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Article 1.

The Daily Beast

Obama Wins Round One on Iran

Leslie H. Gelb

December 4th 2013 -- President Obama has quieted the mob of critics on the interim pact with Iran, so they're now attacking the next deal—the one that hasn't happened yet.

The Obama team has won the first round on the six-month agreement with Iran by a knockout. The phony, misleading, and dishonest arguments against the pact just didn't hold up to the reality of the text. As night follows day, the mob of opponents didn't consider surrender, not for a second. Instead, they trained their media howitzers on the future, the next and more permanent agreement, you know, the one that has yet to be negotiated.

The Saudis lost most gracefully. They simply said this step has been taken and they'll see about the next one. The Israelis lost most tendentiously. Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu called the interim arrangement “a historic mistake.” His minions went further to say that, in retaliation, Israel might well just trash the ongoing private negotiations with the Palestinians, probably the last chance for a treaty in Obama's tenure.

More creatively, American neoconservatives and conservatives are now contending that with his first round, Obama has mortgaged America's future security, conceded Iran's right to a nuclear capability in the second dance, and lost all U.S. leverage. In sum, while the president may not have lost the

first round, he has inevitably set the stage for doom in the talks to come.

To be sure, it is much harder to argue against what has not happened than what has, and the anti-negotiating hawks know that very well. They are well aware that they have Obama on the political ropes generally, or that he has put himself there. Critics are thus hitting alarms on the Obama security policy that ring true in domestic politics. He offended genuine foreign policy sensibilities by drawing a “red line” in Syria, then abandoning it. He has worried most American friends in the dangerous Mideast by initially being for, then being against, the so-called Arab democratic Spring and by an ill-defined “pivot” to Asia. And Obama badly needs to get his strategic act together in the region to clarify these legitimate worries. But in no way did the six-month semi-freeze on Iran’s nuclear program concede any future right to Tehran to do anything, let alone make it easier for Iranians to make nuclear weapons. U.S. negotiators specifically stated they were not bowing in any way or form to Iranian rights in this matter. The Iranian negotiators sometimes seem to claim this victory. But they more or less have to; they have little else to show for their Geneva efforts. This was their “rabbit,” nothing more. And those familiar with modern day bargaining realize that any such American concessions would have been leaked a thousand times over by now.

Yes, there were disproportionate compromises made—by the Iranians.

As for Obama having lost his negotiating leverage on economic sanctions, that is pure nonsense. He gave the Iranians a few billion of their own frozen dollars. U.S. oil and financial/banking sanctions remain almost fully intact. And

these are the sanctions that have been deeply damaging to Iran's economy. Indeed in most cases, the president cannot unilaterally lift these sanctions. It takes Congressional assent. And everyone knows this will be hard to get unless Iran concedes an awful lot. Some wise heads worry that other countries and businesses will rush to restart oil and other transactions with Iran. That might happen to some degree, but many nations have their own sanctions and are party to UN sanctions that will prevent doing much with Tehran in the next six months.

There is some fair concern that Obama may well have undercut his military threats against Iran. His standard position has been and should be that all options are on the table, meaning military ones as well. But in a recent public excess he added these words: "I'm going to do every single thing that I can to try to resolve these issues without resorting to military conflict." One can only hope that he will not repeat this unfortunate addendum.

What, then, are the hawks really trying to do? It's obvious—their old tried and true game of backing Obama into a negotiating hole from whence he can't make any significant compromises without great political cost, so that the price of a new accord is too high. Good tactics.

Obama will need a strategy to overcome this hawkish cornering campaign. He'll have to devise one now, not in six months when the next round is completed. Then it will be too late, as usual. By then, the critics will have already clouded men's minds (women are less susceptible). The starting place is to play up the first round victory. His archers need to pierce the last standing hearts of the mob, those who persist in whimpering to all-too-eager cable news channels that Obama

made disproportionate concessions in the interim pact to the Iranian devils. Yes, there were disproportionate compromises made—by the Iranians. They froze, to greater and lesser degrees, virtually all of their nuclear programs. And critically for Western intelligence, Tehran also agreed to vast new inspections of their nuclear facilities by international experts. In return, the U.S. agreed to provide around \$7 billion in sanctions relief. This is first rate bargaining by the American side. Let Americans know. Then, start setting the measuring sticks for the next round; don't let the mob do it.

Washington could well end up tightening sanctions, or worse, after a failed next round, if Iran moves toward nuclear breakout. But the Obama team has made a first class start. Now, they must press their advantages and take the field aggressively. Now.

Mr. Gelb, author of "Power Rules: How Common Sense Can Rescue American Foreign Policy" (HarperCollins, 2009), is president emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations and a former official at the State and Defense departments.

[Article 2.](#)

Washington Post

The two options on Iran

George F. Will

4 December, 2013 -- Critics of the agreement with Iran concerning its nuclear program are right about most things but wrong about the most important things. They understand the agreement's manifest and manifold defects and its probable

futility. Crucial components of Iran's nuclear infrastructure remain. U.S. concessions intended to cultivate the Iranian regime's "moderates" are another version of the fatal conceit that U.S. policy can manipulate other societies. As is the hope that easing economic sanctions would create an Iranian constituency demanding nuclear retreat in exchange for yet more economic relief. Critics are, however, wrong in thinking that any agreement could control Iran's nuclear aspirations. And what critics consider the agreement's three worst consequences are actually benefits.

