

The future belongs to Islam

The Muslim world has youth, numbers and global ambitions. The West is growing old and enfeebled, and lacks the will to rebuff those who would supplant it. It's the end of the world as we've known it. An excerpt from 'America Alone'.

MARK STEYN | Oct 20, 2006

Sept. 11, 2001, was not "the day everything changed," but the day that revealed how much had already changed. On Sept. 10, how many journalists had the Council of American-Islamic Relations or the Canadian Islamic Congress or the Muslim Council of Britain in their Rolodexes? If you'd said that whether something does or does not cause offence to Muslims would be the early 21st century's principal political dynamic in Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and the United Kingdom, most folks would have thought you were crazy. Yet on that Tuesday morning the top of the iceberg bobbed up and toppled the Twin Towers.

This is about the seven-eighths below the surface -- the larger forces at play in the developed world that have left Europe too enfeebled to resist its remorseless transformation into Eurabia and that call into question the future of much of the rest of the world. The key factors are: demographic decline; the unsustainability of the social democratic state; and civilizational exhaustion.

Let's start with demography, because everything does:

If your school has 200 guys and you're playing a school with 2,000 pupils, it doesn't mean your baseball team is definitely going to lose but it certainly gives the other fellows a big starting advantage. Likewise, if you want to launch a revolution, it's not very likely if you've only got seven revolutionaries. And they're all over 80. But, if you've got two million and seven revolutionaries and they're all under 30 you're in business.

For example, I wonder how many pontificators on the "Middle East peace process" ever run this number:

The median age in the Gaza Strip is 15.8 years.

Once you know that, all the rest is details. If you were a "moderate Palestinian" leader, would you want to try to persuade a nation -- or pseudo-nation -- of unemployed poorly educated teenage boys raised in a UN-supervised European-funded death cult to see sense? Any analysis of the "Palestinian problem" that doesn't take into account the most important determinant on the ground is a waste of time.

Likewise, the salient feature of Europe, Canada, Japan and Russia is that they're running out of babies. What's happening in the developed world is one of the fastest demographic evolutions in history: most of us have seen a gazillion heartwarming ethnic comedies -- *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* and its ilk -- in which some uptight WASPy type starts dating a gal from a vast loving fecund Mediterranean family, so abundantly endowed with sisters and cousins and uncles that you can barely get in the room. It is, in fact, the inversion of the truth. Greece has a fertility rate hovering just below 1.3 births per couple, which is what demographers call the point of "lowest-low" fertility from which no human society has ever recovered. And Greece's fertility is the healthiest in Mediterranean Europe: Italy has a fertility rate of 1.2, Spain 1.1. Insofar as any citizens of the developed world have "big" families these days, it's the anglo democracies: America's fertility rate is 2.1, New Zealand a little below. Hollywood

should be making *My Big Fat Uptight Protestant Wedding* in which some sad Greek only child marries into a big heartwarming New Zealand family where the spouse actually has a sibling.

As I say, this isn't a projection: it's happening now. There's no need to extrapolate, and if you do it gets a little freaky, but, just for fun, here goes: by 2050, 60 per cent of Italians will have no brothers, no sisters, no cousins, no aunts, no uncles. The big Italian family, with papa pouring the vino and mama spooning out the pasta down an endless table of grandparents and nieces and nephews, will be gone, no more, dead as the dinosaurs. As Noel Coward once remarked in another context, "Funiculi, funicula, funic yourself." By mid-century, Italians will have no choice in the matter.

Experts talk about root causes. But demography is the most basic root of all. A people that won't multiply can't go forth or go anywhere. Those who do will shape the age we live in.

Demographic decline and the unsustainability of the social democratic state are closely related. In America, politicians upset about the federal deficit like to complain that we're piling up debts our children and grandchildren will have to pay off. But in Europe the unaffordable entitlements are in even worse shape: there are no kids or grandkids to stick it to.

You might formulate it like this:

Age + Welfare = Disaster for you;

Youth + Will = Disaster for whoever gets in your way.

