

## Republican Perspective

25 November 2015

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### Refujihad

Remember the heart-wrenching picture of a Turkish policeman carrying the body of a Syrian toddler who had drowned in the surf? The child had been on a boat overloaded with refugees fleeing from Syria to Europe. The photograph became emblematic of the refugee crisis: families on the run from the murderous Assad regime. But is that an accurate representation of the tide of refugees?

Surely, there are families---lots of them---amongst the horde of humanity sweeping into Europe. And they are often the focus of the news photos and videos. But it struck me, as I saw more and more of the coverage, that a disproportionate number of the refugees were men. Men who appeared to be of military age.

The latest available data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees supports this observation. The UNHCR says that for 2015, 65% of the refugees are men, 20% children, and only 14% women. The UNHCR does not break down the ages, but the available news photos show the men to be almost all young---hardly a retiree in the bunch.

A refugee population with the predominant demographic being military-aged males is an extremely odd, if not completely unheard of, situation. Intuitively, you would expect that a refugee population would consist of families. Or maybe predominantly women and children---the young men having stayed behind. But here we have just the opposite.

If the tide of refugees were indeed women and children, families, orphans, the humanitarian impulse to take them in would be justified. But military-aged men? Shouldn't the proper response be to turn them around and send them back toward the families they left behind? Or perhaps turn them into an expatriate army, equip them, and send them to reclaim their country? Maybe there are other options. But taking them in, as Europe (and especially Germany) is doing seems to be the wrong answer.

It seems also a safe bet that hidden among this flood of young male refugees there are at least some who are jihadis in sheep's clothing---gaining entrance to the West by riding the tide of legitimate asylum seekers and taking advantage of the Western values of religious tolerance and open arms for the oppressed. The problem, of course, is that there is no way of vetting them, no way to sort them out.

As if to illustrate the point, it turns out that at least one of the November 13 Paris killers passed northward through Greece on October 3, hidden in the horde of Syrian refugees.

Even those who do not plan to make war on the West are a potential problem. They will constitute a population of young unattached Muslim males. Unless they easily assimilate---which is not the predominant history of Muslims in the West---they will settle in enclaves, retaining their own culture and values. Ripe for radicalization in a local mosque run by a jihadist Imam. The examples are abundant, but the Tsarnaev brothers are the poster-boys for political refugees who later became radicalized and committed terrorism against their host country.

National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes announced on November 15, and President Obama has confirmed several times since then, that the administration plans to take in at least ten thousand Syrian refugees despite the Paris attacks. The President indicates a boundless confidence in the administration's vetting process---the French experience does not seem to give him pause.

Don't think me heartless for suggesting that we should not welcome unvetted military-age Muslim males into our nation. I don't advocate that we turn back the women and children, the orphans, the geezers. I do believe we should take in the most vulnerable refugees: Christians who are being brutally persecuted---unlikely there's a single jihadi among them.

What we should do is to triage the refugees. Accept those least problematic and most deserving of asylum---Christians, Muslim women and kids. Turn away those least deserving---military-age Muslim males.