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AI - Monitor

US Has Time, Rouhani Doesn't

Kenneth M. Pollack

October 13 - This week, the United States and its allies will enter another round of negotiations with Iran, this one more hopeful as a result of Hassan Rouhani's election as Iranian president and his repeated statements that he wants a deal to end Iran's nuclear impasse. One of the foundational assumptions of the American approach to these negotiations all along has been that the West doesn't have time and the Iranians do. As a result, the United States has insisted that the talks cannot be allowed to drag on. They need to be concluded quickly. The rationale behind this assumption is that the Iranians care more about retaining their nuclear program than they do about having sanctions lifted, and their goal is merely to stave off worse measures by the West — either US or Israeli military operations, or even harsher sanctions — while they continue to enrich uranium and draw closer and closer to acquiring a breakout capability. (A breakout capability is the ability to quickly field a workable nuclear weapon. Although the term "quickly" is undefined and has changed significantly over the years, it is often described as meaning "faster than the West could act to prevent it.")

It was not wrong or misguided to believe this. In the past, there was good reason to believe it was entirely correct. However, today, the evidence suggests that it is fundamentally mistaken, and that it is the Iranians, particularly Rouhani, who face time pressures more than the West.

Let's start with the Iranian side. Rouhani is unquestionably looking to change Iran's situation both internally and externally. In particular, he is undoubtedly looking for a deal on the nuclear program that, at the very least, would see Iran compromise on its enrichment program in return for sanctions relief. He may very well be willing to go further than that. Certainly, he has suggested as much.

The claims that Rouhani is a "wolf in sheep's clothing," that he does not represent a significant change in Iran's demeanor, simply do not stand up to scrutiny. This is neither the time nor the place for a full explication of the evidence — there is too much to be presented in a short essay, and with the nuclear talks about to begin, Iran's behavior in those talks should be allowed to stand as the best proof for either theory. Suffice it to say that the evidence so far available is overwhelming that Rouhani clearly wants change of some kind, and that he is already paying a price for it at home. He

has been repeatedly attacked by Iran's hard-liners, who are uninterested in a deal. But Rouhani has persevered, suggesting that this deal is important to him. He has twice said publicly that he needs the deal soon — in one instance, he argued for three to six months — because if he cannot demonstrate quickly to Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and his hard-line rivals that he can secure meaningful compromises from the West, they will use his failure to curtail his room for further maneuver.

In fact, it's curious that Rouhani chose to make resolving the nuclear impasse his first major policy move. Most politicians would have chosen to start by tackling smaller, domestic problems related to Iran's economy or political system as a way of racking up some quick wins to bolster their political position before turning to a major foreign policy gambit.

Moreover, this one is focused on a foreign policy problem that has proven utterly intractable for years; represents a core difference with Iran's powerful hard-line faction; requires a deal that the supreme leader himself may oppose; and relies on Iran's repeatedly proclaimed greatest adversary to do the right thing for the Islamic Republic. In many ways, it is a gamble of monumental proportions, which again should reinforce both our sense that Rouhani is serious about getting a deal and the notion that he is probably ready to make significant compromises to get it. But it also gives credence to Rouhani's own warning that he needs this deal soon, or else his presidency could be crippled by its failure.

On our side, the evidence of the past few years gives reason to reassess our assumptions about Iran's nuclear strategy. Of greatest importance, Iran has been deliberately refraining from pursuing a nuclear weapon as quickly as it could have. At first, many feared that once Iran began large-scale enrichment activities, it would simply enrich enough uranium for one bomb to weapons grade (90% purity or better) and then detonate a crude bomb. Iran achieved that capability in about 2008, yet they did not break out. Then, the fear was that once the Iranians accumulated enough low-enriched uranium (3.5% purity) for one bomb they would immediately enrich that to weapons grade and break out. Iran passed that benchmark in about 2010, and again they did not do so.

Next, the fear was that once Iran had acquired enough uranium enriched to 19.75% purity (sometimes called "medium-enriched uranium") for one bomb it would immediately convert that to weapons grade and break out. Iran passed that benchmark in 2012, and again, it chose not to do so. In fact, instead, Iran has regularly converted some of its "medium-enriched uranium" to plates for the Tehran Research Reactor (which makes them difficult to further enrich for weapons), and it has done so to ensure that it has less than a bomb's worth of medium-enriched uranium on hand at any time.

This behavior is important because it demonstrates that whatever Iran does ultimately intend for its nuclear program — and there should be no doubt that its current nuclear program is a military program meant to produce weapons, not a civilian program meant to produce electricity — Tehran has consciously decided not to break out and race for an arsenal and has held to that policy for at least five years. Israel's former chief of military intelligence, Amos Yadlin, and Israeli nuclear expert Yoel Guzansky have called attention to this important pattern, noting that "Iran is not advancing toward the bomb at as rapid a pace as it could. It appears to realize that such progress would bring with it negative strategic repercussions."

Just why Iran has chosen not to go ahead and weaponize remains a mystery, but there are at least four powerful factors that, taken together, probably have convinced Tehran not to do so for now. These include the threat of an Israeli or (more likely) American military attack; fear that the United States would greatly ramp up its covert action and cyberwarfare campaigns against Iran if it decided to weaponize; fear that the Saudis would obtain nuclear weapons of their own if Iran did; and, of greatest importance to my mind, fear that the Chinese and Indians would join the Western sanctions against Iran because Beijing and New Delhi have made it clear to Tehran that while they do not support a war against Iran, they are dead-set against an Iranian nuclear arsenal.