By "will," I mean the metaphorical spine of a culture. Africa, to take another example, also has plenty of young people, but it's riddled with AIDS and, for the most part, Africans don't think of themselves as Africans: as we saw in Rwanda, their primary identity is tribal, and most tribes have no global ambitions. Islam, however, has serious global ambitions, and it forms the primal, core identity of most of its adherents -- in the Middle East, South Asia and elsewhere.

Islam has youth and will, Europe has age and welfare.

We are witnessing the end of the late 20th- century progressive welfare democracy. Its fiscal bankruptcy is merely a symptom of a more fundamental bankruptcy: its insufficiency as an animating principle for society. The children and grandchildren of those fascists and republicans who waged a bitter civil war for the future of Spain now shrug when a bunch of foreigners blow up their capital. Too sedated even to sue for terms, they capitulate instantly. Over on the other side of the equation, the modern multicultural state is too watery a concept to bind huge numbers of immigrants to the land of their nominal citizenship. So they look elsewhere and find the jihad. The Western Muslim's pan-Islamic identity is merely the first great cause in a world where globalized pathologies are taking the place of old-school nationalism.

For states in demographic decline with ever more lavish social programs, the question is a simple one: can they get real? Can they grow up before they grow old? If not, then they'll end their days in societies dominated by people with a very different world view.

Which brings us to the third factor -- the enervated state of the Western world, the sense of civilizational ennui, of nations too mired in cultural relativism to understand what's at stake. As it happens, that third point is closely related to the first two. To Americans, it doesn't always seem obvious that there's any connection between the "war on terror" and the so-called "pocketbook issues"

of domestic politics. But there is a correlation between the structural weaknesses of the social democratic state and the rise of a globalized Islam. The state has gradually annexed all the responsibilities of adulthood -- health care, child care, care of the elderly -- to the point where it's effectively severed its citizens from humanity's primal instincts, not least the survival instinct. In the American context, the federal "deficit" isn't the problem; it's the government programs that cause the deficit. These programs would still be wrong even if Bill Gates wrote a cheque to cover them each month. They corrode the citizen's sense of self-reliance to a potentially fatal degree. Big government is a national security threat: it increases your vulnerability to threats like Islamism, and makes it less likely you'll be able to summon the will to rebuff it. We should have learned that lesson on Sept. 11, 2001, when big government flopped big-time and the only good news of the day came from the ad hoc citizen militia of Flight 93.

There were two forces at play in the late 20th century: in the Eastern bloc, the collapse of Communism; in the West, the collapse of confidence. One of the most obvious refutations of Francis Fukuyama's famous thesis *The End Of History* -- written at the victory of liberal pluralist democracy over Soviet Communism -- is that the victors didn't see it as such. Americans -- or at least non-Democrat-voting Americans -- may talk about "winning" the Cold War but the French and the Belgians and Germans and Canadians don't. Very few British do. These are all formal NATO allies -- they were, technically, on the winning side against a horrible tyranny few would wish to live under themselves. In Europe, there was an initial moment of euphoria: it was hard not to be moved by the crowds sweeping through the Berlin Wall, especially as so many of them were hot-looking Red babes eager to enjoy a Carlsberg or Stella Artois with even the nerdiest running dog of imperialism. But, when the moment faded, *pace* Fukuyama, there was no sense on the Continent that our Big Idea had beaten their Big Idea. With the best will in the world, it's hard to credit the citizens of France or Italy as having made any serious contribution to the defeat of Communism. *Au contraire*, millions of them voted for it, year in, year out. And, with the end of the Soviet existential threat, the enervation of the West only accelerated.

In Thomas P. M. Barnett's book *Blueprint For Action*, Robert D. Kaplan, a very shrewd observer of global affairs, is quoted referring to the lawless fringes of the map as "Indian territory." It's a droll joke but a misleading one. The difference between the old Indian territory and the new is this: no one had to worry about the Sioux riding down Fifth Avenue. Today, with a few hundred bucks on his ATM card, the fellow from the badlands can be in the heart of the metropolis within hours.

