

# The Collapse of Europe's Socialist Experiment

By Victor Davis Hanson

We're hearing a lot about Europe in the news, primarily because of the Ukraine-Russian war and the trade wars or tariff disagreements with the United States. But the more we see contemporary Europe, the more we have grounds for deep concern.

There are mass demonstrations in Britain against [illegal immigration](#) and crime that's not treated in the way it is with citizens. There's a perception that immigrants, many of them in Britain illegally, are not treated equally. And I mean equally in the system, that they're not treated severely as they should be, according to the law.

In Germany, there are massive defections in support for illegal migration.

Remember, former Chancellor Angela Merkel said, "Yes, we can let in people from the [Middle East](#)."

Mostly Muslims.

She let in 1 million into Germany. It's got 15% to 16% of the population are aliens. They're not German citizens. They weren't born in Germany.

We have the same type of unrest appearing in the Netherlands



and, to a lesser degree, in France.

Unfortunately, illegal immigration and unsecured borders are not Europe's only problems. They made a conscientious decision—that is, most European countries—to lessen their carbon footprint, on the idea that they were going to go to zero-net emissions. Meaning, they would disavow all use of fossil fuels. The result, in a country like Germany, they shut down nuclear power plants, they shut down gas- and oil-fed plants. And the same is in true Britain.

And we're seeing, across the board in Europe, energy prices spiking. And average citizens can't turn on the heat in the winter or air conditioning—to the extent they have it—in the summer. But more importantly even, their businesses are not competitive globally now because the price per kilowatt-hour is more expensive than even here, the failed state of California, which has the highest electricity cost in the United States. Again, because of similar policies of Europe.

But that's not the only problem. The postwar order of 80 years is over with.

Remember, the United States rebuilt Europe, or helped to try to rebuilt [Europe](#), through the Marshall Plan, the creation of NATO, the Bretton Woods Accords that had the World Bank, International Monetary Fund. The idea was that in the shambles of World War II, we needed to get the European powerhouse economies back on their feet. And with them, the global economy.

So, the United States really had two or three principal agendas. They were going to allow free entry into the U.S. market, from a recovering Europe, while allowing them, Europe, to have high tariffs against American exports. We were gonna subsidize the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Not so much during the Cold War. Europe stepped up to the plate. But after the Cold War, in the last 30 or so years, we have been

subsidizing 16% to 18% of the budget and much more to keep global communications—sea lanes, travel—safe from terrorists and belligerence.

That's over with now.

There is now a war, not in Chechnya, not in Georgia, but right on their doorstep with Russia and Ukraine. And the Europeans had not all made their promises, when [Donald Trump](#) came into office in 2017, to invest 2% of their gross domestic product on military affairs. Trump was severely criticized for badgering them. Now, almost 22 or 23 of the 32 nations have met their NATO requirements. And now they promise to go up to 5%.

But recently, the German chancellor, Friedrich Merz, said, "We can't afford the welfare state anymore." And I think his subtext was: "We can't afford to subsidize 15% of our population who came here, for the most part, illegally, and are on entitlements."

But in a wider sense, the whole socialist paradigm is not producing goods and service that allow such general entitlements. The borders are insecure. Illegal immigrants are not assimilated, acculturated, integrated into the German, French, European body politic. And they're gonna have a terrible time spending 5% of GDP to defend themselves. This is in addition to having to lower their \$200 billion surplus with the United States.

In conclusion, we know what Europe has to do. It has to return to commonsense energy policies; use their natural gas, use oil, to the extent they have it; build nuclear plants; be competitive on the world market, in terms of energy cost. They need to secure their borders. They need to have legal-only immigration. They need to prune back the state, the socialist state.

Can they do it? It's gonna be very difficult because many in

Europe feel, as [the American Left](#), that the medicine is worse than the disease. And if that's true, Europe, our partner in the West, is going to be looking at some pretty tough times ahead.

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