The six-month agreement, with ongoing negotiations, makes it impossible for the United States to attack its negotiating partner. Hence the agreement constrains Israel, which lacks the military capacity to be certain of a success commensurate with the risks of attacking Iran. Therefore there is no alternative to a policy of containment of a nuclear Iran.

Iran's claim that its nuclear program is for power generation and medical uses is risible. So is the notion that negotiations have any likely utility establishing the predicate for containment of an Iran with nuclear weapons or with the capacity to produce them quickly.

There is a recently published primer for the perplexed: "Unthinkable: Iran, the Bomb, and American Strategy" by Kenneth M. Pollack of the Brookings Institution. Measured in his judgments, scrupulous in presenting arguments with which he disagrees, Pollack comes to this conclusion: "Going to war with Iran to try to prevent it from obtaining a nuclear arsenal would be a worse course of action than containing Iran, even a nuclear Iran."

Some advocates of war seem gripped by Thirties Envy, a longing for the clarity of the 1930s, when appeasement failed

to slake the dictators' thirst for territorial expansion. But the incantation "Appeasement!" is not an argument. And the word "appeasement" does not usefully describe a sober decision that war is an imprudent and even ultimately ineffective response to the failure of diplomatic and economic pressures to alter a regime's choices about policies within its borders.

Israel's superb air force is too small, when striking over great distances at hidden and hardened targets, to do more than set back Iran's program a few years, at most. And an attack might cause Iran to expel the international inspectors or accelerate the crumbling of the sanctions, thereby speeding the reconstitution of the weapons program.

A U.S. attack could do much more damage but could not prevent reconstitution. So, if stopping the program is important enough for war, is it important enough for an invasion of a nation with almost three times the population of Iraq and nearly four times the size?

In December 2011, Leon Panetta, then secretary of defense, said that if Iran were seen "proceeding with developing a nuclear weapon" or had decided to do that, the United States would "take whatever steps are necessary to stop it." In March 2012, Barack Obama said: "Iran's leaders should understand that I do not have a policy of containment; I have a policy to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon." His "red line" was the weaponization of fissile material.

Yet in his Nov. 23 statement celebrating the new agreement, Obama spoke of wanting to be able to "verify" that Iran "cannot build a nuclear weapon." If so, he rejects not only containment but allowing Iran to stop near — "a screwdriver's turn away from" — weaponization. But Pollack, writing many months before the recent agreement ratified Iran's right to

enrichment, said:

“As long as Iran is left with the capacity to enrich uranium, the right to perform some enrichment activity, and a stockpile of LEU (low-enriched uranium) . . . then Iran will have a breakout capability. It could be a breakout window as wide as many months, perhaps even a year, but Iran will have the capability to manufacture the fissile material for a nuclear weapon.”

The agreement will not stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons; only a highly unlikely Iranian choice can do that. The agreement may, however, prevent a war to prevent Iran from acquiring such weapons. If Pollack is right, and he certainly is persuasive, we have two choices, war or containment. Those who prefer the former have an obligation to clearly say why its consequences would be more predictable and less dire than those in the disastrous war with Iraq.

Article 3.

The Christian Science Monitor

Iran deal validates nuclear blackmail and hurts Israeli-Palestinian peace process

Ephraim Sneh

December 4, 2013 -- In May 2003 I attended a closed international conference. The topic was Middle East security after the fall of Saddam Hussein. To the participants' surprise a special guest joined the meeting and gave a speech: Muhssein Rizai, the former commander of the Iranian

Revolutionary Guards Corps, and an influential insider of the regime in Tehran.

Mr. Rizai sent a clear message to the US administration: If you, the Americans, want to stabilize the Middle East, talk to the hegemonic power – us, the Iranians. What he effectively offered to the United States in that speech was a partition of the Middle East into two zones of influence – an Iranian one and an American.

He later met secretly with some US officials in their suite, but the US administration rejected his offer. Until now.

With the deal between the P5+1 world powers (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council – the United States, Russia, China, Britain, and France – plus Germany) and Iran that was signed in Geneva last month, the Iranian regime stands on the verge of getting exactly what it wants, thanks to nuclear blackmail.

Though this agreement achieves a partial, temporary delay of the Iranian nuclear project, it is very important to understand what it does not include on Iran's part:

Stopping development and production of long-range ballistic missiles

Ending the subversion of Sunni regimes in the region, such as Bahrain and Saudi Arabia

Ceasing support and financing of terror organizations such as Hezbollah

Halting the export of the Islamist revolution to other Muslim countries, such as Lebanon, Iraq, and west Afghanistan

Stopping the brutal repression of the Iranian people and of its minority nationalities (Azeris, Kurds, Baluchis, Arabs, and others).

Accordingly, the P5+1 seems ready to give to the ayatollah's

regime not only a comprehensive insurance policy for its survival, but also a license for its imperial ambitions and a permit to use the blackmail leverages of missiles and terror to undermine governments in the Persian Gulf and Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinian territories.

