

Migration Crisis: A Catalyst for a New Europe?

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Class of 2016

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved--OMB No. 0704-0188		
The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 01-04-2016		2. REPORT TYPE STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Migration Crisis: A Catalyst for a New Europe?			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) Lieutenant Colonel Andrew S. Zieseniss United States Army			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Dr. Marybeth Ulrich			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA 17013			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited. Please consider submitting to DTIC for worldwide availability? YES: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or NO: <input type="checkbox"/> (student check one) Project Adviser recommends DTIC submission? YES: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or NO: <input type="checkbox"/> (PA check one)					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Word Count: 7,136					
14. ABSTRACT In 2015, the movement of migrants from Africa and the Middle East caught the E.U. completely off guard. As the numbers grew over the year, many people throughout Europe began to see the migration crisis as a major cultural, economic, and physical security threat. Every incident, such as the Cologne New Year's attacks, adds concern to traditionally homogeneous cultures still feeling the effects of the 2008 financial crisis and subsequent global recession. The influx of migrants has had immediate impacts throughout Europe. These impacts are an increase in discrimination, the growth in political turmoil, and the rise of right wing parties. If the E.U. does not successfully address the migrant crisis soon, there will be long-term consequences for the current structure of the union. The crisis threatens economic and political stability throughout Europe. A weakened E.U. will also lose its diplomatic leverage around the world. Finally, stability on the continent, the very reason the six original members founded the E.U. after WWII, could once again be at risk. As a key ally, a weakened E.U. will have adverse political and economic impacts for the U.S. Assisting the E.U. in resolving the crisis is an important interest for the U.S.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Immigration, Refugees					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 35	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UU	b. ABSTRACT UU	c. THIS PAGE UU			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (w/ area code)

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(7,136 words)

Abstract

In 2015, the movement of migrants from Africa and the Middle East caught the E.U. completely off guard. As the numbers grew over the year, many people throughout Europe began to see the migration crisis as a major cultural, economic, and physical security threat. Every incident, such as the Cologne New Year's attacks, adds concern to traditionally homogeneous cultures still feeling the effects of the 2008 financial crisis and subsequent global recession. The influx of migrants has had immediate impacts throughout Europe. These impacts are an increase in discrimination, the growth in political turmoil, and the rise of right wing parties. If the E.U. does not successfully address the migrant crisis soon, there will be long-term consequences for the current structure of the union. The crisis threatens economic and political stability throughout Europe. A weakened E.U. will also lose its diplomatic leverage around the world. Finally, stability on the continent, the very reason the six original members founded the E.U. after WWII, could once again be at risk. As a key ally, a weakened E.U. will have adverse political and economic impacts for the U.S. Assisting the E.U. in resolving the crisis is an important interest for the U.S.

Migration Crisis: A Catalyst for a New Europe?

This challenge has the potential to...cause tectonic changes in the European political landscape. These are not changes for the better.

—Donald Tusk¹

Three-year-old Aylan Kurdi and his family joined thousands of others fleeing war torn Syria for a chance of a better life in Europe. Weeks prior, in the midst of televised horrific fighting between the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIL) and Kurdish fighters, Aylan's family joined 130,000 other ethnic Kurdish civilians fleeing their homes in Kobane. His family joined the largest single 4-day movement of people during the Syrian conflict.² Enduring massively overcrowded and under-resourced refugee camps across the border in Turkey, Aylan's family decided to pay a small fortune to smugglers who would take them across the Aegean Sea in a tiny rubber raft. Like all those making the perilous trip across the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas, they hoped to find a better life in either Europe or North America. Tragically, Aylan's flimsy rubber boat piloted by smugglers capsized. Like over 3,000 other migrants in 2015, Aylan, his 5-year-old brother, and 35-year-old mother all drowned on their way to a better life in Europe. For Aylan Kurdi, his journey to freedom on September 2, 2015 ended when his lifeless body washed up on a Turkish beach near a resort area. Two simple, but grim, photos helped to galvanize worldwide attention on an ongoing crisis that was well into its second year.³

Aylan's story is no different from so many others who have perished while fleeing their homes and hundreds of thousands who dream of a better life a continent away. The winter of 2015 found the E.U. "on the clock." With the flow of migrants expected to slow over the winter, European leaders have a reprieve of several months to establish a common migration and asylum policy. The E.U. must develop a unified long-term

strategy on how to deal with large numbers of migrants before late spring. If the status quo persists throughout the Middle East and Sub-Saharan African, Europe must brace for even greater numbers of migrants next year. The migration crisis in Europe has had an impact on the culture, economic, and physical security of Europe, that is transforming the current structure of the European Union and redefining Europe's relationship with the United States. The future of U.S.-European relations depends on the effective management of this crisis.

What is a Refugee?

