



# The EU, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

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by Leslie S. Lebl

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**Abstract:** *The European Union (EU), the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) are locked in a struggle for the future of Europe that encompasses very different visions. The EU aims for a highly sophisticated Western civilization; the Brotherhood and OIC see Europe as part of a future global Caliphate, an Islamic empire governed by an Islamist version of traditional Islamic law, or sharia. This competition extends to the United Nations where the OIC is seeking to enforce global prohibitions on criticism of Islam. A comparison of the EU's actions with those of the U.S. federal government shows that U.S. policymakers, in confronting a similar challenge, are making many of the same errors as their European counterparts.*

In the twenty-first century, the European Union has expanded to include 27 member states, or almost all of Europe. It boasts a population of over 500 million people, unprecedented peace, largely open borders between its members, and a spreading common currency. Despite the economic crisis, the EU believes it presents the world with a successful model of “post-national” politics and society that others will copy. Yet the EU’s political system, societal cohesion and democratic values are now under attack. This attack is spearheaded from within Europe by Islamist organizations, in particular the Muslim Brotherhood, and from without by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Previously the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Like the EU, the Muslim Brotherhood has a vision for Europe. The EU aims for a highly sophisticated Western civilization that solves problems by negotiation rather than war, and in which the average person is protected from the vicissitudes of the market by a wide array of social benefits and from injustice by a highly-developed set of human and civil rights. The Brotherhood, in contrast, sees Europe as part of a future global Caliphate, or Islamic empire governed by an Islamist version of traditional Islamic law, or *sharia*.

The OIC, an international governmental organization with 56 member states, plus the Palestinian Authority, shares the vision of a global Caliphate that implements *sharia*. It is now the largest voting bloc in the United Nations and an important EU interlocutor. While from time to time its members may be at odds with the Muslim Brotherhood, both organizations nevertheless cooperate to promote mutual objectives with regard to Europe and the EU. As a priority initiative, the OIC wants a Europe that enforces prohibitions on criticism of Islam.

Few Americans pay attention to the EU, but a comparison of its actions with those of the U.S. federal government shows U.S. policymakers making the same errors as their European counterparts.

## The Changing Face of Europe

The conflict between the EU, the Muslim Brotherhood and the OIC derives much of its potency from growing Muslim populations in Europe, which in 2010 accounted for an estimated 3.8 percent of the EU's total population.<sup>2</sup> While that sounds relatively small, Muslim populations tend to concentrate in certain West European and Scandinavian countries and, within them, in certain areas and cities, thus enhancing their influence.

Muslims, like other immigrants, can be expected to shape the society around them, and in fact they have already begun to wield political influence through the ballot box. That influence will likely expand in future, given that Muslim birth rates exceed those of “ethnic” Europeans.

Many Muslims have assimilated into European society, but many others live apart. Those Muslims living in enclaves or ghettos may do so because they have suffered discrimination, prefer “traditional” ways of life (often more “traditional” than in their country of origin), or, as second and third generation descendants of immigrants, seek a Muslim identity. Nor is it particularly surprising that many ghetto inhabitants lack education, employment, a sense of personal responsibility, or suffer many other deleterious consequences of long-term welfare.

However, there is a huge difference between clustering together to share culture, traditions or language, and trying to change the legal system of the host

<sup>2</sup> “Muslim” can be difficult to define. Not all immigrants from Muslim countries are Muslim; many Muslims now have European nationalities; and some countries, such as France, prohibit the collection of personal data on religious identification. Moreover, the term “Muslim” includes those who are religiously observant, including European converts, as well as those who are not. The population data is drawn from EU, UN and Pew Research Center sources.

country. The evolution of so-called Muslim parallel societies, with their demand to apply *sharia* rather than Western law, is profoundly dangerous for three reasons:

- First, imposing *sharia* means rejecting the laws designed by democratically elected representatives, thus undercutting the principle on which democracy is based. The very fact of a separate legal code is in and of itself extremely destructive. Nor do the proponents of such a change intend to limit it to Muslim-majority areas. Rather, they aim to expand *sharia* to cover all of Europe's inhabitants.
- Second, applying *sharia* is particularly destructive because its fundamental concepts are antithetical to Western law. Rather than enshrine the concept of equality before the law, *sharia* grants Muslims more rights than non-Muslims, and men more rights than women. It has no principles comparable to Western rights of freedom of speech and religion. In general, it eviscerates human and civil rights.
- Third, *sharia* is based on the Koran which is considered to be the unalterable word of God. This means that any dispute must, in the final analysis, be resolved by religious rather than political authorities, a requirement that nullifies centuries of Western secular development.

Coercion plays a key role in the development of these parallel societies, as described graphically in recent memoirs by Ed Husain, a British ex-Islamist, and Samira Bellil, a French woman of Maghreb origin, or novels by Tahar Ben Jelloun or Boualem Sansal.<sup>3</sup> Over time, ghetto inhabitants reduce their contacts with the external world. Non-Muslims are excluded or driven away, and Muslim authorities take control, turning the ghetto into a so-called parallel society, and perhaps eventually a no-go zone that European authorities enter at their peril. Nothing in the philosophy, past history or political structure of the EU helps it to deal with such problems; rather, what it considers its strengths actually contribute to the problem.

## The European Union

As historian Richard Landes has pointed out, the EU in some ways resembles the medieval Church. It exists as a power center above European nations and has attracted its own aristocratic elite.<sup>4</sup> This elite is multinational, cosmopolitan, and in complete agreement on the overriding priority of “building Europe.” It includes politicians, bureaucrats, media and educators, more likely than not to the left of the political spectrum.