Moreover, as a consequence of the agreement, the domestic Iranian opposition could be stifled and tortured with the silent acquiescence of the Western democracies.

Thus Israel, which continues to face an estimated 70,000 rockets and missiles from Hezbollah and Hamas targeting its cities, will not be the only victim of the deal.

Israel and other American allies concerned about the threat of Iranian aggression in the region might be able to come together and create a new regional alliance to confront these dangers. But that is not feasible as long as there is no real progress in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations; Arab countries will not join Israel in such an alliance while the West Bank is occupied and Israeli settlements there are expanded.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's harsh criticism of the Geneva deal is correct. The eagerness on the part of the P5+1 to strike a deal with the ayatollah's regime seems to stem not only from an aversion to standing up against evil, but also from a lack of understanding of the Islamist challenge and from a blurred distinction between allies and foes in the region.

The problem, however, is that Mr. Netanyahu's keenness to appease the hard-liners and "settlers" in his country renders progress in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations impossible, thereby thwarting any attempt to build a regional alliance with Arab countries against the Iranian threat.

Without the Geneva deal in place, the US administration might

have been able to give the Israelis and Palestinians a bridging offer in early 2014. But now that this deal is signed, the US may not have the moral authority to exert pressure on any Israeli government regarding an agreement with Palestinians. Thus for all its failures against the Iranian threat, this deal also increases the chances that Secretary of State John Kerry's sincere, tireless efforts to bring about a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will fail.

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Article 4.

NYT

Egypt's Latest Constitution

Editorial

December 4, 2013 -- Egyptians are squandering another chance to build a broadly inclusive democratic system with the latest constitutional revisions. The new charter defies the revolutionary promise of the Arab Spring by reinforcing the power of institutions that have long held Egypt in an iron grip. The Constitution, approved by a 50-member citizen committee on Sunday, replaces one imposed last year by the government of President Mohamed Morsi, who was deposed in July, and his Muslim Brotherhood allies. It is expected to be ratified by a popular vote in a referendum within the next 30 days. Most Egyptians are not practiced in civic activism after being

disenfranchised for decades under President Hosni Mubarak, who was ousted in 2011. But they would be wise to read the new draft Constitution thoroughly and demand that the writers alter its provisions.

On paper, it appears to grant citizens important new rights, including criminalizing torture and human trafficking and requiring that the state protect women from violence. But some of the language is vague and could even enlarge the influence of the military, the police and the judiciary, which worked to overthrow Mr. Morsi and outlaw the Muslim Brotherhood.

The military won significant autonomy in the 2012 Constitution; the new one would extend that by giving the military the authority to approve the defense minister for the next two presidential terms. It would also allow the military to try civilians in military courts, a practice that has been long opposed by democracy activists.

The new constitution would require that a council of senior police officers be consulted on security policy, which would very likely ensure that there will be little, if any, meaningful reform that could bring the army and police firmly under civilian control.

Egyptians understandably want more stability after nearly three tumultuous years. But expanding powers for the security agencies would be disastrous for democracy. In recent days, there has been a crackdown against thousands of largely liberal and leftist activists who protested a new law effectively banning demonstrations, the government's latest attempt to curb dissent.

Mr. Morsi and his supporters went too far last year in ramming through a Constitution that greatly enhanced the role of Islamic law and restricted freedoms. This new constitution is

equally flawed because it was drafted with minimal input from Islamists and could further crush the Brotherhood by banning political parties based on religion. A last-minute change in one provision has also raised the possibility that the army may not allow elections for a new Parliament before elections for a new president — a promise it had made earlier. That move might make it more likely that Gen. Abdul-Fattah el-Sisi, the defense minister, would win the presidency if he runs.

In the final analysis, the real test of any constitution is how it is carried out in practice. Egypt's recent history, sadly, offers little assurance that any improvements in constitutional language will be honored.

[Article 5.](#)

Al Monitor

29 things you need to know about Egypt's draft constitution

[Bassem Sabry](#)

December 4, 2013 -- Earlier this week, Egypt's Committee of 50, its Constituent Assembly charged with amending the suspended 2012 constitution, finished its work and submitted its draft constitution to interim President Adly Mansour for his eventual adoption and holding of a national referendum. This referendum, assuming the draft remains as is and is not amended once more (a difficult possibility), is set for the middle of January 2014. The draft's contents have been a cause for both applause and criticism. Obviously, there is a lot to cover regarding the charter, and perhaps here is not the

space to be fully comprehensive or detailed.

Instead, here is a brief look at some of the main features of this newly proposed charter (Note that this article might be updated with any important points deemed necessary):

Preamble: The introduction to the charter has some noteworthy points. First, it refers to to the “January 25-June 30 revolution,” putting the two uprisings together as one continuous revolution. There has been debate in Egypt between whether the uprising that began June 30 is considered a separate “revolution” from Jan. 25 rather than “another wave of the revolution,” and some of the more politically conservative even see it as a correction of what Jan. 25 had supposedly “ruined.” It also links the “January 25-June 30 revolution” to a host of widely recognized Egyptian uprisings and popular movement from the 19th century onward, and explicitly celebrates the military’s support of the “sweeping popular will of J25-J30.” Another interesting note is a reference to the constitutional court’s body of interpretations of the “principles of Sharia” mentioned in Article 2 as the “primary source of legislation.” This was a compromise made with the Salafis, who necessitated some official interpretation of what these “principles” meant in exchange for dropping the controversial Article 219 of the 2012 charter. The court’s interpretations of the “principles” are predominantly understood to mean “those rulings of Islam that are of definite proof and meaning.”