What's important about these factors is that all remain firmly in place. If they have been adequate to dissuade Iran from exercising its breakout capability for the past five years, it is likely that they will continue to do so for some time to come. Indeed, in spring 2013 both President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu publicly stated that it would take Iran a year or more to field a workable nuclear weapon from a decision to do so (a decision

that has not been given). That is a pretty wide breakout window, and it will take some time — probably several years — for Iran to narrow it significantly. Thus, even if we continue to fear that Tehran's game is to play for time until it has narrowed that breakout window — a claim inconsistent with Rouhani's current behavior, but perhaps what Iran's hard-liners have in mind — we do not need to fear that Iran will be in that position for some time to come.

This is neither an argument for complacency nor for lowballing the Iranians on the assumption that we are now in a more advantageous bargaining position than they are. We simply do not know what Rouhani will ultimately be willing or able to put on the table as part of a nuclear deal. We also don't know if he can sell any nuclear deal that we would accept to Iran's supreme leader and the hard-liners back in Tehran. But he represents the best opportunity we have had to get a negotiated settlement to one of the most dangerous problems in the world today. If he makes us a decent offer, we should take it and hope to build on it to deal with other problematic aspects of Iranian behavior like its support for terrorist groups. And we should try to move quickly because he needs to, not because we need to.

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/contents/authors/kenneth-m-pollack.html>

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Article 2.

The National Interest

Syria: It Wasn't Isolationism

John Mueller <http://nationalinterest.org/profile/john-mueller>

October 14, 2013 -- One popular explanation for the American public's palpable unwillingness to countenance military involvement in the Syrian civil war was that the country has slumped into a deep isolationist mood. But the reaction scarcely represents a "new isolationism" http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/09/opinion/keller-our-new-isolationism.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 [3] or a "growing isolationism" http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/13/opinion/global/cohen-an-anchorless-world.html?hp&_r=0 [4] or a "new noninterventionist fad" <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/wp/2013/09/08/rubio-and-others-run-from-internationalism-when-it-matters/?hpid=z3> [5]. Rather, there has always been a deep reluctance to lose American lives or to put them at risk overseas for humanitarian purposes.

In Bosnia, for example, the United States held off intervention on the ground until hostilities had ceased, and, even then, the public was anything but enthusiastic when American peacekeeping soldiers were sent in. Bombs, not boots, were sent to Kosovo. In Somalia, the United States abruptly withdrew its troops when eighteen of them were killed in a chaotic firefight in 1993. The United States, like other developed nations, has mostly stood aloof in many other humanitarian disasters such as those in Congo, Rwanda and Sudan. The country did get involved in Libya, but the operation was strained and hesitant, and there was little subsequent enthusiasm to do much of anything about the conflict in neighboring Mali.

This perspective is seen most clearly, perhaps, when pollsters presented Americans in 1993 with the statement, “Nothing the U.S. could accomplish in Somalia is worth the death of even one more U.S. soldier.” Fully 60 percent expressed agreement. This is not such an unusual position for humanitarian ventures. If Red Cross or other workers are killed while carrying out humanitarian missions, their organizations frequently threaten to withdraw, no matter how much good they may be doing.

Some commentators, including such unlikely soulmates as Andrew Bacevich, Robert Kagan, John Mearsheimer, Rachel Maddow and Vladimir Putin, have variously maintained that we have seen the rise of a new American militarism in the last decades or that Americans hail from Mars.

But that perspective extrapolates far too much from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In these cases, opinion was impelled not by a propensity toward militarism, but, as with entry into World War II, by the reaction to a direct attack on the United States. These ventures—the 9/11 wars—have proved to be aberrations from usual patterns, not portents of the future. Although they demonstrate that Americans remain willing to strike back hard if attacked, they do not indicate a change in the public’s reticence about becoming militarily involved in other kinds of missions, particularly humanitarian ones.

An examination of the trends in a poll question designed to tap “isolationism” does not suggest a surge of militarism. Instead, it documents something of a rise in public wariness regarding military intervention beginning with the Vietnam War and, thereafter, a fair amount of steadiness punctured by spike-like ups and downs in response to current events, including 9/11 and its ensuing wars.

Since 1945, pollsters have periodically asked, “Do you think it will be best for the future of this country if we take an active part in world affairs, or if we stayed out of world affairs?” The question seems to have been framed to generate an “internationalist” response. In 1945, after all, the United States possessed something like half of the wealth of the world and therefore scarcely had an option about “taking an active part in world affairs,” as it was so blandly and unthreateningly presented. And, so queried, only 19 percent [6] of poll respondents in 1945 picked the “stay out” or “isolationist” option. The authors of the poll question got the number they probably wanted.

(Actually, to generate high levels of this quality, the query can be reformulated to “We shouldn’t think so much in international terms but concentrate more on our own national problems and building up our strength and prosperity here at home.” In that rendering, measured “isolationism” registers <http://www.gallup.com/poll/22489/little-change-isolationist-sentiment-among-americans.aspx> [7] 30 to 40 percentage points higher.)

