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Article 1.

The Sunday Telegraph

Why I defected from Bashar al-Assad's regime, by former diplomat Nawaf Fares
[Ruth Sherlock](#)

14 Jul 2012 – Beirut -- Nawaf Fares, a former regime hardliner and security chief who was Syria's ambassador to Iraq, spoke out in an exclusive interview with The Sunday Telegraph yesterday - his first since announcing his dramatic decision to quit last week. As the first senior diplomat to abandon the government, it is thought his departure may pave the way for others to follow, leaving President Assad's regime even more exposed.

Yesterday, in a wide-ranging interview conducted by telephone from Qatar, where he has now sought refuge, Mr Fares made a series of devastating claims against the Assad regime, which he said was determined to be "victorious" whatever the cost.

- * Jihadi units that Mr Fares himself had helped Damascus send to fight US troops in neighbouring Iraq were involved in the string of deadly suicide bomb attacks in Syria

- * The attacks were carried on the direct orders of the Assad regime, in the hope that it could blame them on the rebel movement

- * President Assad, who had a "violent streak" inherited from his father, was now living "in a world of his own"

Mr Fares spoke out as the violence in Syria continued unabated, with at least 28 people killed across the country yesterday. The town of Khirbet Ghazaleh in southern Syria was attacked by hundreds of troops backed by tanks and helicopter gunships, according to the London-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Meanwhile, United Nations observers visited the village of Treimsa, in central Hama province, in which up to 200 people are feared to have died on Thursday.

It was precisely such atrocities as these that forced Mr Fares to gradually question his own allegiance to the regime, ending 35 years of loyal service in which he worked as a policeman, regional governor and political security chief, becoming entrusted with some of its most sensitive tasks.

"At the beginning of the revolution, the state tried to convince people that reforms would be enacted very soon," he said. "We lived on that hope for a while. We gave them the benefit of the doubt, but after many months it became clear to me that the promises of reform were lies. That was when I made my decision. I was seeing the massacres perpetrated – no man would

be able to live with himself, seeing what I saw and knowing what I know, to stay in the position."

Mr Fares's most damaging allegation is that the Syrian government itself has a hand in the nationwide wave of suicide bombings on government buildings, which have killed hundreds of people and maimed thousands more. By way of example, he cited the twin blasts outside a military intelligence building in the al-Qazzaz suburb of Damascus in May, which killed 55 people and injured another 370.

"I know for certain that not a single serving intelligence official was harmed during that explosion, as the whole office had been evacuated 15 minutes beforehand," he said. "All the victims were passers by instead. All these major explosions have been perpetrated by al-Qaeda through cooperation with the security forces."

Such allegations have been aired in general terms by the Syrian opposition before, and Mr Fares would not be drawn on what exact proof he had. He is, however, better placed than many to make such claims. One of the reasons for his rise in President Assad's regime was that he is a senior member of the Oqaydat tribe, a highly powerful clan whose population straddles the Syrian-Iraq border. Following the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, their territory became part of the conduit used by Syria to smuggle jihadi volunteers into Iraq, with Mr Fares playing an important role.

"After the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the regime in Syria began to feel danger, and began planning to disrupt the US forces inside Iraq, so it formed an alliance with al-Qaeda," he said. "All Arabs and other foreigners were encouraged to go to Iraq via Syria, and their movements were facilitated by the Syrian government. As a governor at the time, I was given verbal commandments that any civil servant that wanted to go would have his trip facilitated, and that his absence would not be noted. I believe the Syrian regime has blood on its hands, it should bare responsibility for many of the deaths in Iraq."

He himself, he added, knew personally of several Syrian government "liaison officers" who still dealt with al-Qaeda. "Al-Qaeda would not carry out activities without knowledge of the regime," he said. "The Syrian government would like to use al-Qaeda as a bargaining chip with the West – to say: 'it is either them or us'."

Mr Fares, who has six grown-up children, said he made his decision to quit five months ago, after a particularly bloody Friday, which has become the regular day for opposition protests. "The number of killings was unusually high that day, especially in my area, and that was the final straw - there was no hope any more," he said.

Mindful that such a display of disloyalty could lead to reprisals against his family, he slowly began getting his relatives out of the country. He himself was then smuggled out of Baghdad last week by the Syrian opposition. He declines to give details of the operation, but says he made a point of continuing his normal duties up to the last minute so as not to alert the authorities, who he suspected would have been monitoring his phone calls as a diplomat anyway.

Since his defection, he regretted, many cousins within his extended family had been questioned by Syrian intelligence, with some forced into hiding. However, any doubts he had harboured prior to jumping ship had gone after a final visit he made a month ago to his home city of Deir al-Zour, near the Iraqi-Syrian border.

"There was tremendous destruction there and thousands of people had been killed, many of them from my tribe," he said. "Life in the city was almost non-existent. What I saw there broke my heart, it was tragic and unbelievable, and if people there have not joined the uprising already, they will now. The majority of the tribe, I think, are already on the side of revolution."

Indeed, the last time he had spoken to President Assad, in a face-to-face meeting six months ago, the Syrian leader had asked him to use his influence in Deir al-Zour, promising him promotion if he did.

"He was saying that we should insist that this is a conspiracy from the West aimed at Syria," Mr Fares said. "I spoke with the local sheikhs and leaders, but the people's response was that you cannot trust Assad.

