Afghan immigrants protest in Athens in February 2011. The immigrants, including women with babies a few months old, demanded official refugee status from Greece. Some engaged in hunger strikes, including six men who sewed their lips shut.

MIGRATION IMPACTS
SECURITY

AFGHANISTAN SUPPLIES HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF MIGRANTS TO THE EU

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Until recently, migration from Afghanistan in the direction of Europe wasn't considered a serious issue because of the large distances and small number of immigrants. Today, Afghans represent one of the largest groups of immigrants in Europe and, with more heading toward the continent, the situation needs closer scrutiny. Considering Afghanistan's part in global security and the large numbers of Afghans trying to get into Europe, the related challenges need analysis. This is especially important if the situation in Afghanistan isn't stabilizing, but rather is radicalizing, and when individuals and small groups represent a significant security risk.

MEASUREMENT IS DIFFICULT

Researchers studying migration and security issues find the fields to be highly subjective categories, dependent on the person defining them. Some researchers focus on areas that cover only a portion of the phenomenon. An additional problem is that precise quantity and quality data on immigrants aren't available, and that includes asylum seekers, illegal immigrants and – those that represent the biggest security risk – unregistered immigrants. To be more precise, the data is fragmented due to the inability to measure the phenomenon and the variety of methodologies used for gathering and processing data.

Although data gathering and processing is improving, we can see from the example of human trafficking data compiled by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development that the "lack of systematically collected and managed statistical data relevant to trafficking in human beings is one of the main obstacles to the successful and effective implementation of anti-trafficking policies and efforts."[1] The organization states that the success of measures and operations for combating human trafficking are directly dependent on the relation between data collection, processing and analysis. The same dependency is also true for other phenomena in migration. That brings us to the conclusion that every analysis on the impact of migration on security is a matter of estimation and perception in which we can only discover trends and group certain risks together.

EUROPE GRAPPLES WITH IMMIGRATION

Migration is a global phenomenon with different historical, political, social, economic and security aspects. Migrations are growing because of population growth, demographic and class differences, changes in natural habitat, political and economic instability, technological advances and globalization. It is estimated that in 2000 there were about 150 million migrants in the world. Ten years later there were 214 million, and the assumed growth by 2050 is 405 million.[2] The main flows of migration are toward highly developed countries and areas. Western Europe has, in the last couple of years, become one of the most desired destinations. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs estimated that in 2010, "Europe is expected to host almost 70 million international migrants, one-third of the global total."[3] That number represents 10 percent of Europe's total population.

On the other hand, Europe is aware of its unquestioned demographic aging and the necessity of rejuvenating society by attracting targeted groups of immigrants to maintain current levels of development. Authors of the study, "Project Europe 2030: Challenges and Opportunities," estimate that by the year 2050 the working population of Europe will have declined by 68 million people. To compensate, at least 100 million immigrants will be needed to fill the gap (including able-bodied workers and dependent families). According to the report, migrants are part of the solution but are also a challenge for development in the European Union.[4]

The mass immigration suggested in the report represents a major political, cultural, social, economic and security challenge for all of Europe because in the near future, every fifth citizen of the EU will have been born outside the EU. One of the problems of the European model for attracting targeted groups of migrants is that a large quota is set aside for highly educated individuals from developing countries. That means Europe, by building its own future, could be depleting human capital in weaker states and slowing development in those countries. In the long run, that situation represents a double-edged sword.

The EU is at a crossroads because, without delay, it has to harmonize a number of multidimensional platforms in the matter of migration, such as coherent migration policies acceptable to all member states; absorption capacities for accepting migrants while sustaining social cohesion within European countries; development and health care aspects of migration; the implications of multiculturalism; respect and protection of basic human rights; joint mechanisms that have been built between member states by hard work in the last couple of decades; the problem of illegal migration and related crime; and the threats of terrorism and radicalization. Special attention should be paid to regulating and controlling migration pressures and protecting human rights of threatened migrants while not disrupting internal security and institutions built by member states. A particular challenge is the need to integrate immigrants and their acceptance of the values of their hosts. That doesn't necessarily mean conformity with central governments, but rather the integration and acceptance of the local community.