<sup>3</sup> See Ed Husain, *The Islamist* (London: Penguin, 2007), Samira Bellil, *Dans l'enfer des tournantes* (Paris: Éditions Flammarion, 2003), Tahar Ben Jelloun, *Partir* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006) and Boualem Sansal, *Le Village de l'Allemand* (Paris: Gallimard, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Interview with the author.

What started as an economic organization of six member states has grown to include most of Europe. From implementing an agreement on coal and steel production, it now handles immigration, cultural, foreign and security policies as well as agricultural, economic and environmental issues – and many more.

Ambitious Europeans can, by means of the EU, exercise influence at a pan-European level in these sectors far beyond what most of the member states offer at the national level. This elite seeks to set up a new world order based on “soft power” and consensus rather than military might; to make the EU a rival power center that “counterbalances” the United States; to make it the major player at the United Nations as well as the regional power in the Mediterranean; and to spread its unique form of governance throughout the world.

Several essential EU characteristics, however, create serious vulnerabilities vis-à-vis both domestic Islamists and Muslim nations intent on spreading Islamic rule: the EU’s drive to diminish the authority and role of the member states; its lack of democratic legitimacy; its embrace of multiculturalism; and its aspiration to be a global leader in human rights and multilateralism.

### **Tearing Down the Member States**

The EU political and media elite are very proud of the EU’s unique construction: it is something between an international organization and a state, containing hopelessly intertwined executive and legislative functions, and blurring the boundaries between the central institutions and the member state governments.

One result of this system is the gradual, long-term decline in the status and authority of the 27 member state governments. This process happens subtly, usually with the concurrence of those governments. “Brussels” (the shorthand for the central institutions) can never act completely by itself, as cabinet ministers from the member states must agree to any legal measure. Moreover, the central institutions have no body of bureaucrats to implement such legislation.

Rather, any laws must be implemented by the member state governments. Today, at a conservative estimate, more than half of European laws and regulations are drafted in Brussels.<sup>5</sup> They are then enacted into law by the 27 national parliaments, which have devolved from democratic representatives to clerks who adapt EU directives to cultural traditions, local laws, constitutions—and who have been known to change those constitutions if they conflict with EU decisions.

Nevertheless, in many key ways the EU is the opponent of the member states. The last 50 years have seen a slow but steady transfer of power from national governments to the EU, with never a reverse flow of any significance. Nor is this accidental: the EU seeks to break down European national identities, supplementing and maybe eventually replacing them with a European identity.

<sup>5</sup> In 2007, former German president Roman Herzog estimated that the EU affected 84 percent of German laws; see Honor Mahony, “EU threatening parliamentary democracy, says ex-German President.” *euobserver.com*, Jan. 15, 2007. European Parliament President Hans-Gert Pöttering put the EU-wide number at 75 percent (see [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_z5H2J4hudE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_z5H2J4hudE)); other sources, particularly on the left, believe the number is much lower.

Perhaps one day this European identity will become powerful enough to command loyalty from its citizens, but today it is a very thin gruel. Certainly it cannot inspire those second or third generation Muslims who, alienated both from the European country where they reside and their country of origin, are drawn to the Islamic vision of a global *ummah*, or community of believers. Nor can it provide an inspiration, or even a frame of reference, for Europeans who wish to resist this vision.

While the EU has worked to weaken national identities, its policies have favored the growth of parallel societies. For decades, central EU institutions promoted family reunification for immigrants, one of the main sources of continuing high levels of immigration. They also worked to expand immigrants' rights to social benefits and to protect their cultural autonomy, key factors that shape parallel societies. Member states must battle not only centrifugal trends within their own societies, but EU mandates that promote those trends.

In addition, EU efforts to reduce the sense of loyalty to member states, whether couched as patriotism or nationalism, have helped to weaken the authority and legitimacy of the latter. Those efforts are particularly unhelpful now when the member states are unable, at the most basic level, to maintain law and order in their territory.

Many EU member states appear powerless to solve the problem of no-go zones: the French government publishes on the Internet a list of over 750 *zones urbaines sensibles*, or "sensitive urban zones," which it recommends that outsiders avoid. Other European governments may not be so frank, but they too have a similar list. Nor have they been successful in confronting the criminal behavior of thugs and gangs that issue forth from these ghetto areas.

### **The Lack of Democratic Legitimacy**

The EU elite recognizes that their new, transnational construction lacks democratic legitimacy. This elite deplores the EU's "democratic deficit" yet the EU cannot function without it. The chosen path to "building Europe" is the so-called Monnet method,<sup>6</sup> in which seemingly small-gauge technical measures gradually but inexorably induce political transformations. The assumption is that European integration would be resisted if people understood what was going on.

European publics that vote against "more EU" are either brought to heel or subsequently excluded from the decision-making process. For example, in 2005 the French and Dutch in separate referenda voted down the proposed EU Constitutional Treaty. As a result, its successor Lisbon Treaty (known as the Constitutional Treaty Lite) was deliberately written to be unintelligible to the average voter and by that means to avoid referenda.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the Irish held a referendum; voting "no" the first time, they had to vote twice to get it right.

<sup>6</sup> Named after one of the EU founders, Jean Monnet.

<sup>7</sup> See "Valéry Giscard d'Estaing: The EU treaty is the same as the Constitution." *The Independent*, Oct. 30, 2007, and Lisbeth Kirk, "Treaty made unreadable to avoid referendums, says Amato," *euobserver.com*, Jul. 16, 2007.