Here's another difference: in the old days, the white man settled the Indian territory. Now the followers of the badland's radical imams settle the metropolis.

And another difference: technology. In the old days, the Injuns had bows and arrows and the cavalry had rifles. In today's Indian territory, countries that can't feed their own people have nuclear weapons.

But beyond that the very phrase "Indian territory" presumes that inevitably these badlands will be brought within the bounds of the ordered world. In fact, a lot of today's "Indian territory" was relatively ordered a generation or two back -- West Africa, Pakistan, Bosnia. Though Eastern Europe and Latin America and parts of Asia are freer now than they were in the seventies, other swaths of the map have spiralled backwards. Which is more likely? That the parts of the world under pressure will turn into post-Communist Poland or post-Communist Yugoslavia? In Europe, the demographic pressures favour the latter.

The enemies we face in the future will look a lot like al-Qaeda: transnational, globalized, locally franchised, extensively outsourced -- but tied together through a powerful identity that leaps frontiers

and continents. They won't be nation-states and they'll have no interest in becoming nation-states, though they might use the husks thereof, as they did in Afghanistan and then Somalia. The jihad may be the first, but other transnational deformities will embrace similar techniques. Sept. 10 institutions like the UN and the EU will be unlikely to provide effective responses.

We can argue about what consequences these demographic trends will have, but to say blithely they have none is ridiculous. The basic demography explains, for example, the critical difference between the "war on terror" for Americans and Europeans: in the U.S., the war is something to be fought in the treacherous sands of the Sunni Triangle and the caves of the Hindu Kush; you go to faraway places and kill foreigners. But, in Europe, it's a civil war. Neville Chamberlain dismissed Czechoslovakia as "a faraway country of which we know little." This time round, for much of western Europe it turned out the faraway country of which they knew little was their own.

Four years into the "war on terror," the Bush administration began promoting a new formulation: "the long war." Not a good sign. In a short war, put your money on tanks and bombs. In a long war, the better bet is will and manpower. The longer the long war gets, the harder it will be, because it's a race against time, against lengthening demographic, economic and geopolitical odds. By "demographic," I mean the Muslim world's high birth rate, which by mid-century will give tiny Yemen a higher population than vast empty Russia. By "economic," I mean the perfect storm the Europeans will face within this decade, because their lavish welfare states are unsustainable on their post-Christian birth rates. By "geopolitical," I mean that, if you think the United Nations and other international organizations are antipathetic to America now, wait a few years and see what kind of support you get from a semi-Islamified Europe.

Almost every geopolitical challenge in the years ahead has its roots in demography, but not every demographic crisis will play out the same way. That's what makes doing anything about it even more problematic -- because different countries' reactions to their own particular domestic circumstances are likely to play out in destabilizing ways on the international scene. In Japan, the demographic crisis exists virtually in laboratory conditions -- no complicating factors; in Russia, it will be determined by the country's relationship with a cramped neighbour -- China; and in Europe, the new owners are already in place -- like a tenant with a right-to-buy agreement.

Let's start in the most geriatric jurisdiction on the planet. In Japan, the rising sun has already passed into the next phase of its long sunset: net population loss. 2005 was the first year since records began in which the country had more deaths than births. Japan offers the chance to observe the demographic death spiral in its purest form. It's a country with no immigration, no significant minorities and no desire for any: just the Japanese, aging and dwindling.

At first it doesn't sound too bad: compared with the United States, most advanced societies are very crowded. If you're in a cramped apartment in a noisy congested city, losing a couple hundred thousand seems a fine trade-off. The difficulty, in a modern social democratic state, is managing which people to lose: already, according to the *Japan Times*, depopulation is "presenting the government with pressing challenges on the social and economic front, including ensuring provision of social security services and securing the labour force." For one thing, the shortage of children has led to a shortage of obstetricians. Why would any talented ambitious med school student want to go into a field in such precipitous decline? As a result, if you live in certain parts of Japan, childbirth is all in the timing. On Oki Island, try to time the contractions for Monday morning. That's when the maternity ward is open -- first day of the week, 10 a.m., when an obstetrician flies in to attend to any pregnant mothers who happen to be around. And at 5.30 p.m. she flies out. So, if you've been careless enough to time your childbirth for Tuesday through Sunday, you'll have to climb into a helicopter and zip off to give birth

alone in a strange hospital unsurrounded by tiresome loved ones. Do Lamaze classes on Oki now teach you to time your breathing to the whirring of the chopper blades?

