

Headlines:

- **Trump, Islam and the Clash of Civilisations**
- **Greece is Set to Ditch the Euro in Favour of US Dollar**
- **US Commander Warns of Russian, Iranian, Pakistani Influence in Afghanistan**

Detail:

Trump, Islam and the Clash of Civilisations

The hostility to Muslims is finding adherents across the western world. Donald Trump's travails with his "Muslim ban" make it easy to dismiss the whole idea as an aberration that will swiftly be consigned to history by the judicial system and the court of public opinion. But that would be a misreading. The ban on migrants and refugees from seven mainly Muslim countries was put together clumsily and executed cruelly. But it responded to a hostility to Islam and a craving for security and cultural homogeneity that is finding adherents across the western world — and not just on the far right. Even if Mr Trump's ban is withdrawn or amended, it will probably be just the beginning of repeated efforts — in the US and Europe — to restrict migration from the Muslim world into the West. The fact that Mr Trump's closest advisers believe they are engaged in a battle to save western civilisation is a key to understanding the Trump administration. It helps explain why the president, in his inaugural address, pledged to defend the "civilised world" — not the "free world", the phrase that would have been naturally used by a Ronald Reagan or a John F Kennedy. This tendency to conceive of the West in civilisational or even racial terms — rather than through ideology or institutions — also helps explain the Trump team's sympathy with Vladimir Putin's Russia and hostility to Angela Merkel's Germany.

Once the West is thought of as synonymous with "Judeo-Christian civilisation" then Mr Putin looks more like a friend than a foe. The Russian president's closeness to the Orthodox Church, his cultural conservatism and his demonstrated willingness to fight brutal wars against Islamists in Chechnya and Syria cast him as an ally. By contrast, Ms Merkel's willingness to admit more than a million mostly Muslim refugees into Germany make America's alt-right regard her as a traitor to western civilisation. President Trump has called the German chancellor's refugee policy a "catastrophic" error. Through his Breitbart news service, Mr Bannon forged close ties with the European far-right, who share his hostility to Islam and immigration. The belief that the West is engaged in a mortal struggle with radical Islam clearly animates Marine Le Pen, leader of France's National Front, who recently argued that: "Washington, Paris and Moscow must form a strategic alliance against Islamic fundamentalism... Let us stop the quarrels and unnecessary polemics, the scale of the threat forces us to move fast, and together."

Far-right parties with a Trumpian view of Islam are also prospering in the Netherlands and in Germany. The Freedom party led by Geert Wilders is set to top the polls in next month's Dutch elections — although it is unlikely to enter government. In Germany, the Alternative for Germany party has surged in response to the refugee crisis, and is likely to become the first far-right party to enter the country's parliament since 1945. Some in the

British government believe that hostility to immigration from the Islamic world — more than Europe — lay behind the discontent that triggered the Brexit vote last year. Sympathy for the Bannon-Flynn-Trump view of Islam extends beyond the US and Europe. A belief that their nations face an elemental threat from radical Islam is also an animating force on the rightwing of Indian and Israeli politics. Even if Mr Trump loses the battle over his executive order on refugees and immigration, he is likely to return to the fray with further measures. That is because his closest advisers and many of his strongest supporters will remain driven by a deep suspicion of Islam and a determination to stop Muslim immigration. [Source: Financial Times]

The war of civilizations between Islam and the West began in earnest during the crusader years, and have continued since. This is a struggle between truth and falsehood, and truth will prevail. Allah (swt) says:

﴿ وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ ۚ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا ﴾ “And say: "Truth has (now) arrived, and Falsehood perished: for Falsehood is (by its nature) bound to perish." [TMQ: 17:81]