"I think he does believe it is a conspiracy against him, but he is now living in a world of his own."

However, on the question of whether Mr Assad was directing the violence personally, Mr Fares was equivocal. On the one hand, he claimed the Syrian leader was being "led" by powerful members within his own family, and also his Russian backers. On the other, he pointed out that President Assad's late father, Hafez, had been equally ruthless during his rule, which

included the massacre of more than 10,000 people during a Muslim Brotherhood uprising in the city of Hama in 1982.

"Bashar doesn't strike you as being extremely intelligent, he seems to be someone who is led rather than who leads. But nobody has the ability to carry out these decisions except him, and he definitely has the genes of his father, who was a criminal by all accounts. This is what he grew up with, this is the hallmark of the family."

Like President Assad, Mr Fares now faces an uncertain future. To the regime, which formally sacked him from his job last week, he is now a traitor and a marked man. To the opposition, meanwhile, he is a boost to morale but not necessarily someone who can be entirely trusted.

In his message announcing his defection last week, he urged other diplomats to follow in his wake. Yet his own familiarity with the workings of Syria's police state means he knows that they will most likely keep their plans to themselves. "These things are extremely sensitive so I don't know of others planning to defect. Sometimes you are frightened someone will hear if you think it yourself."

Article 2.

NOW Lebanon

Scared by the tribunal, who me?

Michael Young

July 13, 2012 -- Remember when the Special Tribunal for Lebanon was the nuclear bomb in Lebanese pants? Hezbollah members would be accused, civil war would ensue, and Sunnis and Shia would fight, in the memorable [words](#) of Bashar al-Assad, from the Mediterranean to the Caspian Sea.

Now the tribunal provokes hardly a yawn, as lawyers pursue the laborious legal process in their Dutch bubble. This week, the Lebanese state [paid](#) its contribution to the institution, without fanfare and without tension between Prime Minister Najib Mikati and Hezbollah.

Is anyone asking the obvious question: Why does Hezbollah seem so sanguine about the tribunal? Could it be that the party now believes the legal outcome will be less devastating than initially feared?

Until this point, the prosecutor, Norman Farrell, has not issued an amended indictment, one that implicates more Hezbollah figures. Last March the pretrial judge, Daniel Fransen, rejected the prosecution's request to amend the indictment prepared by Farrell's predecessor, Daniel Bellemare, by adding to it the crime of "criminal association" under Lebanese law. The term had to be clarified first by the appeals chamber, Fransen argued. This requirement will have only added more time to the process.

Hezbollah is perfectly aware that the Bellemare indictment suffers from a fundamental flaw: It offers no motive for the assassination of Rafik Hariri. We have four individuals, not one of whom will stand in the dock, who are accused of a crime the rationale of which has not been elucidated—at least not in the publicly released indictment.

Worse, the timeframe once the trial begins hardly suggests an early endgame. According to sources at the tribunal, we may not have a trial until next year. One individual intimately familiar with court procedures of this kind expects the trial to take three to four years, the appeals stage to take an additional two years, and he points out that if the defendants ever surface, the trial will have to be restarted from scratch. If that assessment is correct, we should expect some kind of verdict by 2017 at the earliest, 12 years after Hariri's killing.

I wouldn't worry if I were Hezbollah, would you?

The party is protected to an extent by another factor. Most Lebanese believe, probably rightly, that if Hezbollah participated in Hariri's murder, then it did so in close collaboration with the Assad regime—indeed very probably at the instigation of the Syrian leadership. Within the coming years, there is a good chance that Bashar al-Assad will fall, and with him the edifice of repression and intimidation so instrumental in targeting Lebanon's late prime minister.

What an irony. Some believe the Syrians sought to place the Hariri assassination entirely at Hezbollah's doorstep by eliminating key individuals who might have provided a link in the conspiracy between the party and Damascus. But if Assad is ousted and the Hezbollah suspects are never caught—or if they are somehow declared innocent by the tribunal—then the last laugh would be the party's.

As a weapon against impunity, the Special Tribunal has been an abysmal

failure. The notion that political assassinations will not occur in the future for fear that the international community might set up new tribunals as it did for Lebanon is laughable. If anything, the myriad shortcomings of the investigation and the delays in going to trial will work against a repeat of the Lebanon experience.

After all, a more consensual and, arguably, effective body, the International Criminal Court, has not managed to dissuade mass murderers. Though the ICC has accused prominent leaders of terrible crimes, notably indicting Sudan's president, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, this did not prevent fellow dictators, such as Bashar al-Assad, Moammar Qaddafi or Ali Abdullah Saleh from massacring their populations.

At this stage, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon is useful mainly as a political weapon inside Lebanon. That is why the March 14 coalition continues to swear by it, and perhaps why Walid Jumblatt, who denounced the tribunal as "politicized" in the days when he was cozying up to the Syrian regime, recently praised the American senator, John McCain, for having been steadfast in defending the institution. As leverage against Hezbollah, the tribunal still serves a purpose, but no one should expect results soon.

However, you have to wonder whether March 14, beyond political expediency, is still convinced that the investigation and Special Tribunal were successful experiments. The members of that loose fraternity should feel hoodwinked by the United Nations. Outrage is in order, even though the parties in the opposition will never express it, given their political stake in upholding the tribunal's credibility.