There are currently two main categories of people migrating to Europe, refugees and economic migrants. The term "migrant" is a blanket label used to define anyone moving from one state to another state.⁴ According to the 1951 Refugee Convention on the Status of Refugees, when a state or institution recognizes the claim of an asylum seeker, that person is officially designated a refugee.⁵ The United Nations considers people fleeing war or persecution to automatically be refugees and by treaty, states must offer protection for this group of people.⁶ In the case of the current migration crisis in Europe, people fleeing Syria and Eritrea automatically receive prima facie refugee status.⁷ It is important to note that the 1951 Refugee Convention is a formal treaty signed by 148 nations to include the United States and all European states.⁸

Economic migrants are the other category of people moving to Europe in large numbers. Unlike refugees, these people are motivated to move by the incentive of better economic opportunities.⁹ The crisis has challenged the E.U. in dealing with exceedingly large numbers of both refugees and economic migrants moving intermixed to Europe. Ultimately, early in the crisis Europe granted entry to many people who do

not fit the criteria for refugee status. This diluted the process intended for true refugees and has damaged the national will of many European states to accept future refugees.

Roots of the Crisis: The Push-Pull Effect

No single event or condition is solely responsible for the massive influx of migrants and refugees into Europe. A series of environmental conditions and decisions made by political leaders has contributed to arguably the worst crisis the E.U. has ever faced. Understanding the roots of the crisis is fundamental in examining the solutions.

How it Started

The current migration crisis was born out of the Arab Spring that started in Tunisia in 2011 and spread to other parts of North Africa and the Middle East. While mass protests in Tunisia led to the fall of entrenched autocrats, the governments of Libya and Syria reacted with brutal force against their own people. In the case of Libya, an international coalition of European and Arab states, along with the U.S., took military action that led to the downfall of the Gaddafi regime. The void left by the collapse of the Libyan regime resulted in a lawless failed state. Libya's lack of governance has turned the country into the perfect launch point for anyone in the region wanting to make the journey across the Mediterranean to flee a conflict or to seek better economic opportunity.¹⁰

In Syria, Arab Spring protests led to a civil war that has now fractured the state. Multiple opposition groups, ISIL, and the Syrian regime control state territory that the government of Bashar al-Assad once controlled exclusively. Unlike Libya, outside states have not intervened directly and the civil war continues with conflict spreading regionally. Years of conflict in Syria have led to one of the largest migrations of people in recent history.

How They are Arriving

Migrants traveling to Europe are using two prominent routes. Migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria, and Eritrea make up a large number of people moving to Europe along the central migration route that runs across the Mediterranean from Libya to Italy and Spain.¹¹ Vast majorities of migrants on this route end up in Italy. People from these countries represent the initial surge to Europe using the more dangerous central Mediterranean crossing since 2011. Migrants from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries make up a vast majority of people using the eastern migration route that runs from Turkey to Greece, through the Balkans, and eventually to Germany.¹² People from these countries represented the bulk of the migrants moving to Europe in 2015.

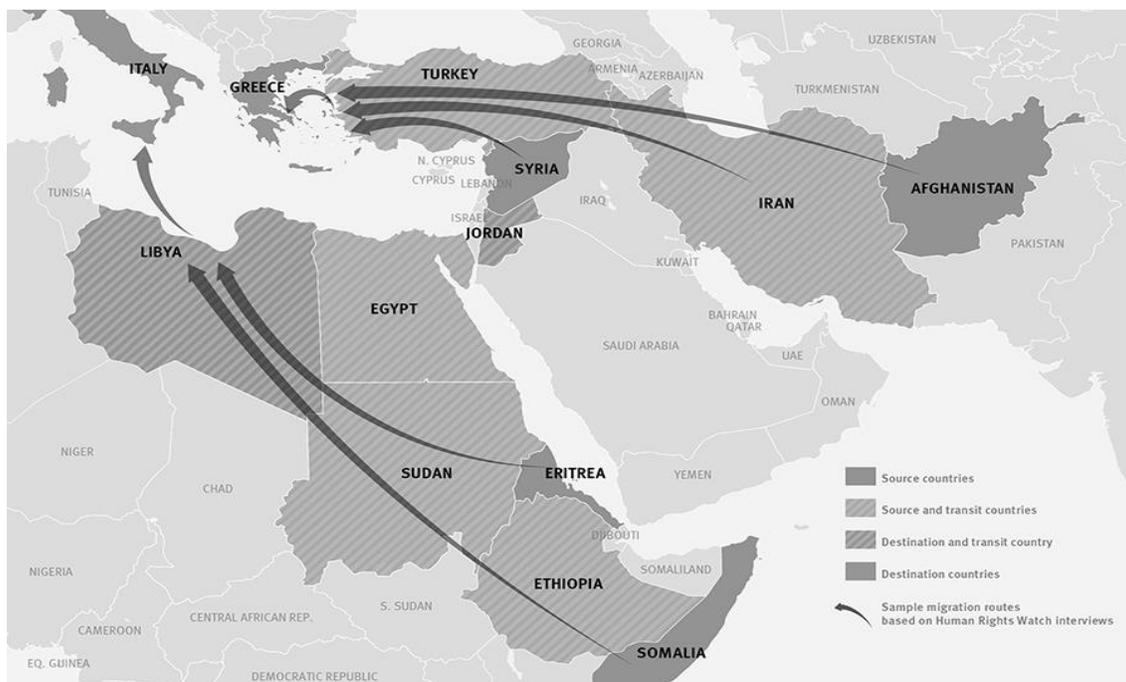


Figure 1. Central & Eastern Migration Routes

Push Effect

A lack of security and dismal prospects for the future has resulted in the “push effect” or a series of conditions and events leading people to leave their home countries.