Religion and minorities: Article 3 remains, explicitly mentioning the principles of the religious laws of Egyptian Christians and Jews as their primary source of legislation on personal status issues. And while the constitution specifically

allows for complete freedom of religion (making it “absolute” as it was in 1971 rather than “protected” as was in 2012), it still retains the right of public religious practice and to build houses of worship only for Christians and Jews. The secular leaning members of the assembly apparently saw that changing this article to be more inclusive would have little practical value in Egypt and could cause a lot of political backlash against the draft document in a conservative country, and ceded the debate with the Salafis and Al-Azhar.

Azhar: The article on Al-Azhar has been moved down to Article 7, and while it still proclaims Al-Azhar as independent and the primary source of Islamic jurisprudential sciences as well as obliging the state to provide it with financial support, it nonetheless removes the controversial 2012 stipulation that its opinion is to be considered on matters pertaining to Sharia, which some critics worried would represent a form of gradual backdoor theocracy.

Gender equality: Article 11 is generally seen as an improvement over the stipulations in the 2012 constitution, providing more explicit and detailed calls upon the state to make sure women are not discriminated against in jobs or politically (though no female quota in parliament ever made it to the draft), and to provide support for women in vulnerable circumstances. Some feminist groups had called for a stronger article, but the majority seem to see it as an improvement and as adequate.

Labor: The draft abolishes the stipulation, present since Nasser, that parliament be comprised of at least of 50% workers and farmers. The stipulation was criticized for being abused in practicality by land owners and non-workers entering parliament as such. Instead, the current constitution

calls upon the state to ensure “suitable” representation in the upcoming parliament for workers and farmers. Article 13 also calls upon the state to protect workers’ rights, improve working conditions and safety and forbids arbitrary firing of workers. Article 17 says the state has to provide suitable pension for small farmers, agricultural labor, fishermen and impermanent labor. One unchanged criticized stipulation, as per current Article 77, is that there can only be one labor union per profession, which was criticized in previous texts.

Healthcare: The draft elaborates on the rights mentioned in the 2012 constitution. For example, Article 18 now more explicitly says the state should provide health insurance “for all Egyptians that covers all diseases.” It now specifically says that the government expenditure on healthcare should be no less than 3% of gross national product (GNP) — not of the budget — rather than leaving the amount open as before.

Education: Article 19 further enumerates on the right to education and adds new references to education instilling ideals of “equal citizenship, tolerance and nondiscrimination” as well as “national identity.” Education remains free in public education institutions. It also specifically says the state should spend no less than 4% of GNP on education. Article 21 similarly sets a minimum of 2% of GNP for higher education expenditure, and a separate 1% for scientific research.

Culture: The draft introduces a new chapter (a chapter is a part of section in the constitution, the Arabic word for section being *bab*, meaning “door” or “gate”) on culture, which now becomes a “right” the state should promote. The chapter provides more specific protections on cultural and archeological heritage, celebrated and protected with its various civilizational sources (which are further named in

Article 50).

Torture: Article 52 specifically criminalizes torture. Before, Article 36 of the 2012 constitution criminalized torture within the framework of protecting the wider set of rights of all detainees. There are little obvious practical ramifications as far as I could tell beyond the political symbolism.

Nondiscrimination: Article 53 provides more elaborate condemnation of discrimination and criminalizes it while also criminalizing “incitement to hatred.” The article calls upon the state to take strong measures to end discrimination, including setting up a special independent commission on the matter.

Right to remain silent: Pertaining to detainees, this is introduced for the first time in Article 55.

Organ donation: Article 61 introduces specific language on organ donation, stating the right of a person to donate organs during his or her lifetime or posthumously. It also suggests that the state create a regulating mechanism.

Arts and literature: New stipulations on the protection and promotion of the freedom of literary and artistic creation bans jail sentences in crimes related to such forms of expression except potentially if the laws sees fit to do so only in matters pertaining to incitement to violence, discrimination or slander.

Impartiality of state-owned media: Article 72 introduces more clear and direct language (than Article 216/2012) in calling upon the state to ensure the “independence” of state-owned media outlets in a manner that promotes their “neutrality,” equal representation and transmission of various public thought, social and political currents.

Political parties and discrimination: The ban listed in the 1971 constitution on parties with a religious foundation or

reference or discriminating on the basis of “gender or origin” is returned to Article 74. Also banned are parties that are founded upon “sectarian or geographic bases, the practice of activities that are against democratic principles, secret nature, military or paramilitary nature.”

Random housing: Article 79, dealing with the right to housing, includes some improvement to Article 68/2012, including urging the state to have a clear national plan to fight random housing (a very dangerous and widespread phenomenon in Egypt) within a fixed time frame.