The last local obstetrician left the island in 2006 and the health service isn't expecting any more. Doubtless most of us can recall reading similar stories over the years from remote rural districts in America, Canada, Australia. After all, why would a village of a few hundred people have a great medical system? But Oki has a population of 17,000, and there are still no obstetricians: birthing is a dying business.

So what will happen? There are a couple of scenarios: whatever Japanese feelings on immigration, a country with great infrastructure won't empty out for long, any more than a state-of-the-art factory that goes belly up stays empty for long. At some point, someone else will move in to Japan's plant.

And the alternative? In *The Children Of Men*, P. D. James' dystopian fantasy about a barren world, there are special dolls for women whose maternal instinct has gone unfulfilled: pretend mothers take their artificial children for walks on the street or to the swings in the park. In Japan, that's no longer the stuff of dystopian fantasy. At the beginning of the century, the country's toy makers noticed they had a problem: toys are for children and Japan doesn't have many. What to do? In 2005, Tomy began marketing a new doll called Yumel -- a baby boy with a range of 1,200 phrases designed to serve as companions for the elderly. He says not just the usual things -- "I wuv you" -- but also asks the questions your grandchildren would ask if you had any: "Why do elephants have long noses?" Yumel joins his friend, the Snuggling Ibot, a toy designed to have the conversation of a five-year old child which its makers, with the usual Japanese efficiency, have determined is just enough chit-chat to prevent the old folks going senile. It seems an appropriate final comment on the social democratic state: in a childish infantilized self-absorbed society where adults have been stripped of all responsibility, you need never stop playing with toys. We are the children we never had.

And why leave it at that? Is it likely an ever smaller number of young people will want to spend their active years looking after an ever greater number of old people? Or will it be simpler to put all that cutting-edge Japanese technology to good use and take a flier on Mister Roboto and the post-human future? After all, what's easier for the governing class? Weaning a pampered population off the good life and re-teaching them the lost biological impulse or giving the Sony Corporation a licence to become the Cloney Corporation? If you need to justify it to yourself, you'd grab the graphs and say, well, demographic decline is universal. It's like industrialization a couple of centuries back; everyone will get to it eventually, but the first to do so will have huge advantages: the relevant comparison is not with England's early 19th century population surge but with England's Industrial Revolution. In the industrial age, manpower was critical. In the new technological age, manpower will be optional -- and indeed, if most of the available manpower's Muslim, it's actually a disadvantage. As the most advanced society with the most advanced demographic crisis, Japan seems likely to be the first jurisdiction to embrace robots and cloning and embark on the slippery slope to transhumanism.

Demographic origin need not be the final word. In 1775, Benjamin Franklin wrote a letter to Joseph Priestly suggesting a mutual English friend might like to apply his mind to the conundrum the Crown faced:

Britain, at the expense of three millions, has killed 150 Yankees this campaign, which is £20000 a head... During the same time, 60000 children have been born in America. From these data his mathematical head will easily calculate the time and the expense necessary to kill us all.

Obviously, Franklin was oversimplifying. Not every American colonist identified himself as a rebel. After the revolution, there were massive population displacements: as United Empire Loyalists well know, large numbers of New Yorkers left the colony to resettle in what's now Ontario. Some American Negroes were so anxious to remain subjects of King George III they resettled as far as Sierra Leone. For these people, their primary identity was not as American colonists but as British subjects. For others, their new identity as Americans had supplanted their formal allegiance to the Crown. The question for today's Europe is whether the primary identity of their fastest-growing demographic is Muslim or Belgian, Muslim or Dutch, Muslim or French.