And if political calculation is behind their silence, that only gives us another reason to regret what the United Nations has spawned. Here the international body set up a judicial body to stay above politics and dispense justice. Now its purpose, at least in Lebanon, is to serve as a political tool, while justice is kept waiting, indefinitely.

Michael Young is opinion editor of The Daily Star newspaper in Lebanon.

Article 3.

Russia in Global Affairs

Echo of an Impending War

[Sergey Karaganov](#)

Resume The macro changes in the world economy and politics, developments in the Greater Middle East, and actions (or inaction) by old great powers make further plunging of the region into conflicts almost inevitable. The macro changes in the world economy and politics, developments in the Greater Middle East, and actions (or inaction) by old great powers make further plunging of the region into conflicts almost inevitable. I am a bit surprised that the press keeps ignoring the growing probability of a big war, or a series of wars, in the Middle East. Observers and analysts, following in the footsteps of the Western mass media from which they primarily get their information, discuss one crisis after another, without trying to blend them into one picture. Many factors from macro geopolitics and macro geo-economics indicate an impending war. These include, above all, an unprecedented rapid redistribution of power in favor of new leaders, especially Asian ones.

New Leaders

The last two decades have also seen a dual energy revolution – major changes in the balance of power and wealth in the energy sector, which have exacerbated the general tendency still further. In the 1990s, when the West was celebrating its victory in the Cold War, it failed to notice that control over an overwhelming part of the world's energy resources moved from its multinational corporations to extracting countries and their companies. Later, in the 2000s, the growth of newly industrialized countries sent energy prices soaring – and the world GDP poured into extracting countries, including Russia. By the second half of the 2000s, OPEC countries alone had begun to earn about one trillion dollars a year, several times more than a decade before.

Now we are witnessing a growing degradation of institutions of supranational political and economic governance: the UN, the IMF and others have become increasingly feeble. The G8 has turned into a parody of a world government, and the G20 is obviously following suit. Organizations like BRICS or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are in no hurry to compensate for their weakness.

International relations are being renationalized. Sovereign states are now coming to the fore, rather than supranational governance bodies, multinationals or non-governmental organizations, as was predicted earlier. Yet their capabilities have been impaired by the economic and informational globalization, and they cannot fill the governability vacuum. Something very strange is happening, namely re-ideologization of world politics. The West, temporarily losing the competition with new leaders, has not only stepped up efforts to proselytize democracy but has also begun to back them with arms. The re-ideologization is proceeding along religious dividing lines as well, especially between the Muslim world and other cultures and civilizations. This situation is seriously aggravated by ideological confusion. The old powers and their intellectuals are unable, or unwilling, to explain what is going on, while the new ones are not yet ready to do it, or unable to, either. Discussions about the state of the world economy and politics contain unusually large amounts of high-sounding pretentious nonsense, understatements, or outright lies.

Add to this the systemic crisis that has predictably hit the EU, the sharp fall in the United States' prestige after its two military-political defeats, and the weaknesses of its economic model (still the strongest, though), which were graphically revealed by the world crisis – and the picture becomes almost unequivocal.

A New Conflict Is Inevitable

There are all prerequisites, even more than required, for predicting the possibility of a new world war. And it would be most certainly unleashed but for the mysterious horror inspired by the existing giant nuclear arsenals of Russia and the United States and smaller, yet still terrifying, arsenals of other countries. But if a new world war is almost ruled out, the probability of a major war or a series of wars in the Greater Middle East, on a vast territory from the Indo-Pakistani border to the Maghreb, is visibly growing. Now it is beginning to seem inevitable due to the aforementioned and other macro prerequisites. But even regional prerequisites alone are more than enough. Pakistan, which is losing competition with India, is already seriously concerned that another provocation (like the attack at a Mumbai hotel) would force New Delhi to respond. In what ways, other than nuclear weapons, Islamabad would be able to prevent its military defeat is unclear. Nuclear-hungry Iran, which has become much stronger due to

the Shiitization and weakening of its former rival Iraq, is scaring its traditional rivals in the Sunni kingdoms of the Gulf. Israel, despite its strong nuclear potential and armed forces, is almost in panic, only fueled further by the “Arab Spring” and a series of falls of troublesome yet relatively stable regimes, with which it could have come to agreement. These regimes are being replaced, one after another, by less stable governments that are more vulnerable to public opinion and, therefore, to anti-Israeli sentiment.

So far, Israel has refrained from attacking Iran’s nuclear facilities, realizing that it would not benefit much from such an attack but that the probability of it causing turmoil in the region would increase dramatically. Iran has great possibilities to destabilize the already unstable region still further. Another factor holding back Israel from attacking Iran is Washington which, having lost two wars, does not want to be involved in one more war on the eve of presidential elections. Theoretically, an Israeli attack could be prevented if Tehran agreed to stop at the nuclear threshold. However, the outside world shortsightedly has offered Iran no guarantees except sanctions. The ruling elite in Iran is torn by growing differences, and it seems that part of it is provoking an attack in order to consolidate the country against an outside threat. But there is a limit even for the moderate and cautious part of Israelis. When they come to believe that the region is plunging into the abyss of war and destabilization, an attack against the enemy, even if only for its temporary weakening, will seem to be the best way out of the worsening situation.