Further protections: For new groups, such as the elderly (Article 83), dwarves (Article 81), Article 89 further elaborates on the former Article 72/2012, banning more explicitly slavery and other forms of abuse.

International treaties: Article 93 says the state has to abide by all international human rights conventions, treaties and charters that it signs up to and ratifies, and must confer upon them the full power of the law.

Crimes: Article 95 removes the Article 76/2012 stipulation that (in addition to what is mentioned in the penal code) a crime could be deduced solely from the text of the constitution without a specific stipulation in the penal code, which critics saw as a backdoor to incorporate traditional Islamic punishments into the judiciary without new legislation.

Shura Council/Upper House: After a grueling political marathon and infighting, the upper house of parliament, long criticized for being of little use in its traditional form, has been abolished. Critics wanted to retain it and expand its powers, while supporters of the abolition see it as best to streamline legislation and save budget overhead.

Parliamentary elections system: The article specifying the

electoral system was rejected in the vote on the draft constitution. The article had originally stipulated a mixed electoral system that reversed that of 2012, intending to have two-thirds of seats for individual candidates and one-third for party lists. Nineteen members voted against it, three abstained. The decision on the electoral system and the districting will be left for the interim president. The debate publicly tried to balance an electoral system that would encourage a vibrant multi-party system (seen as the likely effect of party lists) and one that would limit a potentially strong electoral return of the Muslim Brotherhood (proponents claimed single candidate systems would do this). Article 102, a novelty, also says the president can appoint up to 5% of the members of parliament, subject to a law determining the procedures and criteria of nominees.

Legislation: The new constitution now says that for a proposed piece of legislation to go into committee, it has to have the support of one-tenth of the total membership. This was not there before.

The president and forming the cabinet: The president is first allowed to select any candidate for the role of prime minister, who then proposes a complete cabinet formation and program. If the president's cabinet does not get the endorsement of a parliamentary majority within 30 days, the president is then obliged to ask the majority party or winning “coalition” (a new stipulation on the option of coalitions forming governments) to form the cabinet. If a majority of parliament does not accept this proposal for a cabinet within 30 days, then parliament is considered dissolved and the president calls for new parliamentary elections. The president can also call for the dismissal of the cabinet, subject to the approval of the majority

of parliament.

Removing a president from power: A signing majority of parliament can submit a reasoned motion to withdraw confidence from the president and remove him from power. If two-thirds of parliament endorse the motion, the motion goes into referendum. If a majority accepts, the office of the president is vacant, and new elections take place. If it does not pass, then parliament is dissolved and new parliamentary elections take place.

Governors: There has been growing demand to have local governors elected rather than appointed. After much debate, the draft constitution eventually left the option to elect or appoint governors to legislators as per Article 179, and did not specify the method.

Judiciary: The budget of the judiciary, following full and detailed debate in parliament, is now to be written in the national budget as one figure. The number of Constitutional Court judges is left unspecified, unlike the previous figure of 11 judges in Article 176/2012. The Constitutional Court is also now tasked with continuous supervision of laws, as was the case in the 1971 constitution, rather than prior supervision of draft laws as was the case in the 2012 constitution.

The military: This is one of the most controversial sections of the draft constitution. The draft retains military trials for civilians, but has maintained it in more specific contexts, including: cases that represent direct assault on military personnel during active duty; military establishments and ammunition; military zones; military secrets and documents or military factories; and crimes related to obligatory conscription. The law is to specify exactly the nature of these crimes. This has been one of the most controversial and

opposed elements of this draft constitution, and the military has remained steadfast in hanging on to it. The military will also have a veto over the choice of defense minister for two presidential terms as per Article 234.

The flag: Article 223, which describes the flag, bans “insulting the flag” and sets it as a crime.

The road map: The constitution leaves the option to amend the road map somewhat open. It leaves the choice of holding the parliamentary or presidential elections first to the interim president, but sets a time limit: the first elections must be held within 30-90 days of the constitution taking effect, and the second elections are to be held within a maximum of six months from the passing of the constitution.

Bassem Sabry is an Egyptian political writer.

Article 6.

WSJ

How to Answer China's Muscle-Flexing

John Bolton

Dec. 4, 2013 -- China's declaration on Nov. 23 of an air-defense identification zone over the Japanese-held Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea transformed Vice President Joe Biden's Asia trip this week. Mr. Biden's main objective in meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Abe on Tuesday was to assure him that America opposes China's belligerent, unilateral action in asserting the defense zone. Of course, if Mr. Abe really wants to know how the Obama administration treats close American allies, he can always call Bibi Netanyahu.

