District, where most of the European Union's institutions have their headquarters. It happened within half a mile of the Berlaymont, the massive, austere building which hosts the European Commission. Beyond the symbolism, the terror campaign that the Islamic State is waging on the continent is shaking a weakened Union and could ultimately undermine the European project.

The decision to open a new front in Europe might be a consequence of the recent setbacks that the Islamic State has experienced in Syria and Iraq. But the move also fits within the group's notion that Western Muslims inhabit a "grey zone," neither following the ways of the fantasized caliphate, nor fully integrating with the Western mainstream. Through repeated terrorist attacks, the Islamic State hopes to provoke a political and security backlash against these Muslims, thus pushing them to embrace the radicals and eventually, to join the caliphate. The group's call on its followers to assassinate liberal or moderate Muslim clerics in Europe (and in the U.S.) serves the same purpose: ensuring that there is no space for dialogue, let alone for integration.

In the Islamic State's own words, "*Paris was a warning. Brussels was a reminder.* What is yet to come will be more devastating and bitter." In France alone, several

plots have been foiled before and since the Paris attacks and French officials have repeatedly warned of the possibility of chemical attacks. With more than 5,000 European jihadists believed to have at some point travelled to the battlefields of the Levant, the group can rely on a sizeable reservoir of potential operatives – in addition to other, homegrown radicals. The magnitude of the threat is such that successful attacks are bound to happen again. For security agencies, it amounts to ping-pong with too many balls in play.

Yet the recent attacks also exposed – and indeed exploited – some of the E.U.'s structural weaknesses. Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the organizer of the Paris attacks, boasted in an earlier interview how he managed to escape surveillance and go back and forth to Syria. Just as the monetary union was created without a fiscal union, free movement across Europe was established without strong security cooperation, both among member states and on the Union's external borders. It took an astonishing seven years – and attacks on two European capitals – for the European Parliament to adopt the 'Passengers Name Record', a much needed framework that allows member states to share air travel data.

In the face of transnational plots that spread across jurisdictions, security cooperation and intelligence sharing between member states remains insufficient. Europeans could also make better use of existing tools, like FRONTEX, the Union's border agency and EUROPOL, its law enforcement agency. The E.U. did devise a Common Security and Defense Policy after

the end of the Cold War, and has conducted successful operations within that framework. But that instrument was tailored to stabilize the neighborhood (typically, the Balkans) or to assist in the resolution of even more distant crises (mostly in Africa), not to defend Europe proper. While a dozen E.U. member states contribute to the U.S. led operations against the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, they do it on a purely national basis.

Worse still, these challenges arise at a time when the E.U. is already facing a series of crises: a fiscal and monetary crisis that resulted in the bailout of several European states and a weakened Euro, an economic crisis, with sluggish growth and endemic unemployment, a migration crisis initially spurred by the Syrian civil war, An integration crisis exemplified by neighborhoods like Molenbeek, the rear base for the Paris and Brussels attacks, plagued with unemployment, social segregation, discrimination, petty crime, drug trafficking - and Salafist influence, an identity crisis centered on the status of Islam in Europe and the issue of migration, and last but not least, a crisis of the European project itself, spanning from the French and Dutch initial rebuke of the 2005 constitutional treaty to the forthcoming Brexit referendum in the U.K.

These crises are correlated and tend to aggravate one another. The Islamic State and its European operatives (most of the Brussels and Paris perpetrators were born

and raised in Europe) understand this predicament, and are determined to make the most of it. Freedom of movement, arguably one of the E.U.'s most tangible – and popular – achievements, is already in jeopardy. On June 23rd, British voters will decide on whether to remain in the Union. Whereas the debate was initiated on sovereignty, welfare and fiscal rules, the recent attacks on the European mainland (as well as the current flow of migrants from Syria and beyond) are likely to weigh in on the outcome.

Thus the future of Europe as a political project may very well depend on the ability of the E.U., and of individual member states, to respond to the Islamic State. Should the Europeans fail to tackle the threat while remaining faithful to their values, we could face a very different Europe. And since the E.U. remains Washington's closest economic, diplomatic and security partner, stakes are high for America too.



**Olivier Decottignies**

Olivier Decottignies, a French career diplomat, is a Diplomat in Residence at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. The opinions expressed are his alone.



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# ON THE INTERSECTION OF GERMAN AND SYRIAN HISTORY AND THE ENDURING IMPORTANCE OF ‘COMING TO TERMS WITH THE NAZI PAST.’

by Jeffrey Herf

A successful European wide response to Islamism calls for the following policies.