The Vulnerability of the Middle East

Meanwhile, fundamentalist Sunni kingdoms of the Gulf, which have sucked up billions of petrodollars over the last decade, have predictably begun to try to convert their financial power into political influence. They have launched an offensive against secular and/or Shia states in the Middle East. Their main target is Iran, which is growing stronger despite sanctions, and which can become even stronger in case of its nuclearization. These secular states are highly vulnerable because of inequality in their societies, half-starved masses, and total corruption. It was not the glorified social networks, which Arabs almost did not have, but Qatari and Saudi money and Qatar’s Al Jazeera that were behind the “Arab Spring” riots.

It is quite obvious that the uprising in Syria largely rests on Sunni petrodollars and a desire to undermine the secular al-Assad regime, which gravitates towards Shiites and which is an ally of Iran, although there are also many internal reasons for the discontent in Syria. An important part of this landscape is Afghanistan. The yet another war lost by external forces in this country may make it an even more dangerous exporter of instability if Afghan tribes and clans are not played off against each other, so that they busy themselves and not project their problems outward. For the time being, I do not see a willingness to do that. NATO members, who keep talking about a democratic and stable Afghanistan, are trying to flee for their lives from the country. China is overcautious and is mostly worried that Americans may leave the military infrastructure in the country. Iran will do anything to weaken the West. Russia might be the leader of a new policy towards Afghanistan. But will it want and be able to become one? And here we come to one more factor that is increasing the probability of a big war or a series of conflicts in the Greater Middle East – this is the role of the West. I am far from seeing its hand behind the “Arab revolutions,” especially as this hand is nowhere to be seen either in Egypt or Tunisia. Their results are simply monopolized by Western politicians, who are thus trying to compensate for their geopolitical weakening. But sometimes the West does play a negative role. The systemic crisis which it is entering forces it to look for distracting tactical maneuvers abroad. European political and intellectual elites, which are losing the current round of international competition, have begun to defend democracy promotion even more vehemently, even if it works against their medium-term interests. Russian readers of this article may still remember the “More socialism!” slogan in Gorbachev’s times. But democracy is not dying. On the contrary, it is on the rise. Information transparency has given nations and people unprecedented and ever-increasing freedom. It’s just that the growth of democracy no longer coincides, as was expected, with the strengthening of positions of the cradle of modern democracy – Europe and the United States. Liberal elites are naturally outraged by massive human rights violations in Arab countries and Iran. But then follow less justifiable motives. The war in Libya, for all the indignation over the Gaddafi regime’s outrages, was a classical “small victorious war,” at least for Paris and London at the time. However, the stake on it did not work.

The “victory” over Gaddafi, which the West was very proud of, was immediately washed away by the waves of the economic crisis. Now it prefers not to recall the country which is going to pieces in the throes of a smoldering civil war and which has become a source of instability in the region.

The pressure on al-Assad, in addition to ideological and humanitarian sentiments and considerations, conceals the same, absolutely obvious desire for a “small victorious war.” And even more – a desire to weaken Syria, which is an ally of Iran. In the past decades, the West tried, even though inconsistently, to be a stabilizing force in the region. Now it does not want, and is unable, to play this role. Many countries, subconsciously and contrary to their declared policies, are trying to justify their inability to cope with the crisis by external factors.

Such sentiments can also be found among Russian elites that are not ready for a long-overdue volte-face. To prevent this change, they are trying to find non-existent external threats – or not to counter their emergence from the South, especially as it has no capabilities to do that.

Russia is warned that it may lose its positions in the Middle East. Simultaneously, it is repeatedly told that future developments in Syria depend only on it, and it is urged to interfere. I am not going to give unsolicited advice as to whether or not al-Assad and his government should be saved, if he and his regime fail to cope with the uprising.

The South on Fire

I want to say another thing: due to the objective situation and external factors, the region has crossed the line of profound destabilization. It is all burning or smoldering: India and Pakistan, Afghanistan, nuclearizing Iran, Iraq writhing in convulsions, Syria, Lebanon, Israel encircled by enemies, degrading Egypt and Tunisia, and Libya falling to pieces. This is why it would be immoral and stupid for Russia to follow outside advice and get involved in the developments in the region, no matter on which side – al-Assad, Iran or the West, or start playing Afghan games again. And it would also be stupid to listen to others.

However, geography will not allow Russia to move far away from the region. We and our closest neighbors are vulnerable ourselves. So in the decades to come we will have to maneuver, limit possible damage, deter

potential aggressors with the threat of force, and sometimes actively defend ourselves.

And the last thing. The economic strategy of the country, its corporations and people will have to be built on the basis of the new reality – the probability of decades of wars and conflicts in the vast region south of the Russian border. This reality will not only affect oil prices or pipeline prospects, but also the global economic environment, changing the structure of world demand for many goods and services. The easiest things to predict are the shrinking of real estate markets in the region, a multi-million redistribution of tourism flows, and a dramatic increase of migration, religious and terrorist pressure from the South.

One thing is clear: a profound destabilization of the Greater Middle East will require structural changes not only in politics but also in the economic behavior.

Sergei Karaganov is Chairman of the Presidium of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy and Dean of the School of World Economics and World Politics at the National Research University–Higher School of Economics.

