

MULTICULTURALISM IS D(R)EAD IN EUROPE*

Аннотация: *There is a claim currently circulating the European Union (EU), both cynical and misleading: 'multiculturalism is dead in Europe'. No wonder, as the conglomerate of nation-states/EU has silently handed over one of its most important debates – that of European identity – to the left and right wing parties, recently followed by several selective and counter-productive foreign policy actions. Europe's domestic cohesion, its fundamental realignment, as well as the overall public standing and credibility within its strategic neighborhood, lies in the reinvigoration of its everything but institutions transformative powers – stipulated in the Barcelona process of the European Neighborhood Policy as well as in the Euro-Med partnership (OSCE). There is a claim currently circulating around the European Union (EU), both cynical and misleading: 'multiculturalism is dead in Europe'. No wonder, as the conglomerate of nation-states/EU has silently handed over one of its most important debates – that of European identity – to the left and right wing parties, recently followed by the several selective and counter-productive foreign policy actions.*

Ключевые слова: *information war, geopolitics, multikulturalism, conflicts management technologies, political conflicts, the international safety, the international relations, politica, interests, nation-state.*

The Gulf OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) states and Libya have by far the lowest costs of oil extraction thanks to the high crude 'purity' which is simplifying and cheapening the refinement process, as well as the close proximity to open warm seas for fast and convenient overseas shipments. Hence, the costs per barrel of crude for Libya and the Persian Gulf states are under US\$5, for other OPEC states below US\$10. This is in sharp contrast to countries such as the United States, Russia, Norway, Canada and many others that bear production costs of several tens of US\$ per barrel – according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). Thus, although they are commercially very affordable, Europe presently pays a huge political price for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) crude imports.

By correlating the hydrocarbons with the present political and socio-economic landscape, scholar Larry Diamond revealed that currently 22 states in the world, which earn 60% or more of their respective gross domestic product (GDP) from oil (and gas), are non-democratic, authoritarian regimes. All of them have huge disparities, steep socio-economic cleavages, sharp political inequalities and lasting exclusions, not to mention dismal human rights records. These represent nearly half of the countries considered by the Freedom House's annual reports as 'not free' – the very same countries that are predominantly held accountable by the western media for domestic and regional insurgences, international armed conflicts and famines, as well as for harbouring

and financing terrorists. Hence, as many as 9 of the 11 top crude exporters are usually labelled dictatorships and/or despotic monarchies by the leading academia. Professor Diamond calls it democratic recession. If so, there is not a single economic or political indicator for the MENA region to imply a successful 'Spring' of anything lately, but only a (permeated perpetuation of a) severe and lasting recession.

Indeed, modern history is full of examples where the crude exporting countries' development was hindered by the huge windfall revenues. Far too often, the petro-cash flow did not assist but actually delayed or derailed necessary economic diversification and political reform. It also frequently paved the way for the elites as – to use CIA jargon – 'useful idiots', domestically felt as Anis Bajrektarevic predatory, and externally instrumented. Conveniently through utilising revenues to buy and otherwise subsidise social peace, those regimes (of rentier states) were/are actually creating self-entrapment – ever stronger psychological and political dependence on hydrocarbons. Therefore, a real 'Spring', for the Middle East and the rest of us, will only come with a socio-economic decoupling and diversification, socio-political horizontalisation, and a decisive de-psychologisation of and departure from oil dependence. By no means would it ever come about by a purely cosmetic change of the resident in the presid¹ential palace.

¹ Most observers would agree that, while the so-called Arab Spring was of cross-Arab outreach, it was far from becoming

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Fearing the leftist republican pan-Arabism and Nasserism, the United States encouraged Saudi Arabia to sponsor the existing madrassah and establish a new large network of them all over the Middle East, as Professor Cleveland reminds us in his capital work, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (2000). In the last three decades, this tiger became 'too big to ride', as Lawrence Wright points out in his luminary book on Al-Qaeda, *The Looming Tower* (2007). Wright states that while representing only 1.5% of the world's Muslims, Saudis fund and essentially control around 90% of the Islamic institutions from the United States to Kazakhstan/Xinjiang and from Norway to Australia².

By insisting on oversimplified and rigid, sectarian Wahhabi-Salafist interpretations of religious texts, most of these institutions, along with their indoctrinated clerics, are in fact both corrupting and preventing an important inner debate about Islam and modernity³. Self-detained in a limbo of denial, they largely (and

pan-Arabism – more of a spontaneous social revolt series of events than any directional process. To channel something unexpectedly inflammatory and cross-Arab, but avoiding pan-Arabism as well as any sincere structural socio-economic reform and political emancipation can be achieved only by lightening the torch of Islamism. For one thing, as it now seems, the euphorically tam-tamed 'Facebook revolutions' across MENA were rather a strategic distraction 'innocently' dressed up in diverting banalities of social media networks. The very same role those networks played so well elsewhere too.