First, the European members of NATO and the United States should publicly acknowledge that the policy of the past five years of military non-intervention in the Syrian civil war has been a strategic blunder and moral disaster. The wealthy and powerful countries of Europe have stood by and done nothing as an estimated 400,000 civilians have been killed and several million have become refugees. Even at this late date, some kind of military intervention both to destroy ISIS but also to force a settlement that will lead to the departure of the Assad regime is essential. Without a settlement of the Syrian Civil war the refugee crisis in Europe will continue.

Second, following the terrorist attack on the Charlie Hebdo magazine and the Hypercacher kosher market in Paris in January 2015, France's Socialist Prime Minister Manuel Valls stated the obvious: "we," that is, both the world's liberal democracies but also all civilized people around the globe are "at war with radical Islam." All political leaders should say in public what scholars know is true, namely that Islam, like other religions, can be and has been interpreted in a variety of ways. Islamism (not

Islam) of the 20th century is a totalitarian ideology that is inherently illiberal, anti-Semitic and has served as a justification for terrorism for many decades.

Third, the intersection of German and Syrian history also raises the issue of the legacies of the secular radicalism of the Baathist regime in Damascus and how they will affect that success or failure of efforts to integrate Syrian refugees into German society. The million or so Syrians now in Germany presumably despise the Baathist regime of Bashar al-Assad and are open to learning about the rules and norms of a liberal democracy. Yet however much they reject the Assad regime, they and their parents and grandparents lived under a regime that has been hostile to Israel since its founding in 1948, went to war against it then and again in 1967 and 1973 and supported terrorist organizations attacking it. During the Cold War it spread mendacious propaganda in government controlled media about Israel, West Germany, the Western Alliance and the United States.

Hence the chances are good that some sizable proportion of the recent Syrian refugees to Germany despise the state of Israel. Exposed to the propaganda of the Baath regime that regularly compared Israel to Nazi Germany,

some undetermined proportion of the refugees will add to the antagonism to Israel that already dominates far leftist and not so far leftist sentiment in Germany. So the path to integration into German society may be via leftist parties that regularly denounce Israel.

The refugees who were adults during the Cold War may remember that Baathist Syria was the lynchpin of the Soviet bloc alliances in the Middle East. They may remember East Germany's passionate support for Syria and the PLO. Moreover, the establishment of diplomatic relations with East Germany in 1969 was based on shared opposition to Zionism and imperialism; East Germany provided arms and military training in the aftermath of the Six Day War of 1967, and there were regular visits to Damascus and to East Berlin by military leaders of both states. East Germany even participated in the Soviet bloc military deliveries to Tartus and Aleppo during the Yom Kippur War. A thick web of contacts existed between Syrian military officers, university professors, journalists and people active in economic matters and their East German counterparts. It is certainly possible that the last five years of the Assad regime's attack on its own citizens has also undermined the ideas with which it was identified. Yet it also seems likely that some sizable number of a million Syrian refugees will be bringing these ideas with them.

Should that be the case, the Syrian refugees will find themselves in conflict with one of Germany's most important traditions, namely that of "coming to terms with the Nazi past." Every West German and then German Chancellor has adopted a kind of implicit eleventh commandment of German history after Hitler, Nazism and the Holocaust. It is to do no more harm to the Jews and to the state of Israel. The tradition of coming to terms with the Nazi past in Germany has entailed frank discussion of the crimes of the Nazi regime and the facts of the Holocaust. It commits the German government to fight anti-Semitism whatever its source and led to a special relationship with the state of Israel. To be sure, there is criticism of Israel in Germany but to this day there remains a consensus in the German establishment that an honest history of the Holocaust, firm rejection of anti-Semitism and support for the survival of the state of Israel are, as Chancellor Merkel put it in the Knesset in 2008, part of Germany's reason of state. The concern of this historian is that the Syrian migration to Germany since 2015 will add numbers to those in Germany who want

to break with this, one of Germany's and Europe's finest traditions.

