

Chess Champ Explains Trump Rise in a Single Sentence

Russian political activist Garry Kasparov decried the West's "complacency and retreat" from the fight against Islamic terrorism in the wake of the terrorist attack in Brussels.

In [a Facebook post](#) published Tuesday, Kasparov, a grandmaster chess player and former world champion, began by hinting that the West would have to get serious in its fight against ISIS in the Middle East.

"Once again we face bloody terror in the heart of Europe. Brussels is also the 'brain' of Europe, the de facto capital of the European Union. It is full of journalists and politicians and these attacks are guaranteed to receive a thousand times more attention than the hundreds of thousands of violent deaths in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and the other parts of the world being ripped apart in the power struggle between the modern world and those who would drag us all back to the Dark Ages. As with Paris and San Bernardino, it becomes easy to ignore the direct connection between these distant places. Terror attacks, waves of refugees... the free world can continue to deal with these symptoms of Islamic radicalism and the brutal dictatorships that exploit it or we can go to the source. We can treat each new attack like any other crime or we can admit that the fingerprints at the scene can be traced to Syria, to Iraq, to Iran, to Saudi, to Russia."

Kasparov, considered by many to be the greatest chess player in history, has been outspoken in his support for a more muscular U.S. foreign policy. So perhaps it's not surprising to see him take a swipe at Donald Trump, who has voiced support (clumsily, at times) for tightening U.S. immigration policies and advocated for a more restrained U.S. foreign

policy: "There will be even more talk about national borders and walls now, with politicians and candidates eager to exploit these attacks. **This won't solve the problem, but, as Trump has shown, many people like a bad plan when the alternative is no plan at all.**"

Kasparov may have a point. Trump's popularity, in large part, seems to flow from a number of voters who seem to be saying, "A pox on both your houses." They appear tired of Bush/Wilsonian interventionism abroad even as they grow fearful of the liberal immigration policies at home, the same policies that appear to be overwhelming parts of Europe.

Some of Trump's rhetoric is offensive. Some of his ideas are horrifying (his protectionist rhetoric on trade policy, for one, brings to mind Smoot-Hawley). But he does seem to be the one candidate in the race calling for seismic changes on immigration and foreign policy (not a terrible thing politically when two-thirds of the country says the nation is [on the wrong track](#)).

Kasparov closed his post with some clichés and a bit of a non sequitur: "There is no simple 'winning move' here. It will take time and sacrifice. It is a civilizational project, not merely a military one. But first it will require to courage to see that it is a fight that must be fought."

Of course there is a fight against ISIS to be had. The questions are the following: What kind of fight is the U.S. prepared to wage? How long? And what policies will prevent Brussels-Paris-San Bernardino-style attacks from happening here?

Regarding the final question, Trump appears to be making hay. While the notion of a moratorium on immigrants who practice a certain faith is un-American, impractical, and beneath the conversation of polite people, it doesn't seem crazy to reexamine the nation's immigration policy.

The laws were signed by Lyndon Johnson more than 50 years ago and [have strayed](#) widely from the original intent of the authors. In light of the upheaval in Europe and [the stagnation of wages](#) in the U.S., it hardly sounds out of bounds to examine if these policies still serve U.S. interests. At least voters [don't appear to think so](#).

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