That's where civilizational confidence comes in: if "Dutchness" or "Frenchness" seems a weak attenuated thing, then the stronger identity will prevail. One notes other similarities between revolutionary America and contemporary Europe: the United Empire Loyalists were older and wealthier; the rebels were younger and poorer. In the end, the former simply lacked the latter's strength of will.

Europe, like Japan, has catastrophic birth rates and a swollen pampered elderly class determined to live in defiance of economic reality. But the difference is that on the Continent the successor population is already in place and the only question is how bloody the transfer of real estate will be.

If America's "allies" failed to grasp the significance of 9/11, it's because Europe's home-grown terrorism problems had all taken place among notably static populations, such as Ulster and the Basque country. One could make generally safe extrapolations about the likelihood of holding Northern Ireland to what cynical strategists in Her Majesty's Government used to call an "acceptable level of violence." But in the same three decades as Ulster's "Troubles," the hitherto moderate Muslim populations of south Asia were radicalized by a politicized form of Islam; previously formally un-Islamic societies such as Nigeria became semi-Islamist; and large Muslim populations settled in parts of Europe that had little or no experience of mass immigration.

On the Continent and elsewhere in the West, native populations are aging and fading and being supplanted remorselessly by a young Muslim demographic. Time for the obligatory "of courses": *of course*, not all Muslims are terrorists -- though enough are hot for jihad to provide an impressive support network of mosques from Vienna to Stockholm to Toronto to Seattle. *Of course*, not all Muslims support terrorists -- though enough of them share their basic objectives (the wish to live under Islamic law in Europe and North America) to function wittingly or otherwise as the "good cop" end of an Islamic good cop/bad cop routine. But, at the very minimum, this fast-moving demographic transformation provides a huge comfort zone for the jihad to move around in. And in a more profound way it rationalizes what would otherwise be the nuttiness of the terrorists' demands. An IRA man blows up a pub in defiance of democratic reality -- because he knows that at the ballot box the Ulster Loyalists win the elections and the Irish Republicans lose. When a European jihadist blows something up, that's not in defiance of democratic reality but merely a portent of democratic reality to come. He's jumping the gun, but in every respect things are moving his way.

You may vaguely remember seeing some flaming cars on the evening news toward the end of 2005. Something going on in France, apparently. Something to do with -- what's the word? -- "youths." When I pointed out the media's strange reluctance to use the M-word vis-à-vis the rioting "youths," I received a ton of emails arguing there's no Islamist component, they're not the *madrassa* crowd, they may be Muslim but they're secular and Westernized and into drugs and rap and meaningless sex with no emotional commitment, and rioting and looting and torching and trashing, just like any normal healthy Western teenagers. These guys have economic concerns, it's the lack of jobs, it's conditions

peculiar to France, etc. As one correspondent wrote, "You right-wing shit-for-brains think everything's about jihad."

Actually, I don't think everything's about jihad. But I do think, as I said, that a good 90 per cent of everything's about demography. Take that media characterization of those French rioters: "youths." What's the salient point about youths? They're youthful. Very few octogenarians want to go torching Renaults every night. It's not easy lobbing a Molotov cocktail into a police station and then hobbling back with your walker across the street before the searing heat of the explosion melts your hip replacement. Civil disobedience is a young man's game.

In June 2006, a 54-year-old Flemish train conductor called Guido Demoor got on the Number 23 bus in Antwerp to go to work. Six -- what's that word again? -- "youths" boarded the bus and commenced intimidating the other riders. There were some 40 passengers aboard. But the "youths" were youthful and the other passengers less so. Nonetheless, Mr. Demoor asked the lads to cut it out and so they turned on him, thumping and kicking him. Of those 40 other passengers, none intervened to help the man under attack. Instead, at the next stop, 30 of the 40 scrambled, leaving Mr. Demoor to be beaten to death. Three "youths" were arrested, and proved to be -- *quelle surprise!* -- of Moroccan origin. The ringleader escaped and, despite police assurances of complete confidentiality, of those 40 passengers only four came forward to speak to investigators. "You see what happens if you intervene," a fellow rail worker told the Belgian newspaper *De Morgen*. "If Guido had not opened his mouth he would still be alive."