² However, a corrosive influence of big money (an upper hand of silencing) in politics and human rights groups is so high that any discussion about Saudis is one of the strongest taboos of our time.

³ Undeniably, there were ideological complementarities between Soviet communism and the anti-colonial, leftist, egalitarian and republican pan-Arabism. Still, post-Soviet and post-communist Russia remains in the same position, following its geopolitical rationale. Pan-Arabism is the only Middle Eastern counterbalance, an alternative to the Wahhabism-powered (or newly arriving, neo-Ottoman-powered) Islamism. (Salafist) Muslimhood might have an appeal among the Sunnis in Central Asia, the Caucasus and within the Russian Federation, but pan-Arabism does not hold the same allure (which additionally seals off Turkey and protects the Russian strategic Turkophone backyard from that side too). On the other hand, the republican pan-Arabism was felt as a direct threat to the US-backed Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) monarchies. Rather unchecked, the Al-Qaeda cluster has in the meantime managed to self-prescribe an exclusive monopoly on Islamism. By self-proclaiming an alleged struggle for the Sunni Ummah restoration, it actually corrupted and silenced all important debates within the Arab world. The only strategic objective it has so far achieved has been to effectively divert the Arabs' attention away from their real socio-civilisational, cultural, economic and political issues. In fact, the Al-Qaeda construct is only a radicalised and weaponised ideology of Wahhabism – a sect that originated in the nineteenth-century peninsular Arabian

purposely) keep the Arab and non-Arab Muslim world in a dangerous confrontational course with both itself and the rest of the world⁴.

To end this, there is a claim currently circulating the EU that 'multiculturalism is dead in Europe'. That much from a cluster of nation-states, as if they themselves lived a long, cordial and credible history of multiculturalism. Hence, this claim is of course false. It is also cynical because it is purposely misleading. The very sort of Islam Europe (implicitly or explicitly) supported in the Middle East yesterday is the sort of Islam that Europe hosts today.

On the Wrong Side of History? Young generations of Europeans are taught in schools about a compact unity (singularity) of an entity called the EU. However, as soon as serious external or inner security challenges emerge, the compounding parts of the true, historic Europe are resurfacing again. Formerly in Algeria, Egypt and Lebanon, then in Iraq (with the exception of France), and now with Libya and Syria, Central Europe is hesitant to act, Atlantic Europe is eager, Scandinavian Europe is absent, Eastern Europe is bandwagoning, and Russophone Europe is opposing.

The 1986 Reagan-led Anglo-American bombing of Libya was a one-time head-hunting punitive action. This time, Libya and currently Syria have been given a different attachment: the considerable presence of China in Africa; successful circumventing pipeline deals between Russia and Germany (which will deprive Eastern Europe of any transit-related bargaining premium, and will tacitly pose a joint Russo-German effective pressure on the Baltic states, Poland and Ukraine); the boldness (due to petro-financial and strategic emancipation) of Iran⁵; and, finally, the overthrowing of the

tribes as an anti-Ottoman emancipation quest, which – backed at that time by imperial Britain – finally demolished the centuries-long Caliphates-Ottoman Ummah. With religion per se, it has very little to do.

⁴ Hereby we are not discussing the disastrous image of Muslims created by the Saudi-Qatari-financed Sturm Phalanges holed in Afghan caves and their conductor, Saudi Rasputin/Wahhabi Houdini, recently located in Pakistan and extra-judicially 'retired'.

⁵ It is anticipated that Iran (and Syria) on the Russian southwest flank serve as a pivotal security buffer. Indeed, Teheran is in constant need of diplomatic cover from Moscow. In return, it refrains from its own Islamic projection and it shields the Caucasus and Central Asia – considered by Russia as its strategic backyard – from the assertive Wahhabism. On the other hand, the boldness of Iran endorses a perfect pretext for a reinforced missile shield, which, interestingly enough, rather encircles Russia than deters Iran, as the recent stationing of the US Patriot missiles in Eastern Europe and in Turkey has shown – not to mention that it seriously compromises the 1990 Conventional Armed Forces in Europe

EU-friendly Tunisian, Yemeni and Egyptian regimes – all combined, this must have triggered alarm bells across Atlantic Europe⁶.