Fourth, therefore, it is essential that Syrian refugees in Germany come to understand that integration into German society entails rejection of all forms of anti-Semitism, no matter their source, as well as acceptance of Israel's right to exist. It demands, in other words, not only rejection of the Jew-hatred embedded in the Islamist ideology of Hamas but also rejection of the core ideas of the Baathist regime of Hafez al-Assad and his son Bashir, and of current efforts in Europe to isolate and boycott Israel. The United States played a decisive role in making it possible for the tradition of honest memory of the Holocaust to emerge in post-Hitler Germany. It did so first by contributing to the defeat of Nazism in World War II and then through its role in revealing its crimes in the Nuremberg war crimes trials. Hence it is appropriate for American leaders to applaud the German traditions of honest reckoning with Nazism

Fifth, it is important for both European and American leaders to put new emphasis on the connections between fascism, Nazism and Islamism. The personal as well as intellectual links between Islamism and the ideas of fascism and Nazism in the middle of the twentieth century were important. Nazi Germany played a crucial role in supporting Islamism during World War II and the Holocaust. The Islamists collaborated with the Nazis while the secular radical left in the PLO worked with the East German Communists. The work of scholars on the connections between Nazism with Islamism, and East German Communism with the Baath regime in Syria has a valuable role to play in the future in lending support to the German and European confrontation with both Islamism as well as the secular anti-Western, anti-American and anti-Israeli views that were regularly voiced by the Syrian regime whose war has driven the refugees to seek refuge in Germany and Europe.



**Jeffrey Herf**

Jeffrey Herf is a distinguished University Professor in the Department of History at the University of Maryland, College Park. His publications include *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World* and *Undeclared Wars with Israel: East Germany and the West German Far Left, 1967-1989*.



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# SOLIDARITY, LIBERAL DEMOCRACY, AND EASTERN EUROPE TODAY

by Piotr H. Kosicki

In September 2015, eminent Princeton historian Jan T. Gross penned an essay entitled “Eastern Europe’s Crisis of Shame.” He wrote, “As thousands of refugees pour into Europe to escape the horrors of war, with many dying along the way, a different sort of tragedy has played out in many of the European Union’s newest member states. The states known collectively as ‘Eastern Europe,’ including my native Poland, have revealed themselves to be intolerant, illiberal, xenophobic, and incapable of remembering the spirit of solidarity that carried them to freedom a quarter-century ago.”

It was in 1989 that Bulgarians, Czechs, Germans, Hungarians, Poles, Romanians, and Slovaks cast off Communist regimes through a series of (mostly) peaceful revolutions. At that point, a turn to liberal democracy seemed inevitable; now, it seems to be in full reverse. Governments throughout the region complain that political freedom has not lived up to its promise. A populist backlash against elites means that politicians win votes by painting former dissidents as traitors to “the nation.”

This recasting of the origins of political freedom has justified an anti-democratic turn. In the words of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, “Liberal democracy was not capable of openly declaring, or even obliging, governments with constitutional power to declare that they should serve national interests.” This is why Orbán is building an “illiberal state.” Liberty, he tells us, should

not be “a central element of state organization.” To a student of 20th-century history, this seems a betrayal of decades’ worth of struggle against Communism.

In Poland, the future of liberal democracy is now bound up with fear: of Islam, and of Europe’s supranationalism. At a rally of young Polish neo-fascists, one hears the cry “down with diktats from Brussels,” then – “Once with a hammer, once with a sickle, right into the Islamist trash!” Both chants recycle old anti-Communist slogans: the first substitutes Brussels for Moscow, the second – Islamists for “Reds.” To an outsider, this pairing makes no sense; to that crowd, however, the EU and Islamism are symptoms of the same problem – the undermining of the sovereign nation.

This past year, terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels have provoked outpourings of sympathy and solidarity from across post-Communist Europe. But global media soon folded the story of Europe’s response to terror into another narrative: of refugees reaching Europe in droves, from the Middle East, Central Asia, North Africa. Faced with the prospect of absorbing Muslim refugees, Eastern Europe has sent a different message: that the nations of Western Europe are partly to blame for the Islamist attacks that have befallen them.

To most Hungarians or Poles, this is not about the legacies of French or British overseas empire. It is not even really

about Islam or Islamism. Instead, it is about the limits of the EU: its push for nations to pool their sovereignty, and its failure to substitute effective security guarantees in return. When Hungary erected a razor-wire fence along borders with Serbia and Croatia, the stated reason was national sovereignty. The question is, does sovereignty preclude solidarity?

In a January 2016 survey, over half of Poles opposed accepting migrants. But this is not simply nationalism in action. Eastern Europeans have widely taken exception to German chancellor Angela Merkel's insistence that the migrant crisis is a test of "loyalty to those countries that protect our external borders." (This is especially insulting in the case of Greece, which they see as having nearly bankrupted Europe.)

