The European Union in Turbulent Times: Challenges, Trends, and Significance for Israel

Yotam Rosner and Adi Kantor, Editors

Memorandum
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INSS
המכון למחקרי ביטחון לאומי
THE INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES
TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY
אוניברסיטת תל אביב

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Institute for National Security Studies

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האיחוד האירופי בעידן של תהפוכות:
מגמות, אתגרים ומשמעויות לישראל

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Preface

The year 2017 marked 60 years since the signing of the Treaty of Rome, which was designed to realize the vision of a united European community. The treaty and the European Common Market represented the continuation of a complex and perhaps unique process in which the founding nations, and those that were subsequently admitted, agreed to give up elements of their sovereignty in favor of supranational European institutions. Over the years the member states have dealt with the unending tension between the desire to preserve their national-sovereign individuality and the recognition that notwithstanding the problems and disagreements, the idea of a united Europe has provided more than seven decades of economic prosperity and security.

More than anything else, the vote in Britain to exit the EU symbolized the "centrifugal force" that opposes the growing authority of the EU institutions imposed on the national governments in economic, social, and legal matters. While the British tendencies in favor of secession from the EU were evident for a long time and were manifested in special membership arrangements, in other member states the hesitations and doubts developed at later stages. The expected tension between the nation-state and a supranational system was exacerbated by the accelerated acceptance process of the East European nations following the collapse of the Soviet bloc. The process of their integration imposed a heavy financial cost and exposed the workers in most of the "veteran" member states to competition from a cheap labor force. In parallel to the fall of the internal walls in Europe, the external boundaries were also breached. Millions of Africans seeking water, jobs, education, and healthcare immigrated to Europe, as did many Turks, by exploiting the relative ease of illegal entry into Europe. They were followed by immigrants escaping from central Asia, in particular from Afghanistan, and by a third

wave following the civil wars that erupted in the Middle East over the past decade.

These developments reawakened xenophobic feelings, racism, and anti-Semitism, which constitute the ideological foundations of the extreme parties that have flourished in many of the EU countries. These parties also adopted a nationalist anti-European line that opposed not only continued integration but even called for exiting the EU. At the same time, terror cells appeared within the immigrant populations, which largely did not assimilate in their new countries and often had no desire to do so. These terror cells were ideologically nourished by extreme Islamic movements in the Middle East and North Africa. The influence of these movements was also manifested in the Islamic State's recruitment of members of the younger generation – most of whom were born in Europe to immigrant parents. These young recruits reflect the depth of the problem confronting the EU. The EU finds itself facing fundamental questions, such as whether it can and should force its norms on minority populations such as Muslims and Jews that are in contradiction to their beliefs, concerning, for example, issues of circumcision, ritual slaughter, and dress code. Some who have been recruited to terrorism, whether in Europe or on the battlefields of the Islamic State, have received their inspiration at mosques or through the social networks that have exploited European liberalism and the Continent's freedom of expression and religious worship in order to spread hatred and incitement. This has forced Europe to consider the validity of its fundamental principles in a reality in which large groups are undermining these principles and endangering the very existence of a viable EU.

Alongside its internal problems, the EU faces serious difficulties trying to present to the international arena the image of a cohesive body with unified positions. The EU, along with NATO, was created as part of a bipolar global configuration that followed the Second World War. The disintegration of the Soviet bloc was used by these two organizations in order to absorb the Baltic states and a large portion of the East European states. Russia, which had been defeated without a shot being fired, had no choice but to accept the strategic turn of events, but without fully reconciling itself to the situation. Currently Russia is challenging the US and Europe by means of its willingness to use force in order to halt the process in regions that are viewed by Russia as essential from a strategic perspective and in which Russia has assets that it

can exploit for defense and the realization of strategic goals. Ukraine is a prime example, but not the only one, of Russia's old-new aspirations.

Over the last decade, China has risen in the EU's list of priorities. In addition to China being an immense market for Europe, Europe constitutes a highly important economic target for China, and the average daily amount of mutual trade between these two giants totals about one billion dollars. China is a problematic trade partner for Europe with respect to Chinese imports, as well as aggressiveness in marketing, the transport of goods, and China's investments in the infrastructures of other countries. The Belt and Road Initiative, on land and sea, was created in order to shorten the time it takes to travel from China to Europe. Similarly, the plan to exploit the Northwest Passage is becoming a reality due to climate change. These two maritime routes and the modern version of the Silk Road will make Europe much more accessible to China, and this reality involves both opportunities and risks.

Against this background, it appears that the distancing of the US from its European allies is more problematic than ever. Even before the arrival of Donald Trump in the White House, the relations of the US with its European partners in NATO and with the EU were problematic. The laborious process of decision making in Europe, particularly with respect to foreign policy and defense, was always a source of derision in Washington. In contrast to US activism and willingness to use force, particularly when under a Republican president, post-World War II Europe recoiled from the use of force, reflected in what was allocated for defense budgets – with the gap used by President Trump to criticize the Europeans in NATO. The two sides are now reversing their roles on the Iran nuclear deal. Only the "soft" approach of US President Obama to Iran's nuclear program enabled agreement between the P5+1, especially the three European states, which demanded tougher conditions, and Iran. It is now the US President calling for reopening the negotiations; this has met with European resistance, thus exacerbating their relations. The European rush to Iran's door after the achievement of the JCPOA and particularly in view of the US desire to strengthen sanctions against Iran widens the distance between Washington and Brussels. The opposition of President Trump to international economic agreements and in particular those that in his opinion perpetuate the US trade deficit guarantee that there will not be a free trade zone between the EU and the US during his term.

The relations between Turkey on the one hand and the EU and NATO on the other are increasingly strained as a result of Erdogan's auto-theocratic

domestic policies. Even though the negotiations over Turkey's request to join the EU have officially begun, it is clear they are unlikely to progress. Even before the rise of the nationalistic parties in Europe, there was doubt as to whether Turkey's membership would be approved in every country – whether in the parliament or by plebiscite – which is required in the case of acceptance of a new member. The circumstances of Europe in 2018 would seem to indicate that the entry of Turkey into the EU is simply unrealistic.

Finally, the frosty relations between Israel and the EU have not yet thawed and the two sides continue to have reservations about one another. The EU continues to criticize Israeli policy in all aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and in particular the continued construction of settlements. Israel accuses the EU of an unbalanced policy that ignores Israel's considerations and is clearly biased toward the Palestinian side. The desire of the Palestinians to see the EU become the "honest broker" between them and Israel will constitute another source of tension between the EU – if it accepts the Palestinian invitation – and Israel, which will apparently reject any attempt to marginalize American mediation. These issues, as well as the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the legislative initiatives regarding Judea and Samaria are liable to worsen relations between Brussels and Jerusalem in 2018.

Despite all of the problems and challenges that Europe has faced in recent years, there is room for hope that the collective memory of the era of the world wars and the experience that has accumulated in the rehabilitation and unification of Europe will overcome the tendencies toward separation, secession, and racism, and that this unique enterprise will continue to exist and develop. Israel also has an interest in this happening. Europe does not supply Israel with weapons but it is nonetheless a critical economic and cultural ally.

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The European Union and the Challenges of Globalization

The EU: Challenges at Home and Abroad

Shimon Stein

Sixty years after the Treaty of Rome was signed, the European Union faces an existential threat in the form of a series of crises, both foreign and domestic. At home, the EU is coping with the lingering effect of the financial crisis of 2008, which exposed the birth defects of the euro bloc (i.e., its structure and composition) that currently appear incurable. The wave of asylum seekers and immigrants that flooded the EU (2015) has developed into a systemic crisis whose effects will be felt on the Continent for a long time to come. One of the byproducts of the crises is the growing influence of the populist parties that are challenging the existing European liberal order. Alongside the internal European challenges, the EU is dealing with a no less problematic international reality. The Ukrainian crisis, which led to a crisis with Russia, and the uncertainty following the election of Trump as to the future of the American commitment to European security and the transatlantic alliance have led to a series of moves in the direction of defense cooperation between EU members as a step on the long road to a defense union. The question is whether the EU members will exploit the opportunity and take the necessary decisions, or whether they will continue to stagnate. The lack of consensus with regard to the future of the EU is one of the main stumbling blocks to effective crisis management. The election of Macron as President of France and his determination to promote reform in the EU is a refreshing change, but to this end he will need to coordinate with Germany, which is liable to delay

the reforms that Macron seeks to hasten. French-German coordination was and remains an essential condition for implementing reforms in the EU. It appears that the EU does not have the strength on its own to address the causes of instability, and therefore marking time is the only current viable option. Israel should have an interest in the continued existence of the EU, as well as the transatlantic partnership.

An article by historian Timothy Garton Ash in the *New York Review of Books* entitled "Is Europe Disintegrating?"[1] opened with, "Had I been cryogenically frozen in January 2005, I would have gone to my provisional rest as a happy European." Among the reasons, he includes the unification of the Continent, the expansion of the EU, the agreement of its members to draft a European constitution, and the opportunity to travel without crossing borders and use a single currency. These developments created a sense of optimism and expectations of a bright future. In contrast, had he woken up in 2017, he would have died again from the shock at seeing the changes that occurred in Europe, including: the disintegration throughout the EU, the poor performance of the euro bloc, the unemployment among the young, the lack of a constitution, and the British decision to withdraw from the EU (Brexit).[2] Indeed, sixty years after the signing of the Treaty of Rome, the EU is dealing with a series of crises, both domestic and foreign, that represent an existential threat.[3]

The question is whether members of the EU will exploit the opportunity that the crises present and will take the necessary decisions in order to overcome them, or whether the trend that has dominated in recent years, i.e., partial solutions (and sometimes none at all) will continue to characterize the management of the EU. In this context, the death in June 2017 of Chancellor Helmut Kohl, an acclaimed historic leader whose role in uniting both Germany and Europe remains unequaled, rekindles the tension between the vision of a united Europe and the reality of the challenges and barriers facing the EU today. In view of the fundamental disputes that have arisen in the last decade as a result of the series of crises, one can only wonder whether the aspirations toward an "ever closer union" are realistic. Indeed, the lack of consensus as to the future of the EU is one of the main stumbling blocks in dealing with the crises. It appears that the aspiration of the founding fathers of the EU – to create a post-national framework as the antithesis of the evils

French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Berlin, May 15, 2017. Photo: Guido Bergmann / Bundesregierung via Getty Images

that the nation-state arrangement wrought on Europe – is in doubt, in view of the trend of renationalization that is widespread among EU members, primarily those admitted most recently.

After surveying the crises facing the EU, this essay will examine their implications for relations between Israel and the EU. Do the aspects of disintegration serve Israel's interests?

The Crises Facing the EU

The euro bloc was one of the victims of the financial crisis that originated on Wall Street in 2008. The crisis revealed the birth defects of the euro bloc, i.e., the structure and composition of its members. The euro, which was meant to enhance the integration between countries, exposed the gaps between the economies of the "north" and those of the "south." These gaps are more than economic, and it is doubtful whether they can be bridged in the foreseeable future.[4] The proposals for a solution of the crisis exposed these gaps, particularly between Germany and the "southern" countries, especially France and Italy. Germany advocates savings, deficit reduction, and the implementation of structural reforms as necessary conditions for the creation of growth that will reduce unemployment (which since the onset of

the euro crisis has reached levels in the southern countries that undermine social and political stability and fuel populism). Similarly, Germany remains firm in its "ideological" refusal to transform the EU into a "transfer union" (mutual responsibility in which the stronger nations come to the rescue of the weaker ones in the case of financial-economic crises), a position that France endorses (even if it does not explicitly admit to it), as do the rest of the "southern" nations.[5]

The French-German coordination has been and remains a condition for the progress of integration in the EU. The election of Emmanuel Macron as France's President was perceived by Germany as an opportunity to reinforce bilateral cooperation as well as cooperation at the level of the EU. Policymakers in Germany are aware of the need to assist Macron in the historic mission he has set for himself, namely to "shake up" French society by means of far reaching reforms on domestic issues, and at the same to promote integration processes in the EU. If this does not happen, the National Front, a far right party in France, is liable to constitute yet again an attractive alternative that will put an end to the dreams of the EU. The basic willingness of Germany under Chancellor Angela Merkel to strengthen the cooperation with France depends on the launch of budget and labor market reforms. Evidence of France's and Germany's determination to deal with the crises by means of real change can be found in the understandings reached in the meeting of the German-French ministerial council in June 2017.[6]

In contrast to economic and financial issues, which are the source of disagreements between France and Germany, there is an understanding between the two countries on issues of defense and security that facilitates cooperation. This includes, inter alia, the Sahel Initiative, a project involving cooperation between France and Germany and the Sahel countries that includes military and economic assistance. It is part of a joint effort to deal with the background factors and causes of the wave of immigrants and asylum seekers arriving in Europe from the Sahel. Indeed, years after it was difficult to see any real progress in military cooperation between the EU countries (despite the numerous statements made on the subject), in the last few months of 2017 there was noticeably more willingness among the member countries to strengthen military and defense cooperation between them. This development occurred as a result of the mass terrorist attacks in Western Europe, the ongoing migration crisis, the election of President Donald Trump (which raised the possibility of a lessened American commitment

to the defense of Europe), and Russia's strategic policy. The combination of these factors has created public pressure on decision makers in the EU countries to adopt policies that recognize the need for a joint solution to these security challenges, both on the national level, as can be seen in the French-German understandings, and on the level of the EU.[7]

This change can be seen on the declarative level – such as, for example, in the announcement following the meeting of the EU held in Rome in March 2017 that emphasized the intention to create a "more secure Europe" – and on the practical level. Inter alia, it was decided to launch Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO): the EU members came up with a list of criteria and obligations in this context, and shared an expectation that they will propose projects to promote cooperation. These decisions were described by Donald Tusk, the President of the European Council, as a "historic step." In addition, the European Commission (the executive branch of the EU) decided, for the first time in its history, to create the European Defense Fund, which will finance defense projects. This decision was accompanied by a call to EU members to agree to the proposed European Defence Industrial Development Programme.[8] In parallel to the steps taken on the level of the EU, these decisions make it possible for interested countries to strengthen bilateral defense and security cooperation. This approach advances the model of integration referred to as "multi-speed Europe."

The security and defense consolidation that is taking shape in the EU will also include elements of domestic security, namely, the challenge of terrorist and cyber threats, as well as security aspects of the immigration issue. These threats originate outside the EU, but they create significant domestic threats to the EU countries. The aim of cooperation on these issues reflects a paradigm shift, which can be viewed as seeking an "autonomous strategy."[9] In the long run, such a strategy (as well as cooperation with NATO) will make it possible for the EU on its own to deal with domestic threats and threats from its closest neighbors. This is despite the fact that currently it is clear to the EU that its ability to play a significant role in influencing the international setting and promoting its values and norms is limited.

Nonetheless, and despite the internalization of the threats and the need to develop adequate responses, the EU is finding it difficult, on both the institutional and national levels, to respond to the threat of terror. A series of terrorist attacks in Europe in recent years has exposed the deficiencies in domestic security, including the level of cooperation between the security

services of the various countries. Responding to terror requires a multi-system approach that deals with the motivations of the terrorists, most of whom are immigrants or refugees from Islamic countries (some of whom are veterans of conflicts in Syria and Iraq involving the Islamic State). Despite the lessons learned so far in this context, it appears that terror will continue to be an integral part of the day-to-day routine in Europe.

The French-German alliance regarding the Sahel region is an expression of the effort to deal with the flow of asylum seekers and immigrants that developed in 2015 into a systemic crisis whose effects will continue to plague the EU for a long time to come.[10] In the years since, the EU – again on both the institutional and national levels – began a process of learning from the experience. However, this process is far from over, since the EU is still hard pressed to arrive at an agreed-upon immigration policy.

The massive migration to the gateway countries, particularly Greece and Italy, has exposed the problematic nature of the Dublin Regulation, whereby the first country in which a refugee/immigrant arrives is required to register him on arrival and see to his initial absorption. Currently, it has become clear that in view of the growing number of refugees and immigrants there is a need to modify this arrangement, which places a heavy burden on the gateway countries. The decision reached by the EU in September 2015, which was meant to disperse 120,000 asylum seekers among the member nations, has not yet been fully implemented, due to the refusal of some members to absorb refugees. Furthermore, the refugee crisis has revealed the lack of solidarity between EU members on this issue as well, which is critical to the EU's future.[11]

As a result, gateway countries, and in particular Hungary, Bulgaria, and Croatia, have taken steps on their own in order to close the "Balkan route." Although these steps have been criticized as harsh and non-humanitarian, they have drastically reduced the number of arrivals. Yet while the steps prevented the entry of hundreds of thousands of additional refugees, their arrival at the border of the EU has not been prevented, and it was the agreement signed between the EU and Turkey in March 2016 that led to a significant drop in the number of those entering the EU.[12] More than any other European leader, Chancellor Merkel pushed to reach the agreement with Turkey, based on her understanding that the arrival of additional refugees in Germany will have implications for political stability, and in turn, her political future.[13] Since then, there has been a significant drop in the number

of refugees arriving in the EU, and therefore it appears that the agreement with Turkey, whose signing and content led to criticism by human rights organizations, has achieved its goal.

Following the closure of the Balkan route, the EU has directed its efforts to eliminate the option of setting out from Libya, which is the point of embarkation for refugees/immigrants from Africa seeking to cross the Mediterranean en route to Italy. In contrast to Turkey, which has a functioning government with the power to implement the agreement, Libya is beset by a civil war and has no central government that can sign a similar agreement. Nonetheless, in February 2017 the EU signed an agreement with the Libyan government that is recognized by the UN (and that rules the western portion of the country).[14] In spite of its deficiencies, it appears that thus far the agreement is bearing fruit. In comparison to the summer of 2016, there has been a significant drop in the number of refugees that have arrived in Italy.[15] In August 2017, with the goal of reinforcing the agreement with Libya, French President Macron convened a meeting of the leaders of German, Italy, Spain, and the three African countries along the migration route to Europe – Libya, Chad, and Niger. The European leaders promised assistance in the form of training and equipment to the Libyan coast guard, as well as assistance to Chad and Niger in securing their borders with Libya to prevent the crossing of immigrants from their territory into Libya. Thus, agreement was reached that asylum seekers would be dealt with in those countries, with the goal of preventing the arrival of refugees in Europe, and economic assistance was promised in order to settle the refugees in those countries.[16]

It is clear to the EU leaders that border security and agreement with the transit countries and even the declaration that some of the countries of origin are "safe countries" (to which it is possible to return the refugees who are not eligible for asylum or immigration) will not be sufficient to stem the flow as long as there is no solution to the motives for immigration, namely civil war, economic distress, and climatic disasters. Despite the promises of assistance and the assistance that has already started to flow to those countries, the task of stabilizing the political-economic situation in Africa and the Middle East is beyond EU ability. Therefore, the EU will presumably continue to invest efforts in halting this phenomenon, not a simple task by any means in view of the forecasts of hundreds of thousands of refugees who are on their way from Africa and the Middle East to Europe. This is a global problem, but it is possible that a step in the right direction was made

at the G20 meeting in Hamburg in July 2017 where the continent of Africa was at the center of the discussions.[17]

One of the byproducts of the crises facing the EU is the growing influence of the populist parties, which are attempting to exploit the anger of the average citizen over being unemployed, over his shrinking or non-existent share of accumulated wealth as a result of globalization, over open borders, and over the situation of terrorist attacks and immigrants (of Muslim origin) who not only allegedly steal jobs but are also threaten national-particularist identity and Western civilization.[18] All of the populists are united in their criticism of the elites and the institutions of the EU in general for being anti-populist, i.e., anti-democratic. The result of the 2017 presidential elections in France, Holland, and Austria create a feeling/illusion that the danger of populism has passed; however, this is misleading since the solution of the problems that are the basis for the growth in populism is far from having been achieved. There is no doubt that the refugee crisis, which became particularly acute in 2015, provided renewed energy to the populist movement.[19] Examples of this within the EU can be found in Hungary, whose prime minister advocates an anti-liberal model, and in Poland, whose government seeks to undermine the foundation of European law.

There are those who view the crisis in Catalonia as a critical battle in the fight waged by the EU – with limited success – against populism.[20] Yet even if the reasons for the crisis share elements of the populism phenomenon in the EU countries (identity, frustration, and anger at the elite, and in the case of Catalonia, accumulated anger with the central government), the crisis also has singular characteristics that are unrelated to populism. The Catalonian public longing for self-determination are among a long list of national minorities in the EU (including the Flemish in Belgium, the Scots in Britain, the Corsicans in France, and the Basques in Spain) who would like to separate from the central government. This constitutes a challenge to the nation-state as the organizing principle of the EU. Fragmentation of the European map will exacerbate the lack of governance and the lack of stability that the EU must already deal with. Although this is problem for the entire EU, formally the EU has decided that Catalonia is a domestic Spanish problem, whose solution is to be found by means of dialogue and compromise between the central government and Catalonian separatists.

Challenges in the International Arena

Alongside the domestic crises faced by the EU countries within their own boundaries and within the framework of the EU, the EU is also confronting a problematic international situation. Among the most pressing crises and challenges is the Ukrainian crisis, and in particular Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and Russian subversion in Eastern Ukraine as part of the Russian desire under President Vladimir Putin to regain Russia's superpower status; the questions regarding the future of relations between the EU and the US in the Trump era; and the ongoing crisis in Africa, Europe's southern neighbor. All of these create complex challenges for the EU.

The blatant Russian violation of the principles of the European system, and Russia's continued effort to expand its sphere of influence to the area of the former Soviet Union, alongside its increasing military power (including nuclear), serve as a unifying factor from the EU perspective, at least for now. This is in spite of the fact that one can distinguish between countries in which the collective memory of the period of Soviet occupation is still fresh in the public consciousness and therefore they are prepared to exhibit a more rigid position with respect to Russia (such as the Baltic countries and Poland), and a number of EU members in Western Europe, such as Italy, Greece, Malta, and Cyprus that are calling for easing the sanctions.

A barrier to Russian policy is the NATO-centered transatlantic alliance, which constitutes one of the main components of the Euro-American partnership. It is based on shared values, bolstered by the perception of shared threats and the recognition of the need to find joint solutions. The election of US President Trump, whose worldview and policies reflect nationalism (America First), protectionism (cancelation of multilateral trade agreements), and unilateralism (in foreign policy and defense), is a threat to this partnership in general and to the future of the EU (which may not be able to deal with the aforementioned threats alone), founded on principles that are the antithesis of Trump's positions. An expression of the European recognition of the need to internalize the change that is taking shape can be found in an unprecedented statement (at least for a German leader) by Chancellor Merkel:[21] "As of now, the time has passed when we could rely fully on others," and therefore Europe must take responsibility for its own security. These words reflect the sense that prevails among the other EU leaders as well. However, it remains to be seen how much the emerging rift will widen, or whether the US administration will come to recognize

the necessity of the transatlantic partnership for the future of the US in particular and the West in general, against the background of a changing world order that includes the erosion of American influence, the rise of new actors in the international arena, such as China and India, and the assertive policy of Russia.

No less problematic for the security and welfare of the EU is the threat of continued instability among its southern (and western) neighbors. The dream of democratic change and the stabilization of the region as a result of the Arab Spring dissipated long ago. The ongoing crisis, and with it the dramatic rise in the flow of refugees from Africa and the Middle East, will have dramatic implications for the future of the EU. Despite the strategies adopted by the EU, as well as the assistance it provides to the countries in turmoil from which the refugees are arriving (which is modest relative to their needs), the EU will have to internalize the fact that it does not have the capabilities – neither political-economic nor military – to deal with the threat/challenge from the south, and therefore must adopt an containment approach, which itself is not so simple.

The picture taking shape points to a multiplicity of crises facing the EU in a complicated domestic and foreign environment. Each crisis has its own unique characteristics, but at the same time they converge to form an existential threat. European integration in the post-World War II era presents a model that was once admired and copied. Sixty years later, the question marks as to the future of the EU are more numerous than the exclamation points. Against a background of multiple challenges, both internal and external, that threaten the EU, the question arises as to the implications for Israeli interests. I believe that the continuation of the transatlantic partnership and the principles on which it is based serve the interests of Israel, which views itself as part of the Western world. The differences of opinion between the EU and the US, as well as the possibility that the American administration will back away from its traditional commitment to European security and the disintegration processes within the EU itself, should not be in Israel's interest.

Despite the political differences of opinion between Israel and the EU as an institution and between Israel and the EU members, primarily on the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the EU will for the foreseeable future continue to serve as the hinterland for Israel's economy and for its myriad scientific and cultural ties in the international arena. Therefore, Israel

should monitor the demographic changes occurring on the aging continent of Europe and those that are expected in the future, and should assess the implications of these changes for the future of relations. The growing forces of populism in Europe, particularly among the leadership in Hungary and Poland, which are driven by a national agenda that also includes xenophobia and anti-Semitism, sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly threaten the liberal order in which Israel views itself as a member. Even if Israel enjoys the political support of these groups, which share its view of the threat from radical Islam, they should not be viewed as a stable ally for the long term.

Notes

1 Timothy Garton Ash, "Is Europe Disintegrating?" *New York Review of Books*, January 19, 2017, http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2017/01/19/is-europe-disintegrating/.

2 As a result of the uncertainty with regard to the outcome of the negotiations between Britain and the EU, it is difficult to assess the effect of Brexit on the EU. It is possible that the decision itself will lead to an additional crisis in the EU, although it is also possible that it will accelerate the process of integration and closing ranks.

3 The distinction between internal and external threats is to a large extent arbitrary, since external threats feed into and often fan internal crises in the EU. A clear example is the wave of immigration from the Middle East in recent years.

4 According to Garton Ash in the aforementioned article in the *New York Review of Books*: "It was a big mistake to create….a common currency without a common treasury, and shackling together nineteen quite diverse economies. Intended to foster European unity, the 'one size fits none' Euro is actually dividing Europe."

5 The question is whether as a result of the parliamentary elections in Germany in September 2017 Angela Merkel will have a smaller coalition in her fourth term than in previous ones and whether as a result Germany will take a more flexible position on arriving at understandings with France regarding the necessary reforms in the euro bloc. Signs of this can be seen in statements by the Chancellor at a press conference she held following a meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron on September 13, 2017 regarding the need to stabilize and develop the euro bloc. Her statement reflected openness to the proposals that France is trying to promote, such as a common budget, creation of a financial fund, the appointment of a minister of finance, and the creation of an EU economic government.

