# THE WAR FOR THE FREE WORLD

Not too long ago, the conventional wisdom was that Europe would emerge as a unified and mighty economic and political superpower. We were told it would engage in earnest, if friendly, competition with the United States, but that -- thanks to its substantially larger population and productive capacity -- the European Union (EU) would inevitably displace America on the world stage.

It took less than a fortnight of rioting in France, and now in several other countries of what Donald Rumsfeld has called "Old Europe," to lay bare the preposterousness of this prospect. Even before Islamists took to the streets of Paris' suburbs, the EU was a house of cards waiting to be toppled or burned down.

As usual, underlying conditions are clearer with hindsight. It is now unmistakable that Europe faces a "perfect storm" of socioeconomic, demographic, military and Islamist challenges.

As a result, the EU is poised in the coming decades to become, at best, a strife-ridden, second-rate power, unwilling or unable to help defend the Free World. Alternatively, it may simply cease as an entity or perhaps even as part of the Free World.

On the socioeconomic front, Europeans of all political persuasions have long shared a belief in the virtues of the "social market economy." By this, they meant a modified capitalist system, characterized by considerable state intervention and the fabled "social safety net." It was an arrangement intended to guarantee economic growth and prosperity, on the basis of harmonious labor relations, social cohesion and economic solidarity between the classes.

Today, however, the European project is in shambles. Somewhere along the way, its social market model lost steam and became counterproductive to economic growth. Current statistics indicate that by the mid-1990s, Europe had already begun falling behind the United States, as measured both by gross domestic product and productivity growth.

The future looks even bleaker. Structural problems are likely to limit EU growth to 1.5% at most by 2015 and even less thereafter. All this points to a sobering conclusion few in Europe are willing to admit: The vaunted social market is at the end of the line in the information and globalization age.

More importantly, Europe is just entering a demographic maelstrom that will severely limit its chances for reform. The native European population is expected to contract by between 100 million and 150 million -- a loss of one-third -- by 2050.

There are only two possible solutions that could theoretically prevent the projected demographic crisis: (1) increasing the birthrate or (2) increasing immigration. The first is virtually impossible in the short- to medium-term and unlikely in the longer term. So immigration would seem the solution

of choice.

In fact, though virtually all EU governments try to discourage it, there is significant legal and illegal immigration -- estimated at more than 2 million yearly. This, indeed, is the main reason Europe's population has not yet started declining.

Unfortunately, as events in France demonstrate, the sort of immigration Europe has had actually worsens matters. For one thing, it puts additional burdens on the social welfare system rather than contributing to its solvency.

For another, such immigration has created an even greater political challenge: the extensive and ongoing radicalization of the burgeoning Moslem population throughout Europe. In the last half-century, Western Europe's Moslem population has exploded from less than 250,000 to between 15 million and 20 million. Though this remains only a small percentage of the EU's total inhabitants, the Moslem subset is both rapidly growing and has become progressively radicalized.

Today, an intolerant and violent extremist political ideology known as Islamofacism has taken hold throughout Moslem communities in France and much of Western Europe. Moreover, this fast-spreading strain is on its way to becoming the dominant face of Islam in the EU.

It is profoundly anti-Western, supported directly or indirectly by Saudi sources, and marked by wholesale rejection of such fundamental European values as democracy, secularism, separation of church and state, human rights and modernity.

It is high time for European officials and the rest of us to understand that *Islam in Europe is about sedition, not religion, and needs to be treated as such*.

Extremists preaching violence and jihad against their fellow citizens should be thrown in jail. Radical organizations, subversive "charities," and hate-preaching mosques should be closed.

The United States must contemplate a future in which Europe is no longer the reliable ally, philosophical soulmate and fellow pillar of Western civilization it has been for the last two centuries. At worst, some regions or countries of an Islamicized Europe could become an adversary in the longer term.

The United States should continue to offer friendship and assistance to Europeans who share our vision of freedom, individual responsibility and opportunity. In particular, a closer relationship with the United Kingdom and the Eastern European countries would include political, economic and military ties, as well as policy coordination.

From such initiatives may come a new trans-Atlantic alliance of surpassing importance in the conflict now breaking out in Europe itself: the War for the Free World.

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