The EU's true founding principle is not democracy but the presumed inevitability of European integration. EU proponents ascribe a host of virtues to integration, and the EU funds a range of non-governmental organizations that serve as proxies for "civil society" and that support its vision. But that vision rests on two false premises.

Typically, EU elites credit the organization with replacing war in Europe with peace and security. This nostalgic view of the past of necessity airbrushes out the role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It reflects not only the institutional rivalry between the EU and NATO, but also the effort to erase—or at least greatly reduce—the postwar contribution of the United States to peace and prosperity in Western Europe. Americans may also note that, from time to time, various EU actors resort to anti-Americanism, presumably because uniting against an external foe helps to build group identity.

A second foundational myth is that World War II was caused by European nationalism and that nationalism, therefore, must be eradicated. This version of history is of course false: British, Czech, Polish, Danish, Dutch and even German nationalism did not cause the war. Nazi ideology did—and Hitler sought to destroy the Germans when they failed to meet his expectations. In fact, in attacking nationalism, the EU resembles Nazism, which sought to destroy European nationalism in order to create a pan-European Nazi state.

This is not to say that all Europeans, or even all EU advocates, believe these myths. But constantly rewriting the past and funding sycophantic supporters to propagate the rewritten versions creates a hazy, utopian vision of the future in which world peace will be ushered in by the select few for the benefit of the (unconsulted) many—a vision remarkably similar to the one, described below, that is advanced by Islamists. In practical terms, a political and cultural system that bases itself on mythmaking of this sort rather than on democratic support is poorly positioned to combat other myths.

### **Commitment to Multiculturalism**

The EU obviously needed some unifying concept to replace centuries of separate and sometimes hostile European cultures and traditions. The theory of multiculturalism offered a solution to this problem. Multiculturalism aims to rise above national particularism (often denounced as nationalism), replacing pride in national traditions, culture and history while providing a framework for people of different cultures to live together. But multiculturalism has proven a two-edged sword.

The practice of giving equal weight to non-European cultures has rent the fabric of European society, loosening its connection to liberal democracy and to other principles such as women's rights or equality of all before the law. In theory, multiculturalism holds that all cultures are equally worthy of respect. A corollary of this theory is that the values of a minority culture should have a status equal to that of the majority culture's values. So anyone attempting to uphold Western values is

actually failing to give equal status to the values of other cultures. In practice, at least in the minds of the EU elites, these principles have fused with the conviction that Western society is inferior to other cultures—a conviction closely connected to the guilt that many Europeans feel about their countries' colonial pasts.

European publics since the 1970s, rather than espousing multiculturalism, have deplored the loss of their national traditions and culture. Centrist political parties, however, have refused to address the problem, which has often been couched in anti-immigrant terms, let alone speak out against multiculturalism. That pattern appeared to end in late 2010, when German Chancellor Angela Merkel, UK Prime Minister David Cameron and former French President Nicolas Sarkozy each announced that multiculturalism had failed.<sup>8</sup>

The EU, however, is very unlikely to abandon its commitment to multiculturalism or advance tough immigration or assimilation policies. Unsurprisingly, EU elites deride any new anti-immigration parties that emerge in member states, labeling them all as far-right extremists regardless of whether that description is accurate. At the same time, they fail to find practical ways to help Muslims who wish to assimilate into European society.

### Gaining the Moral High Ground

The EU has for decades aspired to be a global human rights champion and to be a leader of multilateral institutions. These two goals were bound up together: the EU wanted to take the lead in defending and advancing human and civil rights within Europe, then in the world. As a multilateral institution, it had a natural affinity for the United Nations and other multilateral organizations and wanted to play a deciding role within them.

The battles for EU primacy in the realm of human rights occur in two spheres. The first is vis-à-vis the EU member states, where the EU's European Court of Justice, along with the European Court of Human Rights of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, sets standards and norms for all European countries, in the process allowing citizens of those countries to sue their governments. To uphold its authority, the EU must appear to adhere to higher human rights standards than the member states, even if this can be accomplished only by rhetorical flourishes and empty promises.<sup>9</sup> In the crucial area of defending Western values vis-à-vis *sharia*, however, it is for the most part conspicuously silent.

The second sphere is the transatlantic relationship. In the race for the global high ground, the EU has typically defined itself in contrast to the United States. Whether it was the application of the death penalty, the promotion of economic and social rights or the rights of the child, the EU for years has portrayed the United

<sup>8</sup> See Matthew Weaver, "Angela Merkel: German multiculturalism has 'utterly failed.'" *The Guardian*, Oct. 17, 2010; "Full Transcript:/David Cameron/Speech on radicalisation and Islamic extremism/Munich/5 February 2011." *New Statesman*, Feb. 5, 2011; and "France's Sarkozy: Multiculturalism Has Failed." *CBNNews.com*, Feb. 11, 2011.

<sup>9</sup> See Jeremy A. Rabkin, *Law Without Nations? Why Constitutional Government Requires Sovereign States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 151.

States as chief offender rather than chief ally. The war against terrorism and then the invasion of Iraq only heightened this dispute, while the Mideast conflict generated a steady stream of accusations that the United States protected Israel to the detriment of the Palestinians.

In concentrating on the United States, the EU turned its attention away from the Islamic world. Yet that is where, particularly in countries ruled by Islamists, many of the most severe challenges to human rights occur. The EU, like the West in general, failed to protest when the OIC adopted the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in 1990. According to the Declaration, only those rights that do not conflict with *sharia* are valid. It thereby eviscerates the UN International Declaration of Human Rights, which the EU views as a fundamental document, for a large part of the world.

