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"Militarized" Refugees – "A Success Story"

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Current events in Syria and the broader Middle East have brought forth the idea of "militarized" refugees. This is not a new concept but its present incarnation comes most clearly from General Breedlove – a misnomer if there ever was one – who said,

> "These indiscriminate weapons used by both Bashar al-Assad, and the non-precision use of weapons by the Russian forces — I can't find any other reason for them other than to cause refugees to be on the move and make them someone else's problem ...Together, Russia and the Assad regime are deliberately weaponizing migration in an attempt to overwhelm European structures and break European resolve," [1]

This whole statement is essentially a lie. The military weapons being used by al-Assad may be imprecise, but the targeting by Russian forces has displayed accurate and effective attacks against ISIS and al-Qaeda associated terrorists. It is certainly not within their plans to create a wave of refugees as that could have considerable blowback (I'll revisit this idea later) towards Russia in both the European and the Caucasus regions.

Defining "militarized" refugees

The main point however is the weaponizing – referred to by others in politics and the press as militarizing – of the refugees. This carries two aspects: first that the refugees themselves are the weapon, as indicated by Breedlove, in order to "overwhelm" social and economic structures of the EU; second, that some of the refugees are trained and armed for terrorist attacks.

It could well be true that there are militarized refugees in the EU arriving from the Middle East, but the source is certainly not the Syrian government nor the Russian military. If there is a source one only need examine the actions of Turkey over the past several months to realize that Turkey is the initiative behind the migration. For Turkey it is an effort to blackmail the EU and NATO into supporting Turkey's goals in the Middle East which is essentially to establish a new mini-Caliphate supported by ISIS in Syria and Iraq.

Concept in history

The militarized refugee concept is not a new historical construct. An online search will bring the reference up in mostly academic papers in all areas of recent conflict from Rwanda to Yugoslavia and over to Vietnam. These papers also carry the same two ideas about refugees: one, that the refugees themselves are the weapon; and that refugees are militarized once they are in a foreign country.

Both these ideas have elements of truth to them, but only elements. For the latter point, it

is mainly an academic-social construct. For the former point – that is Breedlove's – it is pure propaganda over an opportunistic Turkish government's not so well planned idea.

There is one area that I could not find a reference about any militarized refugees even though that area is by the above definitions the most singular powerful example of militarized refugees being used to "overwhelm…structures and break…resolve."

Israel – primarily militarized refugees

Reading the history of Jewish migration and refugees entering into Palestine is a prime example of militarized refugees being used to control a region, its resources, and its population. This is true for both aspects relative to Jewish refugees. They were seen as weapons of control simply by their existence in Palestine. More overwhelmingly, the immigrants were weaponized both before and after arrival in Palestine.

It started at the political level, mainly in the UK. The British imperial interests recognized the value of the Middle East oil reserves as an energy source for the Royal Navy. This coincided with its colonial India interests and thus in maintaining a peaceful transit route through the Suez Canal. The British government makes reference to a Jewish state as an "outpost" of western control in the region, couched in the usual imperial terms of civilization and freedom. The declarations within the Balfour letter, while not a legal nor international document, helped create the support for a Jewish state in Palestine.

At first the historical record is mostly passive, with occasional riots and attacks as the Jewish immigrants set about to control as much land and as much political space as they could. At this point the main military action descended from the British forces. Before WW II in the late 1930s a large rebellion by the Palestinians was put down by British military forces, aided by Jewish partisans.

As momentum gathered towards WW II, the Irgun (formed in 1931), the Haganah (1921), and the even more militant Stern Gang (1940) undertook many "militarized" actions. Much of that was directed at the British who at the time considered the groups to be terrorists. Thus, even before WW II, the situation in Palestine consisted of highly militarized refugees attempting to "overwhelm…structures and break…resolve."

Postwar militarization

WW II of course significantly changed the momentum of the creation of Israel. In postwar Europe there were masses of refugees and displaced persons, many of whom were Jewish survivors of Nazi attempts to eliminate them.