In the post-war years the “stay out” percentage rose <http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/public-perspective/ppsca/43/43095.pdf> [6] a bit to around 25 percent, but it had descended to 16 percent in 1965 in the aftermath of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis and as the war in Vietnam was about to begin. The experience of that war pushed it much higher—to 31 to 36 percent—as part of what has been called the “Vietnam syndrome.”

It has stayed at around that level ever since. There was a temporary downward dip during the Gulf War of 1991 and interesting spikes upward at the time of the Kosovo conflict in 1999 even though no American troops were lost and even though it was deemed successful at the time. And in this century, the “stay out” percentage dropped to 14, its lowest recorded level, in the aftermath of 9/11. It rose the next year, and then plunged downward again in 2003 and 2004, the first two years of the Iraq War. By 2006, however, it had risen again to post-Vietnam levels where it has remained through 2012 [http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/UserFiles/File/Task%20Fo=ce%20Reports/2012_CCS_Report.pdf](http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/UserFiles/File/Task%20Force%20Reports/2012_CCS_Report.pdf) [8], the last time the question was asked.

Given the bland attractiveness of the “take an active part in world affairs” option, it is impressive that around a third or more of the public since Vietnam has generally rejected it to embrace the “stay out” option. However, this is likely to be more nearly an expression of wariness about costly and frustrating military entanglements than a serious yearning for

full withdrawal. There is, for example, no real indication that Americans want to erect steely trade barriers. And polls [\[9\]](http://www.alternet.org/story/20030/americans_say_no_to_unilateralism), including ones on Syria [\[10\]](http://www.people-press.org/2013/09/03/public-opinion-runs-against-syrian-airstrikes/), continually show that the public is far more likely to approve foreign ventures if they are approved and supported by allies and international organizations. Real isolationism should be made of sterner stuff.

The public response to intervention in Syria also suggests that people, contrary to a large literature, are not readily manipulable by “opinion elites.” The Obama administration dramatically proposed military action in response to chemical weapons use in Syria, and leaders of both parties in Congress rather quickly fell into line. Moreover, these bipartisan “leadership cues” were accompanied by disturbing photographs of the corpses of Syrian children apparently killed in the attack.

Nonetheless, the American public has been decidedly unwilling [\[10\]](http://www.people-press.org/2013/09/03/public-opinion-runs-against-syrian-airstrikes/) even to support the punitive bombing of Syria—a venture likely to risk few if any American lives—out of concern that it would lead to further involvement in the conflict there. And the U.S. public has remained suspicious of, and therefore immune to, repeated assurances from President Barack Obama that he has categorically ruled out putting “boots on the ground” [\[11\]](http://www.cnn.com/2013/05/04/world/meast/us-syria-obama/index.html) in Syria.

Leaders may propose acting abroad, but that doesn't mean public opinion will move in concert, that people will necessarily buy the message. And on the occasions when they do, it is probably best to conclude that the message has struck a responsive chord, rather than that the public has been manipulated.

Ideas are like commercial products. Some become embraced by the customers while most, no matter how well packaged or promoted, fail to ignite acceptance or even passing interest. It is a process that is extremely difficult to predict and even more difficult to manipulate.

John Mueller is a political scientist at Ohio State University and a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic Studies. Among his books are *War, Presidents and Public Opinion*, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War*, *Atomic Obsession: Nuclear Alarmism from Hiroshima to Al-Qaeda*, and *War and Ideas*. This article expands on, and much more fully develops, commentary [\[12\]](http://m.indianexpress.com/news/caution-syria-ahead/1=62441/) presented earlier in the year in the Indian Express.

Links:

[1] <http://www.addthis.com/book=ark.php?v=250&username=nationalinterest>

[2] <http://nationalinterest.org/profile/john-mueller>

[3] http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/09/opinion/keller-our-new-isolationism.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

[4] http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/13/opinion/global/cohen-an-anchorless-world.html?hp&_r=0

[5] <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/wp/2013/09/08/rubio-and-others-run-from-internationalism-when-it-matters/?hpid=z3>

[6] <http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/public-perspective/ppscan/43/43095.pdf> [7]

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/22489/little-change-isolationist-sentiment-among-americans.aspx>

[8] http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/UserFiles/File/Task%20Force%20Reports/012_CCS_Report.pdf

[9] http://www.alternet.org/story/20030/americans_say_no_to_unilateralism [10] <http://www.people-press.org/2013/09/03/public-opinion-runs-against-syrian-airstrikes/>

[11] <http://www.cnn.com/2013/05/04/world/meast/us-syria-obama/index.html>

[13] <https://secure.flickr.com/photos/victoriapeckham/164175205/in/set-7215602263959625/>

[14] <http://nationalinterest.org/topic/politics/public-opinion>

[15] <http://nationalinterest.org/topic/politics>

[16] <http://nationalinterest.org/region/middle-east/levant/syria>

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Article 3.

Al-Monitor</=>

Meshaal to Tehran: Return of the Prodigal Son?

Ali Hashem for Al-Monitor <<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/contents/authors/ali-hashemi.html>>

October 13 -- Khaled Meshaal will visit Iran. This has been confirmed by Al-Monitor's source in Tehran, but still unconfirmed — to us and Meshaal — is the timing.

