

response to geopolitical threats, and each time its efforts ended catastrophically. The German analysis is that engaging in politico-military maneuvers outside of a broad coalition exposes Germany to tremendous danger. Atlantic Europe sees Germany as a buffer against Russia and will see any threat in the Baltics as being irrelevant to their interests. Therefore, they will not join the coalition Germany needs to face the Russians. So the most likely outcome will be German inaction, limited American involvement, and a gradual return of Russian power into the borderland between Europe and Russia.

But there is another scenario. In this scenario Germany will recognize the imminent danger to Poland in Russian domination of the Baltics. Seeing Poland as a necessary part of German national security, it will thus exercise a forward policy, designed to protect Poland by protecting the Baltics. Germany will move to dominate the Baltic basin. Since the Russians will not simply abandon the field, the Germans will find themselves in an extended confrontation with the Russians, competing for influence in Poland and in the Carpathian region.

Germany will find itself, of necessity, both split off from its aggressive past and from the rest of Europe. While the rest of Europe will try to avoid involvement, the Germans will be engaged in traditional power politics. As they do that, their effective as well as potential power will soar and their psychology will shift. Suddenly, a united Germany will be asserting itself again. What starts defensively will evolve in unexpected ways.

This is not the most likely scenario. However, the situation might galvanize Germany back into its traditional role of looking at Russia as a major threat, and looking at Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe as a part of its sphere of influence and as protection against the Russians. This depends partly on how aggressively the Russians move, how tenaciously the Balts resist, how much risk the Poles are willing to take, and how distant the United States intends to be. Finally, it depends on internal German politics.

Internally, Europe is inert, still in shock over its losses. But external forces such as Islamic immigration or Russian attempts to rebuild its empire could bring the old fault line back to life in various ways.

THE MUSLIM WORLD

We have already discussed the Islamic world in general as a fault line. The current crisis is being contained, but the Islamic world, overall, remains unstable. While this instability will not gel into a general Islamist uprising, it does raise the possibility of a Muslim nation-state taking advantage of the instability, and therefore the weaknesses within other states, to assert itself as a regional power. Indonesia, the largest Muslim state in the world, is in no position to assert itself. Pakistan is the second-largest Muslim state. It is also a nuclear power. But it is so internally divided that it is difficult to see how it could evolve into a major power or, geographically, how it could spread its power, bracketed by Afghanistan to the west, China and Russia to the north, and India to the east. Between instability and geography, Pakistan is not going to emerge as a leading Muslim state.

After Indonesia and Pakistan, there are three other major Muslim nation-states. The largest is Egypt with 80 million people, Turkey is second with 71 million people, and Iran is third with 65 million.

When we look at the three economically, Turkey has the seventeenth-largest economy in the world, with a GDP of about \$660 billion. Iran is twenty-ninth, with a GDP of just under \$300 billion. Egypt is fifty-second, with a GDP of about \$125 billion a year. For the past five years Turkey's economy has been growing at 5 to 8 percent a year, one of the highest sustained growth rates for any major country. With the exception of two years of recession, Iran has also had a sustained GDP growth rate of over 6 percent for the past five years, as has Egypt. These two countries are growing fast, but they are starting with a much smaller base than Turkey. Compared to European countries, Turkey already has the seventh-largest economy and is growing faster than most.

Now, it's true that economic size is not everything. Iran appears to be the most aggressive of the three geopolitically—but that is actually its basic weakness. In trying to protect its regime against the United States, Sunni Muslims, and anti-Iranian Arabs (Iran is not an Arab country), Iran is constantly forced to be prematurely assertive. In the process, it draws the attention of the United States, which then inevitably focuses on Iran as a dangerous power.