They were militarized to a great degree by the politics of the day, as the U.S., Canada, and other untouched countries severely limited immigration of Jewish refugees. This is in part due to the influence of Jewish pressure on various governments to encourage the Jewish refugees to go to Israel.

The U.S. became the world superpower and its Jewish lobby supported the creation of Israel for the same reasons as the UK: to create an outpost of "civilization" in the Middle East, an outpost that would continue to control the region's resources and people. It was also to serve as a bulwark against the burgeoning Cold War and the imagined threat from the Soviet Union.

In the above sense, the refugees themselves were a military weapon. More importantly and often left out of the narrative is the nature of the actual militarization by armed force of the Jewish national interest.

Militarized Judaism

The Haganah, Irgun, and Stern Gang were militarily trained units already operating within Palestine (paramilitaries). They had superior organization and superior weaponry to anything the Palestinians had. After the war they morphed into the Israeli Defense Forces (1948) a conscript army to which all Israeli citizens (excepting some religious sects) had to join. Adding to this military superiority were the large number of seasoned and well trained personnel returning from action in WW II.

The Jewish narrative of a small population being overwhelmed by a superior Arab force is simply a myth as per more recent research into the IDF archives. The Jewish forces were numerically superior after the war, with most references giving them a three to one advantage over the Arab forces. The yishuv had already created its own small armaments industry, had taken over the structure and supplies left by the British, and were continually importing military equipment and supplies from Europe.

Even before the war of independence, some of these forces had started the ethnic cleansing of Palestine. After the war officially began and the other Arab countries entered the war, the ethnic cleansing continued unabated and the Arab forces were in most cases readily defeated.

Israel today – a militarized success

From that time forward Israel has always used the fear narrative to rationalize its ever increasing militarization and control of the region. It has had the continued support of the U.S. and more recently the EU along with the UK for its role as an outpost of western control of the region. But Israel has gone well beyond that and acts simply in what it perceives to be its own best interests, or at least the best interests of the ruling elite.

Today Israel stands as the the third most powerful nuclear state in the world with most recent estimates running consistently as high as 300 weapons (tieing for third spot with France). It operates outside the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and has not formally announced its arsenal. Its schools, politics, and industry are highly intertwined with the military.

Israel receives massive 'aid' from the U.S. much of it for military technology and weapons. At the same time Israel has become the sixth largest arms exporter in the world, dealing with friend and foe alike. It also deals with 'security' apparatus ranging from drones through to crowd control technology all well tested in Gaza and the West Bank.

Israel is obviously very secure militarily, in spite of its ongoing 'fear' manipulation concerning Iran and its supposed nuclear weapons program. Israel exists, it will continue to exist against any and all threats…

…except perhaps for its own internal contradictions and the demographic threat that it has always perceived as its biggest worry. For the latter reason it is adamantly opposed to any right of return by the refugees. And as demonstrated by their own success with "militarized" refugees, it is a valid concern for the maintenance of the Jewish state as an

ethnic entity.

Blowback

Because of Israel's success, and the ongoing pursuit of global dominance by the U.S./NATO/EU partnership, there have been millions of displaced persons and refugees in the Middle East and South Asia over the past several decades. As a result of western military depredations against these other formerly stable – if autocratic – governments – most specifically in Libya, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan – a mass migration movement should not be a surprise.

What has not been recognized is that the current "militarized" refugee crisis is not caused by Russia or Syria, but by previous wars initiated by the west. When the pressure became too great for Turkey, they opened the gates towards Europe and allowed the refugees to flow out.

Israel is the greatest global success story concerning militarized/weaponized refugees. The current refugee crisis 'aimed' at Europe is blowback from that success.

Note

[1] *NATO's Gen. Breedlove: Syrian refugees are weapons against Europe.* Ed Adamczyk. March 2, 2016. www.wpi.com

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