



Episode 486: The Syrian Refugee Crisis: What's the Cause?

Guest: Daniel McAdams

WOODS: We're looking at this refugee crisis that's going on now, coming from the Middle East into Europe, and you've been writing a little about it. You've linked me to the Diana Johnstone article, and I've been reading her for a number of years. I remember she did tremendous work on the Balkans and on Kosovo in the 1990s. Even though she comes at in on the Left, she, unlike most of the Left, is actually skeptical of official statements, which is what the Left used to be. So she's valuable to read, and I'm going to link to what you sent me on today's show notes page, which will be TomWoods.com/486. I'll link to your two pieces on this. But before we can evaluate what ought to be done and what's being done, what is exactly is happening? What is the root cause of this? Why now?

MCADAMS: Well, Hungary had been warning for a number of months that refugees or illegal migrants were crossing its border in increasing numbers, and the only thing that Hungary got back from Brussels is basically shut up and take it. They were criticized and ridiculed by Brussels for being concerned about this, and all of a sudden in the past week or so, a pretty good-sized trickle turned into an absolute flood, where you have thousands of people crossing the border from Serbia into Hungary every day. And really, no country I don't think even in the best of times could handle such a massive influx of people, and Hungary of course is wealthier than it was during communism, but it's still not a wealthy country. I daresay even Germany, a relatively wealthy country is going to have a very difficult time taking in hundreds of thousands of people. So it's an absolutely huge crisis in Europe on any number of levels.

But if you look going back, as you asked, about the nature of what's happening, the vast majority of those who are escaping are coming from Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan. (laughing) And you might ask yourself, Tom, hmmm, what do those three countries have in common?

WOODS: (laughing) Yeah, indeed. And I think the answer has a little something to do with what the Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity specializes in telling us about.

MCADAMS: Exactly. I mean, these have all been on the receiving end of U.S. bombs, and what's astounding and astonishing, and I guess we shouldn't be surprised, but the neocons, when facing the stark failure of their policy of interventionism that we were

promised would bring democracy and prosperity to all of the Middle East and North Africa, when faced with this absolute failure, what do they do? They blame the non-interventionists and the realists. Yes, if we had only gone into Syria earlier, this never would have happened.

WOODS: Yeah, you could predict that that was the spin they would put on it.

MCADAMS: But guess what. We went into Libya earlier, and guess what happened. So it's an absolute lie. The evidence is there. We went into Iraq so early that they weren't even a threat at the time, and it still happened. So unfortunately the media still gives them so much leeway, they still give them all the microphones in the mainstream media, and so they can still peddle their lies. But I hope some people are starting to wake up and realizing this doesn't make sense.

WOODS: Well, I'm reading here about this whole phenomenon, and the consensus is that people are saying that the situation in the Middle East, but particularly in Syria, is just so hopeless that it seems like now is the time to get out, especially because you have countries in Europe that are obviously – or at least the political elites in those countries – are quite interested in and willing to receive these people and provide for them in various ways and no doubt spend enormous amounts of money settling them and providing for them, so now seems the time to get out. What exactly is the situation so to speak on the ground in Syria right now, such that things would seem hopeless to somebody?

MCADAMS: Well, I think – and again, I don't have specific information; I only have powers of observation of the obvious – but when I look at the people – and I wrote a little bit about this this past weekend – but when I look at the people who I saw arriving in Munich, to me they don't look like what I would think of as refugees. They're well dressed; they're in Western clothes; they've got iPhones; they're even stylish, I might add.

And that's not to say that everyone has to look dejected, but what it says to me, and Dr. Paul and I did a show about this too, we wonder if it's not the middle class. After all, these people are paying smugglers to get to Europe. A lot of them are leaving from Turkey. As a matter of fact, the family of that little boy whose picture sort of captivated the world was leaving a refugee camp in Turkey. They're paying smugglers, from what I hear, up to \$2,000 a person to be smuggled into Greece, and some of these, of course, on really horrible boats. So how many Americans could whip out a couple of grand without using their credit card to do anything these days?

So I think these people are middle class people, and I think it's probably a function of an economy that's destroyed and a certain amount of hopelessness that comes with the middle class, the burger class, the merchant class having really nothing to look forward to.

WOODS: Is this a situation that – he asks rhetorically – has been exacerbated by Western intervention in Syria?