## The Muslim Brotherhood

European Muslims are far from homogeneous: they come from different countries and different traditions; some are religiously observant, while others see their connection to Islam only as cultural or as unimportant. Many came for economic reasons, others to escape the growing pressures from dictatorship or Islamism in their home country. Some are newly arrived, while others are second or third generation descendants of immigrants. And some are European converts to Islam, again with varying experiences and goals.

Despite the patchwork quilt of nationalities and forms of Islam in Europe today, common behavior patterns are emerging throughout Europe and are attracting, in particular, the support of young second- and third-generation immigrants. An important source of commonality among this cohort is Islamism, a twentieth century creation that combines traditional elements of Islam with modern totalitarian ideology and organization.

Islamism is a political ideology, based on a religion, the stated aim of which is to replace Western legal systems with a version of *sharia* far more brutal than what is currently applied in most Muslim countries. The application of this *sharia* regime worldwide would eventually be guaranteed by a global Caliphate, the head of which would be not only the supreme Muslim religious leader but also serve as political leader.<sup>10</sup>

The Islamist movement includes both violent (e.g., *jihadist*) and nonviolent wings. Traditional Islamic sources identify two basic types of *jihad*: the “lesser *jihad*,” which is war against non-Muslims and the “greater *jihad*,” defined as “spiritual warfare against the lower self.” Despite the identifying adjectives, a basic Islamic law manual such as *Reliance of the Traveller* dismisses “greater *jihad*” after one brief paragraph.

In contrast, “lesser *jihad*” receives extensive discussion and is supported by numerous quotations from the Koran. It can take various forms; for example, either

<sup>10</sup> Islamists say they want to restore the historical Caliphate, but that institution never achieved such primacy.

fighting or supporting fighters with property or money. Its goal of converting or subduing non-Muslims can be advanced peacefully by means of *da'wa*, or proselytization; indeed, war is only to be waged against those who refuse to accept Islam.<sup>11</sup>

Typically, the violent Islamist pursues *jihad* openly, while the nonviolent one publicly eschews it, except against Israel or Western forces fighting in Muslim countries. Nonviolent Islamists usually rely instead on *da'wa* to accomplish their objective. Groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood participate in democratic institutions, and are often viewed by Western government officials and elites as having accepted Western values.

Many Islamist organizations mirror underlying ethnic patterns. In Germany, for example, where the majority of Muslims are of Turkish descent, the Turkish Islamic Community Millî Görüş (ICMG) is by far the most powerful Islamic organization. Similarly, the largest Islamist organization in the United Kingdom is Jamaat-i-Islami, a South Asian organization whose prominence reflects the preponderance of Muslim immigration from South Asia.

Despite the strength of these organizations, the Muslim Brotherhood, which has its base in Arab countries, has become the most influential of the allegedly nonviolent Islamist groups. Regardless of its protestations of commitment to nonviolence, since its founding in 1928 in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood has espoused the stated goal of restoring the Islamic Caliphate, abolished by Turkish President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1924, and of pursuing *jihad*. Its motto was and still is:

“Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader. The Koran is our law. Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope.”<sup>12</sup>

The Brotherhood denies that it is an organization *per se*. Rather, the former leader of the Egyptian Brotherhood, Muhammad Akif, calls it as “a global movement whose members cooperate with each other throughout the world, based on the same religious worldview—the spread of Islam, until it rules the world.”<sup>13</sup> The Brotherhood has also cooperated successfully with other groups such as Millî Görüş and Jamaat-i-Islami, successfully leveraging common ideology to expand its global outreach.

The conspiratorial nature of the group and its lack of an open organizational structure make it difficult to identify Western adherents of the Muslim Brotherhood. Often, however, they can be recognized by a combination of personal and financial ties, as well as ideological statements and actions, especially an

<sup>11</sup> Ahmad ibn Naqib al-Misri, *Reliance of the Traveller: A Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law* (Beltsville, Md: amana publications, 1994), o9.0-9.1, pp. 599-600.

<sup>12</sup> The two crossed scimitars on their seal also suggest that the *jihad* which interests them is the war against non-Muslims.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Lorenzo Vidino, “The Muslim Brotherhood in Europe,” in Barry Rubin, ed., *The Muslim Brotherhood* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 111.

informal allegiance to Sheikh Yousef al-Qaradawi, considered by many to be the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>14</sup>

The European Muslim Brotherhood is arguably the EU's greatest domestic rival. It has thrived in the environment created, in part, by the EU and has become adept at exploiting EU vulnerabilities while winning people to its cause. The Brotherhood advances by driving a wedge between Western human rights and multiculturalism; by using an indirect approach to obtain its objectives; and by offering a competing, utopian view of the future.

### **Human Rights and Multiculturalism**

As mentioned above, *sharia* poses a fundamental challenge to Western human and civil rights. To vitiate those rights, the Brotherhood relies on arguments linked to cultural autonomy and multiculturalism. To make its case, the Brotherhood argues that European Muslims are worthy of special protection because of the hostility they face: that Westerners are guilty of racism or "Islamophobia," defined as the irrational fear of Islam, which functions as a tool to intimidate and silence critics of Islam or Islamism.<sup>15</sup> In recent years it has become widely accepted, despite the lack of concrete evidence to support such allegations that, for example, Muslims are the primary victims of hate crimes.