6 See the Die Bundeskanzlerin, the Federal Chancellor website, July 13, 2017.

7 Decision of the European Council in March 2017 (European council 9-10.3.2017 concilium). See also Global Strategy document, June 2016 (*Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe*, March 2017, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf), and "Announcement of the European Council at the gathering to mark 60 years since the signing of the Rome Treaty (The Rome

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The EU in the Shadow of the Immigration Crisis

Yotam Rosner and Adi Kantor

The wave of asylum seekers that arrived in Europe over 2015-2016 generated a major challenge for the EU. The need to provide for over a million people, most of whom fled from regions of conflict, created major tensions among the EU countries with respect to the division of the asylum seekers. This tension threatened the unity and stability of the EU, both internally within each member country and likewise between the member countries. In the domestic-political realm, Eurosceptic politicians have exploited the fear of asylum seekers among the public in order to attack the EU and strengthen the opposition to European integration in their respective countries. This dividing issue was one of the main factors behind Britain's decision to leave the EU. In addition, the opposition to acceptance of the asylum seekers led to serious friction between the gateway countries, namely Greece and Italy, which have been saddled with the burden of initially absorbing the asylum seekers, and the northern and eastern EU countries, which have refused to accept the principle of a fair division of asylum seekers among the EU members. Even the decision of the European Commission, which was ratified by the European Court of Justice, did not lead to a policy that was agreed upon by EU members. The combination of unbending political opposition to accept the asylum seekers, the lack of strong EU institutions to deal with immigration matters, and the low level of solidarity among the European countries is likely to become an even more serious threat to the EU if the arrival of asylum seekers continues at a high rate.

In the summer of 2015, more than a million immigrants sought asylum in Europe. Some left their countries of origin because of economic conditions and others fled hunger and disease, but the majority came from countries where they were persecuted or suffered actual danger. Subsequently, more than a million asylum seekers arrived in the heart of Europe from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Albania, Pakistan, Eritrea, Nigeria, Iran, and Ukraine.[1] Shocked by the situation of the asylum seekers in their countries of origin, the European countries, and first and foremost Germany, began to open their doors and accept hundreds of thousands of immigrants.[2] These immigrants were absorbed primarily in Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Austria, Italy, and France.[3]

The arrival of the waves of asylum seekers has undermined Europe's social and political order as a result of two factors: the lack of an agreed-upon European absorption policy with respect to the number of asylum seekers each country will absorb, and the lack of political consensus within each country as to how the asylum seekers would be absorbed. In view of the challenge of absorbing the asylum seekers, tension began to rise between the EU members and groups that are hostile to the EU within the countries themselves. Indeed, German Chancellor Angela Merkel declared that "the crisis of the asylum seekers is serious, and threatens the stability of the EU more than the economic crisis in Greece."[4]

This essay argues that the immigration challenge has undermined the social and political foundations of the EU and the European community due to both the inability to reach a consensus on how to disperse the immigrants equitably between the member countries, and the increasing strength of Eurosceptic forces within the EU as a result of the immigration crisis. The essay presents the policy implications of the wave of asylum seekers for the resilience and stability of the EU in the years 2015-2017, and examines how the Continent's political leadership has responded to the challenge.

The Economic and Political Effects of the Wave of Asylum Seekers

The picture of three-year-old Alan Kurdi lying dead on the coast of Turkey in September 2015, which was displayed prominently throughout the Western media, marked a watershed in the attitude of the European community to the humanitarian crisis in Syria. Although until then Europeans might have been apathetic to the issue, it was no longer possible to ignore the

Migrants escorted by police as they are walked to a refugee camp in Slovenia, October 23, 2015. Photo: Jeff J. Mitchell / Getty Images

tragic dimensions of the plight of the asylum seekers, and there was now a greater willingness to open the gates of Europe to hundreds of thousands of individuals. However, at the same time, other sentiments, namely, xenophobia (primarily against Muslims) and violent national patriotism began to rise to the surface in Europe.

From an economic perspective, the absorption of the asylum seekers created a considerable burden on the EU countries. It is difficult to estimate the precise cost of absorption, since this includes several components, including registration, preparation of the request, and the provision of long term social services and health services. However, OECD figures indicate that the average cost to the countries of Europe of entry, intake, and absorption of asylum seekers is estimated at about 10 thousand euros per individual in the first year arrival. For example, Germany, which has absorbed more than a million asylum seekers, spent about 16 billion euros on their absorption in 2015 alone. That same year, Sweden spent 6 billion euros to absorb 160,000 asylum seekers.[5] Expenditure on that scale has significant effects, particularly when Europe is suffering from a prolonged economic recession.

Even more serious than the economic challenges involved in absorbing a large number of asylum seekers within a short period of time are the cultural

differences between the asylum seekers and the populations of the host countries. These cultural differences have sparked a fear that sub-communities will emerge and threaten the social cohesion of the absorbing countries and even undermine their sovereignty and the security of their inhabitants. This fear is common not only among marginal groups in the political system but also among broad sectors of the public in the absorbing countries that worry that the creation of enclave communities that will provide fertile ground for Islamic extremism.[6] This position has been charted in numerous surveys indicating that the public, despite its sympathy for the distress of asylum seekers from conflict-ridden countries, fears the effects of their absorption. According to these surveys, the main fear is that immigration will lead to an increase in terror, the loss of jobs, and a reduction in the level of welfare benefits available to the residents of the absorbing country.[7]

The arrival of hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers, most of them Muslim, has played into the hands of the populist right wing movements throughout the Continent. These parties have exploited the public sensitivity to the issue of the asylum seekers and have woven a narrative whereby Europe is "flooded" with Muslims who "threaten" Europe's Christian-secular culture, its security, and even its existence. The objective of these political groups is to rile up the masses and create broad public legitimacy for themselves.[8] The significant support for the far right movements feeds on the fear among the public that the government does not know how to respond, while the far right parties offer a clear and decisive answer that is perceived by their supporters as a feasible solution to the challenge of the asylum seekers.[9]

Furthermore, these parties have managed to exploit the immigration issue in order to argue that the main entity responsible for the situation is the EU, which has weakened the control of Europe's borders, thereby enabling hundreds of thousands of immigrants to enter the EU countries without any restrictions.[10] The connection between anti-immigration positions and opposition to the EU has been reinforced in recent years, primarily in response to the increasing scope of immigration since 2004.[11] Public opinion polls indicate that there is a direct connection between negative attitudes toward immigration and negative attitudes toward European integration.[12] For example, many of those who voted "yes" in the Brexit referendum claimed that immigration is what motivated them to do so.[13]

The rise of the populist right and the weakening of moderate leaders has led to a situation in which the political center has started to move right in its policy on immigration. For example, Chancellor Merkel has said that Germany will work to integrate "real refugees" as part of its humanitarian obligations, thus hinting at the possibility of the expulsion of immigrants who arrived for economic reasons. Austria, which early on absorbed many of the asylum seekers, also tightened its immigration policies. At a later stage, it decided to increase the controls at the borders in order to prevent any additional immigration. The Danish government has granted the police the right to confiscate possessions from asylum seekers,[14] and similar measures have been adopted in Switzerland and southern Germany.[15]

A Split within the EU

Along with the rise of the Eurosceptic parties, the wave of immigration has led to heated arguments within the EU on participation by member countries in the absorption of asylum seekers. The two poles of the dispute on the issue are represented by German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban – the former because of her decision to absorb hundreds of thousands of immigrants in Germany, and the latter because of the Hungarian government's decision to expel about 4000 asylum seekers within one day.[16] Germany, under Merkel's leadership, has worked to persuade the EU to adopt a policy that would disperse the asylum seekers among the EU countries in an equitable manner. Italy, France, and Greece have supported Germany on this issue, but the rest of Europe's leaders have agreed to a voluntary policy only.

One aspect of the disagreement involves the geographic location of the countries relative to the route taken by asylum seekers. On the one hand are the "gateway countries," which are located on the coast of the Mediterranean and therefore constitute the point of arrival for most asylum seekers; on the other hand are the northern and western countries, which are geographically removed from the routes that originate in the Asian and African countries. The gateway countries, in particular Italy and Greece, whose absorption centers are overflowing, have demanded that other EU members share the burden of the asylum seekers in proportion to their size and their absorption capacity. However, the northern and western countries have refused to absorb hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers within their territory and have claimed that absorption should take place on a voluntary basis. Among

other claims, their stance rests on the fact that most of the asylum seekers have chosen to head north, mainly, to Germany, the Scandinavian countries, Holland, and Belgium.

One of the factors underlying the tension between the gateway countries and the rest of Europe is the EU's Dublin Regulation, which states that a request for asylum must be dealt with by the first country of entry (usually a gateway country). Under the regulation, asylum seekers that relocate from a gateway country elsewhere can be sent back to the country in which they registered, which was known as the "Dublin Transfer."[17] The wave of asylum seekers that arrived in Europe has exposed the weakness of the Dublin Regulation and the need to carry out a reform that will meet the needs of the gateway countries. A proposed reform of the Dublin Regulation began to take shape in June 2015 when a record number of asylum seekers arrived in Europe.[18] According to a proposal by Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, the EU member countries would divide the burden of absorbing the asylum seekers equitably according to a "key" based on GNP, size of population, rate of employment, and number of asylum seekers absorbed in the past.[19]

This policy was not implemented in practice. Hungary and Poland were opposed to absorbing asylum seekers, while Slovakia and the Czech Republic only agreed to accept about a dozen asylum seekers each. At a later stage, a number of countries, including Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland, appealed the 2015 decision,[20] although in September 2017, after two years of legal battles, the European Court of Justice rejected the claim.[21] Despite the ruling, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic decided to maintain their refusal to absorb asylum seekers, a move that apparently will lead to legal proceedings against the three countries.[22]

The inability to find an internal solution to the immigration crisis has created a situation in which European leaders have pinned their hopes on Turkey to reduce the number of asylum seekers arriving in their countries.[23] As part of the agreement, Turkey agreed to accept asylum seekers that are expelled from EU members, in exchange for one billion euros and accelerated proceedings for acceptance into the EU.[24] Subsequently, Turkey became the country with the largest number of Syrian asylum seekers – more than three million.[25] The deal indeed slowed the flow of asylum seekers to Europe. However, the closure of the land-based migration route led to an increased

use of the Mediterranean Sea route, with the coast of Libya becoming the main point of embarkation.[26]

Conclusion

The wave of asylum seekers that arrived in Europe during the years 2015-2017 created a major challenge for the EU. The economic, social, and political cost of absorbing the asylum seekers has led to the refusal of most European nations to assume this task, and as a result huge pressure has been placed on the absorption centers in the gateway countries, which are buckling under the weight. The failure of the EU institutions and the leading EU members to formulate an agreed-on policy that will lead to a more equitable sharing of the absorption of the asylum seekers has exposed the lack of solidarity among the various EU countries and the weakness of the EU institutions in finding an agreed-upon solution.

Furthermore, the issue of the asylum seekers has to a great extent poisoned the political discourse on European integration. The ability of the Eurosceptic parties to leverage the immigration issue in order to recruit support and the political price of a lenient policy toward the absorption of asylum seekers has led the centrist parties to adopt more rigid policies, both toward asylum seekers in their own country and toward the absorption of those waiting in other countries. Even European leaders who expressed sympathy for the asylum seekers, and are also committed to the idea of European integration, have faced a difficult moral and practical question of whether to endanger the stability of the EU and insist on the continued absorption of the asylum seekers or sacrifice their initial position in favor of European integration.

Britain's decision to leave the EU is ascribed, first and foremost, to the fear of future waves of immigration and the loss of control of Britain's borders. This decision demonstrated the trap facing European leaders, namely the fact that the lack of a solution to the problems of the gateway countries, and in particular Greece and Italy, has increased the tension between them and the rest of the EU members. On the other hand, the opening of the gates of the northern countries, which constitute the preferred destination for asylum seekers, has strengthened the Eurosceptic forces and has created a fear that other countries will follow in Britain's footsteps. The agreement signed with Turkey, though it slowed the rate of arrival, did not solve the problem of immigration policy. The refusal of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to accept the decision of the European Commission and

the European Court of Justice exposed the inability of the EU mechanisms to impose the EU's authority on disobedient members.

Although the wave of immigration played a major role in Britain's decision to leave the EU and has led to the rising popularity of the populist Eurosceptic parties, there is to date no apparent willingness among most of the member countries to escalate the political dispute on the immigration issue. Nonetheless, there is a real fear that the political resources of supporters of a common European community have been weakened due to the arrival of the asylum seekers, and that their ability to deal with challenges in the future is in doubt.

Notes

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The Current Terrorism Threat in Europe

Yoram Schweitzer

Senior members of the security establishment have claimed that the current terrorist threat in Europe is unprecedented. This essay examines this claim against the background of the waves of terrorism that have plagued Europe over the last five decades, and specifically in light of the nature of the current threat and the response that it demands. The terrorist threat in Europe in recent years has focused primarily on Muslim Europeans and converts to Islam. These perpetrators are usually veterans of the wars in Iraq and Syria who joined the ranks of the Islamic State and internalized its ideas and methods. Also participating in this activity are Europeans who did not emigrate to the Middle East to take part in the fighting, along with immigrants who operate under the inspiration of the Islamic State. The essay presents the challenges currently facing Europe's leaders and its security services and the ways in which they must respond to the real and potential threats that exist, in view of the threats by Salafi jihadist organizations, particularly the Islamic State and al-Qaeda, to flood Europe "with a river of blood."

According to the media and statements by members of the security establishment and various analysts, Europe is currently under a serious terrorist threat, perhaps the worst it has ever known.[1] This contention comes in the wake of a series of terrorist attacks that have killed hundreds, as well as the fear of what will happen when those among the over 5000 Europeans who joined the Salafi jihadist ranks in the war zones of Syria

and Iraq return to Europe with the goal of continuing the fight. There is also concern over the radicalization processes underway among hundreds of young European Muslims and converts to Islam who are exposed to Salafi jihadist propaganda on the social networks, which incites them to carry out violent acts in the West.

This essay will consider whether the current threat of terrorism is indeed the worst Europe has known over the past fifty years, what characterizes the current wave of terror, and how Europe is dealing with the challenge.

Terrorism in Europe since the late 1960s

The terrorism that struck Europe in the past was both internal and external. The internal terrorism, which originated among European citizens and residents, was characterized by several types. The first was terror carried out by local separatist organizations that were seeking to achieve national and political goals, such as the Basque underground in Spain, the Irish underground in North Ireland, the Moluccan underground in Holland, and the Corsican underground in France. The second was terror carried out by local organizations with Marxist-Leninist ideologies that sought regime change in their countries by means of violence, including Baader-Meinhof in Germany, the Red Brigade in Italy, Direct Action in France, and the Communist Combatant Cells in Belgium. Apart from these, there were far right groups that carried out sporadic though deadly terrorist attacks in Europe.

At the same time, many countries in Europe became the focus of terrorist activity brought in from the outside by foreign terrorist organizations as well as by states that support terrorism, such as Iraq, Libya, Syria, Algeria, Yemen, and Iran, which exported their local conflicts to the capitals of Europe. The most prominent foreign terrorist organizations that operated in Europe during the 1970s and 1980s were the Palestinian organizations, which began to operate in Europe to apply political pressure on European nations to intervene on their behalf in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Among the leading organizations were the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestinian (led by George Habash and Wadia Haddad), Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (led by Ahmed Jibril), and Abu Nidal. These organizations benefited from cooperation with local European terrorist organizations, which shared the idea of promoting an international Marxist ideological agenda.[2]

Paying tribute at a makeshift memorial in front of the Bataclan concert hall in Paris, site of the November 13, 2015 terror attack. Photo: Miguel Medina / AFP

In the latter half of the 1980s, Shiite organizations, and especially Hezbollah, joined the growing terrorist activity in Europe, under the auspices of the Islamic Republic of Iran and with its active support. The Shiite terrorist organizations added a new and particularly deadly modus operandi to the international terrorist repertoire, namely suicide bombings. Under their influence suicide bombings became a dominant mode of attack, and as such was adopted and further developed by many other terrorist organizations, due to the extent of damage it causes, and even more, due to the fear that it instills.[3] From the second half of the 1990s, the Salafi jihadist organizations, such al-Qaeda and its affiliates and in recent years the Islamic State as well, which are all members of the global jihad movement, joined the terrorist activity in Europe.[4]

The Terrorist Threat in Europe in the Early 21st Century

The Salafi jihadist terrorist threat to the West, including Europe, showed its full potential in the attacks of September 11, 2001. The investigation of the attack in the US revealed a deeply embedded terrorist infrastructure in Europe that operated prior to the attack and was used to recruit and prepare some of the September 11 terrorists. The image of immense power

that al-Qaeda commanded following its success in causing such extensive damage and casualties in the US and the threats of the organization and its supporters to "flood Europe with rivers of blood" created anxiety about what was to come. Nonetheless, and even though there were a number of mass terrorist attacks in Europe during the first decade of the 2000s, such as those in Istanbul (2003), Madrid (2004), and London (2005), the European security services managed to deal with the threat and foil dozens of other attacks before they occurred.

The current threat of terrorism in Europe is a direct extension of the Salafi jihadist terrorist threat during the fifteen preceding years. However, it differs in the actual number of operatives and in the number of potential candidates that may take part in future attacks. The threat in its current form began to take shape several years ago following the intensification of the civil war in Syria, the rise of ISIS, and the announcement of the Islamic State as the basis for a caliphate. The establishment of the Islamic State motivated numerous young Muslims from around the world to join its ranks, and their numbers more than doubled with volunteers who went to Afghanistan in the decade from 1979-1989 to fight with the mujahidin.[5] Moreover, the media and technological environment in which they operate today differs from that in the past and provides them with greater freedom of action, and in particular gives their activities much greater resonance.

The current generation of veterans from Syria and Iraq has adopted the extreme ideology of the Islamic State and their deadly methods of operation. Apart from the ideology, fighting for the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq served as an incubator for a generation of trained terrorists with extensive combat experience who absorbed the worldview and norms of their hosts. Among them are thousands of European citizens who openly declared that because of Europe's involvement in the fighting against the Islamic State they intend to return to Europe and take revenge on Europeans on their own soil. And indeed, since early 2014, a gradual trend has appeared with Islamic State activists returning to Europe for the purpose of creating an operational infrastructure and carrying out terrorist attacks. Since then, there have been dozens of successful and attempted terrorist attacks in the cities of Europe, including Paris,[6] London,[7] Barcelona,[8] Stockholm,[9] and Turku, Finland.[10]

Terrorist attacks in Europe that are identified with the Islamic State can be divided into four categories:

a. Terrorist attacks initiated and controlled from the main headquarters of the Islamic State in Syria (until it was destroyed).[11]
b. Terrorist attacks carried out by Europeans dispatched from Syria back to Europe to operate on their own.[12]
c. Terrorist attacks initiated locally and in coordination with Islamic State operatives and contacts.[13]
d. Terrorist attacks initiated and carried out by locals inspired by the Islamic State but without its direct contact.[14]

The easy access to the means for an attack – rudimentary weapons, vehicles, and improvised explosives – has made it possible to carry out a deadly terrorist attack without the need for a formal and professional hierarchical organization or prolonged preparations. This means that terror can take place at any time and in any place, without any prior intelligence warning that is necessary in order to counter it. In addition, the social networks provide incitement, radicalization, inspiration, and sometimes even instructions for lone terrorists and terrorist cells.

More than anything else, it appears that the current threat is what has been described by senior military and security officers as a "generational war."[15] Along with the fundamental difficulty in making predictions a generation ahead, the world is changing at an unprecedented pace. And yet, the presence of thousands of Western young men in regions of conflict and their contact with organizations that have a radical ideology and extreme methods and that deny the basic norms of the liberal democratic world has led to their indoctrination. Ours is an era in which a whole generation, including its offspring, have experienced the horrors of war in the Middle East and beyond, or alternatively, are exposed to the propaganda and uncensored radicalization efforts of terrorist organizations by way of the social media, and essentially do not share the democratic liberal values that form the foundation of European society.

The Response to the Threat

The counter-terrorism policy in Europe remains primarily the responsibility of the individual states, each within its own jurisdiction. Nonetheless, mutual responsibility and cultural and moral solidarity exist between the countries, and this leads to tight cooperation in the fight against terror.[16] To this end, the activity of joint European frameworks has been intensified. The leaders of the EU member states have committed themselves to strengthen

cooperation in both long term strategic aspects of counter-terrorism and the tactical immediate-response aspects: ensuring the safety of citizens by organizational-bureaucratic means; preventing radicalization and maintaining liberal values by legal, educational, and legislative means; and engaging in intelligence and security cooperation with international allies.[17] Among the various measures resulting in the most progress are increased inspections and security measures at the borders; improved regulatory and technological means for identification and processing of personal data; cooperation between the agencies of the various EU countries to prevent cross-border crime and terror; and increased intelligence cooperation between the individual countries and the EU and its allies, and between the EU and third party countries, which has been upgraded in order to fight terror and potential threats.[18]

Legislation to counter terrorism in the various countries and in the EU as a whole has also been strengthened in order to disrupt the financing of terror and make it difficult for terrorists to buy weapons and explosives,[19] and in addition a number of multi-national units have been established. Thus, the EU hopes to improve the legal legislative efforts against the threat of cross border terror by means of designated legislation at the EU level; encouragement of coordination in investigation and prosecution between agencies of the EU member countries and in the exchange of information; and a European judicial network for fighting cyber crime.[20]

Apart from the legislative response, the EU has developed a response to threats of radicalization and cyber attack. In order to deal with domestic radicalization, the individual countries and the EU have developed programs to deal with extremist violence (Counter Violent Extremism – CVE), which seek to deal with extreme ideologies used to recruit young recruits to terror.[21] In addition, there is an initiative to create educational and outreach programs in the Muslim communities in order to reduce their feeling of exclusion; provide families with the possibility of providing a warning of the radicalization of their younger members; and create an organized discourse with the leadership of these communities. In the cyber domain, a number of operational units have been established in order to provide a real time response to terrorist threats; multi-institutional forums in the EU have been created in order to define operating methods and to deal with hate and incitement to violence and terrorist activity placed on the internet and on the social media by terrorist recruiters and organizations; and finally, collaborations have been formed with leading hi-tech companies worldwide.[22]

In this context, and apart from the practical steps taken by the government and security authorities, it is of utmost importance to develop the abilities of societies in democratic countries to withstand the psychological threat that forms the basis of terrorist strategy. The development of social resilience is an important challenge for every society that is facing terror, especially societies that are not used to dealing with terror on a daily basis. This is not a simple task, and the mass media, including the new media and the social networks, have an important role to play in this regard. The modern era is characterized by shared media technologies and platforms that are also available to terrorists and which for them constitute a force multiplier. These means, together with the media coverage of terrorist attacks and the terrorists' declared threats, make it possible for the terrorists to inflate their image of power to dimensions that could not be achieved in the past, and this is used to instill fear that goes beyond the effect of the terrorist attacks themselves. Moreover, it is now even more difficult for heads of state and politicians with democratic and liberal values to demonstrate the leadership that is so essential in order to lead an effective battle against the threat of terror that will instill a sense of security. The recent election campaigns in Europe are evidence that it is easy for populist leaders to ride the wave of violence and threats of terror and to gain votes for themselves through scare tactics and incitement against minorities and foreigners in the name of the war against terror.

Conclusion

Over the past two years, Europe has devoted a great deal of effort to counter-terrorism. This imperative is reinforced not only by the declarations of the Islamic State and its supporters and by al-Qaeda and its affiliates, which threaten to flood Europe with terror, but also by every additional terrorist attack in European cities, as well as the arrests and thwarted terrorist activity, which reveal the dimensions of the threat.

The response to these challenges takes place on two levels, and combining them may prevent the terrorists from achieving social, economic, and political impact. The first is tactical-operative, which involves the deployment on the ground to prevent terrorist attacks, protect the public, and minimize the damage from terrorist attacks through reinforcement and increased presence of security and enforcement agencies; the creation of barriers in locations that are subject to repeated attacks; the training of intelligence and operational

manpower; and finally the modification of legal and judicial tools to deter and punish terrorists and locals who assist them.

The second level is systemic-strategic. The main challenge is to prevent terrorist organizations from achieving their main goals, namely undermining public confidence in the ability of the government to protect them, disrupting relations between the various sectors of the population based on ethnic origin, religion, and the amount of time they have been in the country, and finally undermining a democratic and liberal society's fundamental principles and norms.

The challenges surveyed in this essay underscore that the threat of terror facing Europe is indeed serious and complex and differs from terror in the past with respect to some of its characteristics, such as its perpetrators, and its potential scale. Dealing with terror in a manner that is effective, flexible, and appropriate to the character of the threat can help reduce its scope, as was accomplished in the previous five decades, while maintaining the democratic and liberal character of European societies and fighting terror through collaboration and public transparency.

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doc/document/ST-14260-2016-ADD-1-EXT-1/en/pdf. The PNR agreement is another example of cooperation with the US that has been expanded so as to maintain a high level of access for all members of the agreement. It has also proven effective in the case of the Terrorist Financing Tracking Programme (TFTP) by means of Europol requests. TFTP has proved its worth in the investigation of terrorist events. In addition, there is collaboration with Jordan, Algeria, Turkey, the Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Egypt, Israel, and Tunisia. The EU is also initiating a counter-terrorism initiative in the western Balkan countries where the work plan for 2015-17 is currently being implemented and is supported financially. Moreover, there is a plan to include Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN) abilities in the region. The EU is assisting the Sahel and Nigeria. In Nigeria, the war against terror continues, with its focus on deradicalization of prisoners belonging to the Boko Haram organization and by means of collaboration with the regime to strengthen the rule of law based on a criminal justice system that responds to terror. Spain is a partner in the efforts of the US and Africa to monitor and disrupt the transfer of funds to terror; it also provides assistance to Mali and Mauritania in order to deal with violent extremists.

19 Council of the European Union, "State of play on implementation of the statement of the Members of the European Council of 12 February 2015, the JHA Council Conclusions of 20 November 2015, and the Conclusions of the European Council of 18 December 2015," Brussels, March 4, 2016, http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6785-2016-INIT/en/pdf.