Greece is Set to Ditch the Euro in Favour of US Dollar

Greece is said to be considering ditching the Euro in favour of the US dollar in a devastating move which would humiliate Brussels. Donald Trump's pick for EU ambassador Ted Malloch claimed senior Greek economists are looking into taking on the American banknotes if the country turns its back on the European currency. Due to Greece's crippling financial crisis, officials are said to be desperately searching for an alternative to the Eurozone, which would 'freak out' Angela Merkel, according to Malloch. Prof Malloch was interviewed on Greek TV, where he said Greece leaving the EU would be the best option for residents, and added the current situation is 'simply unsustainable'. 'I know some Greek economists who have even gone to leading think tanks in the US to discuss this topic and the question of dollarization,' he said, according to local press. 'Such a topic of course freaks out the Germans because they really don't want to hear such ideas.' The likely candidate for the Brussels envoy job has previously stated he expects the Euro to crash by 2018. His comments come just four days after one of the EU's most powerful finance chiefs warned Greece will be forced out of the Eurozone if it fails to address its ailing finances. Amid growing concern about the outbreak of another European economy crisis, German finance minister Wolfgang Schaeuble said calls to slash the country's debt mountain would lead to Grexit. The blunt assessment by Angela Merkel's finance chief follows a damning report by the International Monetary Fund that claimed Greece's fragile economy would soon become 'explosive'. In a move that is threatening to destroy the current bailout package, the Washington-based body called for Europe to send even more money to cut Greece's 'highly unsustainable' debt. The war of words about how to avoid another crisis and assist the Greek economy intensified yesterday as officials desperately tried to reach agreement. But Mr Schaeuble rubbished the IMF's call for the EU to inject more money into Greek coffers and said that Germany had no intention of providing a 'debt haircut'. 'For that, Greece would have to exit the currency area,' he said. A standoff between the eurozone and the International Monetary Fund has dragged on for months, raising fears of a new debt crisis and sparking fresh talk of Greece tumbling out of the euro. Talking of the Greek crisis, Prof Malloch told Skai TV: 'Greece might have to sever ties and do Grexit and exit the euro. It needs debt restructuring, it really needs debt relief, and I know people in Europe don't want to hear that [Source: Daily Mail]

Forces of populism and anti-liberalism are threatening to tear apart the EU. Europe is slowly gravitating to its normal position of nation states fueled by hyper-nationalism. The aberration of peace on the continent for the past 70 years is likely to give way to war.

US Commander Warns of Russian, Iranian, Pakistani Influence in Afghanistan

The top U.S. commander in Afghanistan says Russia, Pakistan and Iran are pursuing their own agendas with regard to the fragile country, complicating the fight against terrorism and extremism. "We're concerned about outside actors," General John Nicholson told VOA's Afghan service in an interview. Russia, which had an ill-fated intervention into Afghanistan that started in 1979 and ended nearly a decade later, has been trying to exert influence in the region again and has set up six-country peace talks next week that are excluding the United States. Nicholson worries about Russia's links with the Taliban. "Russia has been legitimizing the Taliban and supporting the Taliban," he said. "Meanwhile, the Taliban supports terrorists. I'm very sorry to see Russia supporting the Taliban and narcoterrorism." Despite the Taliban's history of violence and extremism, Nicholson didn't rule out a role for the Taliban in the peace process, saying there were elements in the group that appeared to be more pragmatic about the country's prospects for peace. "Many of its leaders see a better life for all Afghans," he said. Meanwhile, he said Iran appeared to be supporting extremists in western Afghanistan. "But the situation is more complex than with Russia," Nicholson said. "There needs to be a relationship" between Afghanistan and Iran, which have seen a resurgence in trade that has partially compensated for a decline in Afghan economic activity with Pakistan. President Donald Trump's new administration has made a flurry of contacts with top Afghan and Pakistani officials in recent days as it formulates a new policy in the region. That clearly involves pressure on Islamabad to do more to crack down on terrorist groups that hide out near the Afghan border in Pakistan's volatile tribal areas. "We want cooperation from Pakistan against all terrorists," Nicholson said. "We must have pressure on external sanctuaries in Pakistan." Rooting out terrorists would help ease Pakistan's concerns about further attacks on its turf that are seen by many as a penalty for the country's support for the U.S. war on terrorism, he said. "We all hope for a change in Pakistani behavior," Nicholson said. "This is in Pakistan's interest." [Source: Voice of America]

America firmly controls Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, and so far has failed to extinguish the ferocity of the Afghan resistance. By singling out Russian interference, America may seek to expand Russian participation similar to Syria.