Thousands of people from the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa are fleeing their homes for the safety and promise of a better life in Europe. In 2015, dire conditions in refugee camps in countries surrounding Syria set the conditions for the mass movement of people to Europe. There are currently 11 million Syrians, roughly half the population, displaced from their homes.¹³ Many of these 11 million people are living in underfunded and poorly resourced camps in Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon. Despite U.N. appeals for financial assistance, many refugees have limited access to food and medical care, no access to schools, and no ability to work.¹⁴ In addition, Turkey will not grant the 2 million Syrian refugees within their country asylum. Therefore, refugees have very little hope of ever being able to find work or establish a long-term future.

With over 60 million migrants worldwide, the U.N. is massively underfunded to care for the millions of displaced refugees. As of late 2015, the U.N. only had 40 percent of the funds needed to maintain refugee camps at a minimum standard.¹⁵ Furthermore, many refugees doubt there will ever be a future for them in their home countries of Syria, Iraq, or Afghanistan. In short, by the spring of 2015 most lost hope they would ever be able to return home. With Europe a short boat ride across the Aegean Sea from Turkey, many see the potential for a better life only several miles away. By late summer 2015, over 4,000 people were arriving on the island of Lesbos Greece each day on their journey to central Europe.¹⁶

Pull Effect

The pairing of dismal regional conditions, the “push effect,” and the hope of a better future in Europe, the “pull effect,” has led tens of thousands to seek refuge within the E.U. Certain European actions have increased the “pull effect” resulting in a growing number of migrants moving onto the continent. Chancellor Angela Merkel’s September

2015 announcement that the doors of Germany were open to refugees without limits gave people hope throughout impoverished regions in African and the Middle East that opportunity for a better life was very achievable in Europe. In addition to economic opportunity, Germany is a particularly attractive destination for migrants due to liberal asylum laws, little colonial legacy, and a lingering guilt over two previous world wars that created millions of refugees.¹⁷

Although the 2015 migration crisis was not an entirely new phenomenon, Europe has not previously dealt with such a large volume of migrants. Germany's decision to accept refugees without limits, coupled with the E.U.'s inaction to develop a common strategy for how to react to such a large influx of people through the summer months of 2015, enabled migrants to enter virtually unhindered. As migrants successfully entered Europe, an even greater number of people living in poorly resourced refugee camps saw the opportunity of a better life a short boat ride away.

The push-pull effect of 2015 was staggering. Over 820,000 people used the eastern migration route to arrive in Greece.¹⁸ In the south-central part of Europe, over 300,000 migrants reached Europe using the more dangerous central migration route.¹⁹ Of those migrating in 2015, 69 percent were men while only 18 percent were children and 13 percent were women.²⁰ Although largely criticized, these numbers are indicative of the head of the household leading the way before bringing the remainder of the family forward.²¹ This is significant because these percentages could indicate an even larger influx of refugees in 2016 as many male migrants bring forward the family members left behind.

In a crisis that the media often portrays as the “Syrian refugee crisis,” Syrians make up approximately 54 percent of those migrating to Europe. Figure 2 below shows the breakdown according to countries of origin.

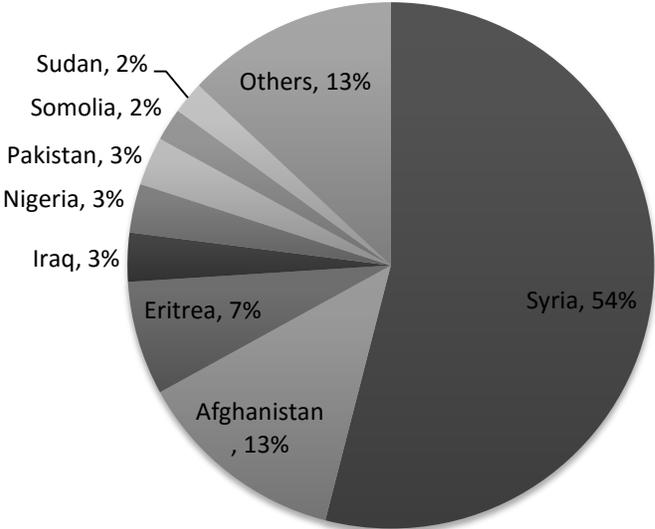


Figure 2. Ethnic Breakdown of Migrants

Other groups migrating to Europe are comprised of 13 percent from Afghanistan, 7 percent from Eritrea, 3 percent from Iraq, 3 percent from Nigeria, 3 percent from Pakistan, 2 percent from Somalia, and 2 percent from Sudan.²² Rounding out the remainder are economic migrants from other areas to include the Balkans.

How the E.U. is Responding

Although 2015 is by far the most significant year thus far for migration, people have been on the move in large numbers since the beginning of the Arab Spring. The first major test for the E.U. was 2014. In 2014, approximately 219,000 people migrated to Europe along the central migration route.²³ At the time, the numbers were so large the E.U. initiated a military operation comprised of 21 nations to combat the smuggling

of migrants across the Mediterranean.²⁴ This operation demonstrated the effectiveness and ability of a strong European Union to mobilize and conduct a unified military operation independent of NATO. To date, this effort has been largely successful in reducing the number of migrants moving across the central migration route.²⁵

As the crisis continued to spiral out of control throughout the summer of 2015, the E.U. did not respond with a military option as it did in the central Mediterranean in 2014. Therefore, E.U. countries moved their focus to internal state security measures to protect state interests. These state actions took priority over E.U. regulations and principles. Citing national interests, many countries suspended the Schengen Zone agreement that allows the free flow of people, goods, and services amongst 26 states.²⁶ Some states, such as Sweden, that were initially open to accepting refugees have now shut their borders to them. Other states are implementing laws that are tough on migrants. European leaders have participated in numerous meetings to develop common ground in handling the crisis with little success.