MCADAMS: Sure, and this is where I get a little bit annoyed. Everyone says, well, this is all because of Assad. And I don't want to sound, Tom, like a defender of Assad. Frankly, I don't really care either way. It's none of our business. But we simply have to face facts. If this is all Assad's fault, then why in 2010 weren't people streaming out? Why in 2009? It was only after the U.S., followed by France and the U.K., announced that Assad must go, and they started fomenting an uprising, and they started from the very beginning, which by the way was full of jihadists, started funding and financing and training covertly in Jordan – the CIA did – people to come and overthrow the government. They were caught up, they were intoxicated by the so-called Arab Spring, and they thought they were sort of going to keep things moving, and Syria did not fall for whatever reason, and that is the origin, that is the genesis of the crisis right now. It is literally U.S. and Western intervention that created this problem.

WOODS: All right, what kind of numbers have we been dealing with so far, in terms of migrants? I'm hearing a figure – not that this has happened yet – but I could swear I heard something like the number 800,000 being bandied about as the number of people that the Germans would be willing to help out. Now obviously not that many have moved at this point, but where's that number coming from.

MCADAMS: I think that's the number that Angela Merkel announced that they would be willing or capable of sort of subsuming into German society. My guess is if you asked the German people, they are going to be a lot less enthused about this. You know, Marine Le Pen has plenty of her own faults, but she made an interesting point that Germany is just wanting to import slaves into its economy, which could be the case, who knows?

WOODS: Sounds like something Donald Trump would say, actually.

MCADAMS: Exactly. But I've seen a number of about, say, 3,000 a day coming into Hungary. I think I saw this last week. And it's ongoing as we speak, Tom. I mean, Hungary right now is on the border with Serbia, is facing a sort of mini-insurrection. It's trying to get these people into refugee centers so they can be documented, which is required by EU law, and they're breaking out, they're very unruly. I think you may even have seen some video of it. They're extremely unruly, and these are really, if you look at them, the vast majority from what I've seen are men of fighting age, are men of army age, and they look very healthy. So these are going to be tough to contain. And now that this group of them has made it to Germany, you can imagine the incentive for the rest of those that have been contemplating the trip.

WOODS: Now, is it the case that these people who are arriving would be eligible for all the benefits or at least some portion of the welfare state benefits of Germany and some of these other places?

MCADAMS: I think that's absolutely the incentive, is the incredible benefits compared to Syria, where there's nothing but despair to face.

WOODS: All right, so hold on a minute. So that means that this is basically a subsidized movement on a part of a lot of these people. This is a movement that would not be taking place or would not be taking place to these particular countries if these government policies were not in place. So it's — when you deal with immigration and libertarians, a lot of times they're just so dying to show you how politically correct they are that the movement of peoples matters more than any other consideration in the world. Well, if only libertarianism mattered more than any other consideration in the world to them, they would have the policy that, yes, move anywhere you like, but as of today, nobody coming into our country gets welfare. You get no taxpayer support whatsoever. And yes, it's not ideal. We'd like to take it away from the natives too. But you've got to start somewhere. I know libertarians who would die a thousand deaths before adopting that policy, even though that would do vastly more to scale back the state than any of the policy proposals they've put out in the past 50 years.

MCADAMS: Yeah, I mean, I've sort of sat at the foot of the master, so I've learned a lot from Ron Paul about immigration, and his views I think are similar to yours, and they make the most sense. It really is a private property issue, even to the point of the welfare state, because the welfare state exists through the theft of individuals' money. So it is a private property issue in terms of welfare, and also, if there were more private ownership, immigration would be a lot less, because you would — Dr. Paul uses the example that if it was a private island and everyone owned part of it, you couldn't just come there on the shore and get off and live. Things would be owned. So I think you're right; there is a real divide among those who call themselves libertarian, but the private property argument makes the most sense to me.

WOODS: All right, so here we are faced, though, with a serious moral problem that a libertarian society would have to face. Now as you say, a purely libertarian society would have entirely private property everywhere, and the consent of the owners of those different properties would be what was necessary to secure passage of people onto it. But still, you'd be faced with some kind of moral issue, that you've got a huge number of people showing up, who have left their homes, who are in a difficult situation, and they need some help. Is there an easy answer? What do you do for these people, especially because the numbers seem to be just — as you say, if it's 3,000 a day, how many of these could a private owner possibly hope to accommodate? Of course, the government can accommodate people endlessly, because it can just siphon off resources from civil society, but that's not a fair metric to judge what a private owner could do. What would we do in that kind of situation? How do we assess the morality of this?