It was obvious that relations between Hamas, the strong Palestinian resistance faction, and Iran, its regional backer, deteriorated due to conflicting interests in Syria. Iran backed its ally Bashar al-Assad while Hamas decided it was time to ally with its ideological mother, the Muslim Brotherhood, which was already gaining ground in Tunisia, Egypt and was a favorite to rule Syria, in case the revolution succeeded in toppling the regime.

But out of the blue the situation changed. The Brotherhood in Egypt was toppled, and Hamas found itself up a blind alley. A previous piece I wrote for Al-Monitor on Aug. 12 explains how Hamas and Iran began this new chapter and who were the main players.

In Tehran, there was still a wing that thought the revival of relations with Hamas needed a confidence-building process, an Iranian source close to this wing told Al-Monitor, adding, "What happened during two years of crisis in Syria raised concerns over the benefit of supporting a group that, at the first serious junction, turned around and placed itself in the camp of our enemies." The source stated, "Since there is a consensus on closing the old chapter completely we don't mind, but it's better to frame the relation."

A well-informed source in Tehran told Al-Monitor that one month ago, at the funeral of Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani's mother, Hamas official Mohammad Nasr visited Tehran to pay condolences to the man who is believed to oversee and manage Iran's influence in the Middle East. The source revealed that there was a suggestion that Meshaal himself lead a delegation to the funeral, but the Iranians thought it too early to broach this stage. "Khaled Meshaal personally is responsible for the old chapter. There were historical leaders in Hamas who opposed his anti-Iran policies, therefore Iran was waiting a real chance. Here, the problem is with Meshaal himself and not with Hamas anymore." 94

Nasr's move was an icebreaker with respect to direct contact between Meshaal and the Iranian leadership, with an agreement settled to take the relations further. In this regard, days ago, Nasr visited Tehran once again carrying a message from Meshaal, who at almost the same time was delivering a speech from Istanbul via videolink to a gathering in Beirut regarding Jerusalem. In his speech, Meshaal stated that he's with the people's right to protest peacefully and not raise weapons, calling on those fighting to direct their arms toward Israel and seek to liberate Jerusalem from Israeli occupation.

Meshaal's stances were seen as positive in Tehran, and from here, it is believed that the second stage will start. The second stage means an official visit by Hamas' leader to the Iranian capital. A Palestinian source in Tehran told Al-

Monitor that Meshaal expressed his willingness to visit Tehran and the Iranians welcomed the move, but the only thing pending is the timing. Sources believe there are few hurdles blocking Meshaal's way, but this doesn't mean the relation with Hamas isn't improving: "Hamas is regarded as part of the bloc, and Iran is assisting them. As far as they are resisting Israel, then they can bet on us."

It's important to mention that despite the ups and downs of Iran and Hamas' relationship, the group's office in Tehran didn't close, its representative never left and visits from several of the group's military and political officials didn't stop.

On a final note, an Iranian official said, "If Meshaal is to visit Tehran at any time, for sure, you're not going to know the timing from media outlets. He'll come to Tehran and then people will know, Abu al-Walid [Meshaal] is a resistance leader and there are security measures to be taken to keep him safe."

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Article 4.

Politico

President Obama's foreign policy shift

Josh Gerstein

October 13 - President Barack Obama's decision to slash aid to Egypt's military government is the latest sign of a course correction shifting the U.S. foreign and national security policies back to the idealistic themes central to his 2008 campaign.

On issue after issue, Obama's recent moves seem aimed at recapturing principles he articulated five years ago as a candidate crusading against what he portrayed as President George W. Bush's overreliance on executive power and failure to uphold American values like human rights. "I'll turn the page on the imperial presidency," Obama declared in 2007. "We'll be the country that credibly tells the dissidents in the prison camps around the world that America is your voice, America is your dream, America is your light of justice."

In his first term, various events pushed Obama into a pragmatic realpolitik as he dramatically escalated the use of armed drones, acquiesced in crackdowns on dissent in countries like Bahrain and bypassed Congress to maintain a military operation in Libya.

Now, Obama is changing course.

U.S. military raids in Libya and Somalia last weekend seemed squarely aimed at capturing suspects rather than killing them with drones. Obama is again taking modest steps to move prisoners out of Guantanamo Bay. And when he decided in August that military action was needed to respond to Syria's alleged use of chemical weapons, he surprised many on his own staff by insisting that the action be taken to Congress for approval.

Obama hasn't admitted to major mistakes on national security policy in his first term, but he has acknowledged dangers in some of his own policies and called for America to open a new chapter in the fight against terrorism.

"With a decade of experience now to draw from, this is the moment to ask ourselves hard questions — about the nature of today's threats and how we should confront them," he said in May. "America is at a crossroads. We must define the nature and scope of this struggle, or else it will define us."

Obama also seemed to be confessing to a degree of overreliance on tools like drones, when he declared: "The very precision of drone strikes and the necessary secrecy often involved in such actions.... can also lead a president and his team to view drone strikes as a cure-all for terrorism."

Some analysts see Obama recalibrating in part out of concern that his foreign policy and national security legacy was at risk of being defined in shorthand as "drones and surveillance."

"In every administration, the first term is about the election and the second term is about legacy," said former State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley. "At the midway point, the White House did look at what was promised in 2008, what we will be judged on in 2017 and what still remains on the to-do list." The recent shifts may have been inspired by or at least fueled by a reshuffle in senior national security positions that saw Susan Rice replace Tom Donilon to National Security Adviser and installed Samantha Power as the U.S. Ambassador at the United Nations.