20 The budget for training and guidance of EU judges and attorneys (the European Judicial Training Network – EJTN) has been increased and the program currently offers guidance to judges and prosecutors in 28 member nations. The goal of collaboration in this area is, inter alia, to deal with the legal challenges of counter-terrorism among the EU countries, both on the ground and in the cyber domain. For further details, see "Implementation of the Counter-terrorism Agenda Set by the European Council."

21 Note the creation of the Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN), which connects about 2400 professionals throughout the EU and is active against radicalization in all sectors. Participating in this framework are experts from diverse fields, such as education, health, and prison services who operate based on their experience and knowledge in order to learn from one another and develop recommendations for decision makers and to provide an alternative narrative to the extremist propaganda on the basis of personal testimonies. The EU is intensifying the war against radicalization not only by means of declarations but also by committing significant financial resources. Thus in 2016, the EU Council transferred more than 200 million euros to finance education for tolerance, social integration, and critical thinking; the creation of a pool of role models who visit schools, sports clubs for youth, and so on in order to share experiences and provide inspiration for others; encouragement of institutions of higher learning to award prizes for volunteering; the encouragement

of curricula that combine academic content with civic involvement; prevention of radicalization in prisons and support of rehabilitation programs; and the war against discrimination and racism and the promotion of shared values, as well as programs to deal with propaganda on the internet and personal radicalization, strengthening of cooperation with third party countries, and research to better understand the developing nature of radicalization and ensure a better response on the policy level. For further details, see "State of Play on Implementation of the Statement of the Members of the European Council of 12 February 2015, the JHA Council Conclusions of 20 November 2015, and the Conclusions of the European Council of 18 December 2015."

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The Populist Radical Right in Europe

Yotam Rosner

In recent years, the populist radical right parties have grown in strength in many European countries, including France, Germany, Austria, Holland, Denmark, Finland, Poland, and Hungary. The meteoric rise of the radical right parties reflects broad public criticism of global trends such as immigration, multiculturalism, and the concentration of political power in the hands of the European Union and its institutions. Accordingly, a not insignificant part of the radical right's agenda is directed toward the delegitimization of the EU and the tarnishing of its image in the eyes of Europe's citizens, with the intention of encouraging the exit of additional countries from the EU. It is no coincidence that senior EU officials feel that the rise of the populist radical right has far reaching consequences for the future of the EU and its ability to weather future crises. A large part of the success of the radical right parties stems from their close relations with the Kremlin, which works through them to undermine the EU from within. Due to their anti-Muslim agenda and their view of Israel as the spearhead of the West's fight against Islam, the rise of the radical right parties will likely have implications for the future relations between Europe and Israel.

In early 2016, forthcoming events such as the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States, the vote in Britain to leave the EU (Brexit),

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and the increased parliamentary power of the radical right movements in many European countries would have seemed more like a far-fetched Hollywood movie than a realistic political scenario. However, in hindsight, these developments in fact appear to be a natural continuation of processes that characterized the previous decade, including: the global economic crisis in 2008 and the ensuing recession; the loss of confidence in political institutions; the growing alienation toward the establishment media; and the rise of alternative media and the social media. Against the background of these trends, the populist radical right movements began to accumulate legitimacy and support. The strengthening of the radical right in Europe in recent years led Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission's General Assembly, in a speech following a series of electoral successes by the radical right parties in Europe and first and foremost among them the referendum in Britain to leave the EU, to warn of "galloping populism" that threatens the unity of the EU.[1]

Parallel to the victory in Britain, the radical right has accumulated major political successes throughout Europe. In Germany, the radical right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party won 12.6 percent of the seats in the Bundestag elections in September 2017.[2] In the presidential elections in France in May 2017, National Front (FN) candidate Marine Le Pen came in second in the first round of the presidential elections with 21.4 percent of the vote, and won 34 percent of the vote in the second round.[3] In Holland, the Party for Freedom (PVV), led by Geert Wilders, finished in second place in the general elections in March 2016, and in Austria, the Austrian Freedom Party (FPO) won 26 percent and was expected to join the coalition as one of the main partners.[4] Similar trends can be seen in Denmark, Finland, Poland, and Hungary.

This essay looks at what characterizes the radical right parties, the factors that led to their rise in popularity, and the manner in which they use their political power to weaken the EU. In addition, it will look at their close ties with Russia and their effect on the relations between Europe and Israel.

The Nature of the Populist Radical Right in Europe

Various definitions of the "populist radical right" are often used to describe parties such as the National Front in France, the Austrian Party of Freedom, the Law and Order party (PiS) in Poland, and the Alternative for Germany party. In general, these are parties that encourage their voters to fear certain

Far right nationalists in Krakow light torches during a ceremony commemorating the 73rd anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising, August 1, 2017. Photo: Omar Marques / Pacific Press / LightRocket via Getty Images

social phenomena, most of which are the outcome of globalization, namely loss of jobs due to open markets; the lack of personal security and the threat to local identity due to the presence of non-European immigrants; the constraints on freedom of expression due to the need to be politically correct; and reduced national sovereignty as a result of the concentration of political power in supranational institutions.[5]

The populist radical right parties in Europe range from populist right parties, such as the Party of Freedom (PW) in Holland, which presents itself as the protector of European liberalism against Islamic oppression, to neo-fascist parties whose most prominent representative is the Golden Dawn party in Greece, which has clear neo-Nazi tendencies. There are important differences between these parties: the rightist parties in Eastern Europe are based on territorial revisionism and ethnic threats originating from minorities, while in Western Europe the main issues are immigration and multiculturalism.[6] Nonetheless, there is a consensus in the academic world that the parties belong to one "family."[7] The dominant characteristic of these movements is the ethno-national exclusivity of citizenship, reflected in the slogan "our people first." The main position of these parties is that nations need to be

populated exclusively by members of the local community, and that non-local elements (people and ideas) threaten the stability of the country.[8] The growth of the radical right is attributed to three main factors: immigration, economic recession, and rejection of multiculturalism.

Immigration: Immigration from the Middle East and Africa to the European countries, which peaked in the summer of 2015, is one of the main themes in the populist radical right agenda. The fear among large parts of the public for their economic and personal security and for the cultural-national character of their country has been exploited by the radical right parties, which have waged a major campaign against the absorption of immigrants, particularly immigrants from Muslim countries. Members of the radical right present themselves as "protectors of liberal values" against the Muslim anti-liberal community, which will in the future force anti-pluralistic values on the "authentic" residents who are disappearing from Europe.[9]

Economic recession: Globalization, which is characterized by the opening of markets to international trade, has changed the face of the world, and while it has brought prosperity to many, it has widened social gaps for others. The rise of the radical right in Europe and the US constitutes a "vote of no confidence" in the global system and a protest by the "losers of globalization." These are people who did not find their place in the era of automation and outsourcing that led to the loss of jobs, primarily blue collar jobs and particularly among the rural unskilled population that was employed primarily in those jobs. The employment rate among the younger population reached a low point in 2016. For example, the general rate of unemployment is 10 percent, and among the young it is 26.4 percent. In Italy, the rate of unemployment among the young is 37.7 percent; in Belgium, it is 20.1 percent; and in Greece it is 47 percent.[10] The main narrative of the populist parties in their attempt to appeal to voters that have not achieved economic security involves criticizing the establishment or the elites, while presenting the populist parties as the authentic voice of the people, as opposed to the elites who are concerned only about themselves.

Multiculturalism: For more than a generation, the economic elites created a social-cultural consensus on a wide range of issues, from free trade and the advantages of immigration to equality in marriage. The unity on these issues pushed those opposed to these values to the political sidelines and created general resentment against the establishment or the "elites." As in the case of economic recession, the rise of the radical right in Europe constitutes a

"vote of no confidence" in a system characterized by multiculturalism and progressive thinking, represented by what the rightist parties have called the "elites."[11] The populist radical right parties are opposed to the inclusion of minorities (both ethnic and religious), the LGBT community, and other groups in the public discourse. Essentially, they relate to only one group as legitimate, namely the "people," and present themselves as the people's exclusive representative. The distinction between the "elites" and the "people" is based less on a person's wealth and more on the values they espouse. According to the radical right parties, even if they are not supported by all citizens, they represent the "grassroots" core that has been neglected by the multicultural establishment.[12]

The Rightist Parties and the Stability of the EU

Although the populist right parties focus on domestic issues, the threat of the rise of the radical right parties to the EU and its institutions is significant. The radical right parties have risen in popularity to a large extent by successfully attracting the votes of losers of globalization who oppose European integration. This goal is common to the populist radical right parties, as well as the radical left parties who have set themselves the goal of destroying the neo-liberal agenda of the EU.[13] Immigration, unemployment, and economic recession have created a feeling among the public that the EU is the principal party responsible for the situation. The main claim of opponents to the EU – the "Eurosceptics" – is that the common man in Europe does not benefit in any way from the EU and its institutions. Thus, the "EU multicultural eurocrats" are perceived as a bureaucratic elite who impose petty regulations removed from the day-to-day needs of Europe's citizens.[14]

The most prominent representative of the Eurosceptics is the UK Independence Party (UKIP) whose leader, Nigel Farage, blames the EU for a wide variety of problems, including uncontrolled immigration and the rise of radical Islam in Britain. The party was part of the forces that worked to pass the referendum on leaving the EU. The growing popularity of Farage, Le Pen, and the like is attributed to sectors that want Europe to be a mosaic of countries rather than an integrated bloc based on a common market, open borders, and a common currency. They seek a Europe that resembles what existed before the countries of Europe initiated the "Great Experiment," and they ignore the fact that the goal of the "Great Experiment" was to prevent Europe from returning to an endless cycle of wars. "What we've tried to

do in Europe is go against all the trends globally," says Farage. "Globally, the world is breaking down into smaller units. The desire to reverse that trend shows Europe's complete lack of understanding of how human beings operate."[15] The British vote became a major component in the election campaigns of the extreme right in France and Holland, which has created the fear among EU leaders of a "domino effect" whereby additional countries will exit from the EU. As a result, the EU has adopted a hardline stance in the negotiations with Britain over the exit agreement, with the goal of deterring additional countries from taking the same route.[16]

Although the radical right parties are abhorred by many, it is possible that their venomous discourse against the EU will push the centrist parties to adopt a stance that is less supportive of European integration in general and the EU in particular. For example, incoming Austrian President Sebastian Kurz was elected in October 2017 on a solidly Eurosceptic ticket.[17] The continuing rise of the radical right parties may push other leaders to follow his lead, and European integration will become a political issue rather than a consensus.

Cooperation between the Populist Radical Right in Europe and the Kremlin

The global media has regularly reported Russia's intervention in support of the right wing populist parties all over Europe. The involvement has been consistent and widespread, and has consisted of campaign financing,[18] the spread of fake news with the goal of creating an atmosphere of panic during elections,[19] and most of all, activity on the social media platforms during election campaigns, including the widespread dissemination of divisive news stories, the distortion of material, and the encouragement of racist discourse and incitement, in order to assist the Eurosceptic parties.[20]

The links between the sides is based on common ideological positions on a significant number of issues: populist rightist parties in Europe focus on limiting immigration, halting global political and economic integration (by denying the need for the EU and in some cases also NATO), taking radical measures in the war on Islamic radicalism, and in most cases opposing cultural liberalism and secularization in their own country. On all these fronts, the parties view Putin as an ally. Since he began another term as President of Russia in 2012, Putin has presented himself as the protector of conservative social values, particularly in his opposition to rights for homosexuals and as

an alternative to the Western countries that according to him "are denying moral principles and all traditional identities: national, cultural, religious, and even sexual."[21] Likewise in the area of defense policy, Putin has positioned himself as a staunch fighter against radical Islam, both in Chechnya and more recently in Syria. He can claim that he has carried on the fight against Islamic radicals with more energy than any Western nation.

For the regime in Russia, the rise of the Eurosceptic parties, both on the left and on the right, coincides with its national interest. Since the occupation of Crimea in 2014, the EU has maintained economic sanctions on Russia, which are directed against both Russia's financial market and its energy and defense industries. The sanctions are renewed every six months by the EU countries,[22] and the EU has succeeded in hindering Russian economic endeavors in other ways as well. For example, European regulation in the energy sector restricts Russian energy companies in the European market. For this reason, Russian is interested in weakening the EU or even dismantling it. The weakening of European integration will enable Russia to strengthen its bilateral relations with the European countries, such that each country can act according to its own national interest rather than the interest of the EU (whose decisions are influenced by the larger countries, most of whom view Russia as a major security threat).[23]

The Radical Right and Israel

The relations between Israel and the radical right parties in Europe are complicated due to the anti-Semitic history common to many of them. There are rightist parties in Europe that oppose the very existence of the State of Israel for open anti-Semitic reasons, including Golden Dawn in Greece, which makes use of Nazi symbols and whose members are declared Holocaust deniers. In 2016, one of the party's members of Parliament, Christopher Pappas, called Israel "an eternal enemy of Greece and Orthodoxy."[24]

At the same time, many radical right parties support Israel enthusiastically. One of the common denominators between Israel and the radical right parties is the opposition to the spread of Islam in Europe. As the Muslim issue became increasingly prominent on the radical right agenda, the support for Israel, which is considered to be the first line of defense against the spread of Islam, has grown. For example, Geert Wilders declared in 2010 that "if Jerusalem falls into the hands of the Muslims, Athens and Rome will be next. Thus, Jerusalem is the main front protecting the West."[25] Wilders is

not an exception. Support for Israel that is based on the fight against Islam is common to the radical right parties in Austria, France, Hungary, and other countries.[26]

Apart from the issue of the struggle against Islam, support for Israel serves to "purify" the radical right parties whose roots lie in the neo-Nazi or neo-fascist movement. With the goal of attracting new audiences, they have tried to distance themselves from their anti-Semitic past and to express support for Israel. For example, Marine Le Pen declared in April 2017 "that the EU parliament made a mistake by supporting the BDS movement."[27] Even a leader that is considered to be anti-Semitic, such as Gabor Wona, the chairman of the Hungarian Jobbik party, who declared in 2013 at a demonstration against the World Jewish Congress that "the Israeli conquerors…should look for another country in the world for themselves,"[28] has moderated his position and declared that "in [the] future, Jobbik would treat Israel like any other nation…we naturally respect its right to exist, form its own identity and opinions and articulate its interests.[29]

Consequently, it cannot be said that the growing strength of the radical right parties in Europe may harm bilateral relations between the countries of Europe and Israel. Indeed, in view of the consistent criticism of Israel voiced by the traditional parties in Europe and by the EU itself due to the stalled peace process with the Palestinians and the construction of settlements in the West Bank, the growth of the radical right parties and their influence may lead to the "defrosting" of relations between Israel and the governments of Europe. At the same time and in light of the anti-Semitic roots of most of the radical right parties and their pro-Russia stance in foreign policy, it appears that this is an alliance based on passing interests rather than a strategic partnership.

Conclusions

The rise of the radical right parties in Europe is a fact, and is evident in almost all of the EU countries. This trend has implications, both for the domestic policy of those countries, and in particular for the issues of human rights and immigration, as well as foreign policy. The growing electoral power of the radical right parties has influenced the centrist parties to adopt more rigid policies on the issues of trade, borders, and immigration, with the goal of denying the right further electoral gains at their expense. Thus far, the

rise of the radical right has not enabled it to win any of the elections held in recent years.

At the same time, there is no reason to assume that the radical right parties will return to the political margins any time soon. Their significant bases of electoral support have proven to be politically committed. New political shocks, such as the acceleration of immigration, an economic crisis, or an extension of the current recession will provide them with the opportunity to achieve a significant political victory. Added to these factors is ever-present Russia. The Kremlin will apparently continue to assist the parties on the right through various means, including psychological warfare and the use of the social media.

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Relations between the European Union and the Superpowers

EU-US Relations in the Trump Era

Oded Eran, Yotam Rosner, and Rotem Oreg

Since the election of Donald Trump, relations between the US and the EU have been on the decline. The clash between the globalist worldview of EU leaders and that of the US President has been manifested on a number of issues. On trade, Trump has identified the EU as a platform for tilting terms of trade in favor of Germany at the expense of the US, and has expressed his willingness to enter into a trade war in order to protect American industry. Major differences of opinion also exist with respect to the nuclear agreement with Iran and the threat posed by Russia. These gaps, combined with Trump's reservations regarding the NATO alliance, are liable to push the EU toward increased military integration among its members.

"As you go forward, you can be confident that your greatest ally and friend, the United States of America, stands with you, shoulder-to-shoulder, now and forever. Because a united Europe – once the dream of a few – remains the hope of the many and a necessity for us all."[1] Thus President Barack Obama ended his speech in Berlin in April 2016. His speech was not just lip service – during his term, transatlantic relations were characterized by close and effective cooperation that was reflected in a number of achievements, including the nuclear agreement with Iran, the climate change agreement, the alliance in confronting the Qaddafi regime in Libya, and the international isolation of Russia following its invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea.

Donald Trump's election initiated a turnaround in US-EU relations. The Trump administration's approach differs significantly and sometimes radically from that of the Obama administration and those that preceded it. In contrast to the American doctrine that has dominated since the end of the Second World War, whereby a united Europe is essential for the stability and prosperity of the international system, the current President has described the EU on more than one occasion as an exploiter that uses economic tools to gain unfair advantage in the free market in a way that causes harm to American markets, and furthermore does not bear its fair share of the NATO burden. Trump's isolationist utilitarian approach, reflected in statements that criticize the EU and its goals, has led to growing hostility between European leaders and institutions and the White House. Against the background of that hostility, difficulties have arisen in preserving previous achievements of the transatlantic alliance with respect to the global challenges facing the West.

This essay analyzes the gaps in ideology and worldview between the Trump administration and the European leadership and the ensuing policy disputes on key issues, including international trade, the nuclear agreement with Iran, Russian aggression, and a defense coalition both within the NATO framework and outside it. In conclusion, the essay points to various trends in the transatlantic alliance and the possible implications of the dispute for Israel.

Ideological Gaps: "Wall Builders versus Bridge Builders"

During the second half of the twentieth century, the EU developed as an economic-political alliance based on a liberal worldview, free market economics, open borders, and mutual dependence. At its foundation is a belief that European economic and social-cultural integration is essential to the Continent's economic future, that it will strengthen Europe's position in dealing with global challenges, and that it will prevent the renewed outbreak of European nationalism that could lead to another world war. This approach, which advocates cultural and economic "bridge building" between nations, is prevalent among the current leadership in Brussels and the key countries in Europe.

An opposing position has gained momentum in recent years, which essentially reflects a loss of confidence in international institutions in general and in European integration in particular. This approach holds that international institutions are corrupt and bureaucratic, serve the cosmopolitan

US President Donald Trump with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, European Council President Donald Tusk, and others at a NATO meeting, Brussels, May 25, 2017. Photo: Stephanie Lecocq / Pool / AFP

elites only, and harm the national identity of the member countries as well as their borders, security, and economies. This approach, which has spread in the West and especially in Europe, peaked with the exit of Britain from the EU and the growing electoral success of populist nationalist far right and Eurosceptic parties, such as the National Front in France led by Marine Le Pen. The leadership in Europe, led by German Chancellor Merkel and French President Macron, has identified these movements as the main threat to Europe's stability at this point in time.

In sharp contrast to Merkel and Macron in Europe, Trump has encouraged the widespread public antipathy toward global values, international agreements, the opening of borders, and multiculturalism, and has advocated a return to simpler and more direct solutions, such as the use of force and the imposition of barriers to immigration and trade, as well as sympathy for a "strong" and autarchic leadership style, such as that of Russian President Putin. Trump's worldview rejects the multilateral ideal of the EU, whereby relations between nations create mutual benefits, and rests on the belief in a zero-sum game, in which the benefit of one nation is always at the expense of others.

Trump holds a highly critical position regarding the EU, which he perceives as a pan-national organization that blurs national identities and shifts power from the hands of the "people" to those of the cosmopolitan elites. Trump has praised Britain for its exit from the EU and has emphasized that he expects additional countries to follow suit, since the EU blurs the unique nature of its members and "people want their country back."[2] In his opinion, the EU does not serve all of its members but rather is "a vehicle used by Germany to promote itself as an economic competitor to the United States." Before entering the Oval Office, senior members of the transition team talked to European leaders and asked whether they would be next in line to leave the EU. Furthermore, Steve Bannon, former White House chief strategist, promised to work to promote bilateral relations with European countries as a counterweight to the EU. Trump himself made a number of promises in this vein that undermine the security partnership between the US and Europe. First and foremost he has questioned the NATO alliance and the commitment to mutual defense, and expressed a willingness to shed previous agreements and alliances that he perceives as a millstone around the neck of the United States, rather than as strategic assets, which was the view of his predecessor.

Policy Gaps: The White House versus Brussels

After over a year in office, it is possible to identify a number of components in Trump's foreign policy, including the lack of an overall doctrine, the use of ad hoc short term solutions, and the definition of objectives on the basis of isolationist rather than global values. Loyal to this approach, Trump has limited American involvement in what he views as foreign interests on a number of issues, including the exit from the transpacific partnership and from the Paris Agreement on climate change, his call to renegotiate trade agreements with countries in the Americas, and the suspension of negotiations[3] for a transatlantic trade agreement.[4] These actions, and in particular the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, constituted a watershed from the viewpoint of the European leadership, and Merkel declared in response that "the days are over when we can depend on others."[5] At the heart of the dispute between the US and Europe stand three issues: intercontinental trade, the opposition to Russian aggression, and the future of NATO.

Of the three, transatlantic trade may be the most important. The trade balance between the US and the EU in 2016 was $136 billion in favor of

the EU. Trump's basic approach is to "balance" the trade balance. To that end, the US must impose tariffs on European imports and cancel multilateral agreements that in his opinion improve the negotiating power of its trading partners. In addition, Trump is threatening to impose a 100 percent tax on the import of dairy products from Europe and other agricultural products, and to raise the import tariffs on vehicles to 35 percent.

The European leadership, under Merkel, has rejected Trump's protectionist rhetoric. Thus, prior to the G20 summit in July 2017, Merkel stated that the developed countries need to strive for a situation in which globalization benefits all[6] and rejected the ideas of protectionism and isolationism (though without mentioning Trump explicitly).[7] Indeed, already prior to the meeting with Trump in March 2017, Merkel made clear that she would fight to preserve free trade and a "strong Europe," even at the price of a confrontation with Washington.[8] Furthermore, in response to Trump's threats to raise tariffs on imports from Europe, senior Europeans, and first among them Cecilia Malmström, the EU Commissioner of Trade, warned that a rise in tariffs on the export of metal to the US would be answered by a rise in tariffs on American agricultural products, such as American whisky and orange juice, with the aim of doing harm to the farming states in the US, Trump's main political base.[9]

The transatlantic divide can also be seen in national security issues, the main one being the response to the Russian threat to the EU. President Putin has identified the EU and NATO as the main threat to Russia's security and its political sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.[10] In order to deal with what is perceived as Western expansionism into Russia's sphere of influence, Putin in recent years has waged a counter-campaign to undermine the stability of Europe. This includes the use of military force in Ukraine, the deployment of forces along the border with the NATO alliance,[11] the use of information warfare, and cyber tools to influence the outcomes of elections in Europe, including those in France and Belgium.[12]

The root of the dispute between the European leadership and Trump lies in their different perspectives on the Russian threat. Europe views Russian aggression as a direct threat to its security and the integrity of the EU. This was made clear in the declaration by then-British Foreign Minister Philip Hammond that Russia is "threatening us all" since it ignores the international rules of the game.[13] This contrasts with the American position: on the one hand, Trump has expressed his wish to promote positive relations with Russia

in general and with Putin in particular, while demonstrating admiration for the Russian President. On the other hand, the Russian intervention in the 2016 elections has reinforced the perception of the Russian threat among legislators in the US. This led to the passing of sanctions to punish Moscow, which gained rare bipartisan support; Trump in turn was forced to accept and sign this legislation.

The third issue in the dispute is the future of NATO. The Russian aggression, and in particular the cognitive attack waged by Russia with the goal of swaying elections in Europe, has led to a discussion of the possibility of activating the mutual defense clause as a tool to punish Russia. However, since Trump came into office there have been question marks regarding the US commitment to its allies in general and to NATO in particular. During the presidential election campaign, Trump expressed doubt as to the necessity of the alliance and refused to commit himself[14] to the mutual defense clause if one of the allies that has not fulfilled its obligations to the defense budget is attacked.[15] The belated recognition by the President of the importance of the alliance (on April 12, 2017), his commitment to the mutual defense clause (on June 9, 2017), and the marginalization of Russian deterrence[16] have been cause for worry among European countries with the respect to the meaning of Trump's declarations. Does Trump intend to position himself as the leader that forced Europe to pay its way, or perhaps his intention is to prepare public opinion for the day when the US reduces its commitment to NATO?

In reaction to what was interpreted in Europe as American desertion, the discussion of the creation of a European "defense union" is gaining momentum. Thus, Germany, France, Italy, and Spain are calling for a joint European defense policy after the vote by Britain to exit the EU.[17] German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen has declared that "the European Union must modernize its military defense and security to match NATO's drive to beef up its own security forces in the wake of a major Russian build-up."[18] Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, has declared that Europe "will fill the vacuum left by the United States, including on the issue of NATO." On the ground, there are growing indications of increased military integration in Europe, including reports of the integration of rapid deployments units (PESCO),[19] and the creation of a joint training facility for European armies.[20]

Trump's decision to withdraw from the agreement between the P5+1 and Iran over its nuclear program (JCPOA) is also a stumbling block in the relationship between the United States and Europe. The stance of the other four permanent Security Council members, Germany, and the European Union against the decision by the US President to withdraw from the agreement with Iran deepens the gaps in trust and may complicate cooperation between the US and its European partners.

Conclusion: Is the Future of the Transatlantic Alliance in Danger?

The transatlantic relationship is facing a watershed, with policy differences between the US and Europe on the core issues of Europe's security and economy[21] accompanied by personal and ideological differences. Trump views the globalist international system as challenging American hegemony, while the current leadership in Europe led by Merkel and Macron is committed to the global approach and greater integration in Europe. These gaps reflect a major contradiction to the historic US military commitment to Europe.