Article 4.

The Wall Street Journal

Radical Islamists Wage Muslim Civil War in Africa

[Melik Kaylan](#)

July 13, 2012 -- The recent spate of attacks on Muslim historic and religious sites in the ancient city of Timbuktu calls to mind the Taliban's destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan over a decade ago. The Taliban, of course, were obliterating the icons of a rival religion, as they

saw it. The Salafist militias that have lately overrun Timbuktu and Mali are obliterating a rival tradition within their own faith.

Their actions more closely resemble intra-Islamic frictions at the end of the Yugoslav conflict in the mid-1990s that were largely overlooked by the news media. In exchange for rebuilding their war-damaged religious sites, Bosnian and Kosovar Muslims first had to acquiesce to the destruction of headstones in their ancestral cemeteries and old decorative motifs on mosque walls. This was required by their benefactors, the Mideast-based Muslim fundamentalist sources of international funds.

Such incidents have now become a global phenomenon. In effect, primitive iconoclastic strains of tribal Islam have burst out of their historical isolation on the margins of civilization and coalesced globally to attack the more cosmopolitan, syncretistic and culturally advanced centers of their faith.

To Western minds, Mali denotes the most marginal of places in the African desert. But it is home to African Islam. The city of Timbuktu, located on a timeless crossroads of trade, developed as a marketplace of ideas for centuries, open to learning from afar and reverential to saintly scholars who came on pilgrimage and stayed. Their manuscripts are housed in Timbuktu's ancient celebrated desert libraries. Their mosques and shrines are what the al Qaeda-related militia Ansar al Dine are busy trying to destroy.

Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo had prospered under the Ottoman dispensation of tolerance among faiths, trade with the West, and aesthetic heterogeneity. Their ancestors' tombstones often featured pictorial bas-reliefs and carved turbans in shapes that denoted professional ranks. Their communities also built shrines to their saints.

None of this was acceptable to Wahbist puritanism—a form of fundamentalist Islam which originated in Saudi Arabia—or al Qaeda and allied zealots of revolutionary, internationalist Islam. In recent decades they have assailed the localized variegations of Islam everywhere.

This is the new power topography of the Muslim geosphere. Oil money has funded extremist madrassas, or religious schools, to propagate a stripped-down, one-size-fits all ideology precisely suited for pollination across impoverished regions such as Somalia, Yemen, Nigeria, the Pakistani-Afghan border and the like. With money and threats, this international

extremist franchise has targeted peaceful Muslim lands where the faith had blended with local customs or become more cosmopolitan through contact with other cultures. Places, in other words, where Islam had lost its aggression and exclusivity.

Today, radicalized imams from the outside infiltrate such places and rebuke the natives for their superstitions and weakness, their relaxed and idolatrous ways. Few can resist the irruption of money and guns legitimized by a virulent Quranic rhetoric, however pious they may be. Some of the oldest communities in Islam, loosely categorized as Sufi for their mystical bent and ecstatic rituals often involving dance and music, have come under attack. In Pakistan, last year 41 Sufis were killed at a festival in Punjab province. Nothing provokes Salafists more than a festival. In postrevolution Libya and Egypt, Sufi mosques, cemeteries and schools have been assaulted.

According to the Islamists, the Sufis, along with other Muslim sects such as the Ismailis and the Ahmadis—not to mention artists, women without veils and the like—have allowed impure outside influences to alloy their faith. They have lost their Islamic authenticity.

In the radical worldview, violence furnishes the litmus test: All authentic Muslims are jihadists, or holy warriors. The addition of anti-imperialism to the religious ideological mix happened under the Afghan resistance to the Russian occupation. Anti-imperialism has become so central to radical Islam's message and appeal that these days any fellow Muslim daring to demur gets branded a foreign agent.

Yet the real imperialists, the outsiders bent on conquest and control, are the radicals themselves. What Timbuktu and other ancient Muslim locales and cultures face is precisely an alien colonial and imperial force—a species of Islam that evolved organically in only one region of the world and now seeks to impose its dominion universally.

That is why national identities and indigenous cultural traditions pose such a threat to international jihad. Local Islam has a living memory tied to geography and ritual, to historical moments when culture was enriched through songs or buildings or to even paintings that commemorate a particular phase.

Jihadists have no memory except for the Quranic era. They have no intervening identity or nostalgia. What we take for granted, the era of

Mozart or Shakespeare or Big Band music, photographs of our grandparents beside a 1950s automobile—such things don't exist for jihadists and represent dangerous, idolatrous deviancy. So too with Muslim societies with history and traditions of their own.

There is a countering strategy, if only we in the West would take up the cause. We have abetted the liberation of political life, freedom of religion and freeing of markets where we can in the Middle East. We have neglected culture.

It's time for the other shoe to drop. We must encourage Muslim countries—with funds and ideas for museums, mass media, education and entertainment—to celebrate their national cultures at their historical peaks. If we help them inculcate their citizens with a pride in their specific regional identity, this pride will act as a shield if the jihadists come to erase it all.

Mr. Kaylan, a writer based in New York, writes frequently about culture in the Journal.

Article 5.