"The playbook hasn't changed, but when you change the coaching staff, you do change the first instinct," Crowley said. "It's possible that over time we'll see a different play selection."

Rice and Power are both seen as more activist and willing to take action in humanitarian crises, such as Libya and Syria. They may also be more inclined to incur the wrath of authoritarian regimes like Egypt's military government in order to signal U.S. support for democracy and human rights.

When the U.S. announced Wednesday that Obama had decided suspending delivery of cash assistance and major weapons systems to Egypt's government, officials acknowledged that more conciliatory efforts to coax military leaders into returning to democracy had failed. "I don't think anyone would claim there's going to be any direct line between decisions that we're announcing on assistance and immediate changes on the ground in Egypt exactly in line with what we are urging the Egyptians to do," said a senior administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity. "But at the same time, the president made clear how important these things are to us and this decision just underscores that the United States will not support actions that run contrary to our interest and our principles. And it's important to be clear about those things." Many national security experts sense that a shift is underway on various fronts, but say it's hard to divine with certainty since the foreign policy and national security sphere involves responding to crises as they arise.

"It's like climate change," said Ben Wittes of the Brookings Institution. "You have weather events and some sort of aggregate change, but to what extent should you attribute any weather event to climate change?" The pair of U.S. military operations in Libya and Somalia last weekend caught the eye of many experts because the raids seemed squarely aimed at capturing terrorism suspects rather than killing them with drones, as the administration sought to do on hundreds of occasions during Obama's first term.

Josh Gerstein is a White House reporter for POLITICO, specializing in legal and national security issues.

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Article 5.

The Washington Post

Obama's bad choices on Egypt

Jackson Diehl <http://www.washingtonpost.com/jackson-diehl/2011/02/24/ABccMXN_page.html> </=>

13 October -- President Obama tends to describe Egypt <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/09/24/rem-rks-president-obama-address-united-nations-general-assembly>> as a distasteful conflict between an autocratic military and its secular supporters and the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood, which won democratic elections but is intolerant and anti-Western. That view is aggressively reinforced by Cairo's de facto authorities, who have flooded Washington in recent weeks with a parade of English-speaking spin doctors, all arguing that Gen. Abdel Fatah al-Sissi, leader of July's coup, saved Egypt from a theocratic dictatorship.

How, then, to explain people like Ayman Nour? A secular, pro-democracy dissident for a decade before the 2011 revolution, Nour mounted a quixotic campaign for president <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005-04/24/AR2005042400890.html>> against strongman Hosni Mubarak in 2005 — and <<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2009/06/01/69224/egyptians-wor-y-that-obama-will.html>> for his trouble.

Now Nour is in exile, in Lebanon, having been warned to leave the country or face arrest and prosecution. He's not alone: Mohamed ElBaradei, the Nobel-winning former nuclear inspector once adopted by the pro-democracy movement as its leader, has retired to his home in Vienna <<http://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/africa/6973-el-baradei-leaves-egypt-for-austria>> rather than answer prosecutorial summons. At least two other prominent figures in Egypt's 2011 revolution, who asked not to be named, have quietly left the country since the July 3 coup <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/jackson-diehl-egypts-misguided-coup/2013/07/04/64bd121c-e4b4-11e2-a11e-c2e=876a8f30_story.html> . A third, <= href="http://asmamahfouz.com/" target="_blank">Asmaa Mafouz, was recently expelled from Kuwait <<http://www.arabtimesonline.com/NewsDetails/tabid/96=smid/414/ArticleID/200180/reftab/36/t/Kuwait-deports-Egypt-activist-Mahfouz/Default.aspx>> .</=>

Many who remain in Cairo are under mounting pressure. The offices of the April 6 movement, a group of pro-democracy youth that organized the Jan. 25, 2011, demonstration triggering the revolution, were raided by police <<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/81354/Egypt/politics-/April--condemns-police-raid-on-Cairo-offices.aspx>> last month. Several of its members have been arrested without charge. So have the leader and deputy leader of the Wasat party <<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/77678/Egypt/Politics-/ProMorsi-Wasat-Party-leaders-arrested.aspx>> , a moderate Islamist faction established during Mubarak's rule as a centrist alternative to the Muslim Brotherhood.

In short, the Sissi government is targeting the same liberal and secular activists who waged a lonely battle against the Mubarak regime. Moreover, their Western supporters are not exempt: The state-run newspaper al-Ahram, a quasi-official government mouthpiece, recently published a six-part series vilifying groups such as the National Democratic Institute for funding a dangerous "fifth column" bent on destabilizing Egypt — even as the regime's envoys were assuring Congressional sponsors of those nongovernmental organizations that a democratic transition was on the way.

Not all Egyptians who fought for democracy before 2011 are under siege: Some have joined the Sissi movement <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/jackson-diehl-egypts-democrats-abandon-democracy/2013/07/21/58beace0-efc8-11e2-9008-61e94a7ea=0d_story.html> . But those who opposed the July 3 coup, or who have since had second thoughts and turned against the military, are feeling more threatened and isolated than they ever did in the Mubarak era. "Back then we thought it was difficult. But it wasn't as difficult as it is now," one exiled activist told me last week. He asked that his name be withheld because his family is still in Cairo — a request he never made when Mubarak was in power.