On the domestic front and in light of Russian aggression in the cognitive domain and the cyber realm, the efforts to maintain the integrity of elections in Europe as a critical infrastructure are of prime importance. In the absence of a legal precedent that defines when a cognitive attack aimed at influencing an election "crosses a red line," it is not clear whether the mutual defense clause (Clause 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty) can be activated in a way that will deter Moscow from continued aggression, and whether Trump, who has rejected the intelligence appraisal that Russia is intervening in election campaigns in the West, will be prepared to commit himself to Clause 5 in such an instance. If Europe does not manage to develop military and technological response capabilities, it will reach a point where it is unable to respond to Russian cognitive attacks, which may boost the Eurosceptic parties and accelerate the breakup of the EU.

Trump's aggressive declarations on trade issues, and in particular his willingness to raise tariffs in order to protect American industry, is liable to lead to a determined response from the EU, which has announced that it will respond in kind.[22] The infamous historic precedent of the Smoot-Hawley legislation, when the US Congress raised tariffs in the early 1930s, led other countries to raise their protective tariffs. This led to a massive decline in international trade and transformed the Great Depression into a global economic crisis that also affected Europe during the 1930s. Because

the scope of global trade has grown exponentially since the end of the Second World War, such a tariff war is liable to have a similar or perhaps even worse outcome.

These disputes likewise harm the cohesion of the West in dealing with strategic challenges. Already now there are signs of gaps between the US and Europe on political issues (such as the relations with Iran and the fight against global warming). The loss of the feeling that Europe can "rely" on the US will force it to increase its internal military cooperation, both on the intra-European level and with international organizations and nations outside the EU. The "vacuum" left by the US is leading to a larger role for Europe (particularly Germany) in the current leadership of the Western world, in the shaping and preservation of world order, and in the response to global ecological, economic, and security challenges.

From Israel's point of view, the split between the camp calling for a stronger international system (led by the EU) and the anti-globalist camp (led by the Trump administration) creates a complex strategic environment with respect to its two senior partners in the political, economic, and international security domains. The special relations between the US and Israel may force Jerusalem to distance itself further from Brussels and certainly be perceived in Europe as doing so, in a way that will make it hard to gain a real partnership status in the future. This in the short run may harm relations with Europe, which would be less reluctant to impose restrictions on business with companies that operate beyond the 1967 lines. On the other hand, Israel, which is not a member of NATO, will be able to exploit the increased need for security in Europe in order to deepen its military collaboration with European countries and institutions and possibly as part of an alternative defense coalition to NATO. Since Israel must battle severe criticism of its policies by the EU frameworks, it is possible that alternative bilateral or multilateral partnerships can strengthen its position against the current criticism and pressure.

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A House Divided: How the Russian Question Polarizes EU-rope

Anastassiya Reshetnyak

While once serving as a cohesion factor across EU member states and in transatlantic relations, the "Russian question" has turned into a litmus test of EU unity and transatlantic solidarity. Since Crimea, Russia-related affairs in Europe have reflected and amplified existing fault lines across EU member states and within European political arenas and societies. Diverging European perspectives on Russia, coupled with transatlantic tensions on the "Russian question" under Trump, have sown confusion in Brussels's Russian policy, serving the "divide and conquer" strategy pursued by Russia.

The March 2014 annexation of Crimea triggered a significant crisis in EU-Russia relations. Within days, the European Union redefined its Russian neighbor as its greatest challenge, threatening the Continent's rule of law, security, and unity. Meanwhile, Western Europe defense doctrines re-ranked Russia as their top security threat, dislodging other pressing agendas such as Islamist terror, illegal migration, arms control, and Iran. For the first time since the end of the Cold War, Russia was framed as a pan-European "question," rather than an Eastern Europe (primarily Polish and Baltic) issue.

The Crimean crisis was the last development in a series of clashes that fed tensions between the EU and Russia in the twenty-first century, particularly since the end of Medvedev's presidency in 2012, and triggered the adoption

of a collective EU response against Moscow. In July 2014, the EU deployed a "linkage" strategy, applying political and economic sanctions targeting Moscow and linking them to Russia's "good behavior." As an integral vector of the EU's Russian policy, NATO embarked on an "enhancement and readiness" strategy, staging new demonstrations of force on its eastern flank. Under the second Obama administration, Brussels's political and economic coercive policy with regard to Russia was coordinated tightly with the US, contributing to a relatively united transatlantic front against Moscow – up until Trump's presidency.

Thus after serving as a cohesion factor across EU member states and in transatlantic relations, the "Russian question" amplified already existing fault lines and tensions between EU member states, turning into a litmus test of EU unity and transatlantic solidarity. The states have differed in their assessment of the threats posed by Russia and in their policy orientations. Russia has also become a "question" within European political and intellectual arenas and societies at large (whether with Russia's agency or not). Overall, Russia and its ideological and political model have exerted a palpable attraction on a spectrum of intellectual, political, and societal trends in Europe, a phenomenon that was facilitated by Russia's soft power activities across the continent.

From Potential Allies to Open Antagonists (1991-2017)

The Ukrainian crisis is often presented as a turning point in EU-Russia relations, yet it marks a culmination of tension-filled events that date back from the late 1990s and early 2000s. Captured by Mikhail Gorbachev's motto, a "United Europe from Vladivostok to Gibraltar," the immediate post-Cold War mood took shape with the partial institutionalization of EU-Russia and NATO-Russia relations in the early and mid-1990s. However, hopes of a rapprochement on both sides were built on an original misunderstanding: Russia aimed for its acceptance into the Western bloc, contemplating its integration into the EU and even NATO; the EU, for its part, sought to expand its values and leverage across the continent without relating to Russia as an equal partner.

This "lost in translation" dynamic unleashed an era of disenchantment. With Russia's authoritarian turn in domestic and foreign policy under Putin's first mandate, the EU became a vocal critic of Moscow. Similarly, NATO's waves of expansion in Eastern Europe (and at a lesser level the

EU's expansion eastwards), the initiation of the US Ballistic Missile Defense Program in Russia's European borderlands, and the US-EU support for the color revolutions in the post-Soviet space ruined Russia's prospect of a rapprochement with the EU. At this juncture, Russia embarked on a "divide and conquer" strategy in Europe liable to provide Moscow with maximum political and economic dividends, with a minor hiatus during the relatively liberal presidency of Dmitry Medvedev (2008-2012).

As since the early 2000s NATO was cast in Russia as a paradigmatic enemy, particularly problematic for Moscow was the accession to the Alliance of former Soviet Union members that demonstrated more antipathy to Russia than West European states. With the Russo-Georgian war (2008) and Russia's new orientation toward the building of the Eurasian Union (2011), tensions mounted anew between the EU and Russia. After 2011, Eastern Europe's traditional show of EU-Russia tension was duplicated in the Middle East and North Africa. Despite cooperation on the negotiations over the Iranian nuclear agreement, Russia and the EU adopted opposite positions on NATO's intervention in Libya (2011) and the status of the Assad regime in Syria following the eruption of the civil war (2011).

Thus since the early and mid-2010s, Russia has represented a multilayered threat for the EU. Of European concern was the potential for "local wars" in the "contested neighborhoods" of Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus; the "hybrid" nature of Russia's power projection in Europe (exemplified by the cyberattacks in Estonia in April 2007); Russia's new security architecture in Europe, and in particular the anti-access/area-denial bubble (A2/AD) of Kaliningrad; Russia's upgraded naval capabilities in the North Atlantic, the High North, and the Eastern Mediterranean; and Russia's "weaponization" of its oil and gas (as illustrated by the winter 2009 dispute between Ukraine and Russia that paralyzed Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, and Croatia).

Originating in Ukraine's last-minute refusal to sign the Association Agreement with the EU in September 2013, the Ukrainian crisis – and its culmination in Crimea's annexation and the war in Donbass – unleashed a decisive rupture. By violating the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, Russia was accused of shattering Europe's law-based order inherited from the end of the Cold War, opening a Pandora's Box of European secessionist and irredentist movements. Since then, Russia has turned into a litmus test of EU cohesion, as it has exposed and at times helped widen existing fault lines across and inside the member states.

A Litmus Test for EU Cohesion

The EU remained much stronger and firmer on the Ukrainian question than expected. At the same time, beneath the EU's collective sanctions policy vis-à-vis Russia since the summer of 2014, EU member states and non-members have displayed differences on their assessments of the Russian "threats" as well as in their policy orientations. Such divergences derive from geopolitical, historical, public opinion, and economic factors. The main fault lines include: contrasted assessments of the "threats" posed by Russia; the status of NATO as the main answer to the Ukrainian crisis and as the bedrock of European security; peace negotiations over Ukraine; the validity of the sanctions regime as an instrument of EU foreign policy; and the acceptable degree of reliance on Russian energy.

On the "threat assessment" question, the Ukrainian crisis marked a strong yet provisional moment of unity as the EU and NATO integrated the Polish and Baltic states' anti-Russian narrative into their own security doctrines. Yet sharp contrasts persist between West European states and EU members bordering Russia (primarily Poland and the Baltics) regarding the scope and immediacy of the "Russian threat." Seen from Brussels, there is a positive asymmetry between European members of NATO and Russia in terms of numbers of troops (3.5 million NATO soldiers versus the nearly 330,000 Russian soldiers stationed on Moscow's western border); defense budget (NATO's military budget in 2016 was $846 billion, compared to Russia's $46 billion); and NATO's powerful power projection on its eastern flank (most critically via the operational US ballistic missile defense system). Seen from Warsaw, Tallinn, Vilnius, or Riga, however, such asymmetry is reversed in favor of Russia. With its hyper-weaponized Kaliningrad exclave, modernized military capabilities, nuclear rhetoric, vast snapshot military exercises, and ongoing – albeit conflict-laden – cooperation with Belarus, Russia appears as a visceral threat. This sense of vulnerability is intertwined with vivid historical (and often politicized) memories of Soviet occupation and ongoing controversies over the memorials to the Red Army. With the notable exceptions of the "anti-Russian" UK and "pro-Russian" Hungary, West European countries tend to adopt a rather accommodationist stance vis-a-vis Russia, while East European states insist on maintaining a confrontational approach.

At the defense level as well, different approaches prevail on the enhancement of NATO in Eastern Europe as the central answer to the Russia-Ukraine

conflict. The UK, Poland, and the Baltics elevated NATO and transatlantic partnership as the core response to the Russian threat. As a result of Brexit, the UK strengthened its ties with NATO and took the lead in some of its central Russia-containment initiatives.[1] By contrast, Germany and France displayed less enthusiasm toward NATO's enhancement policy in its eastern flank. Those contrasts build upon an ongoing EU debate between proponents of NATO as the bedrock of European security and advocates for the development of distinctively European defense capabilities. The UK, Poland, and the Baltics elevate NATO as the sole valid framework for collective defense. Poland and the Baltic states would support Europe's "politics of common defense and security," provided that it does not duplicate or harm NATO's efforts. By contrast, Germany and to a lesser degree France signaled greater interest in developing a European army that they see as "complementary" to NATO's force, thereby challenging the Polish and Baltic argument for NATO's predominance.

Third, the EU countries have struggled to agree on a common approach to the crisis in Ukraine. Member states such as France and Germany, two main stakeholders in the Normandy format that also includes Russia and Ukraine, put the emphasis on a political response to the crisis, while other European nations – the UK, Poland, and the Baltics – advance a military containment approach. Similarly, the European Commission, along with France, Germany, the UK, and Finland has advocated a humanitarian assistance approach.[2] By contrast, Lithuania and Estonia have supported Ukraine's request for military assistance; in turn, Poland upheld an intermediate position by aligning itself with the US and remaining cautious on the military support option. Resisting Polish and Baltic pressures, the EU has also remained cautious on the prospect of Ukraine's integration into the EU. Despite the ratification of the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement on September 1, 2017, the EU made clear, in the words of the European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, that Ukraine "is not 'European' in the sense of the European Union."[3]

On the issue of sanctions, the "Russian question" has brought back to center stage the controversial use of sanctions and coercive diplomacy as the central instrument of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. Here the main bone of contention has not been Russia per se but the sanctions' effectiveness, a question that has marked the EU's numerous adoptions of sanctions' regimes (currently the EU has 40 sanctions regimes). Indeed,

several member states, such as Italy in 2015, have expressed their criticism of the extension of the sanctions regime against Russia; still other countries, such as Slovakia in 2016, even called for their removal. On this issue, European governments have been pressured by a range of professional lobbies, particularly in Italy and Spain, advocating for the removal of sanctions.

The fifth fault line relates to Europe's energy dependency on Russia and its weaponization. In 2016, Russian gas imports comprised 23 percent of total UK gas demand, 25 percent in France, 40 percent in Italy, 55 percent in Denmark, 58 percent in the Czech Republic, 62 percent in Germany and Hungary, 64 percent in Poland, 70 percent in Austria, and 84 percent in Slovakia.[4] Admittedly, the Ukrainian crisis encouraged the East European states to diversify their energy sources through Norway, the Middle East, and the United States;[5] Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were 100 percent dependent on Russian gas in 2007, and by 2016 reduced their gas imports from Russia by 60-70 percent.[6] On the other hand, the Nord Stream 2 (NS 2) pipeline project (designed to strengthen Russian natural gas supply to Europe by avoiding the Ukrainian and Baltic transits), is strongly connected with German, Austrian, Dutch, British, and French companies that invest in and/or benefit from its building. While Nord Stream 2, which would transport natural gas to Germany, is vehemently defended by Germany, it is equally vehemently rejected by Poland, the Baltic states, Romania, and Hungary, which are transit states liable to lose their dividends or suffer the increase of the energy costs after the NS 2 launch.[7] In the context of US-Russia energy competition for the European market, NS 2 has also been at the heart of a transatlantic dispute since June 2017, when the US Senate voted in favor of a bill allowing sanctions against those who facilitate the building or even maintenance of Russian energy export pipelines.

Divisions inside European Societies: The Case of Germany

As much as Russia is a question for the EU, it has been an even more controversial issue inside European societies. Russia's apparent ideological cohesion, united geopolitical worldview, and political stability have contrasted with and sharpened the image of a cacophonic, absurdly technocratic, and politically and morally inconsistent Europe. Russia has served as a magnet for a wide spectrum of ideological currents, ranging from the far right to the far left, advocating an alternative model of national development. Russia has also skillfully capitalized upon deeply entrenched Eurosceptic

and anti-American trends by deploying a range of soft power instruments, including information warfare, diaspora politics, cultivation of client "networks" of "influencers" in the political, academic, and business realms, and ideological and financial support of extremist (and anti-EU) political parties (epitomized by the election of former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder as a chairman of Rosneft in September 2017). Through those pinpointed means, Russia has been able to intervene in Europe's electoral politics and boost anti-EU trends.

Among other relevant examples such as France and the Baltics, Germany is a case in point. First, Moscow has reflected and deepened Germany's historical ambivalence vis-à-vis Russia that builds upon the historical legacy of a Germany divided between the pro-American FRG and the pro-Soviet GDR. According to a Pew research poll in 2015, 40 percent of East Germans had confidence in Vladimir Putin – twice as many as their Western counterparts. East Germans were half as supportive of sanctions against Russia than West Germans (26 percent, vs. 42 percent), and almost twice less likely to defend NATO allies against Russia (28 percent vs. 40 percent).[8] Germany is also a potential hub for Russia's diaspora politics. In 2017, some 3-5 million Russian speakers from the FSU lived in Germany, with a significant number not fully naturalized.

Second, Germany has been a privileged target for Russian information warfare, as illustrated in the 2015 "Lisa case" in Germany (the fake story of a Russian-German girl kidnapped and raped by Arab migrants) which was interpreted in Germany as an attempt to manipulate German public opinion and turn it against Chancellor Merkel. Russia was also accused of involvement in the September 2017 parliamentary election campaign. It has supported and promoted the circulation of pro-AfD materials[9] and has relied on the high proportion of Russian-speakers within the AfD ranks (according to Bloomberg, one third of AfD supporters were Russian-speaking Germans).[10] There were also reports of numerous hacker attacks from Russian servers.[11]

As much as Germans remain ambivalent on Russia, they are also divided regarding the enhancement of NATO. In 2015, at the peak of the Ukraine crisis, Germany's public opinion expressed disappointment, with only 55 percent having a favorable view of the Alliance, and over 70 percent favoring economic aid to Ukraine rather than military assistance.[12] As Russia's second trading partner within the EU, Germany is also particularly exposed to Russia's potential economic and energy coercion, with over 60 percent

dependency upon Russia's natural gas supplies. German companies such as Wintershall or Uniper have been among the most vocal on the European market to condemn the sanctions against Russia leveled by the US in June 2017, rejecting US unilateralism and defending Russia's energy partnership as a key German national interest.

The German case is not unique in Europe, as other information warfare tactics and incidents attributed to Russia occurred in Scandinavia (Sweden in particular), the Baltic states, Central Europe (Slovakia and the Czech Republic), and France. Indeed, Russia has demonstrated its ability and success in identifying and leveraging the soft spots and fault lines within European societies to promote its own interests. Apart from utilizing Russian-speaking minorities' abroad and exploiting deeply entrenched historical, linguistic, and diaspora ties, Russia has also reached out to European hearts and minds through the promotion of the Russian Orthodox Church on the Continent. More broadly, Russian media policy is designed to influence the general climate in Europe by voicing the Kremlin's mindset on the most controversial issues (the rise of the far right, the refugee crisis, the Islamic State and terror warfare, EU-US relations, and the Middle East). For now, Russia's information warfare has had some impact in Europe and potentially represents the greatest threat to Europe's unity. At the same time, Russia has unintentionally triggered the development of a common European policy and response in cyber defense, which may boost the EU's unity in the long run.

Conclusion

The EU-ropean "Russian question" is a reflection of deeper European concerns about the resilience of the European Union, the transatlantic alliance, and the democratic fabric of European states. Across member states, those divisions were thus far mitigated by the systematic extension of sanctions against Russia and may abruptly disappear in times of crisis. Inside European societies, however, Russia's imprint is liable to be deeper and durably affect the post-Cold War accepted rules of law, political culture, and national integrity, as exemplified by the Catalan crisis.

Under the first six months of the Trump administration, the issues of economic sanctions, Ukraine, and US-Russia competition over the energy market in Europe have also driven a wedge (perhaps temporary) between the US and Europe. As the US seems increasingly less predictable, the EU may be tempted to adopt a softer stance vis-à-vis Russia.

Ultimately, diverging European perspectives on Russia, coupled with transatlantic tensions on the "Russian question" under Trump, have sown confusion in Brussels's Russian policy, serving the "divide and conquer" strategy pursued by Russia**.**

Notes

1 In the year 2017 alone, the UK led NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Estonia with 800 British troops; worked with the United States-led Enhanced Forward Presence in Poland; headed the Alliance's Very High Readiness Joint Taskforce; and sent Typhoons to Romania for NATO's Southern Air Policing Mission to police Black Sea skies. Meanwhile the UK continues to build its new nuclear Dreadnought submarines to maintain their nuclear deterrent, against Russia in particular.

2 The European Commission has been one the largest providers of humanitarian assistance to Ukraine: as of the fall of 2017, the European Commission provided over €88.1 million of emergency assistance to Ukraine.

3 "Juncker: Ukraine not 'European' in the Sense of European Union," UNIAN Information Agency, August 29, 2017, https://www.unian.info/politics/2105024-juncker-ukraine-not-european-in-the-sense-of-european-union.html.

4 Gabriel Collins, "Russia's Use of the 'Energy Weapon' in Europe," Baker Institute, July 18, 2017, https://www.bakerinstitute.org/media/files/files/ac785a2b/BI-Brief-071817-CES_Russia1.pdf.

5 Simon Hoellerbauer, "Baltic Energy Sources: Diversifying Away from Russia," *Baltic Bulletin*, FPRI, June 14, 2017, https://www.fpri.org/article/2017/06/baltic-energy-sources-diversifying-away-russia/.

6 "Lithuania, Estonia Trimmer Gas Imports from Russia," *Energy Market Prices*, May 23, 2016, http://www.energymarketprice.com/energy-news/lithuania--estonia-trimmed-gas-imports-from-russia.

7 The EU and Poland also fight over the level of accessibility allowed to Gazprom on European markets: in August 2017, for example, Poland denied an EU order to allow Russian gas giants more access to the vital European pipeline OPAL (in early August 2017, EU regulators had given a green light to Gazprom to send gas via OPAL – a pipeline that previously was out of reach of the Russian energy companies).

8 Katie Simmons, Bruce Stokes, and Jacob Poushter, "NATO Publics Blame Russia for Ukrainian Crisis, but Reluctant to Provide Military Aid," Pew Research Center, June 10, 2015, http://pewrsr.ch/1Tar5Ms.

9 Targeting Russian-influenced German audience, Russian journal *Novaya Gazeta* reports that AfD "supports the anti-Western course of the Kremlin." See Aleksander Chursin, "Alternative for Germany: Germans Don't Need Islam," *Novaya Gazeta*, May 3, 2016, http://bit.ly/2u8NpmA.

10 Henry Meyer, "Putin Has a Really Big Trojan Horse in Germany," *Bloomberg*, May 2, 2017, https://bloom.bg/2FPrSVu.

11 According to research at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, a strong connection can be found between the AfD campaign and Kremlin propaganda since June 2017. See "Allies: The Kremlin, the AfD, the Alt-Right and the German Elections," London School of Economics, http://bit.ly/2prNQmm.
12 Simmons, Stokes, and Poushter, "NATO Publics Blame Russia for Ukrainian Crisis, but Reluctant to Provide Military Aid."

China-Europe Relations: Opportunities and Risks

Doron Ella

China's increasing involvement in Europe, against the background of its growing economic and political strength in the international domain, creates both risks and opportunities. From an economic viewpoint, the trade between China and Europe continues to grow, and is matched by greater Chinese investment in Europe, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time, there are substantive political disputes between the sides, particularly with respect to violations of human rights and the status of China in the World Trade Organization. The West European countries fear that China's growing involvement will allow it to leverage its economic power in order to achieve political objectives. In addition, the increasing military cooperation between China and Russia arouses major concern among European countries, particularly in view of the change in American policy toward Europe under the Trump administration.

Relations between the EU and China were established officially in 1975, and in 2003 a framework plan was created for an overall strategic partnership between them. This plan deepened the cooperation between China and Europe in a number of areas and reinforced mutual economic dependence.[1] At this time, China experienced rapid economic growth and became a major player in international affairs. For Europe, China's growing economic and political strength and its involvement in international affairs creates opportunities and risks alike. On the one hand, a stronger China creates an economic

opportunity for Europe, by way of enhanced trade relations, particularly as part of the Belt and Road Initiative, and by way of direct foreign investment (FDI) from China with the hope of creating jobs and maintaining positive economic growth; on the other hand, China's growing involvement in Europe represents a risk, since its investment in East and Central European countries sometimes incurs a political price, even if it is not visible at first.

Furthermore, China's growing involvement in Europe has generated an ideological split and public disputes between East European countries that are hungry for Chinese investment, and West European countries that refuse to ignore China's ongoing violations of human rights, alongside their demand for reciprocity with respect to the entry of foreign companies into the Chinese market. In addition, the military alliance between China and Russia on the one hand and the signs of US withdrawal from its regional commitments on the other hand constitute a not insignificant threat to Europe's security.

This essay maps China-Europe relations in the political, economic, and security domains and examines how China's economic and political expansion in Europe affects relations between the sides.

Political Relations: Normative Dissonance

European policy toward China is based on a number of principles: the promotion of democracy and the rule of law, the protection of human rights, and the commitment to the clauses of the UN Charter.[2] The EU member states are aware of the difference between them and China from political, economic, and cultural perspectives, and accordingly the EU has declared that its relations with China will involve a "structured management of the disputes between the sides," with the understanding that China is undergoing a complex process of economic reforms that is liable to influence the nature of relations between the sides in the intermediate to long terms. The main disputes between China and Europe focus on China's violation of human and civil rights; the non-enforcement of international law pertaining to copyrights and intellectual property; ignored decisions of international courts, particularly in the South China Sea dispute and norms related to the proliferation of nuclear weapons; and issues related to international trade and the principle of reciprocity in foreign investments.

The main dispute between China and Europe centers on the question of China's status in the World Trade Organization (WTO). When China became a member in 2001, it was agreed that its status would be that of a non-market

Signing ceremony of several agreements between the European Union and China, during the EU-China Summit at the European Council in Brussels, June 2, 2017. Photo: Olivier Hoslet / Pool / AFP

economy. This allows any country to use anti-dumping measures against it, which according to the organization's rules include raising tariffs and restricting imports. However, it was also agreed that within some 15 years, subject to the economic reforms to be carried out in China, it would receive the status of a market economy. Since Europe and the US constitute the main markets for China's products, their decision on the subject is important to Beijing, which is applying immense pressure in order to have its status changed. In this context, the government of China submitted a complaint in 2009 to the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism concerning the anti-dumping measures taken by the EU against Chinese steel products. Although it rejected most of China's claims, a panel of WTO judges decided that indeed in some of the cases the EU did not act according to the WTO charter.[3]

In December 2016, when the time came to declare China a market economy, Europe and the US were opposed, as China's economic policy still discriminated against foreign commercial companies. In addition, Europe accused China of flooding the global markets with cheap steel produced under government subsidy and the non-enforcement of international laws within its borders against the violation of copyright laws. In response, China

claimed that Europe's opposition is the result of its inability to overcome the continuing economic crisis and the refugee crisis, which forces it to adopt protectionist policies.[4] Nonetheless, the European Council initiated legislation that in the end is meant to cancel the clause defining China as a non-market economy within the WTO, an indication of at least a moderate change in the European stance on the issue.

Economic Relations: Trade, Chinese Investments, and the Reciprocity Principle

Economic relations between China and the EU have undergone significant change in recent decades. If in the past Europe provided China with financial and technical assistance for its economic development, the rapid growth in China in recent years has changed the nature of these relations. From the early 2000s, when China joined the WTO, trade between China and the European countries grew gradually. The countries with capital-intensive economies and a developed service sector, such as Germany and Britain, were the main beneficiaries of the trade, while the countries of Eastern Europe, whose economies are labor-intensive, were hurt by China's entry into the European market, which adversely affected their economic growth.[5] Currently, the economic relations between China and the EU are based primarily on trade and investment. China is Europe's largest trade partner in terms of imports, and second in size only to the US in terms of exports. In 2005, total trade between the sides stood at about $112.7 billion; by 2015 this had grown to about $514.7 billion, of which $344.6 billion was imports and $170.1 billion was exports, such that Europe has a trade deficit of about $174.5 billion with China.