The frailty of the European migration model is demonstrated by a situation that occurred in the first half of 2011. On the southern rim of the Mediterranean, something that has been slowly boiling for years surprised everyone and erupted into the Arab Spring: The masses

An Afghan child sits in a wheelbarrow in a slum on the outskirts of Islamabad, Pakistan, in December 2011. About 1.7 million Afghan refugees live in Pakistan.

deprived of their rights stood up to authoritarian regimes. That created further waves of migration toward Mediterranean states to the north. One result of member states accepting the influx of people running from fighting and poverty was a political crisis of the highest level between Italy and France and a real institutional threat to the dissolution of the Schengen borders. France temporarily established border control with Italy, annulling the right of free movement between member states – a right enshrined in the Schengen Treaty.

It is important to mention that many EU residents consider the free movement of people inside the EU – along with the common currency – to be one of the most successful European projects of the last 50 years. The importance of this issue is confirmed by discussions being carried out in the EU about changing the system of controls at the outer borders. Globalization of the issue of border security during the last 20 years further points to the need of an international dimension to dealing with these issues.

Parallel to the events of the Arab Spring, leaders of the strongest and most heterogeneous states of the EU – Germany, France and Great Britain – used almost the same rhetoric in a short time span and said that the concept of multiculturalism failed in their countries. The message mostly concerned "foreigners" living in those countries and not belonging to native ethnic groups. In this way, a strong message was sent to anyone who wasn't "sufficiently integrated" and whose cultural differences were too great, no matter how tolerant the accepting states or societies. That message was also sent to areas that are major sources of both legal and illegal immigrants to the highly developed states of the EU. This wasn't a spur of the moment decision but rather a result of concerns about immigration that have been simmering for decades.

A further challenge for Europe is that certain parties and politicians place immigration at the center of political discourse, inciting xenophobia, radicalizing the political scene and raising security challenges for everybody around them. Their participation in governments and their message directed toward strengthening anti-migration viewpoints result in a security deficit that determines the behavior of executive governments as well as local domestic populations that are growing more negative toward migrants.

Even though the EU has done much to discuss migration in the past couple of decades, discourse is still being conducted on the question of whether immigration is primarily an obligation of law enforcement. That approach is wrong since it is first and foremost a political issue, but also an economic one. One could even argue that migration becomes a security issue only when all other agencies have failed to deal with it.

This complex matrix now requires updating to reflect the needs and aspirations but also the threats of migration flows from Afghanistan. The European perspective is completely different from that on the Afghan side. For the Europeans, migration represents a security challenge and a potential threat; for Afghans, migration is a major "push" factor and represents a way out and eventual benefit.

THE AFGHAN CONNECTION

Migration toward Europe is constantly increasing because of push and pull factors that motivate departure. In correlation with incentives in a wider context of social changes, they can have various dimensions that affect the fates of millions of people and favor great migratory waves. One example is the 30 years of war that have ravaged Afghanistan. During this period, and especially during

Unaccompanied Afghan minors tinker with mobile phones on a bench in Paris. Paris has become a place of refuge for illegal Afghan immigrants. Many are unaccompanied minors as young as 13.

the rigid Taliban rule, several million people not only fled primarily to Pakistan and Iran, but large numbers of people were internally displaced. Consequently, a one-way migratory flow from Afghanistan has lasted for decades.

Afghanistan and the Afghan people were always shaped by their geostrategic location. The land at the crossroads of regions: oil and ideologically rich Middle East; resource rich, but unstable and poor Central Asian countries; and the overpopulated and religiously divided Indian subcontinent. Afghanistan, with 34 million people and several million refugees living abroad (about 1.7 million in Pakistan and 1 million in Iran), is a heterogeneous nation rife with potential challenges: ethnic, linguistic and tribal division; religious, political and educational differences; the divide between rural and urban populations; and conflicts over who controls roads.

Contributing to the divisions are destroyed infrastructure, predominantly poor living conditions, short life spans (48 years on average for both males and females), more than 10 million unmarked land mines, lack of fertile soil and the "Pashtun belt" named for the country's historically dominant ethnic group. In addition, Afghanistan is the poorest country in the world outside Sub-Saharan Africa. Its level of corruption is among the highest in the world, and it leads the world in opium and heroin production. It also has unresolved conflicts with Pakistan, where some state and society elements actively undermine the stability and security of Afghanistan.