Thus far, the E.U. has been unable to build a consensus or develop a common policy to handle the current crisis. Meanwhile, European states are developing their own policies and adopting state centric measures in response to the crisis. In addition, many citizens across Europe are frustrated with the crisis and angry at the way the European Union has handled it. With Russia's entrance in the Syrian conflict in August 2015, many predict an even greater exodus of refugees headed to Europe leaving questions as to what lies ahead for 2016.²⁷

Security Concerns: How Europeans are Reacting

Security concerns are the driving force throughout Europe in reaction to the mass movement of migrants to the continent. These concerns are not limited to physical

security. Europeans define the crisis in terms of their cultural, economic, and physical security. Throughout Europe, an increasing number of people see the volume of migration as a threat to their way of life.

European countries are more homogeneous and have not integrated immigrants as well as the U.S., which prides itself on being a “nation of immigrants.”²⁸ European culture is rooted in tradition and identity developed over centuries. Furthermore, immediately after World War II massive amounts of people migrated to regions more ethnically similar, as they fled adopted countries, creating even greater homogenous enclaves of Europeans. Therefore, the massive migration after World War II focused more on desegregation which is the opposite trend occurring today.²⁹ There is no precedent in Europe for what is currently taking place.

The number of people who see mass migration as a cultural security risk is on the rise. The fact that vast majorities of migrants are Muslim is adding to the perception that European culture is at risk.³⁰ Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, leader of the Hungarian far right party, has been very critical of accepting refugees going as far as to state, “Europe’s Christian heritage is at risk.”³¹ He further stated, “those arriving have been raised in another religion, and represent a radically different culture. Most of them are not Christians, but Muslims. This is an important question, because European identity is rooted in Christianity.”³² Prime Minister Orban and many other right leaning European leaders have stoked anti-Muslim and cultural sentiment adding to the ongoing dialogue throughout Europe.

In addition, statistics are not favorable for Muslim refugees who many assume will join already struggling non-assimilated Muslim communities. Ironically, European

social programs intended to assist those most in need actually make assimilation for refugees more difficult. In many countries, European laws prevent refugees from working, yet they are able to receive a significant amount of social care and funding.³³ In the U.S., the opposite holds true. Migrants are able to work but they receive less social welfare support.³⁴ To a large degree, this helps migrants in the U.S. assimilate more easily than in Europe where they tend to live in tight communities or enclaves for social support. Based on their lack of assimilation, many Muslim communities still prioritize the laws and customs of Islam over their new home country. This creates a much larger divide between European Muslim enclaves and secularly ethnic Europeans.³⁵

Already dealing with a shaky economy and high unemployment rates, many Europeans see the massively expensive cost of dealing with the migrant crisis as a threat to economic security and a hindrance to a full economic recovery.³⁶ In reaction to the migration crisis, the E.U. has already pledged to spend 96.8 billion euros for external development and cooperation between 2014 and 2020.³⁷ The E.U. could easily put this large sum of money to good use in other programs throughout Europe.

In addition, many Europeans have difficulty identifying with those they are spending billions to help. In Germany, the government spends \$160 dollars a month for each refugee. Studies in Germany have shown that only 8 percent of migrants make it into the work force a year after arrival. That percentage increases to 50 percent within 5 years of arrival and 70 percent within 15 years of arrival.³⁸ Conversely, many often blame migrants for taking jobs that would otherwise go to citizens of a particular society.³⁹ However, most studies show this is actually not true. Either way, many people see migrants as a long-term liability and therefore, an economic threat.

Others see migrants as a long-term economic opportunity. A number of European states face a declining work force as populations continue to age at a faster pace than the birth rate. Germany is one such nation challenged with an aging population. In a matter of a few decades, a smaller work force will have to support a larger number of retirees. Chancellor Merkel has stated that today's migrants could help augment Germany's work force in the future.⁴⁰ Although this argument is logical, today's cultural differences weigh more heavily with a large portion of the population making this more long-term strategic point less salient.

Physical security is probably the most emotional and important issue for Europeans throughout the E.U. The Paris attacks and the Cologne crime spree highlighted two physical security challenges Europeans worry about as the waves of migrants enter the E.U. The first is the external physical security challenge or the threat that terrorists and foreign criminal elements will infiltrate Europe. The second is the internal physical security challenge that the threat of increased domestic crime rates and terrorism pose. On November 19th 2015 in Paris, terrorists conducted the worst attacks on French soil since World War II. Within a few hours, ISIL terrorists killed 130 civilians.⁴¹ News that two of the terrorists moved through Lesbos Greece posing as refugees ignited a dialogue throughout Europe on the security risks associated with accepting Muslim refugees.⁴²