The economic crisis in 2008 led to the economic collapse of certain European countries and a significant slowdown in growth of the others; however, the results of the crisis led banks owned by the Chinese government to see the potential for investment in a recovering Europe, while serving as intermediaries between Chinese government-owned companies and potential investors throughout Europe. And indeed, Europe saw a major increase in Chinese investment on the Continent, from $6 billion in 2010 to $55 billion in 2016.[6] In contrast, European commercial companies still find it hard to penetrate the attractive Chinese market, and they encounter regulatory and legal barriers when attempting to invest in China or initiate projects there. According to a survey carried out by the European Chamber of Commerce

in China, at least half of the European countries feel unwanted in China and report that they are treated unfairly relative to local Chinese companies.[7] As a result, the principle of reciprocity, particularly in investment, constitutes a major issue in European policy toward China.

With the progress toward signing a comprehensive investment agreement, the EU is worried by the asymmetry between the liberal foreign investment policy that exists in Europe and the legal and regulatory barriers to foreign investment that exist in China. According to an investigation by the Mercator Institute and the Rhodium Group, European investment in China has been in a steady decline over the last four years. The European Chamber of Commerce has claimed for a number of years that the regulatory atmosphere in China has not improved, despite declarations by senior members of the Communist Party that conditions for foreign companies to enter the Chinese market will be lightened. In contrast, China's growing investment in the European countries, and particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, has sparked disputes, sometimes serious ones, among the EU countries. Only recently, a proposal by the leaders of France and Germany to restrict Chinese investment in what are considered to be strategic assets and to place pressure on China to open its markets to European investment ran into opposition from countries that are in need of foreign investment, such as Poland, Hungary, Greece, and Portugal.[8]

Europe's economic importance to China is reflected in the Belt and Road Initiative, which constitutes a major component in China's international economic policy. The goal of the initiative is to create a land and sea route between the European and Chinese markets, primarily by way of Central Asia. However, in Europe there is disagreement regarding their full participation in the initiative. In the forum organized by China in April 2017, the Vice President of the European Commission claimed that the plan to connect China to Europe must meet international standards and the conditions of the free market, so that it will complement existing infrastructures.[9] Despite declarations of this kind, China is increasing its investment in infrastructures throughout Europe.

An example of Chinese investment as part of the Belt and Road Initiative is the acquisition of control over the Greek port of Piraeus by COSCO, a company owned by the Chinese government. China's motive in purchasing the port is to create a gateway into the European market by way of the Mediterranean. There are those who claim that China also has political

interests in this purchase, since it enables Beijing to translate its economic power into political leverage. Evidence of this is the fact that despite China's declaration that it will not intervene in the domestic politics of foreign countries, Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang, in his speech at the China-EU summit in June 2016, expressed his hope that Greece would remain in the euro bloc. A year later, Greece vetoed the EU decision to condemn China's human rights policy.[10] A similar case occurred when Chinese President Xi Jinping, on a visit to Britain that same year, claimed that Britain's remaining in the EU would contribute significantly to the development of relations between Europe and China.[11] Such statements imply that China views the unity of Europe as an essential interest that leverages its economic power, with the goal of influencing the countries of Europe on this issue.

On the other hand, China is using a divide and conquer strategy in its relations with the countries of Central Europe, and even more so, those of Eastern Europe. In 2012, China created the "16+1" mechanism between it and 16 Central and East European countries, some of which are not members of the EU. Until recently most of these countries were under the influence of the Soviet Union and today are part of Russia's sphere of influence in this region.[12] As part of this mechanism, China has opened a credit line of $10 billion, whereby the 16 countries can borrow from banks owned by the Chinese government for the purpose of infrastructure and technology development in their respective countries. In addition, China is investing in the development of trade corridors, based on rapid trains that use Chinese technology, among the East European countries and between them and China.[13] Since the 16 European countries are hungry for foreign investment and do not view the promotion of liberal norms as a primary goal of foreign policy, as do the countries of Western Europe, China can use this economic mechanism as a way of weakening the unity of the EU on international political issues.

Security Relations: Indirect Influence and the Enhanced Russian Threat

Although the security interests of China and Europe do not directly converge on the geopolitical map and China's ability to project power is not one of the main concerns of the EU, Europe is in fact influenced by China's power in the international arena and by its ability to exploit its economic influence in order to promote its geopolitical interests. In tandem, the growing military

strength of China broadens the range of its activity, both geographically and conceptually. From a geographical perspective, China is building an extensive network of alliances and military ties with various countries in East and Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, as well as with Russia. In this context, China is creating new military alliances and expanding existing ones; it is increasing its arms exports, expanding its activity as part of the UN peacekeeping forces, building ports in foreign countries (such as the Port of Djibouti and the Port of Gwadar in Pakistan), and is increasing its diplomatic involvement in regional conflicts (such as the civil war in Syria and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict). From a conceptual viewpoint, China is changing its traditional military approach, which focuses on massive land-based forces, and is carrying out military reforms so that its forces will be better suited to modern conflicts, which are far from its borders and are based on naval and aerial forces as well as cyber warfare.

The most significant threat to Europe today, apart from terror, is Russia. In recent years, China and Russia have drawn closer strategically. Together with the Central Asian countries, they have created the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), considered to be a response by China and Russia to NATO. The organization is involved in various security matters, such as the war on terror, the cyber threat, the demilitarization of borders, and military cooperation.[14] In addition, China and Russia are holding joint military exercises and naval maneuvers in the South China Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Baltic, and even held a joint missile defense exercise near Moscow. The two countries are also cooperating on cyber security.[15] The close strategic relations between China and Russia are reinforcing the Russian threat felt by the European countries, especially in view of the US policy toward Europe under the Trump administration.

The Unknown Variable: United States under the Trump Administration

The increase in uncertainty when Donald Trump took office led to an unprecedented level of tension between the US and Europe. Inter alia, Trump threatened Germany on trade matters, withdrew from the Paris Agreement on climate change, and demanded that the European countries increase their contribution to the financing of NATO.[16] This development, alongside the exit of Britain from the EU, encouraged Europe to turn to China in the hope that it would fill the economic and leadership vacuum that is forming as a result

of Trump's policy toward Europe. Accordingly, China is wisely exploiting the tension between the sides and consolidating its influence in the region. China's declarations that it is interested in promoting norms of free trade and taking responsibility for continued global growth are taken seriously by Europe, and therefore at the June 2017 G20 meeting, the European countries, and foremost among them Germany and France, made a joint declaration with China regarding continued cooperation as part of the Paris Agreement on climate change, from which Trump has withdrawn, and with respect to commercial partnerships in other areas.

Nevertheless, the US is still the largest investor in Europe and has extensive trade relations with most of the EU countries, alongside its historic involvement in preserving the security of Europe. Therefore, despite the cooling of relations, the US will presumably remain an important partner of Europe. However, the withdrawal from multilateral agreements, such as the Paris Agreement, makes it possible for China to adopt a more central role on the international stage and promote international agreements and institutions of its own, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which has been joined by a number of European countries, to the dismay of the US. China is unable, and apparently also unwilling, to fill the geopolitical vacuum that will be created as a result of a possible US abandonment of its commitments to Europe and apparently will prefer to focus on increasing its economic involvement in the region.

Conclusion

The fact that China is becoming a major player in the international arena, and particularly in Europe, creates economic opportunities along with geopolitical and security risks. In view of the US withdrawal from its commitments to Europe, it will be possible for China to fill the vacuum, at least in part, by means of strengthening trade relations, promoting new international financial institutions, and increasing investment in the EU countries. At the same time, Europe is still reluctant to depend on China to fill the geopolitical vacuum left by the US, particularly in view of the increasing military cooperation between China and Russia and the American declarations of its continued commitment to NATO. Therefore, the future relations between Europe and China will be based primarily on the expansion and deepening of trade relations; at the same time, Europe will presumably continue to view China

suspiciously in view of its relations with Russia and its growing economic and political involvement in the East European countries.

Notes

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13 See Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "China's Twelve Measures for Promoting Friendly Cooperation with Central and Eastern European Countries," April 26, 2012, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/wjbispg_665714/t928567.shtml.
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15 Mikko Huotari, Jan Gaspers, Thomas Eder, Helena Legarda, and Sabine Mokry, "China's Emergence as a Global Security Actor: Strategies for Europe," *Merics,* No. 4. July 2017, pp. 16-17.
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The European Union and the Middle East

Turkey and the EU: A Tug of War Relationship

Gallia Lindenstrauss and Julius Rogenhofer

The decline in both the rule of law and the adherence to democratic norms in Turkey has made it easier for the EU to keep Ankara at a distance than was previously the case. Talks of future EU accession have become altogether symbolic and the substance of even the so-called "privileged partnership" is being hollowed out to cover limited areas of strategic significance. However, neither side is willing or able to abandon the other entirely. The existence of both pull and push factors in Turkey-EU relations can explain why there are seeming overriding contradictions in each entity's approach to the other.

In an interview with the *BBC* in July 2017, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that "if the EU bluntly says 'We will not be able to accept Turkey into the EU,' this will be comforting for us. We will then initiate our plan B and C."[1] This statement can be seen as indicative of an all-time low point in Turkey-EU relations. While Turkey's EU accession process is still formally open, it has been clear for some time that both sides have lost faith that this final goal will be achieved. In 2017 Kati Piri, the Turkey rapporteur of the European Parliament, seemed to endorse a shift in EU policy, by openly calling for the suspension of the accession negotiations.[2] However, in April 2017, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini said that she still wants Turkey to join the bloc, and that negotiations between Ankara and Brussels have not been suspended. Similarly, former German Foreign Minister

Sigmar Gabriel said that "it does not improve things to cancel something before we have something new to offer."[3] Thus, so far neither Turkey nor the EU appears willing to be the side that cancels the Turkish EU accession process. Indeed, the symbolic significance of formal suspension should not be underestimated: it would dispel the convenient fiction of accession, nurtured by both sides as a justification for strategic cooperation on matters of mutual interest.

One explanation for the current state of affairs is that significant pull and push factors shape the EU-Turkey relationship, with these opposing factors generating the ostensibly contradictory policies of the actors. This article will address several of the push factors (Erdogan's authoritarian tendencies, Islamophobia, the Turkish diaspora) and the pull factors (migration, security, and the economy). The concluding section will offer policy recommendations for bringing Turkey-EU relations back to a more positive track.

Push Factors

Erdogan's Authoritarian Tendencies and the End of the Turkish Model

The challenges posed by Turkey's domestic democratic decay and the rising authoritarianism of President Erdogan are at the core of growing friction between Turkey and the EU. With the violent crackdown on the Gezi Park protests in 2013, Turkey's AKP government forfeited its reputation as a possible model for bridging democracy and moderate political Islam.[4] Moreover, the sweeping purges and arrests following the July 2016 failed coup attempt consolidated Turkey's authoritarian reputation among the European public and the political level.[5] Diplomatic confrontations over the arrests of foreign journalists and damning reports about gross human rights violations and the disappearance of press freedoms have made Turkey a toxic counterpart for the EU. The issue of human rights was raised during Erdogan's meetings with senior EU officials in Brussels in May 2017, and while talking with reporters in Berlin in July 2017, former Foreign Minister Gabriel said: "We need to be clearer than we have been until now, so that those responsible in Ankara understand that such policies are not without consequences."[6]

Islamophobia

Mounting allegations of European Islamophobia are another significant factor fueling tensions between the EU and Turkey. Islamophobia can be

considered as a form of anti-Muslim racism, which attributes a constructed, negative Muslim identity to all Muslims.[7] Political reluctance to incorporate Turkey's large Muslim population adversely effected Turkey's EU accession negotiations as early as 2005.[8] Furthermore, in light of rising migration from Muslim majority countries and a series of terror attacks across Europe attributed to sympathizers of the Islamic State, popular Islamophobia increased markedly. Islamophobia is manifested in the resurgence of far right parties across Europe, which capitalize on anti-Muslim sentiment. Similarly, Europe faces rising both anti-Muslim crime and polled public opinion, which reveals an overwhelming rejection of any further immigration from Muslim majority countries.[9] Such sentiments nurture a perception of cultural incompatibility between Turkey and the EU, particularly as Erdogan actively encourages further the Islamization of Turkey. This seeming cultural incompatibility is illustrated by the coexistence of Erdogan's overt attempts to entrench Islamist discourse and conservative Islamic values in Turkish society with the radical secularism of the European Court of Justice, as exemplified by a ruling that European employers could dismiss a woman for refusing to remove her hijab.[10] Instead of seeking to deescalate such tensions, President Erdogan used charges of Islamophobia to deflect European criticism of Turkey's human rights record, often suggesting that a clear break from Europe would give Turkey welcome clarity.[11]

The Turkish Diaspora

The Turkish diaspora in Western Europe (numbering 5.5 million, according to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs)[12] might potentially have been a bridge between Turkey and the EU, but has, in recent times, become a point of contention. First, there were accusations in Germany that clerics, sent to the country by the Presidency of Religious Affairs in Turkey, were spying for the Turkish government. Specific targets were alleged links of Turkish citizens residing in Germany with the Gulen movement, which, according to the Turkish government, was behind the failed coup attempt of July 2016.[13] Moreover, since 2012, the Turkish diaspora can vote from abroad, and is thus courted by Turkish politicians. Diplomatic confrontations over the refusal of certain West European states to allow Turkish politicians to speak at political rallies organized for members of the diaspora triggered a crisis between Turkey and these states.[14] Such crises perhaps also contributed to strong support among the diaspora for the AKP position in the April 16,

2017 constitutional referendum – in Germany, 63 percent voted in favor of the referendum; in Austria, 73 percent; and in the Netherlands, support for the referendum reached 71 percent.[15] This support for the AKP from the Turkish diaspora has only added to concerns regarding their integration in Europe, and to questions whether certain members of the diaspora have not fully internalized the liberal values of their host states.

Pull Factors

Migration

The March 2016 Joint Action Plan, known as the Turkey-EU migrant deal, amplified the de facto interdependence of both entities. The EU relies on Turkey, which hosts over three and a half million refugees, to stop the flow of migrants from Turkey via the Aegean to the Greek islands.[16] In return, Turkey negotiated a promise of visa free travel for its citizens in the Schengen area and three billion euros of financial support to address its domestic refugee situation (added to the three billion euros already promised in November 2015).[17] The deal has been the object of criticism from all sides: human rights groups have attacked Turkey's human rights record and Europe's willingness to put its own needs before universal values. Turkey expressed frustration over delays in the provision of EU financial support and the seemingly indefinite postponement of visa free travel for Turkish citizens.[18] Simultaneously, the migrant deal erodes the EU's ability to apply normative pressure on Turkey by making the EU dependent on Turkey to contain the European "migrant crisis." Elizabeth Collett of the Migration Policy Institute suggests that the deal transformed the migration challenge from a situation of "intolerable dysfunction to tolerable dysfunction," leaving Europe vulnerable to an abrogation of the agreement.[19] Precisely such an abrogation was threatened by Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu in spats surrounding campaigning for Turkey's controversial constitutional referendum.[20] Nonetheless, contrary to the aggressive rhetoric from both sides, the Joint Action Plan has become "too big to fail,"[21] as further evidenced by the European Commission's apparent willingness to provide the next tranche of three billion euros in 2018.[22] While six billion euros pale compared to the twenty-five billion euros the Turkish government claimed in 2017 to have spent on migrants, it is nonetheless significant for Turkey, as is the elusive promise of visa-free travel.[23] Similarly, the challenges of migration persist

for both Turkey and the EU, and Europe has invested too much into the success of the migrant deal to simply walk away.

Security

In many respects Turkey is seen as a bulwark against the threats emerging from the Middle East. In addition, Turkey's role in the Black Sea region and against Russia is seen as critical. The EU cannot ignore Turkey's important role in NATO, and it is impossible to disentangle the EU-Turkey relations from Turkey's position within NATO. As NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated in April 2017, "NATO would undoubtedly be weaker without Turkey." Former Danish Prime Minister and former NATO Secretary General Andres Fogh Rasmussen remarked in June 2017, "I would argue from a security point of view that we need Turkey as much as Turkey needs us."[24] In 2016, Turkey adhered to the NATO guideline of attributing more than 20 percent for procurement and R&D of military equipment as part of its defense budget. Turkey is also above the NATO median on defense spending (and in previous years even met the NATO guideline of the defense budget being at least 2 percent of the country's GDP).[25]

Yet despite the benefits of Turkey as a strategic ally, there are growing concerns about its credibility. Turkey's continued position within NATO is questioned, albeit cautiously, and Turkey is not deemed a reliable partner. This skepticism is not only attributed to the fact that some of its policies are not aligned with those of NATO, but also to the purges in the army, which included many officers that were in charge of the coordination between NATO and Turkey. Many such officers have been replaced with others who are seen as less capable.[26]

Economy

The importance of trade in the relations between Turkey and the EU cannot be overstated. Turkey is the EU's fourth largest export market and fifth largest partner for imports. The EU is both Turkey's number one import and export partner.[27] The 1995 Customs Union agreement has been one of the cornerstones of these trade relations, but there are calls both from Turkey and from the EU to update it, and initial talks have begun on this issue. The Turkish Economic Minister said in April 2017 that "the Customs Union right now contains only industrial products. When the Customs Union is extended to include food, agriculture, electronics and public procurements,

it will put Turkey in a position to provide net contributions to the total growth of Europe."[28] In 2015, Germany was the number one source of foreign visitors to Turkey, accounting for 15 percent of tourists to Turkey.[29] This figure dropped to 11 percent in 2016, though Germans still topped the list.[30] This percentage declined further due to a travel advisory issued in July 2017, warning German tourists to exercise caution while traveling to Turkey due to the arrest of German journalists and human rights activists in Turkey.[31] Nonetheless, a recent recovery in the number of German tourists to Turkey and softer rhetoric by German politicians regarding Turkey's tourism destinations contribute to making it highly unlikely that in the long run, Turkey will sacrifice this important market.

Conclusion

Given the significance of the EU for Turkey's economy, the EU should link the strong incentives associated with economic cooperation through the Customs Union with normative values. The prospect of expanding cooperation within the Customs Union can be used as leverage to ensure that the fundamental pillars of democracy in Turkey are maintained. This strategy entails seeking assurances from Turkey that it will end the suspension of the European Convention on Human Rights. Similarly, the EU should insist that Turkey strengthen the rule of law, separation of powers, and the freedom of speech and assembly. Ending the state of emergency and seeking a rapid conclusion of the purge of Turkish state institutions in an attempt to "clean" them of Gulen movement supporters would go a long way toward enhancing Turkey's international legitimacy. In order to exercise any credible normative sway on Turkey, the EU must re-establish its firm commitment to universal values, including religious freedom. The EU's normative credibility in Turkey suffered particularly from European Court of Justice rulings that seemed to specifically target Muslims and from self-serving EU decisions on migration. Thus, the EU must deliver a strong statement against Islamophobia. Given the likely opposition from Hungary and Poland, it is paramount that Germany and France lead this initiative, particularly since both countries have significant Muslim minority populations.

Notwithstanding legitimate criticism of Turkey's human rights record, both before and after the July 2016 failed coup attempt, Turkey continues to bear a disproportionate burden in respect of challenges posed by increased migration. Unlike Jordan and Lebanon, Turkey has a large population of

almost 80 million to absorb its three million migrants. Nonetheless, Turkey is justified in insisting on increased European support with regard to the migrants, either in terms of financial aid, or by Europe itself accepting more migrants. In light of the likely persistence of increased migration pressures into Europe, it is in the EU's interest to expand cooperation with Turkey beyond the existing migrant deal. However, all funding and cooperation in the realm of migration must be made conditional on Turkey's commitment to universal human rights as suggested above.

Turkey has a significant diaspora all across Europe, which is viewed by Erdogan as a strategic asset. This diaspora often receives insufficient attention from their host nations, allowing the Turkish state to establish powerful networks within European states that back Ankara's positions. Instead of banning these AKP affiliated institutions, European nations must invest in alternative networks and community centers for the Turkish diaspora. In this way EU member states can create new fora for the promotion of the EU's normative values.

Notes

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The EU's Energy Challenges

Elai Rettig and Oded Eran

In recent years, the EU has set for itself a number of long term objectives to increase its members' energy security. First and foremost is the desire to reduce dependency on Russia as Europe's main energy supplier. However, not all EU countries view Russia as a threat to their energy sector, and some, particularly Germany, are actively promoting Russia's continued energy dominance in Europe. The biggest challenge facing the EU's quest for higher energy security is how to reconcile the conflicting energy interests and needs of different European countries and create a joint European energy sector that will provide greater bargaining power against Russia and other external energy suppliers. This challenge will only grow once Turkey becomes a significant transit state for European-bound oil and natural gas from Central Asia and the Middle East, thus increasing its political power with respect to the EU.

Dependence on Imports from Russia

In May 2014, the EU published an official document entitled "European Energy Security Strategy," which concluded that the main challenge to European energy security stems from its growing dependence on a small number of suppliers, primarily Russia.[1] In 2015, Europe (EU-28) imported about 54 percent of its energy resources (compared to 40 percent in 1990) at an estimated cost of over 1 billion euros per day.[2] This dependence is particularly high in the case of oil (90 percent), coal (67 percent), and natural gas (66 percent), which the EU consumes at an annual rate of some 480

billion cubic meters (BCM).[3] Russia is Europe's dominant supplier of these three energy sources. In 2015, Russia supplied 27.7 percent of Europe's oil imports, 25.8 percent of its coal imports, and 29.4 percent of its natural gas imports.[4] Norway is the second largest supplier of both oil (11.4 percent) and natural gas (25.9 percent). In contrast to popular perceptions, Saudi Arabia is only the fourth ranked supplier of oil to Europe (7.5 percent), after Nigeria (8 percent). Together, the Middle East countries (mainly Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Algeria) account for only about 20 percent of Europe's oil imports, while the Caspian Sea nations (Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan) account for about 11 percent. Likewise in the case of natural gas imports, the Middle East countries (primarily Qatar, Algeria, and Libya) account for less than 17 percent. In both cases, the Middle East collectively accounts for a much smaller share than Russia alone. In the case of coal imports, about 61 percent arrive from only three countries – Russia, Colombia, and the US – while the rest comes primarily from Australia, South Africa, and Indonesia.

These figures do not provide a complete picture of the extent of European dependence on Russia, since they reflect only the overall imports of the entire continent. In reality, many countries in Eastern Europe are almost completely dependent on imports from Russia, particularly in the case of natural gas.[5] These include Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. This dependence has made them highly vulnerable to supply disruptions, whether due to political, commercial, or technical factors. A tangible reminder of this risk occurred in the winter of 2009, when a commercial\political dispute between Russia and Ukraine left Ukraine and several other Southeast European countries without gas for heating for 13 days.[6] In contrast, West European countries – including France, Spain, Portugal, Britain, Switzerland, Belgium, Sweden, and Denmark – are hardly dependent on Russian gas. Somewhere in the middle is Germany, which imports about 40 percent of its natural gas from Russia but also enjoys greater diversity in its fuel sources (including domestic production of coal and the widespread use of renewable energy), and benefits from pipeline interlinks to all nine of its neighbors for backup purposes. Consequently, Germany is less concerned about a disruption in supply from Russia.

The assumption that the drive to reduce Russia's energy dominance in Europe leads the agenda of all EU countries needs to be reexamined. For

many countries in Central and Western Europe, the price of gas is what determines their market preferences. In contrast, countries like Lithuania and Poland are prepared to pay a "security premium" for natural gas if its source is not Russia. To this end, they have built intake facilities for liquefied natural gas (LNG) from tankers by sea, which is much more expensive than gas delivered by pipeline. They are also trying to strengthen joint frameworks, such as the "Energy Union" initiative, for the coordination of a uniform energy policy among all members of the EU. The gaps between Eastern and Western countries in the EU therefore constitute a source of conflict that makes it difficult to formulate a joint energy policy for the Continent.

The clearest example of the conflict of interests between East and West is the growing dispute surrounding the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project. The project is meant to increase the amount of gas that Russia will be able to transport directly to Germany by laying an additional undersea pipeline in the Baltic Sea. Donald Tusk, the President of the European Council (who is Polish in origin), announced that the new pipeline will harm the long term interests of Europe since it will increase the continent's dependence on Russian gas. His argument was supported by the leaders of nine countries in Eastern Europe, led by Poland and Hungary.[7] Nonetheless, Germany is resolutely proceeding with the pipeline as a response to the diminishing supply of gas from the North Sea, and has even convinced the US to limit its sanctions on Russia so that they do not harm the feasibility of the project.[8] Germany's preference of ensuring domestic gas supply at the expense of Eastern Europe enables Russia to create further divisions among EU members. This is reflected in a number of East European countries that have increased or extended their gas contracts with Russia in exchange for lower gas prices. The fact that they ignored EU principles of reducing dependence on Russia expresses a lack of confidence among East European countries in the joint front the EU is seeking to present in the energy domain. In order to arrest this trend, the EU is setting up an enforcement mechanism that will require every European government to approve their external energy supply contracts with Brussels before authorizing them.[9]

Consequently, Russia will presumably remain Europe's dominant gas supplier in the coming decades, despite the efforts of the EU. Russian gas is cheaper and more available than most alternatives, and it is connected by thousands of kilometers of pipeline to the heart of the continent. In addition, many countries are tied to long term contracts with Russia, and Russia has

already shown willingness to significantly reduce the price of its gas at the point of renewal in order to maintain its market share. It is important to note that cheap and available gas from Russia is not in and of itself bad for EU countries. The problem is that in contrast to the European oil market, in which there is plenty of competition between suppliers, some European countries do not have any alternative to Russian gas, giving Russia potential leverage in political matters unrelated to energy. Nonetheless, apart from the peripheral damages caused by the gas dispute between Russia and Ukraine, there are no clear-cut examples of Russia's direct use of gas as a political tool against an EU member, and therefore from Europe's point of view this is only a potential danger at the moment.