"Back then we could get maybe 300 or 400 people out on the street, and we had an aggressive regime targeting us," the activist said. "But at least we knew that the majority of the people, though afraid to join us, supported us. I'm here [outside Egypt] now because I know that if I was arrested or gunned down in Tahrir Square no one would care. The regime has succeeded in persuading people that the only alternative is chaos."⁹⁴

The democrats being singled out have been relentless opponents of military rule and the Mubarak-era civilian establishment. Nour's Ghad party briefly joined with another secular party in an electoral alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood in the hope of bridging the secular-religious divide. Most of the April 6 movement chose to support Brotherhood candidate Mohamed Morsi in a 2012 presidential runoff against a military-backed candidate out of the belief that that would offer a better chance to consolidate democracy.

These activists broke with Morsi a year ago, after he suspended the rule of law in order to force through a constitution. They joined anti-government demonstrations, but they didn't support the coup. Their argument was that those opposed to the Brotherhood should work to defeat the party in the parliamentary elections that were to be held next year — something that polls showed was more than possible.

Part of the persecution of these democrats is payback by the generals and the state intelligence service, which blames them for the 2011 revolution and for trying to work with Morsi. But the repression also marks a return to a long-standing military strategy http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/egypts-democratic-pioneers-still-facing-official-persecution/2011/12/01/IQArltmGO_story.html, honed to perfection under Mubarak: Offer Egyptians — and the West — a stark choice between an autocratic, military-backed government and unreconstructed Islamists.

That means making sure that moderate Islamists and secular liberals who oppose military rule are suppressed above all. Left behind are the militant Islamists — the regime has not touched the extremist Nour party, even while crushing the Brotherhood and more moderate forces — and those civilians content to serve under military tutelage.

In the end, President Obama is not necessarily wrong to see a stark political choice in Egypt. He just chooses to ignore why that choice has come about, and so fails to support its victims.

Article 6.

Stratfor

The Evolution of War

George Friedman and Robert D. Kaplan

October 11 (Video Transcript):

George Friedman<=span>: My name's George Friedman. I'm here with my colleague Robert Kaplan. And we want to talk about one of the most ubiquitous things in the human condition: war. War is not a subject people like to think of as insoluble, they don't like to think of it as natural. But the fact of the matter is there's very few things -- family, economics -- as commonplace as war. We don't want to talk so much about why there's war -- that is a long and endless discussion -- we want to talk about what's happening to war. Where we're going today. Everybody's talking about revolutions in warfare, the end of peer-to-peer conflict, a whole range of things. So what we'd like to do today is talk about what's happening to war, and what the future of war looks like. Robert?

Robert D. Kaplan: Yes, I think one of the noticeable changes over the last few decades -- its gradual, it shifts back and forth but it's certainly a change -- is like, whereas in the past you had a relatively confined space with a lot of troops and equipment inside it, which is conventional, industrial war like tank battles in the Sinai in 1973, or in North Africa during World War II. We're going from a small space with a lot of combatants inside it to vast spaces that include immense Third World cities and deserts with small numbers of combatants hidden inside them. So whereas killing the enemy is easy, finding him is what's difficult. It's locating him that constitutes the real weapon of war, whereas in industrial war it was just a matter of killing the enemy at his chief point of concentration. This new century, we may still have major interstate industrial wars or naval battles, we don't know that yet. But at least for the past few decades, what most people define as unconventional war or guerrilla war or irregular war means a vast battle space with small numbers of combatants hiding inside that space.

George: I think one of the things that led to that transformation, is the transformation of mathematics in war, which was the introduction of precision-guided munitions, which actually was introduced in the 1970s -- first by the United States when they destroyed a critical bridge in Vietnam that they hadn't been able to destroy for years, and then by the Egyptians and the Soviets, who sank the Israeli destroyer Eilat with a single precision-guided munition. It used to take thousands of bombs to knock out a target. That meant hundreds of planes at least, that meant large numbers of crews, steel factories, aluminum factories and so on and so forth. The industrial nature of war that you refer to really had a great deal to do with the imprecision of the rifle. It's said -- and I'm not sure it's true -- it's said that in the First World War it took 10,000 rounds of ammunition to kill one man. Perhaps. But it certainly was true that you had to have large numbers of weapons. With the introduction of precision-guided munitions, you began with 50 percent hit/kill ratios and it rose and rose until one plane with one piece of munition would be able to destroy the enemy. And therefore, you had the same lethality with one aircraft and with hundreds.

Robert: And we are seeing this especially in air war, because one of the things they say in the Air Force is "The less obtrusive we are, the less number of planes we have overhead, the more lethal we can actually be." Because with precision-guided munitions, guided by satellites or whatever they're guided by, you don't have to drop a lot of ordnance to do damage. A single drone firing a medium or small-sized projectile can do the same amount of damage as decades ago would take a whole wing of an air force to drop. But we haven't seen it yet in naval war only because we haven't had a real naval war. But if we do, we're going to see that repeat itself, perhaps.