Europeans are now well aware that allegations of Islamophobia can be the first step in a chain of violence and mayhem—not just in Muslim countries, but in Europe itself. From the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh and the violence following publication of the Danish cartoons of Mohammed to the firebombing of the *Charlie Hebdo* offices in Paris, the consequences of criticizing Islam—or appearing to influential Islamists to criticize Islam—are obvious.

Rather than act as a bulwark to protect Europe from these depredations, the EU plays a key role as the one, central location where legislation can be drafted to implement key aspects of *sharia* or to advance the concept of imposing criminal penalties for perceived hate speech. Brotherhood organizations succeed when the EU limits free speech and grants Muslims a special status.

Islamists are also ideally positioned to exploit the increasingly anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic climate in Europe. Anti-Semitism is a fundamental principle of all Islamist organizations; they gain respectability when anti-Semitic speech and actions become acceptable to mainstream society. Truculent marchers in downtown Berlin calling for "Jews to the gas" recall the atmosphere of the 1930s, making a mockery of EU claims to moral superiority over fascist regimes.

Having tolerated and even lauded religious hatred and thuggery directed against Israel as part of its Mideast policy, the EU and its member state governments are now hard put to defend themselves from a similar onslaught on

<sup>14</sup> Lorenzo Vidino, *The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 42-52.

<sup>15</sup> This term apparently appeared first in Iran in the late 1970s (Pascal Bruckner, "The Invention of Islamophobia," on [signandsight.com](http://signandsight.com), Jan. 1, 2011). British newspapers used it in the 1990s (Cherdenine Zakalwe, "The Origins of the Term Islamophobia in English-Language Discourse," *Islam versus Europe* blog, Dec. 28, 2011).

their own territories.<sup>16</sup> Yet the connection between domestic security in Europe and the Mideast conflict, clear from an Islamist perspective, remains obscure to most Europeans.

### Exploiting the Indirect Approach

Like the EU, the Brotherhood is uncomfortable speaking in public about its true goals. It considers it acceptable to practice *taqiyya*, a traditional principle that allows Muslims to lie to non-Muslims if those lies protect Islam or advance the faith.<sup>17</sup> The Brotherhood can present itself as “moderate” to Westerners desperately seeking a Muslim interlocutor, or trying to convince themselves that Islam poses no threat to Western society.

One very large area that remains extremely opaque is the question of financial flows. The Saudis and Gulf States have contributed significantly, over the years, to the European Brotherhood, helping them to build mosques and a web of interlocking organizations and institutions designed to further their cause. In return, Brotherhood-linked organizations have been accused of generating significant flows of terrorist finance, charges that they indignantly deny. Researchers and publishers who write on these topics find themselves subjected to lawsuits and book-banning.

The Brotherhood has been able to exploit the distinction between violent and nonviolent Islamists despite its frequent reliance on threats of physical violence and intimidation to accomplish its objectives. The Brotherhood often acts as a conveyor belt for radicalizing individuals who are later recruited by terrorist organizations. In reality, the Brotherhood has helped Islamic terrorists make Europe their global headquarters and logistical center.

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, organizations linked to the Muslim Brotherhood have acquired a high profile in Europe, presenting themselves as Westerners’ best choice of interlocutor with European Muslim communities and exploiting the multiculturalist tendencies of EU elite interlocutors. Brotherhood leaders then use their access to European governmental authorities to enhance their own standing within the Muslim community.

Brotherhood representatives also help shape European counter-terrorism programs and policies to their liking, exploiting politically-correct thinking about the root causes of terrorism. EU experts in particular continue to cite economic and social conditions of Muslims and Western foreign policy as important drivers while downplaying the role of Islamist ideology.

The EU is poorly placed to combat the indirect approach, as it has spent decades achieving its objectives by keeping in the shadow. As a result, it lacks the habits and mind-set, let alone the moral authority, of a more democratic structure. Indeed, the EU preference for backroom deals with a few key players makes Muslim

<sup>16</sup> For example, see Nidra Poller, “A French Intifada.” *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2011, pp. 25-36.

<sup>17</sup> One justification is provided in Koran, 16:106. See also The Revelation of the Traveller, 8.2, pp. 744-746

Brotherhood organizations very attractive as a means to deal with the “Muslim community.”

### **A Shining Future – and a Sordid Present**

Islamism, like communism in its day, offers a shining future to the vanguard of believers who think they will guide the re-established Caliphate. This is a political siren-call, both for those who feel they fit neither in Europe nor in their country of origin, and for those craving power over other Muslims, as well as over non-Muslims. It is also a vision that has no place for nation states or national identities.

Like communists, Islamists have an answer for every question, removing uncertainty, demanding only obedience from their followers, and surrounding them with a web of interlocking organizations to ensure that every aspect of life falls within their purview. They attack Western decadence and corruption, of which there is plenty, tapping into anti-liberal, anti-capitalist as well as anti-American sentiment.

This vision is realized in so-called parallel societies and no-go zones. The Muslim Brotherhood did not create these parallel societies and no-go zones single-handedly, but they are aligned with Islamist goals. Further, because Muslim Brotherhood leaders often provide this “Muslim community” with leadership, they profit directly by obtaining ever greater influence within European establishments that fear the Brotherhood’s ability to instigate disorder and riots if its demands are not met.

The Muslim Brotherhood’s strident views regarding non-Muslims are also consistent with recent crime patterns. European women and homosexuals, in particular, are targeted with street violence; occasionally, the media or police admit that many of these attacks are carried out by young Muslim men. Whether such hoodlums identify themselves as Muslims is irrelevant; their actions typically serve to reinforce the Brotherhood’s political standing by engendering fear among their victims.