De-politicization of Russian Gas

The goal of the EU is therefore not to reduce the amount of gas flowing in from Russia, but rather to increase its bargaining power by presenting alternatives to Russian gas and thus removing it from its political context. To this end, Europe must work on a number of levels simultaneously. It must diversify its import sources (in part by means of LNG, pipelines from the Caspian Sea and the Mediterranean, and perhaps later also from Iran); improve existing connections of electricity and gas infrastructure between EU countries; allow for domestic exploration and extraction of oil shale and shale gas, despite the opposition of environmental activists; and increase the share of renewable energy in the overall energy mix. There are both internal and external barriers to each of these channels, and the EU must reach joint decisions in the immediate run in order to make them a reality.

The first challenge facing the EU is to find new gas suppliers and deal with the political implications that accompany each one. The first alternative is gas from the Caspian Sea. In 2020, construction of the Southern Gas Corridor Pipeline will be completed, a system of pipelines that will transport natural gas from the Shah Deniz field in Azerbaijan to Italy by way of Georgia, Turkey, Greece, and Albania.[10] Initially the pipeline is expected to transport only 10 BCM of natural gas to Europe each year, but later this can be expanded to about 100 BCM. The pipeline can also be used as a route for additional gas exports from the Middle East (Iran and Iraq) and perhaps also from the Eastern Mediterranean (Israel, Cyprus, and Egypt) by way of an undersea pipeline to Turkey. The advantage of the pipeline is that it bypasses Russia, but it does not provide an immediate solution for East European countries

since the chosen route bypasses them as well.[11] However, the Turkish option for conveying East Mediterranean natural gas to Europe has lost its political feasibility as tensions between Turkey and Israel mount. That increases the prospects for conveying the Israeli, Cypriot, and Egyptian gas to Europe through the off-shore Egyptian liquefaction installations.

The pipeline from the Caspian Sea involves new political challenges for the EU, since it allows Turkey to become an important conduit for gas on its way to Europe. In contrast to Ukraine, which is also an important conduit for gas to Europe, Turkey under Erdogan will be in a much better position to bargain with the EU. From a political perspective, Turkey has essentially abandoned its aspirations to join the EU. In terms of infrastructure, Turkey has sufficient alternatives to ensure the continued supply of gas to its domestic market even if the pipeline that passes through it to Europe is disrupted. These alternatives include gas from Russia, Iran, Qatar, and Lebanon (assuming that gas is found in its waters). Therefore, Turkey can, in theory, threaten Europe with blocking the gas that flows through its territory without harming supply to its domestic economy. In contrast, Ukraine is still seeking to ally itself with Europe to whatever extent possible, and is not able to cut the supply of gas to Europe without also cutting its own supply, since it is dependent on Russian pipelines. Therefore, if Turkey becomes a conduit for gas to Europe it would have much greater political leverage over the EU than Ukraine ever did. In addition, if Iran also becomes a significant exporter of gas to Europe, this could make it difficult to impose sanctions on it for violations of the nuclear agreement. Europe must take these considerations into account when dealing with Turkey and Iran in the future.

Another alternative to Russian gas is to import more LNG by way of the sea. The increased amounts will arrive from the US, Australia, Qatar, Nigeria, and Algeria, and in the future perhaps also from Israel by way of existing gas liquification facilities in Egypt and/or potential facilities in Cyprus. A number of European countries with direct access to the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea have already taken advantage of this option and have begun or recently completed construction of LNG-intake facilities. These include Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Greece, and Spain. Additional countries, including Ukraine, Croatia, and Latvia, have declared their intention to build LNG-intake facilities in the near future. In theory, this is a good solution that exploits the significant increase in supply of LNG in recent years and its lower prices (primarily due to increased LNG exports from the US and

Australia). But even with the recent drop in prices, the import of LNG is expected to be significantly more expensive for European countries than the import of dry gas through pipelines from Russia. In addition, many countries in Europe do not have access to the sea, particularly in Eastern Europe (Belarus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Serbia, and Slovenia), and therefore are dependent on neighboring countries to transport the gas to them through interlinking pipelines. This raises the price of the gas even more and will require the upgrade of existing infrastructure connections between the countries in order to handle the larger quantity of gas flowing between them. Despite these obstacles, the construction of LNG-intake facilities has already proven itself a capable bargaining tool against Russia, as was the case in Lithuania, which in 2016 obtained a significant discount on the price of gas it receives from Russia after it finished building an LNG-intake facility.[12] Even without the Lithuanian example, the very fact that East European countries are constructing LNG import terminals is evidence of their willingness to pay a "security premium" for the gas they consume, showing that price is not always the main consideration.

At this stage, Israel can play only a modest role in any of these alternatives, which is true for both the export of LNG by sea and the construction of a gas pipeline to Turkey or directly to Europe. According to estimates from September 2017, Israel has relatively small proven amounts of gas designated for export – about 430 BCM over the next 30 years. For purposes of comparison, this is the amount exported by Russia to Europe in less than two and a half years. On the assumption that Cyprus also takes part in a large Israeli export project to Europe, this will add no more than about 100 BCM for export. This is still no more than about 16 billion cubic meters per year (about 3.2 percent of Europe's gas consumption). Furthermore, the gas will be substantially more expensive than Russian gas, due to the high costs of transportation (about $6-8 per heat unit as opposed to an average of $4.5 from Russia). Therefore, Israeli gas may have an effect on only a small number of Southeast European countries that will be prepared to pay a security premium on their gas imports (Greece or perhaps Bulgaria).

Creating a Common and Cleaner Energy Sector

Beyond the diversification of external gas suppliers, there are additional ways of increasing Europe's energy security. Foremost among them is the creation of an internal energy market for Europe.[13] Contrary to conventional wisdom,

a "European energy sector" does not currently exist. Each country in the EU is responsible for its own national energy sector, and a large number of countries are not sufficiently interconnected to enable the backup of energy supply and electricity in case of an emergency. Bulgaria and Portugal are the most isolated from this perspective, but Croatia, Hungary, Romania, and Greece also need to improve their connections with each other.[14] Improving the interconnection of gas pipelines and electricity infrastructure is likewise in the interest of LNG suppliers such as the US, since this will facilitate the sale of gas to European countries without access to sea. To this end, the EU has defined a target of 10 percent interconnectivity for electricity transfers between EU countries by 2020, and 15 percent by 2030. It has also issued directives for the upgrade of existing gas interconnections in Eastern Europe.

The creation of common electricity and gas networks is also meant to achieve other EU long term goals, such as more internal competition in the European energy sector and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Theoretically, infrastructure interconnections will enable each country to compete in the electricity market of its neighbors, and thus the consumer will benefit from a more competitive price. In addition, the common network will facilitate better integration of renewable energy within the European electricity market by allowing transmission of electricity between neighboring countries during hours when solar and wind plants produce more electricity than is needed and may overload the local electricity network. More importantly, the creation of an internal energy market will increase the power of the EU immensely with respect to external suppliers, since it will provide them with a "single voice" during negotiations; however, the path to that outcome is a long one.

At this stage, Europe is moving very slowly in its quest to connect the EU countries to a common energy infrastructure, particularly with respect to electricity. According to an EU estimate from early 2017, there are 11 countries that will not meet their connectivity goals for 2020 – including Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Poland, Portugal, and Romania (as well as Britain, which is leaving the EU).[15] Despite the major security benefits in creating these connections, the local electricity companies in each country are not rushing to construct interconnections, since they have no interest in increasing the competition they face in their respective markets. Also politically, the idea that each country will commit to help its neighbors during a gas or electricity shortage (a policy that the EU calls "energy solidarity")

does not gain much support in many European countries. For example, in 2017 Romania refused Bulgaria's request for electricity to get through an unexpected cold spell. Romania did not want to take a risk that it itself would need the extra electricity in case the cold spell reached it.[16] In addition to the political stumbling blocks, the promise of reduced electricity prices in Europe as a result of the liberalization and privatization of markets has not proven itself so far, and in some cases the prices of electricity and gas to the end user have even risen following privatization.[17]

In contrast, European policy has proven itself in two areas – energy efficiency and renewable energy. With regard to energy efficiency, Europe has so far met the targets set by the EU for 2020 and has lowered total energy consumption from year to year.[18] There are estimates that the demand for gas in Europe will even start to decline in 2025.[19] In addition, the use of renewable energy sources during the last decade has grown by 73 percent, and in 2014 they accounted for about 16 percent of total energy consumption in the EU countries. The target is 20 percent by 2020.[20] These developments have helped reduce Europe's dependence on external suppliers. Germany is leading in these two areas. In 2015, 30 percent of German electricity was produced by renewable energy, with a target of 80 percent by 2050.

In contrast to the growth in solar and wind energy, the use of nuclear energy has declined in Europe, despite the fact that it also helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increases Europe's energy independence. Germany intends to close its nuclear plants by 2022 due to the high price of their day-to-day maintenance and the drop in the prices of gas and coal. France is still promoting nuclear energy, but problems in nuclear power plant equipment produced by the Areva company were revealed recently, and the image of this technology is becoming increasingly tarnished.[21]

Europe has so far also met its commitments in the fight against climate change. It intends to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by 2020 and by 40 percent by 2030, relative to 1990. Though most countries are meeting their targets, a number of them are falling short – including Britain, Ireland, Belgium, and Malta. The effect that Europe has on the global effort to combat climate change is relatively small, since it produces only 10 percent of the global carbon dioxide emissions (as opposed to China, which produces 30 percent). Nonetheless, Europe's leading role in the process has an important political function in the absence of cooperation on the part of

US President Trump and the uncertainty regarding his intention to follow the Paris Agreement directives without actually taking part in them.

Notes

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9 "EU Nations Agree to Let European Commission Vet Gas, Oil Deals," *Reuters*, December 7, 2016, https://reut.rs/2rO1KRD.

10 "Gas and Oil Supply Routes." European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/imports-and-secure-supplies/gas-and-oil-supply-routes.

11 There is also a plan to transport gas directly to Greece and Italy by way of an underwater pipeline from Israel (the "East-Med Pipeline"), but according to most

opinions such a project is not economically feasible and therefore will not be carried out without an additional major discovery of gas in Israel's economic waters.

12 Georgi Kantchev, "With U.S. Gas, Europe Seeks Escape from Russia's Energy Grip," *Wall Street Journal*, February 25, 2016, https://on.wsj.com/2IpeWCF.

13 Dependence on Russia is not in itself a sufficient measure for determining to what extent a particular state in Europe is vulnerable to disruptions in the supply of gas. Brenda Shaffer has shown that a number of countries in Eastern Europe are more immune to a disruption despite their dependence on Russia, in part as a result of the diversification of sources, the maintenance of emergency stores, the creation of redundancy in the system, and the infrastructure connection with neighboring countries. See Brenda Shaffer. "Europe's Natural Gas Security of Supply: Policy Tools for Single-Supplied States," *Energy Law Journal* 36, no. 2 (2015): 179.

14 "Energy Production and Imports."

15 "Energy Production and Imports."

16 Anca Gurzu, "EU Energy Solidarity Left Out in the Cold," *Politico*, January 23, 2017, https://politi.co/2kaPFEf.

17 During the years 2008-15, the average prices of electricity and gas to the European consumer rose by more than 20 percent, according to a 2016 report commissioned by the European Commission. See Katharina Grave et al., *Prices and Costs of EU Energy: Final Report*, European Commission, April 29, 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/report_ecofys2016.pdf.

18 2016 was an exception from this point of view. During that year the demand for natural gas increased by about 6.1 percent.

19 "European Natural Gas Demand to Show No Growth in Medium to Long Term: Cedigaz," Platts, July 11, 2017, https://bit.ly/2v8bfuj.

20 See footnote 3.

21 Michael Stothard, "French Watchdog Deepens Probes into Areva Nuclear Parts," *Financial Times*, January 4, 2017, https://www.ft.com/content/2baf6270-c36a-11e6-81c2-f57d90f6741a.

Europe in the Gulf: From Economic Partnership to Strategic Involvement?

Yoel Guzansky

Various motives have led the EU to strengthen its relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the regional bloc that includes Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait. To this end, the EU has over the years even presented a long list of diplomatic initiatives and policy measures. However, despite the potential for stronger relations, achievements have been limited and many of the initiatives never bore fruit. Consequently, notwithstanding the strategic importance of the Gulf, the European role there remains limited. The factors behind the unrealized potential include the difficulty in formulating an accepted European-Gulf foreign policy; the preference of both sides for bilateral rather than multilateral ties; and perhaps most of all, the leading US role in the Gulf; the ethical and normative differences between the sides; and the gradual warming of relations between some European countries and Iran following the signing of the nuclear agreement with the superpowers in 2015. The essay analyzes the development of Euro-Gulf relations since the founding of the GCC, and focuses on the three latter factors. It examines the common interests of the sides and assesses the ability of the EU, as a bloc and as individual countries, to deepen its involvement in the Gulf, beyond the economic relationship that so far has formed the basis for relations.

The Economic-Commercial Base

The creation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 1981 constituted an opportunity for the EU to strengthen relations with the Gulf states. The organization's establishment, comprising Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait, was a direct result of previous cooperation between Gulf states and the unique circumstances that prevailed during that period in the Gulf, foremost among them the Islamic Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War. In addition, the European Community (EC) and later the European Union (EU), which boosted the integration of Europe, served as a role model for the founding states. This contrasted with the parallel models of Arab cooperation, which until then had produced only weak and poorly functioning regional organizations. The creation of an Arab bloc created another opportunity for the two sides to upgrade their cooperation from an inter-nation level to an inter-organizational level, although this cooperation did not go far beyond "soft" issues.

Until now, Europe's main interest has been to penetrate the markets in the Gulf and to obtain access to the natural resources there, even though the overall stability of the Middle East is a European interest, if only because of the relative proximity of the Middle East to Europe. In 1988, the EU signed an agreement that created the legal basis for a partnership and for the first time sought to strengthen the ties between the sides in the realms of investment, trade, technology, and energy.[1] The emphasis was on economics, since the leading European interest was ensuring the supply of oil from the Gulf at good prices. The scope of trade grew accordingly during the last decade and in 2016 stood at 138 billion euros (the fourth largest for the EU), of which 100 billion was European exports to the Gulf. The two parties even declared in May 2017 that they had begun a dialogue in order to promote trade and investment ties between them.[2] However, the economic cooperation did not reach its potential, apparently due to the reservations among the Gulf states with respect to strengthening relations in general. Thus, for example, notwithstanding persistent efforts over more than two decades, a free trade agreement has not been signed between the organizations, even though the leaders of both sides appear committed to the idea. In this context, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, during her visit to Saudi Arabia and the UAE in 2017, declared that "a free trade agreement with the Gulf states would be of great interest from a European point of view," that the EU had made a new

proposal to the Gulf states, and that the matter "is now being considered by them."[3]

The main reason for the inability to make progress in this regard has been the preference of the Gulf states to sign a free trade agreement with the US on a bilateral basis. Over the years Washington has also preferred to manage its trade relations with the Gulf states on this level and has placed pressure on them to this end. The first country to sign a free trade agreement with the US was Bahrain in 2004 and subsequently other GCC countries followed suit.

The Strategic Importance of the Gulf

The Gulf region has experienced war and instability, but it was the so-called Arab Spring – and the immigration crisis that followed – that created a sense of urgency in Europe to increase its involvement in the Gulf, given the understanding that the Gulf is a an arena with important implications for European security and stability. In contrast to the state failures that to a large extent characterize the Levant and the Maghreb, the Gulf states have enjoyed relative political and economic stability.[4] This issue, in addition to the activism, not to mention assertiveness, displayed by some of them – particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE – in managing the Arab agenda, has made them a candidate for political cooperation in the eyes of many European countries.

In general, the basic European interests in the Gulf remain unchanged. Beyond the status of the Gulf states as the main barrier to attempts by Iran to expand in the region, they so far constitute a stable and prosperous enclave – perhaps the only one – in the Arab world; they possess vast natural resources; and they constitute an attractive market for investment, just as the European markets attract investment from the Gulf. For many of the Gulf states, Europe is a main source of professional human capital; an important opportunity for investment; a source of necessary technology; and in some cases even political support. While the Gulf states themselves are an oasis of political and economic stability in a period of regional turmoil, they are also important for their influence and leverage in the Arab world.

In addition, the Gulf constitutes an attractive market for the European arms industry, and indeed, Europe is the second largest arms supplier to the Gulf states, after the US. During 2012–2016, five West European countries – Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain – accounted for close to one

quarter of global arms exports, a large part of which went to the Gulf. During these years, Saudi Arabia and the UAE became, respectively, the second and third largest importers of weapons in the world.[5]

Alongside the growing economic cooperation between the two sides, the leaders of Europe have come to understand the strategic importance of the Gulf, if only because of the growing tension with Iran on the nuclear issue. The EU "strategic partnership" initiative in 2004 sought to lay the foundation for increased dialogue with the GCC on a variety of issues. The EU understood at the same time that it must allocate greater resources to promote these ties. To this end, in 2004 it opened its first diplomatic mission in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, which is also where the GCC headquarters is located, and in 2013 it opened a second mission in the UAE. Nonetheless, these ties have yielded few results on the organizational level, and the main efforts made were on the bilateral level. The reasons for this include the weakness of the GCC as an organization and the fact that it has a small secretariat with little influence and a small budget. Most of all, however, are the conflicting interests within the GCC and the virtual lack of agreement among the Gulf states and between the EU and the GCC with respect to regional policy and objectives.

In view of the challenges created by the regional upheaval in 2011, there have been increasing attempts by a number of European actors (particularly France, Germany, and Britain), as well as the EU itself, to direct political and military efforts toward the Middle East in general and the Gulf in particular. Evidence of this can be seen in the increased military presence of European countries in the Gulf, which began even before the regional upheaval, as with the establishment of a French military base in the UAE in 2009. Since then, there have been increased arms exports to the region and the training of security forces in the Gulf, and a British naval base was opened in 2016.[6]

Barriers to Cooperation

Strengthening cooperation between the sides is challenged greatly by the inherent difference in values and norms of the EU and its member states from those of the Gulf states. The fact that these two blocs also differ in type of regime – democratic versus authoritarian (elected representatives versus royal houses) – has not contributed to stronger relations, particularly during the initial years following the regional upheaval, a time when there was hope that the winds of democracy that were blowing in the Middle

East would lead to greater popular political participation. The EU remains committed to the promotion of political freedom, while the leaders of the Gulf states have at times worked to strengthen authoritarian regimes, and some have even given support to extreme Islamic elements.

The leaders of the Gulf states are not happy about Western criticism on issues related to human rights and democracy. The clear European preference lies in the direction of political reform and human rights, including the rights of minorities and women. However, Europe, both as a bloc and as individual states, has no effective means to pressure the GCC countries in this context, particularly since the regimes in the Gulf are rich and basically pro-American. Therefore, the offering of European foreign aid as a way of "convincing" the royal house to open up the political system even somewhat is in general not effective. At the same time, and despite their clear American orientation, Arab regimes in the Gulf are interested in diversifying their sources of support and strengthening their political and even military ties, alongside those with the US. Already now, more than a few European countries are suppliers of arms to the Gulf states, even though in recent years there has been increasing European criticism of the way in which the arms are used by some of the Gulf regimes.

In certain cases, the EU has gone beyond criticism. Since the start of the military campaign in Yemen in March 2015, Saudi Arabia has been accused more than once by the legislators and media in Europe of violating international law. Charges have been made that the military operation under Saudi leadership, including the use of European-made weapons, has resulted in widespread and unjustified civilian casualties. In February 2016, the European parliament decided, with a large majority, on an arms embargo against Saudi Arabia on account of "the humanitarian disaster" resulting from its military intervention in Yemen.[7] The European Parliament's decision increased diplomatic and public pressure on the kingdom, though it did not have much practical significance, if only because the EU countries are not obligated by it. Furthermore, the assertive and sometimes even confrontational approach that some of the Gulf leaders have adopted, particularly the leaders of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, has already led to tension with some EU countries. It has even been claimed that the policy of Mohammad bin Salman, the Saudi crown prince and the strongman in the kingdom, has aroused concern among European intelligence services regarding the risks it creates with regard

to the stability of the kingdom. This is particularly the case in view of his departure from the restrained Saudi policy of the past.[8]

Europe has until now not been successful in playing a more central role in the Gulf by means, for example, of efforts at achieving more active diplomatic intervention. Attempts to resolve the crisis between Qatar and a number of its neighbors, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, have seen only a marginal role played by several EU leaders and officials. Since the crisis began in June 2017, European leaders have made sure to maintain neutrality and not to choose sides, while expressing support for the internal mediation efforts of the GCC. Yet Europe has a clear interest in playing a more active role in the crisis, if only because of their interest in reducing the possible fallout beyond the Gulf, such as in North Africa, as well as the economic implications, with emphasis on the oil and gas markets.

The warming of relations since 2015 between the EU and several European countries on the one hand and Iran on the other constitutes a major barrier to strengthening relations between the sides at this time. The reentry of Iran into the international community is a stab in the back for the regimes in the Gulf who view Iran as the main threat to their stability. This issue is a source of tension and adversely affects the ability to improve relations between the Gulf states and Europe. This is during a period that began with the implementation of the JCPOA and the removal of some of the European sanctions on Iran (some sanctions on Iran remain due to the human rights situation there and the oppression of minorities) in which there is increasing momentum in contacts with Iran and the signing of agreements between Iran and several European countries.

In this context, numerous European trade delegations made their way to Iran since the signing of the agreement, and some of the contacts have already produced economic deals. Official EU figures indicate that in 2016 alone European imports from Iran (primarily oil and its byproducts) jumped 345 percent, while European exports to Iran grew by 28 percent.[9] Then-Foreign Minister of Germany Sigmar Gabriel even warned that the policy of the US toward Iran "is liable to push the EU closer to Russia and China on the issue of Iran."[10] The position of Germany is intertwined with broad economic interests. German companies have announced their intention to invest about $12 billion in oil infrastructure projects in Iran. According to information published by the Research Department of the Iran Chamber of

Commerce, the scope of trade with the EU countries doubled during the first seven months of 2017 and now stands at 13 billion euros.[11]

As a way to deal with the threat they foresee from Iran, the Gulf states are interested in a greater military presence in the Gulf on behalf of European countries. The instability surrounding them has grown since the regional upheaval. In their view, this situation is exploited by Iran in order to increase its influence in the Arab world. The EU, on the level of an organization and individual members, can also deepen its political involvement in the Gulf by taking a more active part in the effort to mediate a solution in some of the crises in and around the Gulf.

Quo Vadis Europe?

Following the expected withdrawal of Britain from the EU, the organization's influence in the Gulf, which is any case relatively limited, is expected to weaken even further. Beyond the preference for bilateral over multilateral channels, the difficulty in formulating an agreed-upon foreign policy on both sides and a clear emphasis on economic ties has led the Gulf states to understand that at this point, there is no substitute for a US military presence in the Gulf as a brake on Iranian expansion. Very rich but also very vulnerable, with small populations and small and poorly trained armies, despite the huge expenditure on defense, the Gulf states require an external guarantor of their security. Europe is neither capable nor interested at this point in time in taking the place of the US as the strategic guarantor of peace and stability in the Gulf, with the accompanying burden. The extent of the US military presence and its ability to project power, alongside the quality of its forces and the extent of its military and political relations with the Gulf states, are beyond Europe's scope, at least in the near and intermediate terms. At the same time, the Gulf states are not interested in finding themselves one day in a situation of complete dependence on the US, particularly given the doubts as to the US commitment to their security in the long term.

Both Europe and the Gulf states recognize the built-in limitations of the relations between them; nonetheless respective public statements suggest there is a desire to strengthen them. The Gulf still constitutes a source of energy for Europe and an important economic market, both as a buyer of European arms and recently as a customer for nuclear civilian technology. In tandem, it is becoming increasingly understood in Brussels and the capitals of Europe that the Gulf is critical to the stability of the Middle East in general

and of North Africa in particular, due to the influence of the Gulf states on the stability of the various Arab regimes in the Levant and the Maghreb. Therefore, a strengthened dialogue with the royal houses in the Gulf in this context will likely help promote European interests.

Even if it is not currently able to provide security to the regimes in the Gulf, Europe is to some extent able to provide them with backing. At the end of the day, the massive purchase of arms by the Gulf states is first and foremost intended to meet political needs and to strengthen the ties with the international superpowers that are committed to their security. Although the Gulf states have in recent years placed emphasis on the emerging markets in Asia as their preferred destination for the export of oil and gas, Europe still needs Gulf oil and gas in order to diversify its mix of energy sources and to reduce the leverage various players have on it, such as Russia. The Gulf states can exploit this in order to increase the political dividend they obtain from Europe, such as on the issue that is most critical for them, namely Iran.

The EU as an organization, along with individual European countries, still has a role to play in the Gulf, which includes the reduction of tension among the Gulf states and between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Europe also has the ability to play a role in Iraq, even if it is just to limit Iranian influence there. It likewise has an interest in increasing cooperation with the Gulf states in North Africa and in Europe itself, in view of the role of the Gulf states in supporting Islamic institutions, which sometimes provide encouragement to extremism. Despite the awareness of the Gulf's importance, Europe's preference is naturally given to nearby Arab countries of the Maghreb. As a result, and in view of the clear American advantage in the Gulf, the European role in the Gulf will apparently continue to be marginal in the foreseeable future.

Notes

1 For the text of the original agreement, see http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113482.pdf.

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Europe-Israel Relations

The EU and a Two-State Solution: Prospects for Change?

Gilead Sher

Historically, Europe has been sidelined as a broker in the Middle East peace process, playing second fiddle to the United States. However, Europe plays an important role in any future scenario, and the internal social and political changes now underway will affect how it will engage with Israel in the coming years. This article provides an overview of European engagement in the peace process and proposes recommendations to promote a two-state solution using multi-faceted approaches to build a shared vision for peace. These recommendations emphasize: re-engagement in secret talks; support for constructive independent and coordinated efforts; and encouragement of unified efforts via international collaboration. The essay contends that if all parties take the necessary steps to secure the future of Israel and a Palestinian state, peace will be within reach.