The New Republic

The Weimar Union

Walter Laqueur

August 2, 2012 -- THE PUBLIC DISCUSSION of Europe's economic crisis has carried a curious air of repression: When commentators have worried about worst-case scenarios --the scenarios that harken back to the dark moments in the Continent's history --they have generally been dismissed as alarmist.

But there are good reasons to treat these dire warnings with the gravest seriousness --to place them within the realm of plausibility. One of these reasons can be found within the file cabinets of the U.S. government. In 2004, the U.S. National Intelligence Council, the government's premier

agency for strategic intelligence analysis, published a report arguing that the European Union might not survive to see the year 2020. The report worried about restrictive labor laws and aging populations, not debt and the unraveling of the currency union. (The report also saw the main danger as Germany's economic weakness, which makes for curious reading eight years later.) Still, it is bracing to consider that the U.S. government has worried about the worst-case scenario with the same intensity as the so-called alarmists.

With Europe in such a precarious condition, it should be clear that the current economic and political arrangements can't last much longer. That reality ought to focus our attention on the question of what arrangements will take their place. We would do well to recognize that Europe has a range of possible futures in store, some much more disastrous than others. WILL THE EUROPEAN UNION unravel? One reason to think it won't is that dissolving the currency union would impose great expense on all involved. According to the Swiss bank UBS, the immediate cost of leaving the euro zone would be in the vicinity of \$14,000 per person for weak countries. Whatever new currency is introduced would be precipitously devalued.

But such exorbitant cost is increasingly an insufficient deterrent. EU countries are fully aware of Argentina's experience with default in 2001. The economic and social consequences were extremely painful --high unemployment, capital flight, the impoverishment of the middle class. But the country's newly devalued currency soon spurred a recovery. European leaders may decide to exit the monetary union on the basis of similar calculations: that the introduction of a new currency would inflict a period of hardship on their countries for two or three years, after which they would again become competitive on international markets.

Moreover, the economic costs of exiting the European Union are running up against other political imperatives. The economic contagion has metastasized to a point where the only remaining solutions involve the sacrifice of significant national sovereignty. It's now taken for granted among many European policymakers that countries will soon have to surrender control over their budgets (and, thus, domestic policy more generally) to a central European government.

They are much too sanguine, however, in assuming that the European public would ever agree to such a move. Postwar Europe has often been referred to as post-nationalist, but that designation is only partly correct. The carnage of the twentieth century imparted lessons that mostly had to do with the horrors of military conflict. (It's indeed inconceivable that war would now break out between two European countries, except perhaps in the Balkans.) But the loyalty of Europeans still resides foremost with the countries of their birth. The idea of the nation-state is deeply rooted throughout the Continent; the concept of a United States of Europe is authentic only to the least-rooted of elites.

For many Europeans, then, the introduction of the euro --and the relinquishing of existing currencies --was never thought of as a hopeful measure of economic and political progress, but rather as a rude affront to national pride. So if Brussels demands that national capitals relinquish significant power, national publics can be counted on to agitate for an exit from the currency zone. We shouldn't be surprised when national politicians feel obliged to comply. There may be a "European core" that decides to stay with the euro currency, but it's possible that the majority would choose to exit.

IN THOSE COUNTRIES that did exit, domestic politics would quickly focus on finding an adequate replacement for Europe's monetary union. But the search for a new economic order would soon engage more fundamental political questions.

National politicians would be quick to label the failure of the common currency as a failure of the belief in unfettered markets (and they would not be entirely wrong). And as a consequence, they would also work to shore up the reputation of state institutions, insisting they play a larger role in the political imagination --as a dignified guarantor of the common good, but also as a steadfast protector from outside threats.

Some European politicians, drawing on the populist appeal of nostalgia, are likely to extol the Continent's former political divisions. Certainly, the patchwork of homelands that was nineteenth-century Europe offers ample opportunity to indulge in fantasy. (The sentimental artwork, especially painting from that period, provides plenty of fodder.) So we can expect populists across Europe to denigrate the cosmopolitan ethic of the

European Union and romanticize instead the local face-to-face interactions of a bygone era.

Politicians will also use such nostalgia to insulate themselves from the economic hardship that arrives as a consequence of exiting the euro zone. They will praise the days before the globalized economy, when it may not have been as easy to acquire great wealth, but at least life was simpler, more familiar, and not as hectic.

But some inventive demagogues may combine their appeals to nostalgia with calls for radicalism. Indeed, one underappreciated tragedy is that Europe's political future will depend greatly on the political will of those most traumatized by the current crisis: Europe's youth. The political and social implications of Europe's mass youth unemployment have not earned nearly the attention they deserve.

Traditionally, youth has been a factor of hope in politics. As the philosopher Martin Buber put it in 1918, "Youth is the eternal chance mankind possesses." Older generations generally focus on the difficulties, dangers, and risks of political change. But young people have always had the passion, idealism, and enthusiasm to struggle for political progress. It is no coincidence that, when the French Revolution broke out, the most fiery of revolutionaries, Saint-Just, was just 22. Georges-Jaques Danton, meanwhile, was nearly 30 --and therefore considered an old man. However, the second part of Buber's statement about youth is usually forgotten: "What a pity that this chance is usually wasted." If youth is the season of hope, it is also the age of credulity and fanaticism; the radicalism on behalf of which youth has served as a vanguard has not always been so admirable.