Although Mr. Biden publicly criticized the defense-zone announcement, he did not expressly reject it. Moreover, the administration earlier advised U.S. commercial airlines to notify China of flights into the zone, whereas Japan and South Korea told their airlines not to make such notifications. At the very best, these are mixed, and therefore dangerous, signals. Beijing's new zone over the islands the Chinese call the Diaoyu, along with the government's broader territorial claims, is indicative of a much larger problem for the United States. For too long, American business and political leaders have accepted the notion that China is engaged in a "peaceful rise" to become a "responsible stakeholder" in world affairs, which we should placidly allow to happen. Instead of fantasizing about what China might become, it is far more sensible to consider what America's strategy should be under a range of possible scenarios. The rosy "peaceful rise" theory ignores countless other possibilities, particularly its polar opposite. The People's Liberation Army remains the dominant force within the Communist Party, and the party remains the dominant political (and major economic) force in China. That explains Beijing's sustained increases in military budgets; its expanding nuclear and ballistic-missile arsenals; its unmatched cyberwarfare program; its construction of a blue-water navy; and its anti-satellite, anti-access and area-denial weapons systems. These aren't the marks of a "peaceful rise," especially combined with Beijing's aggressive territorial claims. America urgently needs strategic thinking about China's radically different alternative futures. Simply ignoring the bad news won't work. Here are three building blocks for a more realistic U.S. strategy on China. First, since China's principal theater of action for decades will

be Asia, that must also be the focus of America's response. China's territorial claims, and now the air-defense zone, provide Washington with an enormous opportunity to maintain and expand its influence along China's periphery, from India to Japan. Whether we have the wit to exploit this opportunity remains to be seen.

Ideally, the U.S. would benefit from something akin to an alliance system among our friends and allies, currently a far-fetched goal given, for example, tensions between South Korea and Japan. Contemporary Japanese-Chinese disputes are mirrored in Seoul-Tokyo arguments over seemingly useless islands and reefs, reflecting even deeper historical grievances and animosities. Nonetheless, America alone can provide the support necessary to resist Chinese hegemonism, which essentially all Asian governments recognize. They would welcome a stronger, more visible, Washington role, even if they won't necessarily say so expressly in today's uncertain and dangerous environment.

Taiwan has an interesting potential role. Although its territorial claims mirror Beijing's, Taipei could gain substantial support for its unique status from its Asian neighbors, thereby reducing its international isolation, by distancing itself from China's current assertive posture. For example, Taiwan could say publicly that it does not recognize Beijing's defense-zone declaration, and that it wants to confer with Japan, South Korea and others to align their responses. So doing would serve notice that Taiwan won't accept being declared part of China's next power projection.

Second, China's military growth demonstrates persuasively why the U.S. can no longer countenance massive military-budget cuts. We need superior Pacific Ocean air and naval

power to counter Chinese aggressiveness, but we also need capabilities in the Middle East, the North Atlantic and elsewhere against other potential threats.

Beijing doesn't have to match America's military capabilities world-wide to equal the U.S. off China's shores. Accordingly, allies who pulled their weight in meeting common-defense needs would certainly help. Most of Europe may be beyond redemption, but Japan is poised to resume a normal nation's full self-defense role, something Washington should welcome. Third, the U.S. and its allies should press China to join a vigorous campaign to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by North Korea, Iran and others. Pyongyang's nuclear and ballistic-missile capabilities have fueled enormous concern in East Asia. While China has the heft to bring North Korea to heel, Beijing's persistent failure to do so signals that it is not as interested in solving the problem as its rhetoric indicates.

No wonder, therefore, that Tokyo and Seoul look to their own military capabilities, including missile defense, to protect themselves against Pyongyang and Beijing's growing nuclear arsenal as well. Nor has China's interest in Iran's oil reserves helped in containing Tehran's nuclear program.

Japan and Israel both live in the real world of threats and dangers, not in the Obama bubble where national-security issues rarely intrude on his efforts to reshape American society. But China's air-defense zone move has pierced the bubble, and Joe Biden's Asia trip could tell us if President Obama now gets it.

Mr. Bolton is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and the author of "Surrender Is Not an Option:

Defending America at the United Nations and Abroad" (Simon & Schuster, 2007).

[Article 7.](#)

The Weekly Standard

'The Israeli Epic': A story of seven paratroopers in the Six-Day War

Eliot A. Cohen

December 9, 2013 -- Usually one disregards the puffs on dust jackets written by the author's friends, who have often neglected to read the book in question. In the case of *Like Dreamers*, however, one of the blurb writers, former Israeli ambassador (and very fine historian) Michael Oren, has it right: "Yossi Klein Halevi has written the Israeli epic." An epic is a heroic tale, written in an elevated style, that covers an extended struggle and, very often, a journey. Halevi's heroes, or at least his subjects, are seven Israeli paratroopers who fought to liberate the Old City of Jerusalem in 1967. Some were in the thick of the fight; others were wounded as they crossed the line of departure; and some never saw much combat at all. They took very different paths in life, ranging from zealous settlement on the West Bank to treason. Some were atheists and others profound believers. Some were staunch Marxists, others became right-wing politicians. Some were dreamers, aesthetes, and near- (not quite) pacifists; some were hardheaded pragmatists. Halevi, an American immigrant of longstanding to Israel, has the great gift of empathy as he carries their individual stories from the years just before the Six-Day War to the present.

Along the way, he chronicles real wars—June 1967, the Yom Kippur War, the 1982 Lebanon war—and the politics of an Israel whose factions are almost as fierce toward one another as they are toward the country's Arab enemies. It is a measure of Halevi's gifts as a writer that he can narrate combat, political intrigue, and the prosaic challenges of making a living in the Tel Aviv art scene with equal skill.