It is easy for many to point to horrific events such as the terrorist attacks in Paris and immediately appeal to public fear of importing terrorism along with the migrants. Cultural security issues compounded by a handful of high profile terrorism events go a long way in raising external physical security questions throughout every nation involved

in the migrant crisis. In fairness to Europeans, this conversation is not unique to Europe. Within the U.S., public debate on allowing refugees into the country is now taking place throughout the media, Congress, and in presidential debates. Thirty-one governors have gone as far as the refuse to accept any refugees from Syria.⁴³

In addition to external physical security threats, many Muslim communities are overrepresented in European domestic crime statistics.⁴⁴ Higher crime rates and well publicized events, such as the 2015 New Year's Eve Cologne migrant gang attacks on over 500 German women, fuels the argument that Europe already has a problem with migrants contributing to internal physical security challenges.⁴⁵

Increased domestic crime rates are in part due to assimilation challenges and tough European laws on work standards and social programs. Europe sees a significantly higher crime rate among Muslim populations due to higher unemployment rates and greater numbers of Muslims living in poverty.⁴⁶ Throughout European countries, statistics show that a much greater percentage of the Muslim population is incarcerated or overrepresented in a wide range of criminal acts.⁴⁷ As an example, in Germany, a third of the population confined in prison are foreigners. In France, prisoners are nine times more likely to be of North African descent than ethnic French descent. In one city in the Netherlands, police have files on 21 percent of local Moroccan boys and 27 percent of Somali boys.⁴⁸ Many Europeans are concerned that accepting more refugees will lead to even larger segregated Muslim enclaves and higher crime statistics. People throughout the E.U. are frustrated and have little tolerance for the higher crime rates associated with migrants. Thousands of Europeans

expressed their anger following the Cologne attacks by holding mass demonstrations to protest Chancellor Merkel's policy on admitting refugees.⁴⁹

Near Term Impacts

As the crisis continues, Europe will experience a rise in three distinct problem areas for the E.U.: an increase in discrimination at the individual and the state level, a growth in political turmoil throughout the E.U., and a continued rise of right wing or Euro-skeptic parties. These three specific trends have consequences for long term E.U. stability and will worsen over time.

Increase in Discrimination at the Individual Level

The longer the migration crisis lasts without a coherent E.U. strategy that is highly publicized across the continent, the more discrimination will grow throughout Europe. The magnitude of the rise in hate crimes in 2015 is an indication that the migrant crisis is having a profound affect on Europe. In Germany alone, there were 1,005 attacks on refugee homes. This is a 500 percent increase in attacks on refugees from 2014.⁵⁰ As people in Europe digest the recent criminal events in Cologne, Germany and the terrorist attacks in Paris, France, Muslim refugees are becoming greater targets for discrimination. In Leipzig, Germany, protesters recently carried signs stating "rapefugees not welcome" and "Islamist not welcome."⁵¹ In some cases, angry citizens have turned to violence attacking migrants and even ransacking local stores.⁵²

Across Europe, anti-migration activists have targeted those supporting policies for accepting refugees with threats and, in some cases, violence. After announcing that his town would accept 40 Syrian refugees, anti-migration activists targeted the mayor of Troglitz, Germany, Markus Nierth. To protect his family from hateful language and threats, Nierth resigned from office.⁵³ Throughout Germany, politicians who are

supporting Merkel's refugee policies have become targets of hate crimes. There are a growing number of threats against political leaders and Merkel's own political party receives thousands of hate emails every week.⁵⁴ If such trends continue, Europe risks slipping away from international values while the chance of civil unrest increases.

Increase in Discrimination at the State Level

Although no European government has condoned violence towards refugee groups, some states are making controversial moves that may have crossed discrimination boundaries. Throughout Europe, states are passing tough laws focused on making it much more difficult for migrants to enter Europe. Countries such as Italy, Hungary, and Greece are adopting tough laws on migrants.⁵⁵ Hungary may have already crossed the line with E.U. non-discrimination laws.⁵⁶ In Denmark, Parliament recently passed a highly criticized law that allows police to confiscate personal property, such as money, jewelry, and other personal items, as compensation for the government.⁵⁷ The new law will also delay family reunions of asylum seekers. The Danish government passed the controversial law to discourage refugees from entering Denmark.⁵⁸

As the crisis persists and events such as the one in Cologne are publicized in the media and fueled by the far right, people throughout Europe will continue to turn out in greater numbers at anti-refugee rallies and protests. Crime against refugees will increase and states will continue to take tough measures targeting migrants in order to protect cultural, economic, and security interests.

Growth in Political Turmoil

The second near term impact of the migration crisis is the increase in political turmoil throughout the E.U. This is directly resulting in national interests taking priority

over E.U.-wide interests. It is also causing political discord between states. These trends are likely to continue in the near term. States throughout Europe will continue to abandon E.U. policies when their self-interests are at risk.⁵⁹