As it is, Poland's initial commitment to welcome 7,000 migrants amounted to less than 10% of the number already taken in by Hungary. One could easily make the case, then, that Poles have no reason to complain. But this is as much a practical as a symbolic matter. The 11 refugee centers scattered across Poland already function near capacity. For over a decade, Poland has been the release valve for migrants out of regions where Russia has fomented violent conflict: Chechnya, Georgia, now Ukraine. In March 2016 alone, Poland's Office for Foreigners received 815 applications for refugee status from the Russian Federation. How many from Syria? Two. The Polish infrastructure for dealing with migrants has long been concentrated elsewhere – on its eastern, post-Soviet borders. Does this mean that resources cannot be reallocated? Of course not. But this is where the specter of "diktats from Brussels" comes in.

In October 2015, a political party calling itself "Law and Justice" (PiS, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) won a razor-thin majority in the Polish parliament. It has since begun to dismantle institutions of liberal democracy that its leader Jarosław Kaczyński considers beholden to the "winners" of 1989. Opponents contend that PiS has launched an attack on the rule of law itself – especially in its effort to eviscerate Poland's Constitutional Tribunal. The government's supporters, meanwhile, argue that PiS is correcting the injustices of a rigged political transition.

PiS has seized on Viktor Orbán's ideal of illiberal democracy, arguing that individual rights should count for less in an era when the rights of the nation are threatened. The refugee crisis has helped to define the political vocabulary of Eastern European nationalism. Rather than victims of oppression, refugees have been presented as a menace. When PiS leader Jarosław Kaczyński warned

in the fall against accepting Syrian migrants, his rationale was that they carry "all sorts of parasites and protozoa (...) long unseen in Europe." After the attacks in Brussels, the Polish prime minister's spokesman bluntly stated that the government would be turning away migrants because it "can't allow for events in Western Europe to happen in Poland."

PiS has vocal opponents, and a movement called the Committee for the Defense of Democracy has organized regular mass rallies in defense of the rule of law. But PiS's politicians have undoubtedly struck a chord – like Orbán before them – by framing Islamism and the refugee crisis as symptomatic ills of the European project.

In global terms, the critique of European integration as value-blind materialism is nothing new. In his famous 1989 "End of History?" essay, Francis Fukuyama lamented the "flabby, prosperous, self-satisfied, inward-looking, weak-willed" political culture of Western Europe.

But in the hands of today's Eastern European populists, impugning Western Europe has simply become good politics. For a quarter-century, one-time leaders of Poland's Solidarity movement have gambled that the EU will guarantee liberal democracy in their region, securing the legacy of their fight against Communism. For them, the EU was the next best thing to Immanuel Kant's vision of "perpetual peace," the first step toward a global commons of free speech and pluralism.

Today, however, it is their nationalist, Euro-skeptical opponents who write the history, blaming the EU for Eastern Europe's misfortunes. Their answer is to wall themselves off from the rest of Europe – in effect, reintroducing the proverbial divide between "old Europe" and "new Europe." Given that European integration began as a project of free trade and free movement of peoples, this is a perverse turn. Poland has been welcoming migrants from the Russian Federation for over 20 years, yet Germany's demand that Poland share in the EU refugee burden has fueled new extreme nationalism.

As the EU sinks deeper into the refugee crisis, it also fails to confront the rising tide of nationalism in Eastern Europe. So far, Islamism remains a largely hypothetical problem for Eastern Europe. In Hungary and Poland, in fact, one hears talk increasingly reminiscent of inter-war Germany, about the decadence of Western European democracy, or the hygiene and backwardness of migrant populations. When EU leaders like Merkel talk about quotas or fines for Eastern European member states, they only make matters worse. The only hope in the face

