

Whose Fault is the Immigrant Crisis?
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Wouldn't you know that the moment any crisis occurs in the world that the usual commentators would blame the United States? Amy Goodman's recent column blamed the chaos in the Middle East on the US and Europeans sending arms to the region. Others, many on the political left, have blamed the crisis entirely on the disastrous aftermath of our Iraq invasion. However, I have not seen any of these critics pinning blame on the total failure of governance and religion in the Muslim World itself. It's not politically correct, they say, to blame Islam. This crisis has many fathers, but father-in-chief is Islam's failure to create a stable culture with modern western institutions.

The Muslim Brotherhood, authors of dysfunctional Islam, have been proclaiming since the 1930s that "Islam is the Answer." They, and their more recent spawn, Militant Islamists such as ISIS, are demonstrating how wrong this analysis is. Islam has not met the requirements of reforming and modernizing behaviors, particularly in promoting participatory rule. Democracy does not fare well in a culture that is authoritarian from the top down.

The entire Middle East has emerged from colonial occupation (Turkish, English, and French) with an opportunity to embrace modern institutions. They embraced monarchies (some of them modernizing but others totalitarian); secular dictatorships; fits of Arab nationalism; and now religious dictatorships. Every attempt of a government to introduce modern institutions (such as the emancipation of women) has been met with murderous fury by the pious. Reforming leaders and liberal intellectuals have more often than not been assassinated. Critics of Islam and its leaders are met with jail, execution, or murder.

Had women been emancipated, the population explosion would not have happened. It is destabilizing to have an explosion of population in countries that cannot even handle lesser numbers. This produces a surplus of young men who are unhappy over their cultural constraints (authoritarian fathers), poor educational systems, and failing economies that can provide no jobs. These young men are now either joining the likes of ISIS or are trying to flee to Europe where many are unwilling or unable to accept European values. They are also largely unemployable.

The current Syrian crisis should be laid firmly on the doorstep of dictator Assad himself. It would not matter much had the US been suckered into military intervention. The problems in Syria could be predicted from prior examples: when a dictator is destabilized, social unity and rule of law melts. The oldest problem in the Arab World revives: tribal hatreds and violence, a problem that existed from Mohammad's time to today. If Islam unified people, why are Muslims blowing up each other's mosques and marketplaces?

The Iraq invasion by the United States has now been acknowledged as a mistake. However, it could have been a success if we had taken out Saddam Hussein (a monster) and replaced him with an Iraqi general. We destabilized the country by hoping for a democracy. The democratically-elected president (Maliki) turned out to be a very bad egg. He, not we, created the internal warfare between Shias and Sunnis; he was a bad national leader.

Three Muslim countries gave hope that Muslims could modernize and secularize their societies: Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan. The most successful of these, Turkey, is now reverting bit-by-bit to Islam; Iran has fallen to a Shiite dictatorship; and Pakistan is hopeless. Even non-Arab Muslims have difficulty with secular governance.

What looks like a mass invasion of Europe by refugees of a failed civilization does have limits, however. The flood of boat people may halt as Winter sets in and the oceans grow turbulent. Also, European countries will begin (as some already have) to bar Muslim immigration. These countries have not successfully integrated the Muslims they already have, as seen in the rash of Islamist violence against them, and will reject having more of them.

Europe also has a crisis of identity to resolve. The politically chic ideology of "multiculturalism" is dying. European secular values must once more become precious to its citizens, precious enough to fight for if needed.

678 words

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