



## Brexit and the Chaos that Awaits

In the aftermath of the Brexit vote, divergent opinions have emerged predicting the impact of the exit on the future of the European Union (EU). Two prevalent opinions dominate the political landscape but each reaches an opposite conclusion. The adherents of the first view unequivocally maintain Britain out of Europe weakens the EU, eventually leading to its disintegration. The Europhiles argue Britain's exit encourages the remaining member states to forge stronger unity thereby moulding the EU into a powerful force.

Those who subscribe to a stouter Europe minus Britain live in utter fantasy. It is true, Britain is an argumentative member of the union, determined to safeguard its interests, even if it weakens Europe. Nonetheless, Britain's exit is likely to exacerbate the breakup of the EU because at the core of the union are deep fissures that lie in wait ready to rent asunder the European project.

At the heart of the EU is the perennial debate between supra-sovereignty versus nation state sovereignty. The financial crisis of 2008, the predicament of the euro, Greece's bailout, Russia's intervention in Ukraine and the recent refugee catastrophe have exposed the limitation of the European project. A substantial proportion of Europeans irked by Brussels repeated interference have mobilized efforts to reclaim their sovereignty. Europe's elite are not oblivious to such trends. Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said, "I think that one of the reasons why European citizens are stepping away from the European project is due to the fact that we are interfering in too many domains of their private lives." However, the elite have only one remedy and that is to push for greater integration. This is precisely why Britain voted out of the EU and others are willing to do the same. France, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland and Hungary are just some of the disgruntled countries, where people are keen to leave the EU.

Then there is the inept political leadership that greets every crisis in the same way: paralysis, chaos, followed by a muddled response. The political decision making process in Brussels is an avowed enemy of stability. The disorderly manner in which Brussels dealt with the influx of Syrian refugees roiled member states, and caused open rifts with the EU's political bureaucracy. Greece warned that EU's failure to show unity over the refugee crisis threatened its very survival. Similar warnings have accompanied other crisis and the lack of control over events have galvanized Europeans to seek greater political control over the management of their own affairs. In truth, the EU exists only as an economic initiative, but lacks the political clout needed to resolve problems.

The ugliness of hyper nationalism—once a vestige of the pre-modern era—is making a spectacular comeback and threatens to unravel the European project. Wherever one looks, indigenous Europeans are exhibiting abhorrent attitudes to foreigners of all types—irrespective of their place of origin. Europe's premier sporting

event, Euro 2016 turned out to be a hotbed of excessive jingoism, and European fans fought open street battles with each other. The seventy-one years of peace Europe has enjoyed since 1945 appears to be a mere aberration in European history.

Today, there is more that divides Europe than unites it. Populist movements driven by racism, xenophobia, and hatred of Islam are springing up all across the continent, and are basking in the limelight of Euroscepticism. This increasingly begs the question when will the EU crumble.

But perhaps the most shocking of all developments is Turkey's doggedness to join the EU. Erdogan's stance seems incomprehensible in the context of Britain's exit and the resurgence of hyper-nationalism. After all, what has the EU to offer Turkey apart from more Islamophobia. Erdogan himself has lamented, "Europe, you don't want us because we're Muslim" then why persist in joining a fragmented union determined to oust Muslims.

The epitaph of the EU is slowly writing itself. The Long Peace that Europe enjoyed for several decades is fast ending and may well spur a full-scale war on the continent. America anxious about losing a pillar of its neo-liberal world order is facing similar forces of hateful vengeance at home. These forces desire to isolate America from the international arena and embroil people of color against white supremacists for years to come.

Thus, an opportune moment for a revisionist state to take advantage of the international situation presents itself. It is unlikely, for Russia made frail by its floundering economy and China imprisoned by its unwillingness to lead can seize this opportunity. Could it be that Islamic Ummah can finally avail this moment, and permanently terminate the interference of colonial powers in Muslim lands?

**"And Allah has full power and control over His Affairs, but most of men know not."** [TMQ: Yusuf: 21]

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