Consider Italy's fascist movement. Benito Mussolini was not yet 40 at the time of his march on Rome, and those surrounding him were even younger --Achille Starace, the future secretary of the party, was 33; Dino Grandi, the future minister of justice, was 27. Galeazzo Ciano, the future foreign minister, claimed to have participated at the age of 19. (The anthem of the fascists was "Giovinezza primavera di bellezza": "Youth, Spring of Beauty.")

The same was true with the Nazi movement. In 1933, Adolf Hitler was in his forties, but his closest followers were all very young: Joseph Goebbels was 36; Heinrich Himmler, head of the terror machine, was 33; his deputy,

Reinhard Heydrich, 29; and Adolf Eichmann, the engineer of the Holocaust, a mere 27. And there is no doubting that Germany's massive youth unemployment problem in the early '30s --a total of seven million Germans were out of work in 1932 --contributed to their collective rise. Communist parties throughout Europe similarly exploited youth unemployment. In early Soviet days, they sang: "We are the young guard of workers and peasants." The leading figures in the Russian Revolution (with the exception of Vladimir Lenin) were all in their thirties or younger. So far, the political radicalization of youth in Europe has been sporadic. But this is unlikely to remain the case. Youth unemployment in much of Europe is running at astronomical levels, reaching 50 percent in Spain and Greece. The official figures do not even convey the full picture, as many young people have been forced into part-time or unskilled work, or have given up looking for a job entirely. And already, in the past year, there have been riots in London and mass action by the indignados in Spain.

Will protest make a turn to the left or the right? The most widely noted manifestation so far has been the phenomenal success in Germany --and a few other countries such as Sweden --of a new political party named the Pirates. But that party has eschewed commenting on broad societal issues like the EU crisis, instead focusing on copyright and intellectual property. (At least two leading German Pirates were revealed to have had past affiliations with extreme right-wing groups.)

But a latent potential for extremism is very much present in Europe. And given the stubbornness of the youth unemployment crisis, it's very likely that this potential will be absorbed (and exploited) by new groups and leaders preaching an illiberal political gospel. Parliamentary democracy, they will say, does not work anymore; the system should be replaced by something new. These movements, whatever form they take, will be unpleasant.

EVENTUALLY, THESE currents of nostalgia and radicalism may push European leaders to look beyond the monetary union and to undo the other institutions comprising the European Union: the single market, the European Court of Justice, the coordination of economic and foreign policy. When those functions are unraveled, the European Union would, in essence, cease to be.

Such a precipitous descent into rank populism would be horrid. It would unravel generations of hard-won diplomatic progress, as European elites would have new incentive to indulge the chauvinism of their people. Relations between European countries would harden and become bitter. What will eventually bring this to a halt will be Europeans' instinct for self-preservation. Indeed, this faint pulse of enlightened self-interest will also motivate their tentative rediscovery of the virtues of continental unity. As eager as Europeans might be to abandon cosmopolitan pretensions and international exertions of soft power, they will definitely want to maintain their standards of living. And they would soon discover that this is a goal incompatible with the old system of passport checks and customs duties. So they will remember the reason they sought economic integration in the first place --small countries need many trading partners to maintain economic growth, and the more tightly integrated they are, the better. The isolated, economically depressed, independent nations of post-EU Europe will come to miss the economic coordination that they once had --not least, because they will have replaced it with the anxiety of persistent low-level tension with their neighbors.

Of course, having suffered the turbulence of disbanding the European Union, there will initially be resistance on the Continent to starting the experiment anew. But after a number of years, maybe even decades, when the pleasures of unimpeded sovereignty have been exhausted, and the lessons of its limits have been learned, there will be another attempt to pursue European integration.

It's possible that, having learned from the mistakes of the past, Europeans will reach farther back in seeking a model for their future attempts at integration. Some might evoke the model of the Hanseatic League, which existed from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century. (The name survives in some unexpected ways; the car registration tag of the city of Hamburg reads "HH" to this day --Hansestadt Hamburg.) The Hanseatic League had a considerable reach, from Scotland to Novgorod in Russia, but its purpose was mainly to facilitate trade, though it also had its own legal system and provided some mutual help and security. If a "core Europe" does stay intact after the dissolution of the currency, it's likely to be in such a stripped-down capacity. And it would be precisely such a system that chastened former EU countries could be tempted to join.

IT SEEMS SAFE TO say, however, that Europe's future advocates of unity will be struggling against compatriots radicalized by the experience of prolonged recession. This could mean the Continent will experience a generational conflict of unprecedented ferocity. It would also mean the end of a Europe that could pursue unity on the basis of a common, and implicitly understood, commitment to democracy.

That is why it is not enough for European elites to simply expend energy defending Europe's current institutions. Europe will only be secure in its unity if it can achieve a measure of solidarity. This was clear even in the darkest depths of the '30s, when the aristocratic Austrian politician and publicist Richard Nikolaus von Coudenhove-Kalergi intuited that the rise of fascism demanded an even louder propagation of the pan-European cause.

In the same way, the greatest unanswered question confronting the Continent today is not about the mechanism of a bailout, nor the sustainability of sovereign debt, but the Continent's great solidarity gap. Those ties that currently bind Europeans to Europe are composed not of genuine sentiment, but rational argument. Even the most fervent supporters of unity are Vernunfteuropäer, to borrow a term coined in the days of the Weimar Republic. They endorse Europe but do not particularly love it and feel only a limited duty to support it. This is a pale imitation of the spirit that once moved a Giuseppe Mazzini or a Victor Hugo to mount the barricades on behalf of a united Europe.