When Chancellor Merkel announced that refugees are welcome without limits in Germany, she did so without consulting other European partners.⁶⁰ She based her decision on the belief that Germany and the E.U. have a moral obligation to assist refugees.⁶¹ Her decision infuriated other European leaders that see her refugee policy as “moral blackmail.”⁶² A majority of other European states believes Germany unilaterally opened the door to the mass migration of Muslim refugees while imposing a policy on all of Europe.⁶³ Although Merkel’s refugee policy was only for Germany, her decision to allow refugees into Germany created issues for many other E.U. states. Her announcement fueled an already growing migrant crisis. It also opened many other European states to the flow and settlement of refugees. As a result, many states are now placing national interests first by suspending Schengen Zone rights, establishing fixed border controls, passing legislation not consistent with E.U. values and regulations, and not abiding with E.U. agreements for refugee resettlement quotas. E.U. Parliament President Martin Schulz summarizes the concern when stating, “European governments are putting national interests above finding common solutions for the good of the entire union.”⁶⁴

In addition, the crisis has further highlighted to many smaller states that larger states seek to impose their political will on others. This is contributing to growing political discord throughout the E.U. This has been a particularly bitter point for smaller states in Central and Southeastern Europe. In Hungary, Prime Minister Orban has been

deeply critical of larger European states. Using the migration crisis, he has stated that larger states like Germany have been forcing their agenda on smaller states.⁶⁵

Romania, the Czech Republic, and Poland have joined Hungary in adamantly opposing Germany's efforts to influence the E.U. in mandating quotas for refugees. They've gone as far as to take their case to the European Court of Justice to counter these quotas imposed by the E.U. essentially placing state rights versus E.U. rules in the hands of the courts.

Rise of Right-Wing Parties

The third near term impact of the migration crisis, and perhaps the most important, is the rise of right wing or Euro-skeptic parties. As Europeans grow more frustrated with the migration crisis, the support for right wing parties is growing. These parties are not hesitating to take advantage of this growing frustration to promote their political platform and base of support. Throughout Europe, these parties are calling for a halt to immigration along with greater self-control over state affairs.

Across Europe, several data points suggest right wing parties are on the rise. In some cases, these parties have won recent elections at various levels. In other cases, right wing parties have gained double-digit support based on data collected through polling and social media. These parties are on the rise in nations such as Germany, Austria, Norway, Sweden, and Italy. Sweden's ultra-right Democrats, with roots in neo-Nazism, are now one of the most popular parties in the country⁶⁶ In Denmark, immigration and integration minister Inger Stojberg, one of the most hard line members of the government, is now one of the most popular politicians.⁶⁷ Even in last year's European Parliament elections, far right parties won enough seats to form their own bloc, giving them access to E.U. funding.⁶⁸

In June 2015, the Danish People's Party captured the second largest percentage of popular vote in national elections. This party is anti-immigration and was able to appeal to strong anti-immigration sentiment throughout Denmark.⁶⁹ In Central Europe, right wing parties in Poland and Romania made political gains.⁷⁰ In October 2015, the Polish anti-immigration Law and Justice party (PiS) won over 39 percent of the vote and control of the government. Polish PiS party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski, twin brother of former President Lech Kaczynski, was able to use the migration crisis to their party's advantage in October. To help gain such a decisive victory, he took advantage of the electorate's fears by claiming that migrants were bringing diseases into Europe.⁷¹

Within months of taking control, Poland's right leaning government now faces an unprecedented European Commission inquiry on whether new Polish laws violate E.U. democracy rules.⁷² The inquiry comes after Poland's President approved controversial laws giving the government control of the media that it sees as critical of PiS party views.⁷³ The government also changed rules for Poland's constitutional court.⁷⁴ Under provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, the E.U. can place pressure on a member state for violating E.U. democracy standards and even remove its ability to vote in the European Council.⁷⁵ If the E.U. took such measures, it would raise serious questions on Poland's long-term membership prospects.

In countries that are not facing an election cycle, other support mechanisms have spiked. Social media support for right wing parties on Facebook has exploded exponentially as the migration crisis continues. Support for Denmark's right wing Folk Party grew over 67 percent to more than 55,000.⁷⁶ Britain's U.K. Independence Party grew 31 percent with an increase of over 130,000 supporters. Even France's National

Front led by Marion Marechal Le Pen grew by 13 percent, or to more than 191,000, and gained the world's attention with preliminary victories across France during regional elections.⁷⁷

When speaking to the BBC, European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans was quite clear in addressing the threat to the E.U. that right wing parties pose when he stated "if we're not able to find sustainable solutions [to the migrant crisis], you will see a surge of the extreme right across the European continent."⁷⁸ More European states could take on a political landscape similar to Hungary's ultra-right government. Prime Minister Orban's government has used the migration crisis to highlight state rights over that of the E.U., seen as largely influenced by larger states, and his criticism has fueled anti-migration sentiment across Europe as well as disdain for larger states such as Germany.⁷⁹

According to Jonathon Moss, although right-wing parties throughout Europe have different agendas and platforms, "they do share common features, the most common of which are a very critical view of the current state of affairs, and a strong and explicit distrust of foreigners, especially Muslims."⁸⁰ With growing concern that the migration crisis is spiraling out of control, people throughout Europe are turning to right wing or Euro-skeptic parties as an alternative to more traditional mainstream parties.⁸¹