Thus, in response to the MENA crisis, the EU failed to keep up a broad, single-voiced, consolidated agenda and an all-participatory basis within its strategic neighbourhood, although having the institutions, interest and credibility to do so – as it did before on home territory, by silently handing over one of its most important questions, that of European identity, to escapist anti-politics (politics in retreat) dressed up in the guise of Western European left and right wing parties. Eventually, the ‘last world’s cosmopolitan’ (i.e. the EU) compromised its own perspectives and discredited its own transformative power’s principle⁷. As the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, the EU did so by undermining its own institutional framework, the Barcelona Process, as the specialised segment of the from-Morocco-to-Russia European Neighbourhood Policy (EU) and the Euro-

(CFE) Treaty (since the United States unilaterally withdrew from the 30-years-in-place Anti-Ballistic Missile [ABM] Treaty in 2002), and poses a challenge to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)-guarded politico-military/CSBM (Confidence and Security Building Measures) cooperation among the organisation’s 56 member states.

⁶ Additionally, the announced reductions of the American physical presence in Afghanistan, its limits in (the nearly failed nuclear state of) Pakistan, massive over-extensions suffered on the south-western flank of the Euro-Asian continent, as well as the recent US Army pullout from Iraq are all felt within Anis Bajrektarevic the GCC (in France, Israel and Turkey too) as resulting in dangerous exposure to neighbouring (increasingly anticipated as assertive) Iran, with Russia and China behind it as well. Right now, Syria pays a (proxy war) price for it: this multi-religious country may end up entirely combusted, creating a dangerous security vacuum in the heart of MENA. Or, to use the words of frustration of a senior French diplomat, who recently told me in Brussels: ‘we have to quickly delegitimise the legitimate Syrian government and topple al-Assad in order to convince Israel not to bomb Iran ...’

⁷ The Gulf OPEC states and Libya have by far the lowest costs of oil extraction thanks to the high crude ‘purity’ (measured by overall properties such as a state of aggregation, excavation gravity, viscosity, weight, degree of sulphuric and other contaminants), which is simplifying and cheapening the refinement process. These exporters also enjoy close proximity to open warm seas for low-cost, fast and convenient overseas shipments. Hence, the costs per barrel of crude for Libya and the Persian Gulf states are under US\$5, for other OPEC members below US\$10. This is in a sharp contrast to countries such as the United States, Russia, Norway, Canada and many others that bear production costs of several tens of US\$ per barrel, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). Thus, although they are commercially very affordable, Europe presently pays a huge political price for the MENA crude imports. Of this often-hidden price, European consumers are largely unaware.

Med partnership (OSCE)⁸.

The only direct involvement of Europe ranged from a selective diplomatic de-legitimisation to punitive military engagement via the Atlantic Europe-led coalition of the willing (Libya, Multiculturalism is D(r)ead in Europe Syria)⁹. Confrontational nostalgia pre-

⁸ The MENA theatre is situated in one of the most fascinating locations of the world. Along with the Balkans-Caucasus, it actually represents the only existing land corridor that connects three continents. It also holds over half of the world’s proven oil-gas reserves (56% – oil; 48% – gas). Therefore, it is absolutely imperative for the external/peripheral powers to dominate such a pivotal geo-economic and geopolitical theatre by simply keeping its centre soft (e.g. preventing any emancipation that might come through indigenous socio-political modernisation). This is the very same imperative that was a dominant rationale of inner European and Asian machtpolitik for centuries. No wonder that the competition in the MENA theatre, which has a lasting history of external domination or interference (and largely with Versailles, Anglo-French-drawn borders), is severe, multiple, unpredictable. The region is predominantly populated by the Sunni (Arab) Muslims.

With its high population density, and demographic growth stronger than economic, this very young median population (on average 23–27 years old) is dominated by juvenile, mainly unemployed or underemployed, but socially mobilised and often angry males. Political radicalisation (besides exploitation of the Shia–Sunni and Muslim–Jewish antagonism) is surely one of the most convenient instruments of tacit control aimed at preserving weak, if not incapacitated, governing authorities. It is of no surprise that each and every one of the predominantly Sunni-Muslim Balkans-MENA countries of the secular republican type, where the external powers have brokered the political settlement, is enveloped in perpetuated instabilities, and thus paralysed. So far, no single monarchy has been (significantly) affected. From Bosnia (nearly 20 years ago) to Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya (as well as post-‘Spring’ Egypt, Tunis or Yemen), there is a purposely dysfunctional and indecisive central government put in place.

