

The Menace in Europe's Midst

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Among Europe's Muslim immigrants are some who arouse security concerns within the continent's governments. Western Europe has long served as a safe haven for jihadist preachers and activists fleeing the Middle East. Their message, or *da'wa*, now finds adherents in an indigenous second and third Muslim generation.

If some scholars of American immigration perceive a postindustrial "decline of the second generation"—that is, downward mobility among post-migrants—the decline is steeper and harder to deny in the case of Europe's Muslims. For this, Europeans can thank their economic stagnation and a kind of cultural dissonance. In the United States, many Muslims are prosperous professionals. In Europe, Muslim descendents of immigrants achieve outcomes—in education, employment, income, and housing—that are, according to studies, inferior to those of non-Muslim post-migrants, as well as to those of natives.

These statistics notwithstanding, most European Muslims are not Islamist. Even fewer, of course, are extremist or violent. However, when an angry son of migrants explains his own and others' downward mobility in a narrative of Muslim oppression, we may get a terrorist wannabe.

Of the scores of jihadist terror attacks plotted in Europe this century, most have taken aim at Europe itself. But several have targeted the United States—including the attacks of September 11, 2001, and a failed plot in 2006 against transatlantic airliners leaving London's Heathrow Airport. This February, US Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair, in his first Annual Threat Assessment, emphasized that "Al Qaeda has used Europe as a launching point for external operations against the homeland on several occasions since 9/11, and we believe that the group continues to view Europe as a viable launching point."

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Later that month FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III drew attention to "extremists from visa-waiver countries, who are merely an e-ticket away from the United States." Of the 35 countries to which the United States offers visa waivers—whereby citizens may travel to America without visas and thus without interviews by a US consular or Homeland Security official—31 are European.

VARIETIES OF MUSLIM EXPERIENCE

Muslims in Europe share a complex fate. They are religious minorities in secular states. They are immigrant Muslims in countries historically unfamiliar with both immigration and Muslims. They reacted quietly in 2005 and 2006 to allegedly blasphemous Danish cartoons that in the Middle East provoked riots and the burning of consulates. Because Europe's Muslims are European, their hearts were pierced as much by ethnic cleansing in Bosnia as by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Yet, despite similarities among Europe's Muslims, national differences are discernible. British Muslims, in particular, tend to be more radical and outspoken. The grievances of Bosnia echoed more loudly in the United Kingdom than elsewhere in Europe. During the Danish cartoon episode, British Muslims were more vocal than Muslims in France and Germany. They were also far more vocal during the Rushdie affair in 1989, when the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a religious command urging Muslims to kill the author Salman Rushdie.

National differences can be attributed in part to the varying experiences of Muslim communities. Muslims began arriving en masse as labor migrants to northwestern Europe in the 1950s, but to Southern Europe only beginning in the 1980s. In the Balkans it is another story—and yet another in Eastern Europe. Further distinctions surface on examination of the three most important European countries, which also happen to be those with the largest Muslim populations.

In the case of Britain, the provenance of Muslims is mainly Pakistan, in Germany Turkey, and

in France North Africa. Until the year 2000, descendants of Turks born in Germany did not have the option of citizenship. Pakistanis migrating to Britain were already citizens of the British Commonwealth. For French Algerians, citizenship was once automatic but is now conditional. In Britain the Pakistanis, and in Germany the Turks, tend not to speak the host country's language, as France's Algerian males often do.

In addition, Turkey has long had a secular tradition, while Pakistan has always fomented Islamism. Algeria suffered a civil war that continues to generate Islamist terror. The French immigration discourse is assimilationist, though "the French melting pot" is often merely formal. British affirmative action can balkanize populations. And Germany has been divided in its own way: multicultural in courts, colleges, and cant; segregationist in daily life.

THE BRITISH DIFFERENCE

But the most striking variance is that British jihadists far outnumber those of all other European countries combined. Jonathan Evans, director of Britain's domestic security service, the MI5, disclosed in a rare and dramatic public appearance in 2007 that 2,000 individuals were known to be "involved in terrorist-related activity" in the United Kingdom, with "as many again that we don't yet know of." That year the service was aware of 200 terrorist networks and 30 active plots. A year later authorities viewed the threat as growing "increasingly complex" and the numbers as "even higher."