No, he wouldn't. He would be as dead as those 40 passengers are, as the Belgian state is, keeping his head down, trying not to make eye contact, cowering behind his newspaper in the corner seat and hoping just to be left alone. What future in "their" country do Mr. Demoor's two children have? My mother and grandparents came from Sint-Niklaas, a town I remember well from many childhood visits. When we stayed with great-aunts and other relatives, the upstairs floors of the row houses had no bathrooms, just chamber pots. My sister and I were left to mooch around cobbled streets with our little cousin for hours on end, wandering aimlessly past smoke-wreathed bars and cafes, occasionally buying *frites* with mayonnaise. With hindsight it seemed as parochially Flemish as could be imagined. Not anymore. The week before Mr. Demoor was murdered in plain sight, bus drivers in Sint-Niklaas walked off the job to protest the thuggery of the -- here it comes again -- "youths." In little more than a generation, a town has been transformed.

Of the ethnic Belgian population, some 17 per cent are under 18 years old. Of the country's Turkish and Moroccan population, 35 per cent are under 18 years old. The "youths" get ever more numerous, the non-youths get older. To avoid the ruthless arithmetic posited by Benjamin Franklin, it is necessary for those "youths" to feel more Belgian. Is that likely? Colonel Gadhafi doesn't think so:

There are signs that Allah will grant Islam victory in Europe -- without swords, without guns, without conquests. The fifty million Muslims of Europe will turn it into a Muslim continent within a few decades.

On Sept. 11, 2001, the American mainland was attacked for the first time since the War of 1812. The perpetrators were foreign -- Saudis and Egyptians. Since 9/11, Europe has seen the London Tube bombings, the French riots, Dutch murders of nationalist politicians. The perpetrators are their own citizens -- British subjects, *citoyens de la République française*. In Linz, Austria, Muslims are demanding that all female teachers, believers or infidels, wear head scarves in class. The Muslim Council of Britain wants Holocaust Day abolished because it focuses "only" on the Nazis'(alleged) Holocaust of the Jews and not the Israelis' ongoing Holocaust of the Palestinians.

How does the state react? In Seville, King Ferdinand III is no longer patron saint of the annual fiesta because his splendid record in fighting for Spanish independence from the Moors was felt to be insensitive to Muslims. In London, a judge agreed to the removal of Jews and Hindus from a trial jury because the Muslim defendant's counsel argued he couldn't get a fair verdict from them. The Church of England is considering removing St. George as the country's patron saint on the grounds that, according to various Anglican clergy, he's too "militaristic" and "offensive to Muslims." They wish to replace him with St. Alban, and replace St. George's cross on the revamped Union Flag, which would instead show St. Alban's cross as a thin yellow streak.

In a few years, as millions of Muslim teenagers are entering their voting booths, some European countries will not be living formally under sharia, but -- as much as parts of Nigeria, they will have reached an accommodation with their radicalized Islamic compatriots, who like many intolerant types are expert at exploiting the "tolerance" of pluralist societies. In other Continental countries, things are likely to play out in more traditional fashion, though without a significantly different ending. Wherever one's sympathies lie on Islam's multiple battle fronts the fact is the jihad has held out a long time against very tough enemies. If you're not shy about taking on the Israelis and Russians, why wouldn't you fancy your chances against the Belgians and Spaniards?

"We're the ones who will change you," the Norwegian imam Mullah Krekar told the Oslo newspaper *Dagbladet* in 2006. "Just look at the development within Europe, where the number of Muslims is expanding like mosquitoes. Every Western woman in the EU is producing an average of 1.4 children. Every Muslim woman in the same countries is producing 3.5 children." As he summed it up: "Our way of thinking will prove more powerful than yours."

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