⁹ In my article ‘Libya – Unbearable Lightness of Being, Africa’ (Bajrektarevic, 2011), I stated – well before Gaddafi’s fall – the following: ‘Gaddafi’s government was a totalitarian one, but the post-Gaddafi government will be dysfunctional (like in other countries where NATO brokered a change in the last 15 years). The post-Gaddafi Libya will be – unfortunately – a territory. It will be a mere space of the grave political, territorial, economic and social problems, energised by a growing and nearly self-perpetuated sectarian violence (and inter-tribal blood revenge) ... To conclude with the Huntingtonian Clash of Civilizations wisdom: When the predominantly Christian air-force is bombing a predominantly Muslim country for 4 consecutive months and keeps doing so all throughout the “Muslim Christmas” – the holy fasting month of Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr – it surely will not help to maintain secularism and introduce democratisation locally, nor will it assist the war against Islamist radicals regionally.’ There are other Huntingtonian paradoxes as well: For over a decade, the United States has detained more political prisoners on Cuban soil (Guantánamo) than the Castro regime. It serves neither justice nor democratisation, be it of MENA or of the American continent.

vailed again over dialogue (instruments) and consensus (institutions)¹⁰.

The consequences are rather striking: the sort of Islam that the EU supported (and the means that it deployed to do so) in the Middle East yesterday is the sort of Islam (and the means it uses) that Europe gets today. Small wonder, then, that Islam in Turkey¹¹ (or in Kir-

gizstan or in Indonesia) is broad, liberal and tolerant while the Islam in northern Europe is brutally dismissive, narrow and vindictively assertive.

¹⁰ The 'Group of Friends of Syria'-induced recognition of the so-called Syrian opposition means also that Turkey is now practically at war with Syria. At this point, let me be both instructive and predictive: the fall of al-Assad would most certainly trigger the dissolution of Syria. It would also lead to a formalised federalisation of Iraq in a desperate move to prevent its total decomposition as well as to a serious crisis of Lebanese and Jordanian statehood, probably beyond reparation. The (short-run) winner should then seem to be Israel along with the GCC monarchies. However, in the long run Multiculturalism is D(r)ead in Europe (even the northern portions of Syria being occupied by the Turkish army for quite some time), it would be Kurds and Shias. Consequently, any proclamation of a Kurdish state, the Erdoğan government (as well as Iraq) would not survive – as it has already created enough enemies at home and in its near abroad. Ergo, as well as the dispersed, rarified and terrified MENA Christians, the (modernised) Sunnis are definitely the long-term losers.

¹¹ While the cacophony of European contradictions works more on a self-elimination of the EU from the region, Turkey tries to reassert itself. The so-called neo-Ottomanism of the current (Anatolian, eastern rural power-based) government steers the country right into the centre of grand bargaining for both Russia and the United States. To this emerging triangular constellation, Prime Minister Erdoğan wishes to appoint his own rhythm. Past the 'Arab Spring', neither will Russia effectively sustain its presence in the Middle East on a strict pan-Arabic secular, republican and anti-Islamic idea, nor will the United States manage to politically and morally justify its backing off from the absolutistic monarchies energised by the backward, dismissive and oppressive Wahhabism. Ankara tries to sublimate both effectively – enough of a secular republican modernity and enough of a traditional, tolerant and emancipating Islam – and to broadcast it as an attractive future model across the Middle East. Put simply, Bosphorus styles itself as the empiric proof that Islam and modernity go together. In fact, it is the last European nation that still has both demographic and economic growth.

Moreover, Ataturk's Republic is by and large by far the world's most successful Muslim state: it was never basing its development on oil or other primary-commodity exports, but instead based it on a vibrant socio-economic sector and solid democratic institutions. This is heavily challenging, not only for Russia, but primarily for the insecure regime of the House of Saud (and other GCC autocracies), which rules by direct royal decree over a country with a recent oil-export-dependent past, a fizzing presence and an improbable future. No wonder that on the ideological battlefield, the two belligerent parties will be dominating the Middle East, which is currently in self-questioning mode, struggling past yet another round of hardships. The outcome will be felt significantly beyond the Arab world, and will reverberate all across the Sunni Muslim world. Ankara is attempting to proclaim that the

Saudi-promoted Islam is actually a toxic, separatist/sectarian Wahhabistic ideology that self-constrains Muslims, and keeps them on the wrong side of history by hindering their socio-economic and political development. It does so, Turkey claims, by holding Muslims on a permanent collision course with the rest of the world, while Turkey-promoted Islam is not a weaponised ideology, but a *modus vivendi* which permits progress and is acceptable for all (including non-Muslims), with a centuries-long history of success.

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