In contrast, the Dutch security service identifies only "some 10 to 20 loose-knit structures in the Netherlands that can be qualified as jihadist networks" within a "relatively small" "hard core of radical Islam encompassing several hundreds of people only." In Spain, the comparable number is around 300 radicals, a slim total compared with Britain's more than 4,000 active terrorists, who themselves form only a small portion of the country's Islamic radicals.

Jean-Francois Clair, the former deputy director of the French domestic security service, explained to me last year that, while British officials needed "to show the size of the problem to the public," conditions in France had not made it "useful to make open declarations." In any case, he contin-

ued, "the number in France of those under investigation is certainly far less than thousands."

The disproportionate number of terrorists in Britain reflects a singular radical milieu. To cite one example, Hizb ut-Tahrir, the Party of Liberation, is a virulently anti-Semitic group wishing to install Islamic regimes by coup d'état and to pursue jihad. It is said to have 10,000 members in Britain. Germany's Party of Liberation has 300 members. Denmark's has fewer than 200.

At least three-quarters of the groups under surveillance by British domestic security are linked to Pakistan. Nearly all British jihadists implicated in major plots since 2004 were in contact with jihadists in Pakistan, Al Qaeda's sanctuary. Lashkar-e-Taiba, the militant Pakistani group that conducted the 2008 massacre in Mumbai, India, sports an extensive web of supporters in the United Kingdom.

So if angry Muslims in general challenge Western Europe's integration of immigrants, it is Britain's who pose the most dangerous security threat. US intelligence agencies seem to have concluded that the MI5 has been unable to cope with a stun-

ning increase in Islamist terrorist cells in recent years, a judgment corroborated in January by MI5's director general. American intelligence officials have told President Barack Obama that British jihadists now constitute the

chief terrorist threat to the United States—a bitter irony in light of the significant role that the Iraq War has played in radicalizing Muslims in Britain, America's principal ally in the war.

Intelligence sources now believe that a British-born Pakistani extremist entering the United States under the visa-waiver program is the likeliest source of another attack on American soil. That is why two years ago, prompted by the failed attack on airliners departing from Heathrow, the US Central Intelligence Agency launched a vast spying operation in Britain to prevent a repeat of 9/11. According to the London *Sunday Telegraph*, four of every ten CIA operations aimed at foiling attacks on the United States are directed against subjects in Britain.

THE WAGES OF TOLERANCE

Yet, if the reader can bear one more turn of the screw, Muslims feel more at home in Britain than in any other European country. The uncomfortable truth is that Islamic radicalization is most potent

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and perilous in the very countries that have worked hardest to accommodate the mores and structures Muslims brought from the old country.

Britain and the Netherlands, proud of their legendary tolerance of minorities but ashamed of their third world pillage, began in the late 1980s to welcome tens of thousands of Muslim asylum seekers, some of whom turned out to be jihadists. In both countries, young able-bodied conspirators, under no obligation to seek citizenship, received unemployment insurance, public assistance, health care and housing subsidies, affirmative action jobs, subsidies for a wide range of religious and social organizations, bilingual education, and free courses on their native culture. The failure of these policies should not cause the West to forget its own limitations, or to abandon its kindness to strangers, but the reappraisal now in progress was long overdue.

In redefining the struggle against global jihad, President Obama in February stressed “international partnership in dealing with international terrorism.” Neither a suspension of the visa waiver program (damaging to business and diplomacy, and prohibitively costly) nor a new multiculturalist policy aimed at countering grievances offers a silver bucket for dousing Europe’s Muslim anger or the threat that it poses. There is no way around the targeted surveillance that British and American authorities are now reportedly carrying out in the United Kingdom.

This “international partnership” will teach us distinctions—for example, between political Islamists and bomb-making jihadists, between radicals who counsel separatism and piety and those who stockpile ammonium nitrate. This is another reason for the CIA to be in Britain. ■