George: Well, I think the next step is infantry war. But you know, it's interesting to me that during World War II, we had a thousand bomb raids over Germany, and it was morally complex but nobody objected to bombing Germany, or very few people -- of course, the Germans did. We now have this idea of the drone as somehow a singularly unique moral weapon, particularly evil. It strikes me as an ambiguous argument: Is it better to have World War II-style, thousand-bomber raids killing tens of thousands of people in order to destroy one factory, or to have an unmanned aircraft striking it? Precision has on the one hand offended people with an apparent callousness, which certainly is in the nature of war, but at the same time has the virtue that collateral damage -- which will always be part of war, you will always make massive mistakes -- have been reduced.

Robert: And precision implies the death penalty because the precision means that your chances of killing the target are 90 percent, 80 percent, rather than 5 or 10 percent. So you're essentially carrying out a death sentence on someone.

George: So there's a paradox. Massive raids that killed thousands of innocent people are seen as somehow less morally reprehensible than the certainty of the death of one person, that has been targeted for that. It's a transformation of war. Now, the question really is, Is this war or something else?

Robert: Or is it police actions? Carrying out assassinations? Because one of the natures of the post-9/11 world is we're hunting down individuals as much as we're hunting down groups. And if you're hunting down individuals, and you have a revolution in precision-guided weapons, and the battlefield is vast, and the individual is hiding in an apartment building in a slum in Peshawar, Pakistan. This is a whole different world than the Korean War or World War II.

George: But there's still, then, the question. We have and have always had in the world what we'll call policing. The British did it in India, the United States did it in Nicaragua and the Philippines. Most major countries and many minor countries did it. To me, the interesting argument that's underway, and the one that's least tenable, is the argument that this is the way war will always be from now on. We heard that all wars will be nuclear wars, we've heard that all wars will be counterinsurgencies, all wars will be small. To me, I don't accept the idea that the peer-to-peer war has been abolished, that the 21st century will be the first century that will have no major systemic war between two great powers.

Robert: Well, look, every century before, going back thousands of years, has had the equivalent of interstate war. So to claim that this century automatically won't stand up statistically, in any sense of the word. I mean, the Iran-Iraq war, which I covered firsthand as a journalist, was like World War I. You would see hundreds of bodies piled up, killed by poison gas, on the Iraqi side. They were Iranian bodies. Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons left, right and center. And this was only 25-30 years ago. So to think that we're not going to have interstate wars, given the tensions in the Middle East, given the buildup of weapons in the Far East, I mean we haven't even talked about the growth of various naval platforms throughout the Pacific, not just in China. It seems to me very questionable.

George: I want to apply the new math, which we've seen obviously in Afghanistan, for example, to peer-to-peer conflict. So for example, it strikes me as questionable whether surface vessels are survivable. We know that in the Arab-Israeli War of 1973, tanks facing wire-guided Soviet-built anti-tank systems, were being destroyed by infantrymen. And we learned that there was an entirely new matrix to the war. One of the things that it seems to me is that we're going to see interstate war, but with the same sparseness of forces.

Robert: And without even journalists able to cover it, because you mentioned that surface warships are more and more vulnerable. What that means is that the face of naval warfare is going under water. It's going under sea.

George: Assuming that submarines are survivable.

Robert: Yes. Well, there's a saying in the Pacific: The submarines are like the new bling; everybody wants one.

George: But, I mean, the question to really ask is, we have anti-submarine rockets. We have anti-submarine torpedoes. We have an entirely new generation of weapons. A submarine can run at 30 or 40 knots; a surface vessel can do 20, 30 knot. You have missiles coming out that are hypersonic, doing certainly Mach 3-4. You can't run from it, you can't hide from it. There were three great platforms that emerged from World War II: the main battle tank, the aircraft carrier and the manned bomber. It's very hard to imagine how a manned bomber survives in an environment of surface-to-air missiles, or how a tank survives, or how a ship survives. And I include in that submarines because as much as you are hidden under water to my eyes, there are many technologies that can find you. So it really becomes an interesting question of how war is framed, what sea-lane control means, and so on and so forth, that's evolving.

Robert: We haven't had a test yet of these things. The 21st century so far, as violent as it has been in the Greater Middle East, in Afghanistan and Iraq, presently in Syria, has not had the kind of test that you're pointing at.

George: World War II. Many of these systems have appeared in World War I and afterwards. But in many ways people were surprised at the emergence of the aircraft carrier, at the criticality of the tank, certainly by the massed manned bomber. There was speculation about it, and then it emerged. So I would argue that first, we've had a revolution in warfare. Two, we've seen it applied in Afghanistan, in that morally difficult and ambiguous state. When it's supplied in the state-to-state conflict, which I expect to happen whether we want it or not -- I mean, it's not that everybody said, "Let's have a war"; wars seem to happen for their own reasons -- we're going to see emerging, exactly as you said, an entirely new structure.

Robert: This is why what's going on in the East-China Sea and the South China Sea is very interesting in this sense. Because you see a buildup of naval platforms in a part of the world of vibrant states that are not united by an alliance.

any sense of the word, have historical disputes and where essentially the peace has been kept by the U.S. Navy since World War II. It's been essentially a unipolar atmosphere at seas. Will that change? Is it changing?

George: Well that's the crucial thing. The United States has dominated the global oceans since World War II. It has been the only navy that is able to be global and bring overwhelming power locally. It bases itself on a triad of surface, air and submarine. How survivable is that? What can power on land do?

