

A Solution to the Migration Crisis

The stories and photographs of migrants attempting to enter Europe is a human tragedy, heartbreaking as people die trying to cross the Mediterranean. On August 27, 2015, over 50 migrants were found dead inside an abandoned truck, a Hungarian registered vehicle, abandoned on a highway in Austria, near the Hungarian border. In April, more than 400 died in a shipwreck in the Mediterranean. In August, several hundred people were on board a boat that sank off the coast of Libya. So far, more than 2,300 have died while crossing the sea.

European countries are groping for solutions to the large numbers of immigrants that is linked to other issues such as border controls and criminal networks. Reasonable estimates suggest that about 200,000 arrived in Greece this year, about 100,000 entered Italy, and 3,000 a day are migrating through the Balkans. More than 100,000 boat people entered the European Union in July 2015.

Europe has no consensus on the problem. Germany in particular, expecting to get 800,000 migrants, 40 per cent of them asylum seekers, proposes an immigration law that would allow for legalization of migrants from non-EU countries. Chancellor Angela Merkel holds that immigration is more beneficial than not. Some individual Germans provide hospitality. Others do not, and more than 200 assaults on shelters for asylum seekers have occurred.

Britain has tried by various means to reduce the flow of migrants that has risen to 330,000 this year. Among them are plans to make it more difficult for British businesses to recruit skilled workers from outside the European Union, to reduce work benefits, to limit access to welfare for the

unemployed, and to allow only migrants with a job already promised to enter the U.K.

At least four problems arise from the increasing migration crisis: the reality and possibility of terrorism; political friction within the European countries; the increased support of right-wing extremist organizations; and the larger proportion of Muslims in the European nations.

Two recent incidents indicate the possibility and danger of cross-border terrorism. One was the attempted attack on August 21, 2015 on the high speed train between Amsterdam and Paris by a 26-year-old Moroccan who had connections to radical mosques on Spain, and is said to be linked to a cell of French ISIS militants in Turkey. This jihadist, Ayoub el Khazzani, lived in at least five European countries, able to cross borders without difficulty.

This is due to the Schengen arrangement that allows free travel movement between most of the EU countries. Apart from providing the right of free travel to citizens, this was originally intended, among other things such as lessen the possibility of organized crime and terrorist threats, to allow freedom to move to a job already offered. It is now the opportunity to allow people in EU without jobs to move in search of work and benefits, putting pressure on public services. But it also allows terrorists to move freely without restrictions or checks.

The second incident was the arrest in Italy of a 22-year-old Moroccan who had been involved in an attack on an art museum in Tunisia, and who had entered Italy together with 90 other migrants in the Sicilian port of Porto Empedocle.

A possible danger is that Iran or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or terrorist groups elsewhere could foster militants coming into EU disguised as migrants. On May 18, 2015, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg spoke of this possibility

of foreign fighters, terrorists trying to hide and blend with migrants. It may be the case that the EU already has several thousands of its citizens who have fought for jihadists in Iraq and Syria, and may become “lone wolf” militants.

NATO is supposed to be working on the “root causes” of the large numbers seeking migration by working with partners in the Middle East and North Africa to help them stabilize their own countries. It is trying to help those countries take more responsibility for their own security. Thus, Jordan is being assisted in defense capacities, in training, and advising. Western countries are trying to assist in achieving a cease-fire and reaching a peaceful negotiated solution for the conflict in Libya.

It is crucial to find and to dismantle the criminal networks responsible for smuggling, or pretending to smuggle, people across the Mediterranean. These criminals force large numbers on to boats that take on water after leaving the Libyan coast because of the extra weight. European naval forces have limited their activities, and should do more to stop and search boats on the sea.

Despite the NATO search for reasons, the real “root cause”, the elephant in the room, for migration to Europe is ignored. It is the unwillingness of Arab and Muslim states to help and to accommodate the migrants coming from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, and other Muslim countries. One might reasonably expect the migrants, escaping their suffering from war, oppression and poverty, to be offered shelter in the wealthier countries such as Saudi Arabia, the Gulf countries, the United Arab Emirates including Qatar and Dubai.

The refusal of these countries to aid fellow Muslims is inexcusable. The UAE, the federation of seven states founded in 1971, is enormously wealthy, with 10 per cent of the world’s supply of crude oil reserves, and oil exports that account for 30 per cent of its GDP. Dubai is economically

successful with its heavy investments in real estate, airlines, ports, the drug trade, and human trafficking. It displays its wealth by its rain forest in the desert, large shopping malls, and the world's tallest twin towers. Dubai is already preparing for the World Expo to be held there in 2020.

Qatar, with the highest per capita income in the world, has become influential politically and economically, punching, as the British say, above its weight. Politically, it has been involved in assisting Libyan rebels, those opposing the Assad regime in Syria, and aiding the ruling party in Tunisia. It owns, in whole or in part, the Al Jazeera Media Network, property in London including the Shard, Canary Wharf, Barclays Bank, Harrods Store, No. 1 Hyde Park, the world's most expensive block of apartments, British horse racing, Sainsbury's Stores, and the London Stock Exchange, and the football club Paris St. Germain in France. Qatar is spending lavishly on preparing to host the football FIFA World Cup competition in 2022.

One can understand that the favorite charity of these wealthy Arab nations is themselves, but it is not unreasonable for the "international community" to demand that they share some of their wealth and take responsibility for helping Muslims caught the violence, the horrors and the oppression of other Muslim states. Now is the time for the world community to discuss, the problem and to ask, in the words of Socrates, do you know by what means the wealthy Arab nations might be persuaded to change their behavior and do the right thing.

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