The European Muslim Brotherhood is likely to enjoy enhanced status if its sister organizations gain power in various North African and Mideast countries following the Arab Spring. Its purported commitment to nonviolence may come under strain as the Egyptian Brotherhood is forced to define its ties to Hamas, the Brotherhood’s Palestinian wing but, overall, its influence is likely to expand. As part of that expansion, it may enhance its existing cooperation with the OIC.

### **The Organization of Islamic Cooperation**

The OIC is neither a secret organization nor a unique form of transnational governance. Rather, it is an international organization of 56 Muslim member states plus the Palestinian Authority. The OIC is dedicated to advancing Muslim interests worldwide, including those of Muslim minorities in the West. It was established in the early 1970s in response to an arson attack on the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem; its headquarters are to be transferred there once Jerusalem is under Palestinian control.

For now, the OIC is headquartered in Jeddah, reflecting the fact that Saudi Arabia was the moving force behind its creation and remains its major source of funding. Saudi Arabia is the seat of Wahhabism, an intolerant form of Islam out of which Islamism grew. The cooperation between the two that occurred in the 1960s when members of the Muslim Brotherhood, fleeing from Egypt, were welcomed to Saudi Arabia has had far-reaching consequences. In addition to establishing universities where Brothers could expand and promote their ideology, the Saudis set up international organizations, among them the OIC, to disseminate it worldwide.

The national interests of OIC members are sometimes at odds, and a number of them are mortal enemies of the Muslim Brotherhood and/or al Qaeda. Yet they all share with Islamists the aim of a more powerful global role for Islam, as laid out in the OIC Charter.<sup>18</sup> Nor are OIC members opposed to *jihad*, at least in principle, as the OIC was founded on the principle of implicit *jihad* against the State of Israel. Both within Europe and at the United Nations, the EU faces in the OIC a formidable, deep-pocketed opponent more than ready to compete with the EU, both in Europe and globally.

## Competing in Europe

Like the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist groups, the OIC wants to engage actively in issues of European politics, culture, freedom of speech and religion, interfaith dialogue, and any issues they consider to be connected to the rights, dignity or culture of Muslim minorities in Europe. Their goals, which dovetail those of the Muslim Brotherhood, include:

- To disseminate, promote and preserve the Islamic teachings and values based on moderation and tolerance, promote Islamic culture and safeguard Islamic heritage;
- To protect and defend the true image of Islam, to combat defamation of Islam and encourage dialogue among civilizations and religions; and
- To safeguard the rights, dignity and religious and cultural identity of Muslim communities and minorities in non-Member States.<sup>19</sup>

The first goal, promoting Islam in European culture, appears to differ from its Islamist counterpart by emphasizing moderation and tolerance. However, the actual meaning of those words in an Islamic context differs from Western usage. “Moderation,” a greatly-abused term rarely defined with any vigor, is for example often applied not only to genuine moderates but also to individuals who denounce

<sup>18</sup> “Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.” (Amended) Dakar, Mar. 14, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> OIC Amended Charter, Art. 2, paras. 11, 12 and 16.

“terrorism,” while supporting terror attacks against Israel or Western forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. “Tolerance” is similarly ambiguous. Westerners usually define it in political terms as granting everyone equal standing and rights, but tolerance in Islam, while it exists, is based on the superiority of Muslims over non-Muslims.<sup>20</sup> Thus, in practice, there is little distance between OIC and Islamist objectives vis-à-vis Europe.

Now that the OIC, like the Muslim Brotherhood, has opened an office in Brussels, it is well-positioned to lobby the EU effectively on priority initiatives related to these goals. One of these is condemning words or actions deemed critical of Islam. Several years ago, the OIC established an “Observatory of Islamophobia” which, like the U.S. State Department, produces annual reports related to human rights. Observatory reports typically criticize Western countries for statements or incidents that appear to criticize Islam or Muslims, while praising them for steps they have taken to combat alleged Islamophobia.

This pressure would be largely meaningless were it not for the threat of violence that lurks behind it. The OIC first demonstrated its power by working with Danish imams connected to the Muslim Brotherhood to promote international condemnation—and lethal riots—after the publication of the Mohammed cartoons.

The OIC also derives significant influence from the wealth of its energy-producing members and the decades of financial flows from these countries into the West. While the OIC has little ability to exploit any particular transaction, it benefits indirectly from the deference accorded its richest members.<sup>21</sup>

In addition the OIC has sought to leverage financial inflows to transform Western financial institutions by developing and applying *sharia* finance instruments developed by the Muslim Brotherhood and its close cousin Jamaat-i-Islami. The new *sharia* finance sector, is valued at \$1 trillion and its proponents expect it to reach \$5 trillion by 2016. European governments and financial institutions are eager to participate in this expansion.

*Sharia* finance is a twentieth century invention that offers financial instruments designed to meet Islamic standards (as defined by Islamists).<sup>22</sup> Western governments and financial institutions favor it because they see it as a means to attract funds from wealthy Muslim countries. However, *sharia* finance is also meant to serve as yet another tool for reinforcing parallel societies, in this case by separating Muslims from the Western banking system.

<sup>20</sup> Islamic rulers tolerated and protected their non-Muslim subjects as long as the non-Muslims followed certain strict rules, such as not mentioning something impermissible about Allah, the Prophet...or Islam (*Reliance of the Traveller*, o11.10(5), p. 609). Failure to follow those rules meant non-Muslims could be killed.