As long as the migration crisis continues, these near term impacts will grow over time. Four distinct current conditions indicate that the 2016 migration crisis will exceed 2015. First, there is no foreseeable conclusion to the Syrian conflict. Despite rounds of negotiations with all key regional actors, there is no indication a settlement to the Syrian conflict is within reach. Second, Russia's entry into the Syrian conflict is actually

expanding the conflict. Many predict that Russia's involvement with indiscriminate bombing of Syrian population centers will lead to an expansion of the migration crisis by the summer of 2016.⁸² Third, the E.U. is unable to come to terms with the crisis. Throughout 2015, the E.U. demonstrated a lack of consensus and resolve to develop a common policy and strategy for handling the influx of migrants. Thus far, there is no indication that a common E.U. policy is within reach. Finally, the precedent for migration to Europe is established. To date, over a million migrants have traveled to Europe. Millions of others living in under-resourced camps see the allure of a better life a short boat ride away and they see that the trip is very feasible. In January 2016, over 55,500 migrants traveled to Greece during a month plagued with bad winter weather.⁸³

Consequences of the Migration Crisis

Six European countries established the foundation for the E.U. in 1953 when they formed a union based on economic integration to secure a lasting peace.⁸⁴ The union has grown over the years and now includes 28 member states that make up 24 percent of the world's GDP. The purpose of the EU is to promote social, economic, and political integration among the member states to prevent internal conflict.⁸⁵ So far, the E.U. has accomplished more than what it was established to achieve. If the migration crisis continues, the three previous discussed near term impacts will have profound consequence for both the E.U. and the U.S. A strong E.U. is very much an important interest for the U.S.

Consequences for the E.U.

The migration crisis has transformed regional conflict and poverty in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa from a peripheral interest into an important interest for many states throughout Europe. For the European Union, the migration crisis has

arguably transformed into a vital interest as the very core of the union is at risk. If the E.U. fails to develop and publicize a comprehensive strategy to deal with the migration crisis and its spin-off terrorism effects, such as the Brussels bombings in March 2016, there will be long-term consequences for the structure of the union. The crisis could lead to a weakened or even fractured E.U. that is much less influential and effective.

The E.U. has been largely responsible for the economic prosperity and spread of democracy and human rights throughout Europe. If the migration crisis persists through 2016, the political landscape across Europe will most certainly change as more states hold internal elections that will indirectly serve as referendums on the future of the EU. A weakened or even fractured E.U. will cause economic and political disruption across the continent. It will weaken Europe's diplomatic national instrument of power, decreasing its leverage around the world, and ultimately destabilizing the continent.

Consequences for the U.S.

A strong E.U. is an important interest for the United States. A strong E.U. translates into a strong economic and political partner, a stable Europe, and a large union of countries that share moral values that mirror a core U.S. interest. In addition, a strong centralized E.U. eases U.S. diplomatic efforts enabling the U.S. to focus diplomatic capital elsewhere in the world. A strong E.U. also stays in line with other U.S. core interests. The E.U. has been very successful in promoting free economics, democracy, and human rights throughout Europe and elsewhere in the world.

The E.U. is a very important economic partner. A strong E.U. has helped improve the overall economic power of Europe having a positive effect on the U.S. economy.⁸⁶ In addition, as the E.U. prohibits individual members from negotiating their own trade policies, it has been much easier for the U.S. to negotiate trade deals with a single

partner rather than 28 individual states.⁸⁷ A strong E.U. greatly simplifies all economic transactions between Europe and the U.S. A weakened or fractured E.U. would further damage an already fragile European economy. This would certainly have adverse economic effects in the U.S.⁸⁸ It could also reignite a recession in Europe and potentially the U.S.

The E.U. is an extremely strong political partner and an important global actor. The E.U. has played a role in various U.S. led efforts around the world, such as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In alignment with U.S. interests, the E.U. supports ongoing stability operations in Africa.⁸⁹ Most recently, the EU played a vital role in negotiating the U.S.-Iran nuclear deal. The E.U. spent almost 2 years setting the framework for the agreement before the final deal.⁹⁰ The E.U. has proven on numerous occasions that it is an important political player and close ally of the U.S. throughout the world.

In addition, the E.U. has helped maintain peace and security within Europe for over 63 years. The E.U. has very successfully achieved its original charter of maintaining stability on the European continent. For over the last half century, the U.S. has not had to worry about a major war or significant turmoil on the continent of Europe in large part due to the E.U. A strong centralized E.U. eases the diplomatic effort for the U.S. In many cases, the U.S. is able to deal directly with one centralized union rather than 28 different nation states.⁹¹ In addition, the E.U. picks up many humanitarian or stability related missions that NATO and subsequently the U.S. would prefer not to address.⁹²

The E.U. shares the same values as the U.S. and does its share to promote human rights and assistance throughout the world. It currently provides 52 percent of all global humanitarian aid.⁹³ The E.U. is very much in line with core U.S. values and national interests. The E.U. has also been a strong influence on the spread of democracy and free markets throughout Europe.⁹⁴ It has grown from six original members to 28 members; all meet the specified criteria found in democracies and free markets. Membership in the E.U. adds a significant incentive for nations to conduct internal reforms.⁹⁵

Finally, a strong E.U. in line with U.S. core interests helps maintain a level of security and leverage over less democratic nations, particularly a reemerging Russia. As Russia looks to extend its influence and play a larger role throughout the world, a strong E.U. helps the U.S. maintain significant leverage over Vladimir Putin's regime. Russia would almost certainly seek to influence any states, particularly those in the east, which exit the E.U. A strong E.U. helps maintain geopolitical leverage against one of the U.S.'s main adversaries.