Like *Dreamers* is a tale of two elites: the largely secular kibbutzniks and the modern Orthodox religious nationalists. As Halevi admits, his story therefore leaves out large swaths of the Israeli public, such as the Sephardic population that Menachem Begin tapped to build a new majority and new politics in Israel from the 1970s on, and the mass of refugees from Germany and Eastern Europe who arrived in the years just before and just after World War II and who were, to some extent, comparably sidelined in favor of the old socialist elites of the first decades of the 20th century and the native-born sabras thereafter.

But Halevi's choice is not arbitrary. In the 1960s, kibbutzniks, though amounting to only a small percentage of the population, dominated the elite ranks of the Israel Defense Forces, including the paratroops. They represented, in large measure, the leftist (sometimes very leftist) idealism of the founding generation. The modern religious, usually identified by their knitted skullcaps, have assumed a similar role. They now are overrepresented almost as much as the kibbutzniks once were, and for similar reasons: They are willing to volunteer for the most dangerous and demanding assignments. Halevi's account follows not only the paratroopers but other political and military figures—Ariel Sharon, Yitzhak Rabin, and, perhaps most interestingly, Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook, a

pivotal figure in modern religious Zionism. Halevi focuses most of his attention, however, on two paratroopers. One is Arik Achmon, a mulishly independent secularist who leaves his kibbutz and becomes a businessman and entrepreneur; he is a relentless rationalist, a patriot, and a doer. The other is Yoel Bin-Nun, one of the founders of the Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful) movement that pioneered the settlement of the West Bank, beginning with the Gush Etzion bloc outside Jerusalem, which had been overrun by Palestinian irregulars and the Jordanian Army during Israel's War of Independence. He, too, in a different way, breaks with his own world of settler politics.

Achmon and Bin-Nun are Halevi's epic subjects, each with his faults and blindness, but ultimately with qualities of character—including self-sacrifice and compassion—that make them heroic in the author's eyes and in our own. Each, in different ways, strives to accommodate fellow citizens and soldiers across the secular/religious divide. Each achieves positions of eminence and leadership only to be, in different ways, betrayed by subordinates and associates. Each is a man of integrity, whole in spirit, and just.

The Six-Day War helped consolidate, at home and abroad, a superficial, sometimes cartoonish, heroic image of Israel and its armed forces. It was a war of necessity, to be sure; but, like any war, it was filled with episodes of incompetence, cowardice, and horror. Halevi recounts the intelligence blunders and tactical errors that cost many of the paratroopers' comrades their limbs, their eyesight, or their lives. Some of them saw, in the recovery of the Temple Mount and the Western Wall, the fulfillment of a divine promise; others, more soberly, saw the costly accomplishment of a necessary military

task.

Halevi does not conceal from readers the underside of Israeli military and political life—and both can be nasty indeed. This is a world that includes assassins and totalitarians, as well as the normal array of cheats, liars, dupes, and demagogues. But it is a measure of Halevi's genius as an author that he can depict these realities without losing sight of the extraordinary nature of the Israeli accomplishment: the construction, with all its faults, of a liberal democratic state, a tolerant and humane Jewish homeland—all from the most unlikely collection of refugees and victims in the face of enmity and violence.

The Israel of 2013 remains endangered, but it also flourishes, economically and more profoundly as well. It has one of the highest birth rates in the modern world, and fecundity is, for a wealthy country (as Israel must now be counted), a measure of a population's commitment to its own future. That it has navigated the perils of external enemies and internal conflict so well is a testament to its Arik Achmons and Yoel Bin-Nuns. To know Israel's real strength, and to learn something of heroic achievement, one can do no better than to read this remarkable book.

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The Council on Foreign Relations

Power Plays in Ukraine

Interview with [Stephen Sestanovich](#)

December 4, 2013 -- *Mass demonstrations have roiled Kiev's streets since November 22, when Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich turned down an association agreement with the European Union in favor of a customs union with Russia. Despite the December 3 failure of a no-confidence vote in parliament, protests are continuing, with resistance leaders vowing a long fight. "The regime has to see that its maneuvering room here is less than it thought," says CFR's Stephen Sestanovich. "It can't just orient itself toward Moscow and expect civic peace." This is a blow to Russia's President Vladimir Putin, says Sestanovich, who "had orchestrated...a diplomatic coup for Russia [that] has ended up as a dramatic demonstration of how unwilling many of Russia's neighbors are to move toward closer ties, or let themselves be seen as part of a kind of any neo-imperial Russian order."*

Despite the failure to get a no-confidence vote, the opposition is still calling for the overthrow of Yanukovich's government. What's happening there?

The first thing we've seen is that Ukrainian politics are much more brittle than many people thought. The government's decision to yield to Russian pressure and reject an arrangement with the European Union at the last moment produced a show of public disapproval, and when the authorities tried to clear the demonstrators from downtown Kiev, the response to their heavy-handed tactics was even stronger. That's when you got five hundred thousand people in the middle of Kiev. The regime has to see that its maneuvering room here is less than it thought. It can't just orient itself toward Moscow and expect civic peace. The opposition has been invigorated; important leaders have come to the fore, and that may give them a

platform for continuing political pressure in the near term and for presidential runs in the next election in 2015.