<sup>21</sup> This influence was recently demonstrated by the government of Qatar, which offered a cash-strapped French government a 100-million-euro investment fund to support Muslims in France, particularly those living in ghettos. See Peter Martino, “The Qatari Takeover of France.” *Gatesstone Institute*, Oct. 10, 2012.

<sup>22</sup> See Timur Kuran, *Islam & Mammon: The Economic Predicaments of Islamism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

A distinguishing feature of *sharia* finance is that it prohibits investments in various sectors, including Western defense industries.<sup>23</sup> Prohibitions on investing in Western defense industries do not spring from pacifist tendencies. Rather, the Islamists who invented *sharia* finance considered it as a form of *jihad* that could accomplish two objectives.<sup>24</sup>

First, the Islamic economy built on the foundation of *sharia* finance would supplant the West, paving the way for Muslim political hegemony of the world.<sup>25</sup> Second, institutions offering *sharia* financing would help to fund *jihad*. They are required to collect and channel a 2.5 percent obligatory *zakat*, or tithe, on each transaction. Sheikh Qaradawi, the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood and an expert in *sharia* finance, made clear in a 2006 BBC program that one of the authorized uses of *zakat* is to fund *jihad*. “I don’t like the word ‘donations.’ I like to call it Jihad with money, because God has ordered us to fight enemies with our lives and our money.”<sup>26</sup> There is very little evidence that the EU is even aware of these negative aspects of *sharia* finance.

### Gaming the Multilateral System

Like the EU, the OIC sees the United Nations as a primary locus for its diplomacy. While the EU seeks to globalize its human rights and humanitarian ideals, however, the OIC wants to Islamicize the UN—to exert political influence in the day-to-day activities of the organization, and over time to change UN policies and standards to comply with Muslim law and practice. With 56 member states, the OIC has a distinct advantage in any situation, like the UN General Assembly, involving bloc voting. By contrast, the EU only controls a potential bloc of something over 27 votes, i.e. EU member states plus other countries that associate themselves with EU positions.

The 1990 Cairo Declaration on Human Rights that aimed to shield OIC countries from Western criticism of human rights abuses also served as the first step toward fundamentally revising—Islamizing—UN human rights standards. In this process, the OIC sought not merely to intimidate Westerners into avoiding any criticism of Islam or of Muslims; it wanted to criminalize, on a global scale, any

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, the explanation on the Hawkeye Wealth Management website, at [http://www.hawkeyewealth.ch/islamic\\_finance.html](http://www.hawkeyewealth.ch/islamic_finance.html). “Finance focuses on the exclusion of immoral business branches. Sharia-compliant portfolios must be free from adult entertainment, alcohol and pork production, and the defense industry.”

<sup>24</sup> *Jihad* can consist of military actions or the use of one’s property; e.g., financial support.

<sup>25</sup> As Kurshid Ahmad, a leader of the Jamaat-i-Islami movement, put it, Muslims’ “dependence upon the non-Muslim world in all essentials must be changed to a state of economic independence, self-respect and gradual building-up of strength and power.” Ahmad buttressed his argument with the Koranic passage, “Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies of God and others besides whom you may not know.” Quoted in Patrick Sookdheo, *Understanding Shari'a Finance* (McLean, VA: Isaac Publishing, 2008), p. 14.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Sookdheo, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

thoughts or actions defined by a new concept, “defamation of religion.” In other words, it sought to universalize Islamic blasphemy laws.<sup>27</sup>

Over a period of ten years, OIC-proposed resolutions adopted by UN human rights bodies and the UN General Assembly called on countries to criminalize defamation of religion. These resolutions ran completely counter to centuries of Western law. In the West only individuals can be defended from defamation; e.g., from false statements of fact that damage their reputation and livelihood. The right to freedom of speech or expression covers criticism of religious ideas or institutions.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, for centuries, proponents of free speech battled against blasphemy laws shielding Western religious authorities from criticism.

Blasphemy codes in use today in various Muslim countries serve political as well as religious purposes, targeting reformers, dissenters, religious minorities, or anyone else who makes statements that governmental or religious authorities dislike.<sup>29</sup> Adopting and criminalizing this concept would severely impinge on the Western right to freedom of speech and deliver a body blow to Western democracy.

Over time, the OIC resolution garnered fewer and fewer votes in annual meetings of the UN General Assembly, despite the introduction of watered down compromise texts.<sup>30</sup> Subsequent statements had made clear, however, that the OIC’s intention had not changed. For example, in September 2012 it signed a statement about a 13-minute alleged anti-Islamic movie trailer that called for “an international consensus on tolerance and full respect of religion, on the basis of UN Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18.” That resolution, passed in April 2011, calls on countries to “[adopt] measures to criminalize incitement to imminent violence based on religion or belief.” To its discredit, the EU (along with the Arab League and the African Union) also signed the 2012 statement.<sup>31</sup>

The EU announcement was, unfortunately, consistent with its adoption in 2008 of a Framework Decision to criminalize “certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia.” While the Decision contains a clause reaffirming freedom of expression, its clear impact is to reduce freedom of speech: the remainder of the text subjects public incitement to violence or hatred, to include disseminating or distributing tracts, pictures or other materials, as well as other acts to criminal penalties of up to three years in prison.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Nina Shea, “Fatwa Against Free Speech.” *National Review*, Oct. 15, 2012, p. 26.

<sup>28</sup> See discussion in “The Dangerous Idea of Protecting Religions from ‘Defamation’: A Threat to Universal Human Rights Standards.” United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, Policy Focus, Fall 2009.