European Involvement in the Middle East Peace Process

Historically, the EU has desired to play a pivotal role in the Middle East peace process, but its efforts have been sidelined by Israel and the United States or derailed by disunity within the EU.[1] To be sure, over the past three decades a number of important benchmarks in the Israeli-Palestinian political

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process have occurred on European soil or at the behest of European leaders. These included the PLO's initial recognition of Israel in Stockholm in 1988; the 1993 Oslo Declaration of Principles (DOP); the 1994 Paris Protocol on Economic Relations; the 2000 "Swedish Track" in preparation for the Camp David summit; the 2007 Quartet (US, Russia, EU, UN) appointment of Tony Blair as Middle East special envoy; the 2009 French (under President Sarkozy) and Egyptian partnership for a Gaza Peace plan in a regional summit; and French President Hollande's initiative in 2016 to revitalize a stalemated peace process in Paris, which culminated in the 2017 International Conference for Peace, with over 70 countries represented. However, despite the EU's significant investment, Europe has still not garnered a position commensurate with its investment in the Middle East.

Early on, the EU made efforts to extend the same rights and agreements to both Israel and the Palestinians. In 1970, the EU and Israel solidified its relationship with a preferential trade agreement; the following year saw the Schuman Declaration, where the European Council highlighted its stance supporting Palestinian rights. In the 1977 Venice Declaration, the EU objected to what it determined as illegal Israeli settlements and unilateral moves regarding the status of Jerusalem. In 1995, Israel gained complete access to the EU's framework program for research and technology development, and in 1997, the EU executed a free trade agreement with the PLO. Following Oslo (1994-1999), the PLO was granted 800 million euros for the development of infrastructure. In 1999, the EU reinforced its commitment to the two-state solution with the Berlin Declaration. Today, annual aid to Palestinian territory amounts to one billion euros, while the EU maintains its preeminence as Israel's first and largest trade partner (34.6 billion euros in 2016).[2]

Europe's ineffectiveness in the peace process has been especially evident since the early twenty-first century. US-led bilateral negotiations in Camp David (2000) were preceded by secret Sweden-hosted "Stockholm talks," brokered by Prime Minister Göran Persson and special envoy Pär Nuder; however, Camp David was followed by the breakout of the al-Aqsa intifada (that lasted four years) and the failed Taba talks (2001). In 2002, the EU outlined a final status agreement on Israeli settlements in the Seville Declaration, and the Arab League endorsed the Arab Peace Initiative (API); both were received with suspicion by Israel. In 2003, the Roadmap for Peace, a three-step roadmap for Palestinian political reform, was advanced by President Bush.

The 2006 victory of Hamas in Gaza signaled a turning point and began the EU-backed "West Bank First" strategy. In 2007, within weeks of the Hamas takeover, British Prime Minister Tony Blair began his role as the Quartet's Middle East Envoy. Yet over ninety visits to the region notwithstanding, Blair was criticized for his ineffectiveness to advance the two-state solution despite effectively nurturing economic development in the West Bank, inter alia vis-à-vis removal of major roadblocks, opening of the Jalameh Crossing and the crossing for Bethlehem tourism, and an increase in Palestinian use of Area C and the Allenby Bridge.[3] His diminished success in Gaza is attributed to four violent escalations in the region.[4]

In January 2009, French President Sarkozy and Egyptian President Mubarak, in a summit with European leaders, pushed a Gaza plan for a ceasefire that would end Operation Cast Lead (the "Gaza War"). In November 2009, French Foreign Minister Kouchner met with President Peres in Jerusalem and discussed the freeze in peace negotiations, strained relations between France and Israel due to Netanyahu's policies (i.e., denying rights to cross into Gaza from Israel), and French support in achieving the two-state solution.

The May 2010 Gaza flotilla incident injured relations with Turkey for six years when ten armed Turkish activists were killed after the Israeli military boarded the *Mavi Marmara*, which attempted to breach the Gaza blockade. A UN panel concluded that Israeli forces faced violent opposition and used force in self-defense.[5] The Israeli government linked the flotilla sponsors, the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedom and Humanitarian Aid (IHH) with Hamas and the Union for Good, an entity that backs suicide bombings, though Turkey maintains IHH is a legitimate charity.

In 2011, Britain, France, and Germany released a joint statement explaining their support for the UNSC resolution on Israeli settlements. Though the resolution was ultimately vetoed by the US, over 120 UN members supported the motion. In 2012, in a controversial decision (Spain, France, and UK pro-recognition versus Germany and Italy anti-recognition), EU members supported UN resolution 67/19 granting a "non-member observer state" status to the Palestinian Authority. The "non-member observer state" status of Palestine allowed for its April 2015 membership into the International Criminal Court (ICC), where it could attempt to prosecute Israeli officials for alleged war crimes, which could include settlement construction, claiming violation of the 4th Geneva convention.[6]

In 2013, Catherine Ashton, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, pushed for a differential European strategy due to continued settlement activity. Principal measures included the removal of EU research funding, sanctions, and labeling requirements for Israeli settlement products. Three EU members, the UK (2009), Denmark, and Belgium (2014), introduced their own guidelines. As of June 2017, seventeen EU members issued liability advisories to businesses about working with Israeli entities in settlements. Companies such as the Dutch PGGM pension fund, Danish Danske Bank, and Norwegian KLP insurance withdrew their investments in Israeli banks. Other departures included French companies Veolia and Orange, as well as Irish giant CRH. Though the economic maneuver only affects 1 percent of trade with Israel, it symbolizes an important shift in European strategy.

After Operation Protective Edge (2014), French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius extended the idea of an EU observer mission to encourage a truce. The EU declared it would support the initiative with boots on the ground,[7] and provide assistance to monitor international and Palestinian waters and encourage opening Gaza.[8] By late 2014, the European Parliament officially voted for a non-binding resolution for the recognition of Palestinian statehood as part of a two-state solution. Several EU member parliaments, including France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Sweden also passed motions in support of recognizing a Palestinian state.[9]

In 2016, French FM Jean-Marc Ayrault continued efforts to revitalize the stalemated peace process. At France's invitation, 28 countries met in Paris to recommit to peace, and numerous initiatives followed: the Quartet published its 2016 report condemning Palestinian violence and Israeli settlement expansion, and highlighted the situation in Gaza. Russian and Egyptian initiatives were proposed, and UN Resolution 2334 was adopted. France's efforts culminated in the 2017 International Conference for Peace hosted by President Hollande and attended by 70 countries, but which Netanyahu, and subsequently Abbas, failed to attend. French President Macron has persisted in efforts, meeting with Abbas on July 5, 2017, and was scheduled to visit Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the spring of 2018.[10]

Public Opinion and Trends in Europe

Despite its somewhat tenuous influence, Europe still plays an important political and economic role in any future peace scenario, and the internal

social and political changes it is now experiencing will affect how it engages with Israel and the Palestinians. Of special note is the growing negative public opinion toward Israel over the last decade that has been spearheaded by international activity; the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement; and internal politics within Europe itself.

International Bodies

Actions by UN organs raise legitimate concerns about disproportionate actions concerning Israel. As of 2013, Israel was condemned in 45 resolutions by the UN Human Rights Council, 20 resolutions by the General Assembly (in 2016 alone), and 226 resolutions by the Security Council since 1948.[11] The most notable resolutions over the decades include Resolutions 181 (the 1947 partition plan), 242 (the UNSC response after the 1967 war and the basis of all peace plans and negotiation processes), 338 (calling for implementation of 242), 1860 (2009 call for cessation of the war with Hamas), and 2334 (the UNSC 2016 demand to end Israeli settlement construction).

UNESCO in particular has passed contentious resolutions against Israel and the Jewish people, including three recent decisions: one denying Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem, and two denying historic Jewish ties to Jerusalem holy sites, including the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron and the Temple Mount. The disparity is clear when in 2007 UNESCO adopted a resolution opposing Israeli excavations, though it never criticized mechanical excavations by the Muslim Waqf to "preserve" the Old City.

In 2015, at the Palestinians' request, the ICC in The Hague opened a preliminary inquiry into the 2014 Gaza war and settlement expansion, but Israel disputes the ICC jurisdiction owing, inter alia, to the fact that there is no official state of Palestine and Palestine was not under ICC jurisdiction at the time.[12] Following UNSC 2334 in 2016, Palestine demanded a full ICC criminal investigation.

BDS

Israel's image in the West is in decline, which enables hostile groups such as the BDS movement to attack the moral and political legitimacy of Israel. These groups often aim at questioning Israel's basic right to exist as the nation-state of the Jewish people and demonize Jews and Israelis via a manipulated combination of factual and legal argumentation with falsified accusations, including blood libels.[13] Though the BDS movement is counterproductive

and even harmful to Palestinians, BDS in Europe is strong, with millions of euros flowing into NGOs sponsoring BDS, confirming the growing anti-Semitism in Europe.[14] Some countries staunchly oppose outright discrimination, namely the UK, France, and Germany, and others do not want to jeopardize Israeli economic relations.[15] Still, NGO Monitor reported that 29 out of 100 regional funding frameworks, or 16.7 million euros out of 67.1 million, at least partly financed BDS activities.[16] Unintentionally, EU-backed funding often sponsors BDS initiatives.

A Disunited Europe

The European Union is crumbling under the weight of the economic and political polarization, the Brexit blow, and the influx of refugees. Amidst the growing uncertainty, Europe will not be the same in the next generation. Time will reveal whether the 28 (pre-Brexit)-member supranational system with its post-WWII institutions and its vision for the free movement of goods and people will endure, especially with nationalist right wing movements on the rise.

Over the last two decades, the faltering economies of Greece, Ireland, Spain, and Portugal (and Italy and France) highlighted the dominance of Germany and the financial imbalance among EU nations. The 2016 Brexit blow has yet to unfold in full: Will Britain be allowed to retain benefits of the EU free trade market? Will the EU deter other European leaders by setting a steep price for secession? It is almost certain that Brexit will weaken Britain's moderating voice in EU policy, as well as the ability of the EU and its member countries to deal with the Middle East peace process.

Marked with differing cultures and values reflected by member state politics, the EU struggles to unify on common policies concerning brokering peace in the Middle East. For instance, in the debate over the Palestinian issue, Germany and the Czech Republic (and the Balkan states) were opposed to recognition of Palestinian statehood, in order to preserve the prospects for peace talks, while Spain and Sweden were strong champions of Palestinian statehood.

Europe's Changing Identity

The EU's identity is changing rapidly. The Muslim share of Europe's population has increased steadily, and Muslims are expected to comprise 20 percent of the EU population by 2050.[17] Muslims who gain leadership

positions in local, national, and EU parliaments are likely to be biased against Israel.[18] Furthermore, the EU is preoccupied primarily with immigration and absorption polices, since in 2015 alone EU countries received 1.3 million asylum applications. In the current reality, and with the multitude of interests vying for attention, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become of lower priority, both in aid and diplomatic junctures.

The arrival of over one and half million refugees in Europe as a result of the destabilization of Iraq, Eritrea, Somalia, Afghanistan, and most of all Syria, is an unsettling global emergency. Neighboring countries are not coping well with the strain of 10 million fleeing Syrians entering EU's insecure external borders. With the closure of Balkan routes for asylum seekers, migration shifted to the Mediterranean region, and German Chancellor Merkel extended an invitation to Syrian refugees. Hundreds of thousands of refugees have poured into Europe, though the German reception has not been echoed by other EU members in Central and Eastern Europe.

Many Europeans feel strongly about maintaining Western democracy, culture, and morals – values suspected of being incompatible with Islam.[19] Terror attacks have heightened the fear of Islamist extremism, and the rise in uncertainty and security dilemmas has caused a surge in right wing nationalistic movements. For example, moderate President Macron won the French election, but one third of French citizens supported Le Pen, the right wing nationalist candidate.[20] Political and economic dynamics have forced Macron into close cooperation with Chancellor Merkel in Germany, and Franco-Germany will likely dominate EU foreign relations. Moreover, with nationalism strong in the US under the Trump presidency, the EU will pursue an "independent foreign policy" in the Middle East.[21]

Reaching Peace Together

Despite these trends in the EU, the gradual achievement of a two-state solution is still paramount for regional stability and cooperation, and the EU has an important role to play. Therefore, the EU would do well to take several steps. First, it should encourage unified efforts via international collaboration. The EU should revive the former Quartet partners and engage regional alliances (Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and others) along with other relevant stakeholders (EU members, Turkey, the World Bank) to revitalize bilateral and regional talks concerning the preservation of conditions for an eventual two-state solution.

Second, it should support constructive independent and coordinated efforts. Alongside regional and bilateral tracks, within the framework of the Quartet, the EU should push independent measures for gradual advancement toward a two-state reality in transition to an eventual scheme for coexistence, hopefully within the context of two states for two peoples. This effort requires aid incentives and international support for independent steps in implementation of agreed segments of treaties (e.g., unilateral withdrawal from certain parts of the West Bank, recognition of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people, Palestinian institution building and economic boosts, and Gaza reconstruction and development in return for a long term truce).

Third, it should re-engage in secret talks. The EU is strategically located to host talks and thus can afford greater secrecy and discretion essential for various players, mainly Israeli and Palestinian leadership but also actors whose contacts with Israel should remain below the radar, as well as Jordon, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and others. Even before coordinated Quartet action is taken, a number of European states can serve as unofficial mediators of a series of private talks leading up to formal bilateral or regional conferences that showcase progress (similar to pre-Oslo and the Camp David summit), subsequently followed by serious and binding negotiation processes (such as the 2007 Annapolis conference and subsequent talks).

If Israel and the EU fail to work together, and other actors such as the UN and the US do not impose a process that defies the unsustainable status quo, the two-state solution will no longer be a viable option. The alternative, likely disastrous option – a bi-national state – will be all that remains. The expected regional instability that would follow should encourage EU, Israeli, and PA leaders to preserve the conditions for the two-state solution, and in the interest of all parties and along with other actors within the international community, advance this goal.

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Europe and the Delegitimization of Israel in 2017

Michal Hatuel-Radoshitzky and Rotem Oreg

The phenomenon of Israel's delegitimization in the international arena has persisted for over a decade, and is primarily propagated by civil society activists who have organized transnationally and across borders to isolate Israel internationally. With the aim of gauging this phenomenon in a limited geographic area and timeframe, the current article asks, "What are the central milestones in the phenomenon of Israel's delegitimization as manifested in Europe in 2017?" The article's central claims are that efforts to delegitimize Israel in Europe characteristically remain in the civil society realm, falling short of penetrating the official European political establishment, and thus, at least to date, have few repercussions on Israel's diplomatic standing in Europe. The analysis of Israel's delegitimization in a limited region and during a limited timeframe cannot be generalized to summarize the scope of the phenomenon elsewhere. The methodology adopted in this paper, however, can be a model for future research of other regions to form a cumulative picture and in turn contribute to a fuller comprehension of the phenomenon. The article begins with background regarding the delegitimization phenomenon, followed by an analysis dwelling on major developments pertaining to Israel's delegitimization and the counter struggle waged against this phenomenon in Europe during 2017. It concludes with a discussion and policy recommendations.

Israel's International Delegitimization

Research shows that delegitimizing rhetoric relating to Israel gained significant momentum at the turn of the century and has been on the rise ever since.[1] Two milestones that appear to have contributed to this phenomenon are the UN Durban Conference (2001), which united hundreds of civil society organizations in a call to boycott Israel; and a formal call in 2005 to isolate Israel internationally, endorsed by over 70 civil society organizations. This latter development formed the basis of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which continues to spearhead the current campaign to delegitimize Israel.

A defining feature of the BDS movement is its founding and support by dedicated civil society activists from all corners of the world, providing the campaign with momentum and popularity and reinforcing its ostensible moral legitimacy. The movement's operational infrastructure is typified by the ability of BDS activists to plug into local contexts in different corners of the world, as demonstrated by the translation of the 2005 BDS call into seven languages and its official endorsement by organizations operating outside the Palestinian realm. This includes organizations based in Arab countries such as Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, but also in Western states such as the United States, Canada, Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and Sweden.[2]

Common to delegitimizing activities throughout the world is the core belief that Israel does not have the right to exist in its current format as the homeland of the Jewish people. This paradigm is demonstrated by the three goals at the base of the BDS call, which advocates isolating Israel until the latter ends the "occupation of all Arab lands"[3] and dismantles "the Wall"; recognizes the right of "Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality" (already granted by Israeli law); and enables "Palestinian refugees to return to their homes."[4]

After more than a decade of intensive efforts geared toward isolating Israel internationally, the BDS movement has based itself on the margins of civil society in several West European countries.[5] However, measuring the impact of this phenomenon has proven to be a challenge: assessing the campaign's merit exclusively on the realization of its goals – manifested in concrete indications of Israel's international isolation – clearly encapsulates a very negative scenario that once reached will be difficult to reverse. On the other hand, assessing the campaign's merit based on events conducted

Pro-Palestinian demonstration, Paris, October 10, 2015. Photo: Matthieu Alexandre / AFP / Getty Images

under its global banner results in heightened focus on small scale activities with minimal to non-existing impact, creating a skewed picture of an oversized, imminent threat to Israel's international standing.

Avoiding these obstacles, the following section relates to central milestones in Israel's delegitimization in Europe during 2017, as a means of characterizing this phenomenon in a given area and time period. While analyses of delegitimization in a limited region and timeframe cannot be generalized to imply the scope of the phenomenon elsewhere, the methodology adopted below can be applied to other regions in future research to form a cumulative picture, and in turn a wider understanding of the phenomenon.

European-based Efforts to Delegitimize Israel and Counter Initiatives

The following section presents an overview of significant developments that resonated in international discourse during 2017. The choice to include specific developments over others is based on the exposure and subsequent debate of such events, inferred from their coverage in traditional English media outlets.[6] While this methodology may paint a different picture than the one received by analyzing social media, it is instrumental in identifying

key developments that were more likely to result in wider impact than events that remain largely confined to the virtual world.

Delegitimization

Events in 2017 can be categorized according to four central realms: political, economic, academic, and cultural.

At the time of this writing, public support for the BDS campaign in the official political European establishment was voiced only by Ireland's President Michael Higgins, who applauded BDS leader Omar Barghouti at a conference in Belfast. President Higgins served as the head of Friends of Palestine in the Irish Parliament, and has a record of references to Israel's security barrier as the "apartheid wall."[7] In Spain, some political establishment representatives support civil society action against Israel, where the second largest opposition party,[8] Podemos, openly endorses BDS.[9] In the Netherlands, the general 2017 elections resulted in the first representation in parliament of the DENK party,[10] which has displayed suspicion toward those voicing support for Israel, has a track record of anti-Semitic statements,[11] and whose leader refused to shake hands with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in 2016.[12]

In the economic realm, Norway's largest trade union, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), endorsed BDS principles and, defying a recommendation from its leadership, voted in support of an international boycott of Israel.[13] In addition, one of Denmark's largest pension funds announced that it will bar investment in four companies that operate in West Bank settlements.[14]

In the academic realm, noteworthy developments include Israel Apartheid Week in campuses in the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Austria. Three additional benchmarks in the academic world are an open letter signed by 200 legal experts from Britain and 14 other European nations protesting anti-BDS legislature as violations of fundamental human rights;[15] the rejection of the IHRA[16] definition of anti-Semitism by the British Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) under the premise that it "conflates anti-Semitism with criticism of the state of Israel";[17] and academic conferences that adopt delegitimizing rhetoric. Two examples in Ireland include a conference in Cork questioning Israel's legitimate right to exist, and a conference in Dublin relating to the boycott of Israel as a case study of the restrictions on academic freedom.

In the cultural realm, "Palestine Expo," a two-day anti-Israel event that was branded as a Palestinian cultural event, was held in a government building in London; and systematic efforts hounding European artists to refrain from performing in Israel continued (albeit with little success).[18] Noteworthy is activists' role in leading to the cancelation of singer Lorde's trip to Israel.[19] Although Lorde is from New Zealand, and thus outside of the scope of this research, European activists' involvement in the grassroots efforts to cancel the singer's show in Israel cannot be ruled out.

Counter Efforts

A prominent actor at the forefront of the struggle against Israel's delegitimization in Europe in 2017 was the European Parliament, which adopted the IHRA definition that denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination amounts to anti-Semitism.[20] Moreover, the European Parliament encouraged EU member states to adopt this definition – publicly commending the UK, Romania, and Austria, which had already fulfilled this policy directive. Subsequently, Germany and Bulgaria adopted the definition, raising the number of European states that endorse the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism to five.[21]

On the level of member states, several high ranking leaders denounced efforts to delegitimize Israel internationally. These include French President Macron's decision to oust two of his party's Parliamentary candidates, owing to their stated support for BDS, along with his declaration that "anti-Zionism is a new type of anti-Semitism";[22] the public commitment by Berlin Mayor Michael Muller to work against organizations that promote boycotts of Israel;[23] and a call by the German Christian Democratic Party and Social Democratic Party to denounce BDS as anti-Semitic. For their part, the establishment in Spain published a statement asserting that the "Spanish government has a consistent, official and long-standing position against BDS,"[24] and Norwegian Foreign Minister Børge Brende condemned the Norwegian trade union's decision to boycott Israel.[25] Also in Norway, the government noted it will no longer fund NGOs that support boycotts of Israel;[26] days after the Danish Foreign Ministry announced it will stop funding over a dozen Palestinian organizations in the wake of an investigation concluding that they channeled state funds to anti-Israel activity.[27]

Considerable efforts in Israel's defense were also made in the United Kingdom. Theresa May's government prohibited local authorities from

introducing changes to trade regulations with allies, thus disabling their opportunity to endorse calls to boycott Israeli goods.[28] The Charity Commission[29] opened an inquiry regarding student unions that support the grassroots BDS campaign,[30] and Universities Minister Jo Johnson issued a letter to UK university leaderships reminding them of the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism in advance of Israel Apartheid Week on British campuses, a move that reportedly led to the cancellation of several events and the toning down of others.

Conclusions and Recommendations

A comparison of these initiatives demonstrates that in 2017 European efforts geared toward delegitimizing Israel remained primarily in the civil society realm, with the majority of the European establishment working proactively to block their effect, both in the European Parliament and on the level of national EU member states. As such, it appears that thus far civil society-backed efforts to delegitimize Israel have little impact on Israel's diplomatic standing in Europe.

Nevertheless, the European arm of the global campaign to delegitimize Israel should not be dismissed. As the article demonstrates, this is not because of the campaign's formal achievements, but because of its engagement in a long term struggle and its displayed ability to persist for over a decade; its multi-faceted approach revealed by initiatives launched in the political, economic, academic, and cultural arenas; and the campaign's ability to draw press coverage and hence potentially shape international discourse and influence public opinion. These characteristics, along with the increasing ability of civil society actors who form the campaign's base to participate in diplomatic processes once reserved solely for official state representatives, lend the campaign increasing power and possibilities.

The methodology employed in this research, i.e., zooming in on a demarcated region during a defined timeframe, does not enable generalizing from the paper's assertions beyond Europe or beyond the specific timeframe discussed. Nonetheless, such an approach is vital in comprehending and assessing a phenomenon that boasts the ability to plug in to an array of local contexts, and is constantly evolving in response to developments on the ground. As such, similar research pinpointing central milestones in the manifestation of activities pertaining to Israel's delegitimization and their

counteraction should be conducted in multiple regions and in an ongoing manner.

In searching for an antidote to European initiatives to delegitimize Israel, on a technical level, Israel should strive not only to preserve the European establishment's support, but to proactively nurture and cultivate it by seeking to upgrade cooperation and refrain from relating to Europe as a monolithic bloc. In this respect, Israel should work strategically, hand-in-hand with Brussels and member states to counter delegitimization efforts targeting Israel, by encouraging additional European states to endorse and enforce the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism. Given the achievement of the negative campaign by the mere international deliberation regarding the question of Israel's legitimacy, Israeli establishment and civil society actors should maintain counteractivity in this realm away from the limelight.

On a more substantive level, the Israeli establishment should consider recognizing that the more that civil society anti-Israel activism increases, the more likely it is to eventually become reflected in official European policy. Although articulating a coherent Israeli strategy on how to emerge out of the current Israeli-Palestinian impasse will by no means annul the phenomenon, it will credit Israel with much needed diplomatic points in the long term struggle – in Europe and elsewhere.

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Economic Relations between Israel and Europe: Selected Issues

Elai Rettig and Oded Eran

Economic trade between Israel and the EU countries has flourished over the past decade. Despite political disagreements, Europe is still Israel's largest and most important market, both for exports and for imports. This dominance is particularly reflected in the Israeli food market, in Israel's import of vehicles, in the pharmaceuticals market, and in technological and scientific cooperation. The immigration crisis and the terrorist threats in Europe have spurred a significant increase in defense exports from Israel to Europe, and in 2016 Europe became the second largest export destination for the Israeli arms industry, after Asia. The rift between Europe and the US may play into Israel's hands in this context, particularly in the realm of military exports to Western Europe. On the other hand, the growing political tension between the EU and the government of Israel, the boycott threats, and the strengthening of the shekel against the euro threaten other aspects of trade, and particularly Israeli exports. In any scenario, the shift of Israeli exports to the emerging markets in China and India is not expected to replace Israel's dependence on Europe any time soon.

Trade between Israel and Europe: The Current Situation

Since the 1960s, Europe has been Israel's most important trading partner. This trend has only intensified since the conclusion of the Association

Agreement between Israel and the EU in 1995. Currently Europe accounts for more than one third of Israel's total foreign trade. In contrast, Israel is 24th in size among Europe's trading partners, accounting for about 2 percent of Europe's total foreign trade, and is Europe's most important trading partner in the Eastern Mediterranean.[1] In 2016, the value of trade between Israel and Europe stood at 34.4 billion euros (as compared to 23.8 billion euros in 2006), and since 2012 has grown by an annual average rate of 6.5 percent. In 2016-2017, the growth was reflected primarily in increased exports of goods from Europe to Israel due to the strengthening of the shekel against the dollar, while exports from Israel to Europe fell by 1.9 percent and are currently where they stood in 2011.[2]

Europe buys about 30 percent of Israel's exports (as of 2016), and ranks ahead of the US, which buys about 26 percent. This can be seen in particular in the processed food sector, in which about 44 percent of Israel's exports are destined for Europe.[3] Among European countries, the leading destination for exports is Britain, followed far behind by Holland, Belgium (mainly diamonds), Germany, and France (in descending order). The exports to these countries consist primarily of pharmaceuticals and chemicals (39.2 percent), machinery and transport equipment (21.3 percent), and computers, electronic, and electro-optic equipment and other products (15 percent). In the past year, defense exports to these countries have also grown, in particular, technology for countering infiltration, fighting terror, and border protection. In addition, exports of new cyber defense products have begun. As a result, Europe has become the second largest destination for defense exports after Asia, and is ranked ahead of North America and well ahead of Africa and South America where Israeli exports have declined substantially since 2014, primarily due to the drop in the global price of oil, which is the major source of income for many of the countries in those regions.[4] Despite the general trend, over the past year total Israeli exports to Europe have declined, and in particular exports to France (17 percent); on the other hand, there has been an increase in exports to Spain (14 percent), Germany (4 percent), and Italy (3 percent).[5] The decrease was felt mainly in the manufacturing sectors (2.7 percent) and in agriculture, forestry, and fishing (0.7 percent).[6] Nevertheless, the Israel Export Institute predicted that exports to Europe would recover in 2017 due to growth in the economies within Europe that constitute the main destinations for Israeli exports.