Explain the agreement Ukraine was supposed to sign with the European Union at last month's meeting in Vilnius.

It was what the EU calls an "association agreement." It's not the beginning of negotiations for accession—and this was a source of some dissatisfaction for Ukrainians—but it was to bring Ukraine into closer trading relations with the EU. As a symbol it would have indicated that Ukraine saw its future more with the EU than with Russia. The outburst of demonstrations shows that the EU has a little more soft power than it may have reckoned. They were very eager to have Ukraine sign this agreement, and many European leaders were probably a bit complacent about how easy it was to bring this off—and shocked when Russian president Vladimir Putin and the Russian government mobilized a lot of counterpressure. Now the EU has seen both that it exaggerated its ability to bring Ukraine into this association and that it probably underestimated the degree of popular support for doing so.

What did Putin do to get Yanukovich to back off from the EU deal?

He said that Ukrainian goods would be at a severe disadvantage in the Russian market—they would be essentially kept out of the Russian market. And he offered the prospect of lower natural gas prices if Ukraine would move to join the customs union that Putin has set up between Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. Putin offered primarily economic inducements, but there's been a lot of heavy geopolitical rhetoric associated with this. The Russians have accused the EU of trying to "capture" Ukraine, of trying to isolate Russia, of trying to make Ukraine a vassal state and subordinated,

whereas for many Ukrainians this would be a big promotion and an upgrade of their status.

Russia's historical origins come from Kiev Rus, which is in Ukraine. Is there a sentimental relationship here?

There's some appeal to history and to cultural unity in the Russian approach. There's also the calculation that Ukraine would increase the size of Russia by a third, if [the two countries] were really united. There's a lurid picture sometimes drawn by Russian analysts of the rest of Europe using Ukraine as a tool to keep Russia out of Europe. There's a mix of different motives and tools in this confrontation. For the Europeans there is a conviction, which is stronger among states in east-central Europe, that Ukraine should not be left under Russian sway, but the EU as a whole has been reluctant to raise the possibility that Ukraine could actually become a member of the EU. In that respect it has not risen to the level that Turkey has, which has been for decades in discussion with the EU about joining. Nothing that the Europeans have said opens the door explicitly for Ukrainian membership.

What is Georgia's status with the EU?

"When you have big news of this kind, and when the EU itself gets energized, and when there are demonstrators in this number out in the streets of Kiev, even the White House takes notice."

Georgia and Moldova signed the association agreement, and Moldova is being rewarded by getting a visit by Secretary of State John Kerry, who wants to show his commitment to the process of bringing countries that want to join Europe into a closer relationship in the transatlantic community. The American policy overall here has been somewhat distant. This is not a high-priority issue for the Obama administration. But

when you have big news of this kind, and when the EU itself gets energized, and when there are demonstrators in this number out in the streets of Kiev, even the White House takes notice. I mean, you had a statement Monday from the White House—contradicting the Ukrainian prime minister—saying that there was no coup attempt being made by peaceful demonstrators.

But Kerry obviously did not want to make headlines by showing up in Kiev as he had originally planned.

That's absolutely clear. I would contrast that with the kind of interest that the United States took during the Orange Revolution in 2004, when American commitment interests were much greater. There was a lot of active encouragement of European leaders, for example, to go to Kiev. The decision to rerun the election in 2004 was made essentially when the presence of many European leaders showed up in Kiev as mediators of this political crisis. You may yet see that degree of EU interest and possibly even American interest, but we're not there yet.

I guess Washington feels it wants to deal with the Russians very carefully, because of delicate issues such as Syria in the Middle East.

Yes, this is an interesting moment for Russian policy, because Yanukovich's decision to back away from the EU was widely seen—especially by Russia—as a big victory for Putin. But the aftermath has cast a somewhat different light on it. Putin obviously takes this very seriously, [and] does not want to experience a big setback, but for him the demonstrations are a pretty personal affront. He has seen that what he had orchestrated as a diplomatic coup for Russia has ended up as a dramatic demonstration of how unwilling many of Russia's

neighbors are to move toward closer ties, or let themselves be seen as part of a kind of any neo-imperial Russian order.

What has been the role of jailed former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko in the current turmoil?

Yulia Tymoshenko was absolutely at the center of this when it was a story about the EU negotiating with Yanukovich, because the EU said it was a condition for going forward with the agreement that Yanukovich release her from prison. [She has been in prison for two years, serving a seven-year sentence for abuse of power for signing a gas deal with Russia.] He refused, even though he'd given a lot of indications that it was moving in that direction. What's interesting is that although she has been a very visible part of this drama in its early stages, in the most recent days of crisis in Kiev she hasn't been so prominent. The opposition leaders are not primarily committed to bringing Yulia Tymoshenko back into Ukrainian politics. They'd rather bring down the government themselves and establish their own status as challengers to Yanukovich and his circle. The demonstrations have been more about protesting police brutality, about objecting to official corruption, and [about] a desire to orient Ukraine toward Europe as a way of solving those problems.

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