Robert: And will we see asymmetric naval war the way we've seen asymmetric, low-tech war in Iraq and Afghanistan with suicide bombers? Will we see the technological equivalent taking on the U.S. Navy like Iranian swarm boats, for instance, in the Persian Gulf?

George Friedman is the Chairman of Stratfor, a company he founded in 1996 that is now a leader in the field of global intelligence. Robert D. Kaplan is Chief Geopolitical Analyst for Stratfor, a non-resident senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security in Washington, D.C., and has been a foreign correspondent for The Atlantic for over 25 years.

Article 7.

NYT

A Surprising Case Against Foreign Aid

Fred Andrews

October 12, 2013 -- In his new book, Angus Deaton, an expert's expert on global poverty and foreign aid, puts his considerable reputation on the line and declares that foreign aid does more harm than good. It corrupts governments and rarely reaches the poor, he argues, and it is high time for the paternalistic West to step away and allow the developing world to solve its own problems.

It is a provocative and cogently argued claim. The only odd part is how it is made. It is tacked on as the concluding section of "The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality" (<http://press.princeton.edu/titles/10054.html>) (Princeton University Press, 360 pages), an illuminating and inspiring history of how mankind's longevity and prosperity have soared to breathtaking heights in modern times.

Mr. Deaton is the Eisenhower Professor of Economics and International Affairs at Princeton. He has spent decades working with the World Bank in creating basic yardsticks for measuring global poverty and with the Gallup Organization in creating survey-based measures of well-being.

The "great escape" of the title, he writes, is "the story of mankind's escaping from deprivation and early death." His book gives a stirring overview of the economic progress and medical milestones that, starting with the Industrial Revolution and accelerating after World War II, have caused life expectancies to soar.

Professor Deaton is a fluent writer, but his book is a demanding read. Its guts are his statistical comparisons, region by region and country by country, of how things stand today. They show how, when and whether higher incomes have promoted greater life expectancies and higher well-being across the globe. Professor Deaton tells us that a rising tide has lifted almost all the world's boats — but some far higher than others. Some have scarcely moved; a few have sunk.

Obviously, some developing nations have done phenomenally well, yet, on average, the distance between “rich” and “poor” countries remains the same.

China and India continually come to the fore. For all their extraordinary progress in lifting millions of people out of poverty, it is still the case that about half of the world’s poor are Chinese or Indian.

In today’s world, with all we have mastered in medicine, public health and development, Professor Deaton says, it is also still the case that almost a billion people live in material destitution, millions of children still die through the accident of where they are born, and wasting and wanting still disfigure the bodies of nearly half of India’s children.”

That troubling statement leads to his indictment of foreign aid, which is jarring and odd only in that nowhere in the first 266 pages of his historical analysis has he even mentioned foreign aid, either positively or negatively. A new character joins the play in its final act and becomes the villain of the piece.

In his considered judgment, global poverty today is no longer a result of lack of resources or opportunity, but of poor institutions, poor government and toxic politics. Though about \$134 billion in official aid still flows from donor governments to recipient governments, there is no mystery, he says, as to why foreign aid fails to erase poverty. That is not its mission, he asserts: typically it serves commercial interests at home or buys political allies abroad, too often unsavory ones.

All aid is distorted by politics at both ends, he says, citing the example of Mauritania several years back, when aid was in danger of being cut off. The country’s president hatched the brilliant idea of becoming one of the few Arab countries to recognize Israel. The aid taps were reopened and the reforms rescinded.

THE author has found no credible evidence that foreign aid promotes economic growth; indeed, he says, signs show that the relationship is negative. Regretfully, he identifies a “central dilemma”: When the conditions for development are present, aid is not required. When they do not exist, aid is not useful and probably damaging.

Professor Deaton makes the case that foreign aid is antidemocratic because it frees local leaders from having to obtain the consent of the governed. “Western-led population control, often with the assistance of nondemocratic or well-rewarded recipient governments, is the most egregious example of antidemocratic and oppressive aid,” he writes. In its day it seemed like a no-brainer. Yet the global population grew by four billion in half a century, and the vast majority of the seven billion people now on the planet live longer and more prosperous lives than their parents did.

So what should the West do instead of providing aid? Well, it can invest in finding a vaccine for malaria, still a mass killer. It can push drug companies to tackle diseases that threaten poorer countries. It can support the free flow of information about inventions and new management techniques. It can relax trade barriers and provide poor countries with expert advice at the bargaining table. It can ease immigration restraints and accept more newcomers.

Many options exist, but Professor Deaton suggests that the question is fundamentally wrong and self-centered. “Why is it we who must do something?” he wonders. “Who put us in charge?” What the West should do, he says, is stand aside and let poorer countries find their own paths, in fits and starts, at their own pace, to development and prosperity, just as the West had to do a century or so earlier.

That is a powerful argument from a scholar who has done his homework, but it is more provocative than ultimately convincing. Defenders of foreign aid would reply that past efforts have contributed greatly to the enormous gains in life expectancy that the professor celebrates. The professor’s maverick views fly in the face of an enormous global effort and he paints with a very broad brush. The World Bank counts nearly 12,000 projects under way in 172 countries. It’s hard to believe that all are nearly as flawed or misguided as Professor Deaton suggests. Aid is not a door that should slam shut. /p>