With respect to imports, over the last two years there has been a substantial annual increase of 11.6 percent in imports from Europe, primarily due to the strengthening of the shekel against the euro. As of 2016, the EU countries account for about 43 percent of Israel's total imports (not including diamonds), which made the EU the largest exporter to Israel, with the US and China (13 percent each) lagging far behind. This figure is reflected particularly in Israeli imports of processed food, of which 50 percent originates in the EU. The top-ranked countries of origin for Israeli imports are (in descending order) Germany, Switzerland, Belgium (diamonds), Britain, Holland, and Italy.[7] Imports consist mainly of machinery and vehicles (45.4 percent), and pharmaceuticals and chemicals (18.2 percent).

The positive trade relations between Israel and the EU are expected to continue and even improve in coming years. The acceptance of Israel as a member of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) inter alia led to the implementation of new agreements between the sides. These include trade agreements for agricultural and fishing products, which went into effect in 2010; the Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance (ACAA) signed in 2013, which recognizes the standards for industrial and pharmaceutical goods approved in Israel and is intended to facilitate trade in those goods; the "open skies" agreement signed in 2013, which enabled more European airline companies to enter the Israeli market; and the Eurocontrol agreement of 2016 for coordination of air traffic and air defense.

The reentry of Israel in 2014 into Horizon 2020, the EU's research and development program, was also a major step forward in strengthening ties between the sides. The program provides researchers, companies, and universities in Israel with access to a budget of 77 billion euros up to 2020 for the funding of joint scientific research and projects. According to data from the Israel-Europe R&D Directorate (ISERD), the previous round of the program, which ended in 2013, awarded 2110 Israeli participants with research grants in the amount of 840 million euros, which made the EU into one of the major growth engines for Israel's R&D.[8] The program also constitutes a lever for bringing Israeli scientists back to Israel and creating new research laboratories in academia, although as of 2015 Israel's balance of leaving/returning researchers was still negative.[9] The countries with which Israeli researchers have had the majority of collaborations are (in descending order) Germany, Britain, Italy, France, and Spain.

In addition to investment in R&D, the EU makes available about 12 million euros as part of the ENP to non-government organizations operating in Israel for the promotion of goals and values that Europe supports (such as democracy, human rights, and promotion of the peace process). This policy also creates political tension with the government of Israel, since part of the funding reaches organizations that Israel defines as "anti-Israeli" seeking to undermine Israel's legitimacy. These political tensions will likely affect the continuation of the bilateral economic partnership, since many of the current proposals for the improvement of Israel's status as a preferred EU trade partner include progress in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians as a precondition.

Political Economics: Boycotts, Opposition Organizations, and Illegal Construction

The growing political tension between Israel and EU institutions surrounding the Palestinian question is also reflected in the economic realm and is influenced by the Israeli economy's dependence on Europe. In July 2013, the EU adopted recommendations whereby any new economic agreement signed with Israel will not apply to the settlements and the Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, but rather only to areas within the 1967 borders. In November 2015, the EU approved the labeling of goods produced in the settlements that are exported to Europe, a measure that was perceived in Israel as assisting the vocal BDS organizations that operate in Europe. It was also seen by Israeli policymakers as a warning light in advance of more serious economic sanctions that have been on the table since 2015. These include proposals to limit the activity of Israeli banks in Europe that invest beyond the Green Line or provide loans and mortgages to residents there.[10] Such measures have a potential to generate real harm to the Israeli economy, but at this stage their economic effects are marginal and do not justify the media attention they receive in Israel.

To date, the European steps against products from the settlements have not had much of an effect on Israeli industry.[11] From the outset, the harm was not expected to be serious, since the vast majority of the one thousand Israeli factories established in industrial zones and settlements in the West Bank market their output (consisting mainly of furniture, metal and construction products, textiles, and footwear) primarily in Israel, rather than Europe. The main focus therefore is on processed food and agricultural products.

However, the exports of the Israeli food industry to Europe actually grew in 2016 by 3.5 percent, which is higher than the rate of the preceding two years.[12] In contrast, agricultural exports fell by 0.7 percent, though presumably the strengthening of the shekel is the main cause of this trend. In any case, it is also possible that against the background of calls in Western Europe for a boycott there is a trend of increasing Israeli agricultural exports to Eastern Europe and Asia, although in those regions Israel is competing with cheap producers in Turkey and elsewhere. In these markets, prices are lower and thus the revenue that returns to the Israeli economy declines. Therefore, if political conditions permit, an Israeli exporter will always prefer to market products to Western Europe and North America.

Beyond the threats of a boycott and sanctions, an additional focus of tension between Israel and the EU is the European funding of opposition organizations and non-government organizations that operate in Israel and in the West Bank and are perceived as undermining the state's interests. According to NGO Monitor, the EU delegation has in recent years awarded 16.7 million euros to 42 Israeli or Palestinian organizations that openly support a boycott of Israel.[13] A particularly thorny issue is the direct funding provided by the EU to Palestinian construction in Area C based on humanitarian pretexts, without building permits or coordination with the government of Israel.[14] Taking into consideration the volume of the trade and its being a major portion in Israel's global trade and other economic interests, it is doubtful whether Israel has an effective response beyond expressing its dissatisfaction in the short run and making greater efforts to diversify its markets in the long run. In the long term Israel's growing economic relations with Asia create an interesting option for Israel. Exports to China, which is now the third largest market for Israel, continue to grow, and military exports to India are of a significant economic importance to Israel. New, more comprehensive trade agreements that are being negotiated with these two countries could contribute to a major shift in Israel's balance of trade from politically-linked trade with Europe to politically-free trade with Asia.

Future Issues: Brexit, the Transatlantic Rift, and the Look to Asia

A number of global issues that are not directly related to Israel are liable to affect the level of its trade with Europe. First, the withdrawal of Britain from the EU has created uncertainty for Israel, since it is unclear what new arrangements between Britain and its EU trade partners will take shape.

Currently, Israel's trade with Britain is worth about $5 billion, and the UK is the first-ranked destination for Israeli goods in Europe. However, Israel does not have a bilateral trade agreement with Britain, since the legal basis for trade between the countries is the EU Association Agreement. As a result, there will be a need to negotiate new bilateral trade arrangements with Britain, which could be less favorable to Israeli companies than those achieved within the framework of the EU. A new EU-UK agreement nay result inter alia in a devaluation of the English pound against the Israeli shekel, harming Israeli exports to the UK. Alternatively, in a more positive scenario, the UK exit from the EU will improve the competitiveness of Israeli goods in UK markets vis-à-vis goods from the EU. These issues will become clearer once the EU and the UK conclude their new framework for their future relations.

Relations between the United States and the European Union affect Israel's political and economic relations with the EU. A growing distance between the two allies across the Atlantic weakens the US ability to influence the EU policy on issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Israel's long term security. The US decision to pull out of the JCPOA with Iran could have adverse effects, for example, on the weight of the EU and the US dialogue on other issues related to Israel's security, such as the situation in Syria.

Under pressure from President Trump and because of the growing threats to their domestic and external security, the Europeans may increase their defense expenditure. This may result in a growing cooperation between Israel and Europe in defense equipment production and procurement. The potential in this field has been overlooked for decades because of political considerations, but the new global and regional circumstances in Europe and the Middle East may open new opportunities for Israel in Europe. The deterioration of the relations between Turkey on the one hand, and the US and Europe on the other, will require Europe to reevaluate the strategic implications. So will the Russia's policies in Europe and the Middle East, with one of the possible outcomes of such a reassessment being a changed, more positive, European view of Israel.

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European Jewry in an Era of Turmoil: Elections, Anti-Semitism, and Security Issues

Oded Eran, Rob Geist Pinfold, and Sarah Roost

This chapter charts the response of Jewish communities to the atmosphere of political uncertainty prevalent throughout the European Union, examining the links between broader societal trends and rising anti-Semitism. It demonstrates why recent manifestations of anti-Semitism differ from previous occurrences, as European Jews now find themselves in a complicated relationship between the "new" left and the resurgent populist right in Europe. How Jewish communities have reacted to the new political instability and recent elections is examined, and key policy issues facing the EU – specifically terrorism and refugees – are delineated within the context of the Jewish communal response. Finally, the chapter scrutinizes the trend of rising anti-Semitism in Europe, focusing on the most problematic trends and areas where they are manifested.

The European Union (EU) is facing an unprecedented crisis. Uncertainty, societal conflict, political instability, and violence are evident throughout the 28-member state bloc. Extraordinary security measures – such as the

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ongoing state of emergency in France – have become the new norm in many European capitals, following a series of significant terrorist attacks. These developments, coupled with the massive influx of refugees and migrants, have helped shatter societal taboos and prompted a debate on complex issues concerning integration and multiculturalism, particularly in Germany and France. In June 2016, the British public voted narrowly to leave the EU, further aggravating the pan-European crisis, while in Eastern Europe, goverments continue to walk a tightrope, balancing post-communist national assertiveness with tolerance of existing minorities.

Jewish communities within the EU are far from immune to these trends, often finding themselves disproportionately affected and involved in policy debates, either as victims of rising anti-Semitism or leading advocates for tolerance of refugees. These developments have ignited an intra-communal debate, as Jewish communities struggle to reconcile conflicting impulses in the face of continuing political uncertainty. This debate joins traditional challenges, including aging populations, assimilation, and decreased political and societal power. This chapter analyzes three key trends affecting European Jews: the growing political instability in Europe; the influx of immigration and terrorism; and escalating anti-Semitism. It charts how different Jewish communities in Europe have responded to these trends, while delineating the correlation between increased political instability and anti-Semitism.

Political Instability and Polarization

The rise of right wing populism has created an increased sense of worry and suspicion among Jewish communities. In France, the far right Front Nationale (FN) presidential nominee, Marine Le Pen, received 34 percent of the vote in 2017, despite calling for Jews to choose between French and Israeli citizenship and denying any French role in the Holocaust. In Hungary, Jobbik – a party accused of glorifying Hungary's pro-Nazi policies during World War II – holds 26 seats in Hungary's National Assembly following the 2018 elections, which represents 20 percent of the vote. In Germany, Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), which embodies significant tendencies advocating a new German culture of remembrance and historical revisionism, entered the Bundestag in 2017 with 94 seats, or 12.6 percent of the vote. In Austria, elections on October 15, 2017 witnessed the Far Right Freedom Party (FPO) win third place, with a 5 percent swing to the party. Even the potential entry of these movements – previously relegated to the political

wilderness – into government represents uncharted waters for many Jewish communities. Reflecting a more nuanced position than their predecessors, contemporary right wing populist parties often combine xenophobia with strongly pro-Israel sentiments, as demonstrated by the AfD, FPO, FN, and the Netherlands' Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV). However, the mainstream Jewish establishment continues to treat these parties with suspicion, concerned that endemic anti-Semitism within the far right has not declined, but is instead thinly concealed by a populist anti-Islamic message for the sake of political expediency.

Simultaneously, populism is not a uniquely right wing phenomenon. Whereas moderate, West European social democratic parties frequently obtained a majority of Jewish votes in previous decades, a "new" anti-globalization left – often scathingly critical of Israel – has catapulted from the extremist fringes to the political mainstream. This trend is particularly salient in the United Kingdom, since the election of the left wing Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party in September 2015. Corbyn previously referred to Hamas and Hezbollah as "friends," and under his leadership, a surge in anti-Semitism within the Labour Party led to an internal investigation. However, the significant media attention resulting from anti-Semitism scandals only affected Jewish voters, with the party out-performing predictions in the general election of June 2017. This trend was repeated in the French presidential election, where far left candidate Benoit Hamon received over seven million votes, though the Jewish community was appalled by his dismissal of increased anti-Semitism in France and his characterization of Israel as "colonial."[1]

Jewish communal reactions against the ongoing populist, nationalist trend are exemplified by the June 2016 United Kingdom referendum on European Union membership: whereas 52 percent of voters backed "Brexit," around 59 percent of British Jews voted to retain the status quo.[2] Nevertheless, a limited number of outliers within local Jewish communities have given their backing to the populist right. In 2012, more than 13 percent of French Jews reported voting FN, while in the Netherlands the PVV polled around 10 percent of Jewish support.[3] Conversely, Corbyn's leadership precipitated a sharp decline in Jewish support, with only 13 percent of British Jews voting Labour in 2017. Similarly, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has increasingly alienated the Jewish community by adopting xenophobic and anti-cosmopolitan rhetoric that some argue is tinged with anti-Semitism.[4]

By contrast, French expatriates in Israel supported centrist Emmanuel Macron, winner of the 2017 presidential election, over FN's Marine Le Pen, with Macron winning an overwhelming 96.3 percent of the French Israeli vote.[5] Thus, Jewish voters appear largely removed from populist sentiments sweeping Europe, though this places many communities in the uncomfortable position of being at odds with prevailing public opinion.

Security, Borders, and Terrorism

The recent influx of refugees to Europe has challenged European Jewry to act in a spirit of social responsibility. Many members of the community feel that Jews – as former refugees themselves – have a historical and moral duty to help those in need. This tendency is demonstrated by Britain's World Jewish Relief, which ran assistance programs to non-Jewish refugees in Greece and Turkey, while helping 1000 refugees integrate into British society.[6] Indeed, the often fractious British Jewish community was united in shock at tragic pictures of refugees, such as the three-year-old Alan Kurdi, who drowned while fleeing conflict zones.[7] Similar trends were evident in Germany; the Jewish German umbrella organization met with Muslim organizations to discuss the challenges of refugee integration in Germany, while Jewish and Muslim social workers cooperated to help refugees.[8] Likewise, French Chief Rabbi Haim Korsia called on French Jews to assist refugees;[9] in Belgium, the left-leaning CCLJ Jewish organization called for Jews to "act generously" and help migrants. In Hungary – which refuses to accept refugees – Prime Minister Orban passed a bill allowing refugee detention and transfer to Serbia,[10] which led the local Jewish community to actively oppose government policy, condemning anti-migrant public discourse as "hate speech."[11]

Nevertheless, the perceived European Jewish moral prerogative to support refugees is tempered by fears that migrants – many of whom come from nations hostile to Israel – could bring anti-Semitic sentiments with them. Though anti-Semitic violence in Germany is still rare, there have been high profile cases of attacks against Jewish property and individuals by members of the Muslim community, such as the firebombing of a synagogue in the city of Wuppertal in 2014.[12] German Jews feel a great sense of responsibility to help in refugee camps, though many report they are afraid to identify themselves as Jews.[13] Jews in France have long felt under threat, following recurring attacks against Jewish supermarkets, synagogues, and community

members, such as the killing of a French rabbi and three schoolchildren at a Jewish school in 2012. Opinion polling of French Jews suggests community members perceive the most preeminent source of anti-Semitism as emanating from the Muslim community; 37 percent of Jewish parents fear their children could be victims of an anti-Semitic attack.[14]As a result, though the French Jewish community is numerically the largest in Europe, its numbers are dwindling as members are emigrating to Israel, London, and Canada.[15]

Concurrently, opinion polls suggest that British Jews harbor growing feelings of communal insecurity.[16] The string of terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom in 2017 caused concern throughout the community, and the police and private security presence around community institutions increased.[17] The Islamic State has announced plans to target British Jews, a threat the community takes seriously,[18] particularly because the terrorist group claims to have sent 1,000 fighters to Europe in the guise of refugees.[19] Thus, throughout Europe, the recent spike in attacks against Jews frequently originates from the same groups that European Jewry is eager to stand up for: the refugee population from Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Threatened and actualized anti-Semitic attacks pose not only a threat, but also create inter-communal tension within European Jewish communities, who struggle to balance competing desires for security and solidarity.

Anti-Semitism Facing the Community

More than 70 years after the Holocaust, anti-Semitism continues and is even growing in Europe. Indeed, a survey conducted in 2016 by the European Union in nine member states, including France, Germany, and the UK noted a demonstrable rise in anti-Semitism in recent years. While two thirds of self-identified Jewish respondents saw anti-Semitism as a concern in their country, 76 percent noticed a rise in anti-Semitism in the last five years.[20] Though not necessarily anti-Semitic, issues of religious clothing and freedom continue to affect European Jews to a disproportionate degree. For instance, during her election campaign in October 2016 FN presidential candidate Marine Le Pen called for the banning of overt religious symbols, including Jewish ones.[21] Furthermore, Denmark and Sweden have banned kosher and halal slaughter, due to animal rights concerns, with Denmark also considering a ban on infant male circumcision out of human rights considerations.[22]

Across the continent, manifestations of anti-Semitism differ. Violent attacks against Jews are the most noticeable in France, but Swedish Jews are more afraid to be publicly recognizable as Jews. France has the highest numbers of Jews considering leaving the country, followed by Germany.[23] In addition, opinion polls taken among non-Jewish Germans show that 10 percent of respondents openly state their anti-Semitism, thinking of Jews as different or even inferior.[24] Often anti-Semitism is connected to anti-Israel attitudes; an opinion poll of non-Jewish British citizens taken in 2015 noted that 20 percent of respondents saw British Jews as more loyal to Israel than to the UK.[25] In Eastern Europe, anti-Semitism is also resurgent in countries with very few Jews – such as Poland – where younger generations exhibit more anti-Semitic sentiments than their parents.[26] An opinion poll among the European Jewish population conducted by the EU in 2013 showed that 40 percent of Jews experienced or saw violence perpetrated by "someone with an extremist Muslim view," while 20 percent of respondents identified the perpetrator as left wing; 14 percent identified the culprit as a right winger.[27]

While the rise of anti-Semitism is an overall trend, the source and nature of anti-Jewish prejudice differs on a case-by-case basis. Among its neighbors, Hungary stands out for claims of state-sanctioned anti-Semitism by the Orban government. These allegations have been particularly salient in the ongoing campaign by the government and other right wing parties against the perceived influence of liberal-leaning, prominent Jewish billionaire George Soros in Hungarian politics.[28] The campaign caused a schism between the local Jewish community and the Israeli government, with the Netanyahu government accused of abandoning the concerns of Hungarian Jews in exchange for warm bilateral ties between both nations.[29] In France, 63 percent of the Jewish respondents of a 2015 poll personally experienced anti-Semitism in their daily lives.[30] In Britain, where cumulative anti-Semitism manifests less violently than in France, community leaders have noted the rise of online anti-Semitism, particularly on social media;[31] a senior member of the British Jewish community establishment suggested that "cyber hate" constitutes one of the most pertinent challenges for the community.[32]

Dealing with increased and diverse forms of anti-Semitism across Europe is complicated by severe budgetary restraints in securing community institutions, which hampers communal responses to increased anti-Semitism; increased government security often only materializes after terrorist attacks occur. In many cases, Jews have reacted by leaving their native countries. This

is most evident in France: in 2013, French Jews were the largest group of new immigrants to Israel. Opinion polls also suggest a growing number of British Jews see their future outside their home country.[33] Several French community leaders have suggested that observant Jews consider hiding any overtly religious symbols in public, such as skullcaps.[34] On the other hand, non-Jewish French politicians vowed to wear skullcaps in a show of solidarity with the Jewish community after an anti-Semitic stabbing in Marseille, in January 2016.[35]

Conclusions and Implications

Throughout contemporary Europe – as in many historical examples worldwide – there is a clear correlation between political instability and anti-Semitism. While complex issues such as the refugee crisis, border security, and the future of the European Union are not explicitly "Jewish" issues, European Jews have been disproportionately affected by the political and social paradigm shift underway across the continent. Despite their small numbers relative to their non-Jewish compatriots, European Jews have been the deliberate targets of terrorist attacks, while often finding their own views at odds with prevailing populist winds sweeping the continent. European Jews are often more acutely aware of the rising anti-Israeli sentiment on the left, but are also more sensitive to right wing populism and extreme nationalist currents. Nevertheless, while Jews may be more likely to demonstrate empathy for refugees than many of their compatriots, other minority groups are more likely to hold unfavorable opinions of Jews, which sometimes manifest in violent anti-Semitism. Overall, European Jews are enduring an evolving and complicated relationship between the "new" left and the resurgent populist right in Europe, with the boundaries between allies and enemies no longer clearly defined.

The diversified threats and issues facing the Jewish communities of Europe are significant. Clearly anti-Semitism is no longer the political preserve of any specific ideology or demographic group, if it ever was. The trends illustrated in this chapter have proved controversial within Jewish communities, with opinions increasingly polarized. The lack of a communal consensus may well continue to be a salient trend if not addressed by community organizations, which are liable to struggle to formulate a consensus position when dealing with external groups and authorities. If instability continues, Jewish communities are likely to be increasingly challenged by

the continued movement of constituents to Israel, diminishing the social and political power of long-established communities. Simultaneously, the instability within the European Union shows no signs of abating, suggesting both Jewish and non-Jewish citizens should anticipate the continuation of ongoing political and social shifts across the continent. Governments must reassure Jewish communities by remaining vigilant against all forms of anti-Semitism, including from other minority communities or the far left. Additionally, Jewish communities and the State of Israel should be wary of offers of support from "reformed" ultra-nationalist groups that may support Israel while demonizing local minorities. However, and due to the nuanced nature of perceived threats, just as anti-Semitism is not uniform across Europe, neither is nor should be the Jewish response.

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Shimon Stein, a senior research fellow at INSS, served as Israel's ambassador to Germany (2001-7). Prior to this appointment he served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as deputy director general for the CIS, as well as Eastern and Central Europe. Ambassador Stein held additional MFA posts in Washington, Germany, and Israel, and was a member of Israel's delegation to multilateral negotiations on arms control. Ambassador Stein is an international consultant for American, German, and Israeli companies. He publishes articles in the German press regularly on topics of foreign policy and security.

INSS Memoranda, February 2017–Present

No. 177, June 2018, Yotam Rosner and Adi Kantor, eds., *The European Union in Turbulent Times: Challenges, Trends, and Significance for Israel*.

No. 176, June 2018, Udi Dekel and Kobi Michael, eds., *Scenarios n the Israeli-Palestinian Arena: Strategic Challenges and Possible Responses* [Hebrew].

No. 175, May 2018, Yotam Rosner and Adi Kantor, eds., *The European Union in a Time of Reversals: Challenges, Trends, and Significance for Israel* [Hebrew].

No. 174, April 2018, Avner Golov, *The Israeli Community in the United States: A Public-Diplomacy Asset for Israel* [Hebrew].

No. 173, March 2018, Meir Litvak, Emily B. Landau, and Ephraim Kam, eds., *Iran in a Changing Strategic Environment*.

No. 172, February 2018, Meir Litvak, Emily B. Landau, and Ephraim Kam, eds., *Iran in a Changing Strategic Environment* [Hebrew].

No. 171, January 2018, Carmit Valensi, Udi Dekel, and Anat Kurz, eds., *Syria – From a State to a Hybrid System: Implications for Israel*.

No. 170, January 2018, Doron Matza, *Patterns of Resistance among Israel's Arab-Palestinian Minority: A Historical Review and a Look to the Future*.

No. 169, September 2017, Einav Yogev and Gallia Lindenstrauss, eds., *The Delegitimization Phenomenon: Challenges and Responses.*

No. 168, September 2017, Carmit Valensi, Udi Dekel, and Anat Kurz, eds., *Syria: From a State to a Hybrid System: Implications for Israel* [Hebrew].

No. 167, July 2017, Udi Dekel, Gabi Siboni, and Omer Einav, eds., *The Quiet Decade: In the Aftermath of the Second Lebanon War, 2006-2016.*

No. 166, July 2017, Yehuda Greenfield-Gilat, *The Palestinian Refugees: The Israeli Interest* [Hebrew].

No. 165, June 2017, Dan Weinstock and Meir Elran, *Securing the Electrical System in Israel: Proposing a Grand Strategy.*

No. 164, February 2017, Einav Yogev and Gallia Lindenstrauss, eds., *The Delegitimization Phenomenon:Challenges and Responses* [Hebrew].

No. 163, February 2017, Nizan Feldman, *In the Shadow of Delegitimization: Israel's Sensitivity to Economic Sanctions*.

Prominent among the leading issues confronting the European community over the past decade is the migration challenge, which has sparked profound political disputes between and within the countries of the European Union. The waves of migrants have reignited xenophobic, racist, and anti-Semitic sentiments with new fervor, and led to the strengthening of nationalist and populist right movements. These trends have been aggravated as a result of terrorist actions motivated by radical Islam.

Changes in the international arena are also challenging the European community. The readiness of Russia to use military force has given new life to the threat of the Cold War. An increasingly powerful China is utilizing trade agreements to drive a wedge between European countries. Relations between Turkey and the EU are more and more strained, not unlike the suspicious relations between the European community and the Sunni Gulf states. These issues are particularly salient against the background of the growing estrangement of the United States, under President Trump, from the EU.

Despite progress in economic relations between Europe and Israel, the EU continues to adhere to its staunch criticism of Israel with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This near-automatic political orientation makes it difficult for Israel to regard the EU as an unbiased mediator, especially in view of the activity of the delegitimization movement against Israel and the awakening of anti-Semitism against European Jews.

The European Union in Turbulent Times: Challenges, Trends, and Significance for Israel maps, reviews, and analyzes the urgent issues on the European agenda. The essays in this collection review the political, social, and economic consequences of these issues and assess their significance, both for Europe and for Israel.

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