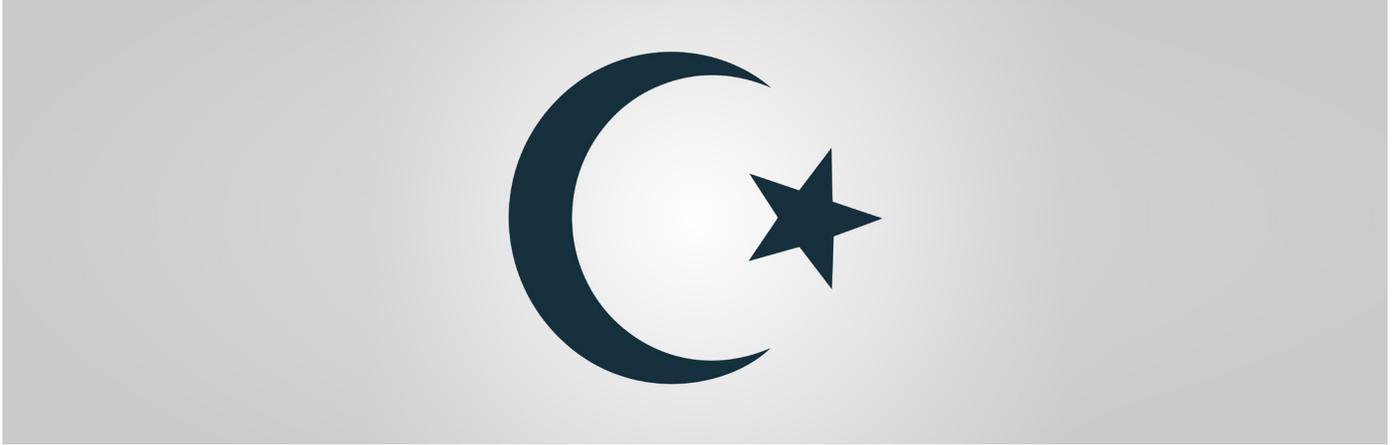
of extreme nationalism and Islamism alike is a serious reckoning with the stakes of liberal democracy and national sovereignty in Europe. The United States must play a role here, too.

In the 1980s, Poland's gift to the world was the word "solidarity," which embodied a basic, shared human impulse toward freedom in the face of autocracy. As things stand now in Eastern Europe, this word risks becoming an irrelevance, if not a cruel joke.



**Piotr H. Kosicki**

Piotr H. Kosicki was a W. Glenn Campbell and Rita Ricardo-Campbell National Fellow for the 2014-15 academic year at the Hoover Institution. He is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Maryland and and the Bittson National Fellow.



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# THE PERILS OF “PERFECTING”

by Charles Hill

“A Spectre is Haunting Europe” – again. Now, as in Marx’s proclamation, an idea generated in Europe has had consequences elsewhere that threaten modern civilization.

Modernity’s world-spanning influence has been accurately and derogatorily labeled “Eurocentric.” Born in the Italian Renaissance, the German Reformation, and the English scientific revolution, the Modern Age was given a procedurally universalist structure by the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia which ended the religion-driven Thirty Years’ War.

The strands were gathered together in the Enlightenment as cross-cultural ideals: quantitative and experimental reasoning, a recognition that all mankind is one, universal human rights, the values of open trade, open expression, and consent of the governed within an international system of states with restraints on the worst horrors of war and, in retrospect, a determination that religions should not be inserted into political, military, and diplomatic world affairs. The progress of modernity, Max Weber proclaimed, would be measured by the extent to which it erased religion from human consciousness.

Over the past four centuries this became the framework of what was called modern and generally accepted around the world as the only system which made room for wide cultural diversity through a simple set of procedures founded on the improbable but imperative

juridical doctrine of “the equality of states,” creating history’s first-ever liberal world order.

Looking back with fresh eyes, we can see that all of the major modern wars – Napoleonic, the First and Second World Wars, the French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions, and the Cold War – were caused by neo-imperial or radical ideologies bent on destroying and replacing the modern state system. This counter-current has been carried, forcibly and subversively, into the twenty-first century by the revolution that produced the Islamic Republic of Iran, by Saudi-supported Wahhabi Salafism, and most recently by the “Islamic State” (aka ISIS, ISIL, or Daesh).

As the Modern Age has been Eurocentric, the main battle for modernity’s survival is taking place in Europe. Here is the fulcrum on which history’s next phase has begun to turn because Europe in the late Cold War years decided to urgently redefine itself against its own history and the international state system it had created in order to carry the concept of modernity as secular, scientific, administrative, and ethical to a perfected degree.

