



**Institute
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Commentary

Future Surprises that Could Shock the World: A Symposium

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<http://www.danielpipes.org/17178/future-surprises-that-could-shock-the-world>

Symposium introduction:

First it was the Arab Spring. Then the 2008 global financial crisis. Then Brexit. International conventional wisdom always seems unaware of the big changes about to unfold. There are in the present few facts about the future. Ten years ago, who would have predicted surprise developments such as negative interest rates, the potential breakup of the European Union, the Donald Trump effect, drones, the use of driverless cars, the rise of ISIS, the myriad uses of artificial intelligence and big data, U.S. energy independence, the emergence of the Zika virus, or the rate at which robots are taking away jobs. TIE asked more than fifty top thinkers to look ahead ten years at what outside-the-box developments could shock the world.

I foresee two surprise developments in my areas of study:

First, as indicated by the half of Austrians who recently voted for the Freedom Party's candidate for president, a rebellion is underway in Europe against permissive immigration and multiculturalism. Expect to see populist parties implement tough policies *vis-à-vis* Muslim populations, who will respond with anger and violence. Steady low-grade civil insurrection will follow, leading eventually to larger scale clashes. In the end, Muslims in substantial numbers, finding Europe uncongenial, will abandon it for Muslim-majority countries. I call this the "separation of civilizations."

Second, the Islamist movement appears to be strong and growing, spanning a wide range of tactics from the fanatical murderousness of the Islamic State's caliphate to the increasing authoritarianism of Turkey's elected President Erdoğan. But, I predict, the movement will have much weakened in a decade. Two reasons mainly account for this decline: Islamists are ever-more inclined to engage in internecine strife (such as in Syria); and Muslim populations generally reject Islamist strictures when they experience these (think of Egyptians under Morsi). The overthrow of the Islamic Republic of Iran will culminate this decline, leading to a post-Islamist era.

Mr. Pipes is president of the Middle East Forum.