The challenge in the years ahead will be for influential Europeans to take this cause and make it their own. The German philosopher Jürgens Habermas has tried for years to outline a concept of European nationalism, but he has been a lonely voice. Such appeals would resonate more widely in a general atmosphere of dire necessity. Historical experience shows that radical change usually occurs as the result of a deep crisis. This fact was well-known to Jean Monnet, the architect of the European Union. As he was famous for saying: Crises are the great federators.

In that sense, it is unfortunate that there has still been no palpable feeling of crisis this summer in most EU countries (other than the few most severely affected by the recession). Europeans have been content to devote more attention to the queen's Jubilee, the European soccer championship, and the run-up to the Olympic Games than to the news bulletins about

Continental summits and bailout meetings. We should hope that these distractions do not prove fateful.

What was said at one stage about Italy ("We have created Italy, let us now create Italians") has always been true of Europe. The current European Union is now on the precipice of falling apart because Europe's leaders refused to recognize the importance of the task. But there is nothing preventing Europeans from trying once again. Sometimes the energy to overcome great collective difficulties can only be forged in great collective failure.

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Article 6.

NYT

Why Our Elites Stink

[David Brooks](#)

July 12, 2012 -- Through most of the 19th and 20th centuries, the Protestant Establishment sat atop the American power structure. A relatively small network of white Protestant men dominated the universities, the world of finance, the local country clubs and even high government service.

Over the past half-century, a more diverse and meritocratic elite has replaced the Protestant Establishment. People are more likely to rise on the basis of grades, test scores, effort and performance.

Yet, as this meritocratic elite has taken over institutions, trust in them has plummeted. It's not even clear that the brainy elite is doing a better job of running them than the old boys' network. Would we say that Wall Street is working better now than it did 60 years ago? Or government? The system

is more just, but the outcomes are mixed. The meritocracy has not fulfilled its promise.

Christopher Hayes of MSNBC and The Nation believes that the problem is inherent in the nature of meritocracies. In his book, “Twilight of the Elites,” he argues that meritocratic elites may rise on the basis of grades, effort and merit, but, to preserve their status, they become corrupt. They create wildly unequal societies, and then they rig things so that few can climb the ladders behind them. Meritocracy leads to oligarchy.

Hayes points to his own elite training ground, Hunter College High School in New York City. You have to ace an entrance exam to get in, but affluent parents send their kids to rigorous test prep centers and now few poor black and Latino students can get in.

Baseball players get to the major leagues through merit, but then some take enhancement drugs to preserve their status. Financiers work hard to get jobs at the big banks, but then some rig the game for their own mutual benefit.

Far from being the fairest of all systems, he concludes, the meritocracy promotes gigantic inequality and is fundamentally dysfunctional. No wonder institutional failure has been the leitmotif of our age.

It’s a challenging argument but wrong. ■ say today’s meritocratic elites achieve and preserve their status not mainly by being corrupt but mainly by being ambitious and disciplined. They raise their kids in organized families. They spend enormous amounts of money and time on enrichment. They work much longer hours than people down the income scale, driving their kids to piano lessons and then taking part in conference calls from the waiting room.

Phenomena like the test-prep industry are just the icing on the cake, giving some upper-middle-class applicants a slight edge over other upper-middle-class applicants. The real advantages are much deeper and more honest. The corruption that has now crept into the world of finance and the other professions is not endemic to meritocracy but to the specific culture of our meritocracy. The problem is that today’s meritocratic elites cannot admit to themselves that they are elites.

Everybody thinks they are countercultural rebels, insurgents against the true establishment, which is always somewhere else. This attitude prevails in the Ivy League, in the corporate boardrooms and even at television

studios where hosts from Harvard, Stanford and Brown rail against the establishment.

As a result, today's elite lacks the self-conscious leadership ethos that the racist, sexist and anti-Semitic old boys' network did possess. If you went to Groton a century ago, you knew you were privileged. You were taught how morally precarious privilege was and how much responsibility it entailed. You were housed in a spartan 6-foot-by-9-foot cubicle to prepare you for the rigors of leadership.

The best of the WASP elites had a stewardship mentality, that they were temporary caretakers of institutions that would span generations. They cruelly ostracized people who did not live up to their codes of gentlemanly conduct and scrupulosity. They were insular and struggled with intimacy, but they did believe in restraint, reticence and service.

Today's elite is more talented and open but lacks a self-conscious leadership code. The language of meritocracy (how to succeed) has eclipsed the language of morality (how to be virtuous). Wall Street firms, for example, now hire on the basis of youth and brains, not experience and character. Most of their problems can be traced to this.

If you read the e-mails from the Libor scandal you get the same sensation you get from reading the e-mails in so many recent scandals: these people are brats; they have no sense that they are guardians for an institution the world depends on; they have no consciousness of their larger social role. The difference between the Hayes view and mine is a bit like the difference between the French Revolution and the American Revolution. He wants to upend the social order. I want to keep the current social order, but I want to give it a different ethos and institutions that are more consistent with its existing ideals.