In light of these issues, when the significant number of migrants start arriving from that part of the world, additional precautionary measures will be necessary.

The flow of migrants from Afghanistan toward Europe can be viewed through three challenging prisms: first, the large number of immigrants and especially those needing extra help; second, illegal immigrants, especially those connected with organized crime; third, migrations connected with terrorism and radicalization of certain Muslim circles in Europe.

Research and analysis suggest that in the last several years hundreds of thousands of Afghans, both from the home country and refugee camps in Pakistan and Iran, have sought out the EU, becoming one of the largest groups of immigrants to Europe.[5] Events thousands of kilometers from Europe – happening in an area that doesn't represent a natural source of migration to Europe – are producing a continuous influx of migrants and great legal and institutional difficulties for transit and destination countries alike.

It is important to keep in mind the religious, ethnic, linguistic, native, tribal and educational differences in this large group, and that those differences create administrative and technical problems in accommodating and processing migrants. Here it is important to demystify fears that migration is mostly a security issue and state that, in most cases, economics is the reason for migration. It is a cause for worry that, among the multitudes, there

are groups or individuals trying to hide and pass covertly because their motives for entering Europe are different. Those are the challenges of mixed migratory flows.

Minors arriving without escort are an especially sensitive group of Afghan migrants. Estimates suggest they represent a much larger portion of Afghan migrants than they do of other ethnic or social groups. Many have lived through great personal tragedy and have often lost close family members. This creates special challenges for the national institutions and those of the EU. Additionally, it is necessary to mention that, after the start of the Enduring Freedom and International Security Assistance Force operations in Afghanistan, many Afghans realized the possibility of migrating to the countries from which the intervening forces came. While the intervening countries send their people to Afghanistan to work on the stabilization and reconstruction of the country, the Afghans are migrating to the donor countries. The question arises whether the architects of the intervention in Afghanistan reckoned with this phenomenon. This overall group of challenges, although the largest in number of migrants, represents the least expressed security threat for Europe but is certainly not negligible.

ILLEGAL MIGRATION

Another aspect is illegal migration, including unauthorized border crossings, stops or transit through certain countries or failure to leave countries after regular immigration status has expired. Anna Kicinger believes that "illegal migration is generally perceived as the most dangerous part of migratory flows due to its uncontrolled character."[6] There are a large number of crimes involved in illegal migration: theft and counterfeiting of personal and travel documents; various forms of fraud, coercion and molestation; customs infringement; human and organ trafficking; prostitution; and civil servant corruption. Involvement in these criminal activities, directly or indirectly, includes migrants and people in the countries through which migrants flow, from source countries, through transit countries to destination countries.

The migrant flow establishes an international network for these criminal activities and a kind of symbiosis of the criminal groups with the people who wish to migrate. From a security point of view, this shadow group of illegal, unregistered and unknown migrants especially stands out. Of the Afghans arriving in Europe, the majority do not have documents. Most deliberately throw away their documents to hide their identity. One interesting detail is that some Central Asians, who culturally and physically resemble Afghans, try to pass themselves off as Afghans, thinking they will receive preferential treatment and protection.

After arriving at their destinations, if they don't request official protection, some migrants try to get involved in the underground economy. It is estimated that, in the second half of the past decade, between 4 million and 8 million illegal migrants worked in the construction, agriculture, hotel and other sectors of the EU.[7] The question that arises is: Is their stay in Europe silently condoned because whole branches of certain industries would function much worse without the cheap workforce? Afghans take their place in that growing gray labor market. But, in cases where they haven't secured a basic existence and haven't upgraded their status, these people are subject to all sorts of influences, from entering the criminal milieu for purely financial reasons to radicalizing for protection and sense of belonging. The underground status causes a larger degree of ghettoization as well.