MCADAMS: You're right, there are no simple answers. One of the things that western Europe has been suffering and I think central Europe as well is the depopulation of these countries as the birth rate ever shrinks. And I think there is probably an economic case for Germany to be made of having an influx of low-cost workers coming in, when Germans simply aren't having babies anymore. So I think that is an issue. But how do you bring these people into the economy? How do you bring people that have very, very different backgrounds, very, very different experiences and perspectives on life — for example, think of some bucolic German village of 1,200 people who've lived

there for tens of generations. And this is – I'm not trying to make a racist argument or a racial argument – this is also a matter of culture, when you have an influx of another 1,000 people in a village of 1,000 who share none of the history with these people. And it's difficult to quantify these things, but these are real things that people face.

WOODS: Yeah, and this is why – again, I don't see what's so hard to see about this – this is why governments want this. It's not that – when you think about the nature of the state and the types of people who are involved and how willing they are to dispense with human life for no good reason, they don't suddenly turn angelic when it turns to immigration policy. It's not that they say, my goodness, we just want the world's poor to have a haven somewhere. It's not that Joe Biden just suddenly becomes a nice guy all of a sudden. They benefit from this. Either it's the Democratic Party benefits from the votes or the state benefits from the fact that we're so busy struggling with each other that we can't possibly ever conceivable unite against them. This is why Stalin wanted to import ethnic Russians into the Baltic states. It wasn't so that the Baltic States could enjoy Russian culture. Well, in fact, it was, but very much involuntarily. This is why they do these things.

Now, having said that, we're facing this type of problem, I want to read you this passage about, again, the source of where it all might have gotten started, and this is from that Diana Johnstone article that you sent me that, again, I'm going to link to at TomWoods.com/486. She writes this – she is just so in your face direct. She says, "The current refugee crisis in Europe is the inevitable, foreseeable, predicted result of Western policy in the Middle East and North Africa. Gaddafi's Libya was the wall that kept hundreds of thousands of Africans from migrating illegally to Europe, not only by police methods but even more effectively by offering them development at home and decently paid jobs in Libya. Now Libya is the source both of economic migrants and of refugees from Libya itself, as well as from other lands of desperation. In order to weaken Sudan, the United States (and Susan Rice in particular) championed creation of the new country of South Sudan, which is not a country at all but the scene of rival massacres driving more and more fugitives toward unwelcoming countries."

So what we have is Western intervention creating instability, and then the instability makes people want to leave, and then the people leaving and coming to European countries where there is obviously going to be a culture clash leads to still more instability. It's like these people, either they are as sly as a fox and they're doing this on purpose, or we are dealing with the most incompetent, horrifying group of ruling classes in the history of the world.

MCADAMS: That's the age-old question, Tom: stupid or evil?

WOODS: Yeah.

MCADAMS: And I go back and forth. I don't know which is the right answer.

WOODS: A little from column A, a little from column B.

MCADAMS: It is. And I remember the Sudan crisis, and as a matter of fact, I was working on the Hill for Dr. Paul, and as a foreign affairs person, I felt my obligation was also to seek answers beyond that which we would find in the mainstream media. So I remember once I had a meeting with some people from the Sudanese embassy, and they were just absolutely confused about U.S. policy. They'd say, why all of a sudden is this happening, why are we being demonized – and this is not to say that they're good guys, but these things happen. Susan Rice gets a bee in her bonnet and decides to create a new country, and so they gin up all of this Western sympathy, and I think Western liberals play an important – they sort of weaponize human rights in a way, and they play a key part in getting people to sympathize with this. Oh, we've got to save these poor South Sudanese. And now, as Diana points out, it's an absolute nightmare there.

WOODS: Now, what are we to make of the claim by the Islamic State – and I can't know what's true and what's false about the Islamic State, but they apparently have boasted of or they're claiming that among the refugees, they are sending terrorists into Europe, that that's part of the plan for them, is to smuggle in terrorists in this way, and that in this way they can create still more turmoil in western Europe. I mean, is this just an empty boast? Is there any way we can know?

MCADAMS: Well unfortunately, we'll probably know when it's too late, if that's indeed the case. But you know, this goes back to the stupid or evil, and I just don't know. But if the U.S. and Europe want to continue the militarization, the military industrial complex – which we may be the kings, but the French and the Germans are princes at least – if they want to continue that, then you need to have continued unrest. So that's getting off in the area of conspiracy, but stranger things have happened. If that's not the case, if they're not looking for more instability, then I would say anyone with half a brain would say that letting in 100,000 people at a pop, there's no way you can check each one of these people, and you know, I look around on social media and Twitter a lot because you can find a lot of information, and I've seen, for what it's worth, some pictures of some guy coming into Germany, and here's the same guy with a rifle fighting for al-Nusra. It could be true; it could be untrue, but how colossally stupid to open yourself up to this possibility.