<sup>29</sup> Shea, *op. cit.*

<sup>30</sup> The OIC was joined in its efforts by a U.S. administration eager to reach out to Muslim countries, a development that will be discussed in the final chapter.

<sup>31</sup> “Joint statement by the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, OIC Secretary General, Arab League Secretary General, and Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union.” European Union press release A 412/12, Brussels, Sep. 20, 2012.

<sup>32</sup> “Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law.” *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 328/55-58, Dec. 6, 2008.

By caving in to pressure from the OIC and adopting positions that fail to protect EU citizens, the EU destroys its own authority and credibility. At the same time, it does not solve its problem. The OIC will not be placated by “hate speech” codes like the EU one when it is seeking the level of censorship provided only by a full-blown Islamic blasphemy code.<sup>33</sup> The EU would do better to take a higher-profile position with those who criticize the human rights record of OIC countries.<sup>34</sup>

## The United States

Many American observers of the changes in Europe express regret for the loss of traditional European culture while assuming that such things could never happen in the United States. But they are wrong. There are many striking similarities between recent developments on both sides of the Atlantic, and between various actions and policies of the U.S. federal government and those of the EU.

An estimated 2.5 million Muslims now live in the United States, constituting 0.8 percent of the total population.<sup>35</sup> Muslim immigrants to the United States have on the whole done quite well, are better assimilated than are their counterparts in Europe and, with the exception of enclaves in places like Dearborn, Michigan, tend not to cluster in Muslim-majority areas. Nevertheless, troubling trends are evident. When asked in a 2007 Pew study whether they saw themselves as Americans or Muslims first, 47 percent of respondents replied that they were Muslims first, and 39 percent of young people thought Muslims should remain distinct from U.S. society. Perhaps most troubling, the Pew study reported that 15 percent of American Muslims under age 30 believed that suicide bombing could often or sometimes be justified.<sup>36</sup>

Those sentiments may be related to what is preached in American mosques. A random survey of 100 American mosques found that imams in 82 of them recommended the study of Islamic texts promoting violence. Disturbingly, these mosques were better attended than those which did not promote violence.<sup>37</sup>

As in Europe, the Muslim Brotherhood has established itself quite firmly in the United States. Its goals were laid out in a secret 1991 memorandum discovered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The memorandum sets out a long-term strategy for presenting Islam as a “civilization alternative” in North America, calls for supporting “the global Islamic State wherever it is” and urges the Brothers to

understand that their work in America is a kind of grand Jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and ‘sabotaging’ its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the

<sup>33</sup> Shea, *op. cit.*

<sup>34</sup> See Patrick Goodenough, “Islam Is not Incompatible With Human Rights Standards,” Islamic Bloc Insists.” *CNS News*, Apr. 26, 2012.

<sup>35</sup> “Mapping the Muslim Global Population,” Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, Oct. 2009, p. 24.

<sup>36</sup> “Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream.” Pew Research Center, May 22, 2007.

<sup>37</sup> Mordechai Kedar and David Yerushalmi, “Sharia and Violence in American Mosques.” *Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2011, p. 67.

believers so that it is eliminated and God's religion is made victorious over all other religions.<sup>38</sup>

Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated organizations have succeeded in presenting themselves to U.S. federal authorities as spokesmen for Muslims and as advisors. In large part, this has been because the U.S. authorities shared the approach of their European counterparts: they dedicated themselves to combating terrorism, or violent extremism, rather than Islamist ideology *per se*.

Various Muslim legal groups that have emerged in the United States in recent years have promoted the use of *sharia* law in America. A recent study identifies 50 cases in which appellate legal cases involved “conflict of law” issues between *sharia* and American state law.<sup>39</sup> To ward off such judgments, over 20 states have sought to prohibit U.S. courts from applying anything but U.S. law. Several (Tennessee, Louisiana, Arizona and Kansas) have already passed such legislation. The states are doing so without any support from the federal government. Rather, federal officials tend to respond to the concerns of groups like the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), a Muslim Brotherhood-linked organization that routinely opposes these initiatives.

In fact, the federal government has on numerous occasions taken steps that raise questions about the extent of Muslim Brotherhood or OIC influence on its domestic and foreign policies. These include official speech codes designed to obscure the connection between Islam and terrorism; efforts to blame the unrest and violence directed against the United States in September 2012 on an obscure anti-Mohammed video; and policies that favor the Muslim Brotherhood over its secular or liberal competitors in Egypt, Syria and other Muslim countries. It is shocking to see how much ground the federal government has already ceded to the Islamists, especially in view of the relative advantages the United States enjoys over Europe in the struggle against Islamism.

The U.S. government, like the EU, has sought closer ties with the OIC. This cooperation has been the most intense at the UN’s Human Rights Council since October 2009, when the Obama administration negotiated the compromise resolution with Egypt regarding defamation of religion. The United States has also become an active member (as has the EU) of the UN’s Alliance of Civilizations where the OIC enjoys a great deal of influence.

## Conclusion

Muslims, like any other immigrant group, will influence European politics and society as they increase in numbers. The Muslim Brotherhood and the OIC will help shape how that happens, and what becomes “the New Normal” in Europe. They will also shape what happens in the United States.

<sup>38</sup> “An Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Group in North America.” May 22, 1991, pp. 4 and 7. Available at <http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/20.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> “Shariah Law and American State Courts: An Assessment of State Appellate Court Cases.” Center for Security Policy, May 20, 2011.

Groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood do not speak for all Muslims and should not be allowed to usurp that role. Nor should the EU and the United States defer to them or their allies in the OIC on human rights, foreign policy, or any other issues where there is a conflict with Western values and interests.