This was propelled by the German “Historikerstreit” (the historians’ dispute), a late 1980s controversy about the causes and justifications of guilt in the past. This aroused an intellectual-moral reaction of “Enough! That was then; this is now.” Europe would pride itself by accelerating the EU into a new form of

trans-national entity that would eschew war, abolish sovereign borders, exalt diplomacy, and supersede the Westphalian system by offering the world a compelling model of how to dismantle the state by devolving some of its powers downward according to the concept of “subsidiarity” while pulling other powers up into a pan-European bureaucracy in Brussels which, however defined, would not be a state. There would be a new flag bearing no hint of national identity and a new currency depicting unidentifiable architecture of no discernable origin. While some worried that “subsidiarity” originated with St. Thomas Aquinas and that the flag recalled the Blessed Virgin Mary’s iconography, the EU assured that it was entirely un-religious and noted the care with which the text of its voluminous constitution – unrati- fied – avoided any reference to Europe’s Christian heritage.

Put simply, the EU made itself the epitome of the Modern Age by relentless secularization. Islamism, emerging from the post-World War I collapse of the Ottoman Empire and Caliphate, made itself the vanguard of jihadist religion’s rise to become the implacable adversary of modernity. If Europe is where the siege is to take place, the drawbridge already is up:

- Islamism abhors the state; the EU has emasculated it.
- Islamism recognizes only one border: between itself and regions yet to become Muslim; Europe has opened its borders to the point of abolishing the concept altogether.
- Islamism regards democracy as un-Islamic because it enacts laws other than Sharia; the EU from its inception has acted assiduously to prevent people from governing themselves democratically.
- Islamists, like Machiavelli, know that armed prophets are victorious and unarmed prophets are destroyed; the EU has deliberately diminished its capacities to defend itself or to back its diplomacy with strength.
- And while Islamists declare religion to be the answer the EU has seen religion as the problem.

As Pierre Manent has pointed out, had Europeans maintained their identity as sovereign states with a Christian heritage, the assimilation of Muslims could have been possible on the basis of comity whereas now it lacks an answer to “assimilation to what?”

Americans need to understand that the Modern Age with its pluralistic structures, societies, and beliefs is under assault and that the enemies of modernity are uniate, unwilling to accept others on an equal basis. In this context America’s involvement in the Middle East must take the side of pluralistic states and parties compatible with the international system.

Only Europeans can rectify the flaws in the EU’s design to enable Europe to act on the world stage as a bordered state incorporating its historic nation-states in confederation. And only Europeans can attend to the needs of the European soul.

But however the relationship between Britain and Europe comes out, the U.S. must regard its relations with both as “special.” Transatlantic unity has been the keystone of the defense and extension of freedom in wartime for a hundred years and must remain so.

It is not the EU but NATO that has been the key to transatlantic solidarity. Strengthening NATO as a military alliance with political consequences in support of a reformed EU must be at the core of American policy. NATO’s role “out of area” will be vital along with continued efforts to integrate like-minded partners to the extent possible: Russia, Israel, the Gulf Arab states. The Modern Age itself is at stake.



**Charles Hill**

Charles Hill, a career minister in the US Foreign Service, is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution. Hill was executive aide to former US secretary of state George P. Shultz (1985–89) and served as special consultant on policy to the secretary-general of the United Nations (1992–96).



# THE CARAVAN

The Caravan is envisaged as a periodic symposium on the contemporary dilemmas of the Greater Middle East. It will be a free and candid exchange of opinions. We shall not lack for topics of debate, for that arc of geography has contentions aplenty. It is our intention to come back with urgent topics that engage us. Caravans are full of life and animated companionship. Hence the name we chose for this endeavor.

We will draw on the membership of Hoover's Herbert and Jane Dwight Working Group on Islamism and the International Order, and on colleagues elsewhere who work that same political and cultural landscape. Russell Berman and Charlie Hill co-chair the project from which this effort originates.

For additional information and previous issues of The Caravan visit [www.hoover.org/caravan](http://www.hoover.org/caravan)

## Working Group on Islamism and the International Order

The Working Group on Islamism and the International Order seeks to engage in the task of reversing Islamic radicalism through reforming and strengthening the legitimate role of the state across the entire Muslim world.

Efforts draw on the intellectual resources of an array of scholars and practitioners from within the United States and abroad, to foster the pursuit of modernity, human flourishing, and the rule of law and reason in Islamic lands—developments that are critical to the very order of the international system. The working group is chaired by Hoover fellows Russell Berman and Charles Hill.



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**Hoover Institution, Stanford University**  
434 Galvez Mall  
Stanford, CA 94305-6003  
650-723-1754

**Hoover Institution in Washington**  
The Johnson Center  
1399 New York Avenue NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20005  
202-760-3200