WOODS: This article – I'm going to have to have her on, by the way. She's got a book coming out this month, called *Queen of Chaos: The Misadventures of Hillary Clinton*. (laughing) That's fantastic.

MCADAMS: (laughing) She's great. She's fearless.

WOODS: It ends up with, "The refugee crisis should be seen as the warning signal that the United States and its NATO allies - especially Britain and France - are bringing the world to a state of chaos that is going to keep spreading and that is approaching a point of no return. It is quick and easy to break things. Putting them back together may be impossible. Civilization itself may be more fragile than it seems."

And let me add my own editorial comment here: to add insult to injury, the people who pushed these policies most fervently over the past 10 or so years have been people who actually have the nerve to call themselves conservatives.

MCADAMS: Mmm.

WOODS: What is conservative about what's going on in the world today? And you know, you could say that it's the old neocon commie saying that in order to make an omelet, you've got to break some eggs. Okay, the broken eggs are everywhere, but how come, Daniel, where's my omelet? I never get an omelet.

MCADAMS: Well, this reminds me of what Professor Claes Ryn wrote. These people are Jacobins. They're very good at destroying societies and destroying the world, but when they actually have to rebuild something, it looks even more grotesque than that which it replaced.

WOODS: You know what, this is just a day of ideas. I've got to have Professor Ryn on the show.

MCADAMS: Oh yeah, he's terrific.

WOODS: Why have I not had him on? He is so outstanding. He is the classic example of the dwindling endangered species of an actual conservative —

MCADAMS: Yes.

WOODS: — who can look at foreign policy and say this is the most ridiculous, destabilizing policy in the world. How can you call it conservative? All right, look, you are just an endless source of ideas for me, Daniel McAdams, and I appreciate this conversation. As I say, I'm going to link to what you've been writing at TomWoods.com/486. I am sure I saw an episode — I'm sorry it's my middle aged brain failing me here — an episode of the Ron Paul Liberty Report, where you talk about this issue. Am I right about that?

MCADAMS: I think we've done a couple of them, but me too, Tom. I think we've done 120 shows now, and I'm starting to forget them as well.

WOODS: Yeah, I don't exactly — did I dream this one? I don't know.

MCADAMS: You know all about that. You've done so many. It's hard —

WOODS: I know, I'm coming up on 500 very soon. After we're done, if you wouldn't mind sending me a link to an episode or two where you guys focused on this, I'll put that on the show notes page also. And I want you to take a moment to tell us about the new website, what the URL is, and just say a word about the Ron Paul Liberty Report, because it should be viewed by 100 times more people. So take it away.

MCADAMS: Sure. Well, we do a live show every weekday at 11 central time, noon Eastern time, with some exceptions. Obviously you can't do it every single day, but we strive to do a live show, and we try to keep them between 10 and 15 minutes, so it's just a short little thing. We have also podcasts of each episode as well, and we cover everything that's on Ron Paul's mind. I'm just sort of the sidekick; I try to bring some facts and some questions to the table. But from immigration to monetary policy to foreign policy, it's just everything that Ron Paul is thinking, and so it makes it a delight for me, because I generally learn something every day from him. But RonPaulLibertyReport.com is the companion website, and it has all the shows, plus it has a lot of other writing of people that we're in the same circles with, and I think some of your stuff is on, Tom, and as much as we can get. So that's a growing concern.

WOODS: Well, Daniel, let me tell you what I enjoy about the show. First of all, I like the chemistry between the two of you, but also — first of all, it reminds me of how well read Dr. Paul is, that he's always on top of every issue, and I'll think to myself, well, I wonder if he's seen that article I saw the other day that would really boost his argument, and then two seconds later he's citing that very article. He's read it all. But more than that, what I go to him for is his judgments. I want to know where does he stand on something, and there'll be some controversial question where it's kind of murky for a libertarian exactly what the correct position is. I always want to know — it doesn't necessarily mean I'll always agree with him, but I always want to know, to ground myself in an issue, where does Ron Paul stand. I know I can't go too far wrong when I get the answer to that. Well, we'll link to that. So it's RonPaulLibertyReport.com.

MCADAMS: Yes, exactly.

WOODS: Okay, so we're going to put that up on today's page as well. All right, Daniel, I know you have work to do for the boss, so I will let you get going, and thank you once again for being with us today.

MCADAMS: Thank you, Tom.