Recommendations

The migration crisis is the most significant issue that Europe has faced in decades and probably the biggest challenge for the E.U. thus far. It is in the U.S. interest to assist the E.U. to develop an effective short and long-term strategy to deal with the crisis. The following points are recommendations for both the E.U. and U.S.

- The EU needs to act with a sense of urgency to develop a comprehensive short and long-term strategy. Without a unified approach to the problem, the E.U. will look increasingly like an ineffective institution that will in turn decrease its support and legitimacy.⁹⁶ The U.S. should take every opportunity at the highest levels to encourage

European heads of state to develop a unified solution. For Europeans and the world community to view the E.U. as an effective institution, the E.U. must develop a unified policy and subsequent strategy.

- The E.U. should immediately implement or expand Operation Sophia to the Aegean Sea to assist Greece on the sea and on the land with the migration crisis. Greece is overwhelmed and cannot adequately process the large volume of migrants. NATO also has the capability to assist in providing security in the Aegean although the E.U. is much better suited to deal with the migration crisis. NATO should remain focused on countering Europe's most credible military threat, an expanding Russian aggression.

- The U.S. and E.U. need to make an immediate and significant investment in refugee camps in the areas surrounding conflict zones. Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan are overwhelmed. Refugees make up almost a quarter of the population of Lebanon and 20 percent of the population of Jordan.⁹⁷ The U.N. is vastly underfunded to handle relief care in regional camps. Due to a lack of monetary support, the U.N. has reduced food and medical aid to hundreds of thousands of refugees.⁹⁸ The E.U. and the U.S. can do more to invest in humanitarian relief for refugees in camps near their home countries. It is better for the E.U. to spend money within the region where refugees can easily return home after the war, rather than in European countries caring for refugees who are less likely to return to the Middle East.

- The E.U., with U.S. assistance, must work with Turkey to better control the refugee flow. Although the E.U. may not grant Turkey membership outright, it can offer other incentives such as economic support, visa waivers, and the pledge to reconsider

Turkey's membership application. The E.U. has already pledged 3 billion euros to Turkey in return for improved conditions at refugee camps and the ability for some refugees to work.⁹⁹ The E.U. and the U.S. need to provide more support to Turkey while also holding it accountable for interdicting and disrupting smuggling operations.

- The E.U. must play a role in a solution for long-term stability in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. The end of the Syrian civil war and the defeat of ISIL will go a long way in reducing the flow of migrants but it will not end the crisis. Both the U.S. and the E.U. must use all instruments of national power in a synchronized approach to solve the civil war in Syria, defeat ISIL, and bring stability to the Middle East and portions of North Africa. They must also convey hope to Syrians living in refugee camps that one day they will be able to return home.

- After developing a comprehensive long-term strategy to deal with the crisis, leaders in the E.U. must use various means to communicate the strategy throughout population centers. To alleviate fears, the public in Europe must understand that a viable strategy is in place.

- The E.U. needs to establish a "safe country list" to help better expedite the return of migrants who do not meet the criteria as outlined by the U.N. This, in conjunction with established "hot spots," or consolidated refugee processing centers, will help expedite the return of economic migrants and support for true refugees.¹⁰⁰

- Although the E.U. recently agreed to a trust fund for Sub-Saharan African governments to use to enhance security and improve conditions for people seeking to move to Europe for a better life, more must be done. The E.U. must prepare to play a

long term role in improving conditions in Africa while working more closely with African governments to help slow the flow of people leaving their home countries.

- The E.U. should expand funding, size, and deployment of Frontex, the E.U. organization established to maintain border security, to help struggling countries with border security. Although the E.U. has designated additional funding for Frontex, the organization does not have adequate resources to deal with the magnitude of the crisis.

- The U.S. must commit to assisting the E.U. in resolving the migrant crisis. Doing so is an important interest for the U.S. Political tension between states and a misaligned E.U. hurts U.S. interests. An E.U. collapse will most certainly have severe economic impacts for the U.S. and global economies. Likewise, the U.S. will send a strong political message, good or bad, based on the actions, or inaction, that it takes in assisting with the crisis.

Conclusion

The E.U. is one of the most successful international institutions in modern history. After two world wars, the E.U. has accomplished what its founders intended. By socially, politically, and economically integrating 28 nations, the E.U. has helped ensure peace and stability on the continent of Europe since the original six nation members formed the European Coal and Steel Commission in 1953.¹⁰¹ It has also accomplished many subsidiary effects such as economic prosperity and the spread of democracy and human rights to 28 member states and many other states beyond its current borders. However, the very political institution meant to unify Europe with a common approach to challenges has failed to deliver during the present migration crisis. Facing perhaps the biggest challenge it has ever faced, the E.U. must approach the ongoing migration crisis

with a sense of urgency. Although the E.U., as it exists today, will most certainly change, its overall survival is on the line. With grim prospects for a near term solution to the conflicts in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa in 2016, Europe can expect even greater numbers of migrants and refugees. If the E.U. fails to develop and deliver a unified strategy, acceptable to its population, it will almost certainly face severe consequences that will have a global reach. It is very much in the U.S. interests to assist its close E.U. ally in tackling this challenge. The year 2016 is a critical one for the survival of the E.U. and the U.S.-E.U. relationship, as it exists today.

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