One segment of illegal migration is the one connected to organized crime. There are two main forms of organized crime related to illegal migration: human trafficking and human smuggling.[8] The difference between trafficking and smuggling is that smuggling doesn't include the element of exploitation, coercion or human rights abuses as is the case with trafficking.[9] Estimates of criminal profits rise with every increase in the number of migrants being smuggled or trafficked. The "Guide to the New UN Trafficking Protocol" from 2000 estimates that such profits range from $5 billion to $7 billion annually.[10] A large portion of that profit is generated on European territory, a fact that represents a huge security challenge for all in Europe. When some other categories are added to these numbers, profit estimates skyrocket. For example, the International Labour Office, in its report from a conference in 2005, estimated that more than $30 billion of annual profit is generated by forced labor, migration and human trafficking.[11] Afghans add to that number.

Apart from being used for the flow of "regular" migrants, migration corridors are being used by gangs connected with human trafficking and smuggling, as well as heroin smuggling to Europe. Cocaine, synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals flow in the opposite direction. Drug groups in Afghanistan produce 93 percent of the annual level of opium in the world.[12] It is being processed into heroin and the majority of it is shipped to Western Europe, the most profitable market. Migrants are sometimes used as cover for the drug business (drug couriers or "mules").[13]

TACKLING TERRORISM

But the most specific challenge for law enforcement agencies is cooperation and collaboration of organized criminals and terrorist organizations. Organized crime groups may not normally assist terrorist organizations in direct execution of terrorist acts but, through their criminal infrastructure, enable them to counterfeit documents and travel papers; covertly buy goods and equipment; transport personnel and equipment, as well as provide them with safe houses and money to finance terrorism. Such collaboration allows terror organizations to protect the identities of their members.[14]

Europol warns: "The large and growing number of illegal immigrants from countries and regions in which Islamist terrorist groups are active – such as Chechnya, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Somalia – raises the possibility that channels for illegal immigration will be used increasingly by those seeking to engage in terrorist activity in the EU."[15] With these most sensitive security challenges, we should be particularly careful in making cause and effect connections. As Khalid Koser explains, we should be wary of such simplifications as "migration can be a vehicle for importing terrorists and criminals." That possibility is not excluded, but, as Koser continues: "These are dangerously misleading perceptions, but nonetheless widespread. First, there is very little evidence from any country in the world that there is a greater concentration of terrorists, potential terrorists or criminals among migrant populations than among local populations."[16]

However, other authors suggest the influx of unknown and potentially dangerous migrants rightfully represents a huge security challenge, especially in their connection with those circles in Europe that were already radicalized. Bruce Hoffman points to a barely noticeable and unpredictably small base in the huge Muslim diaspora that represents an enormous security threat.[17] Carlos Ortiz, adding to Hoffman's viewpoint, believes that migratory flows established during the last century and enriched by a large influx of political refugees after the 1990s have become the medium for certain radical Muslim circles in Europe. These circles have provided jihadists for Middle East conflicts and have influenced the creation of terrorist cells in Europe. "The attacks in Madrid on March 11, 2004, and London on July 7, 2005, were fed from this terrorist pool."[18]

Here it is necessary to mention again that it is essential to be careful to avoid the identification of the majority with the minority because in every society there are those who act against the system. Despite all the previously mentioned challenges, perhaps one of the biggest threats is radicalization of certain members of the Muslim community in Europe. Many travel to terrorist camps in the predominantly uncontrolled parts of Pakistan on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan (but not only there), where they train and are indoctrinated and then return to Europe with extremist views and plans. This last phenomenon is distinctly disturbing and dangerous. Decision-makers in the highly developed countries must be especially careful not to contribute to radicalization with their decisions.

CONCLUSION

Under the influence of globalization, increased mobility and information availability, immigration is growing fast. The challenges of migration have never been so great and diverse, with so many subjects included in the migration flows. Europe finds itself at the forefront of the great challenge of immigration, both because it needs immigrants and because it must deal with various security challenges and threats. The great majority of migrants, including those from Afghanistan, don't represent hard security issues for Europe but create other social, financial and political challenges. Many refer to handling illegal immigration as a "battle," but it is in fact an attempt to mitigate consequences when the causes of the migration have been unjustly ignored. It is important to deal with the causes in the source countries of migration. As long as there isn't sincere cooperation on both sides, along with the will to solve issues of migration between source and destination countries, a major part of solving the problem will reside in the security sector, which cannot rise to these challenges because it is too diversified and lacks the ability to address such complex challenges. A whole of government approach could be more effective in addressing migration. □

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