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Article 1.

NYT

Egypt's Democracy Interrupted

Editorial

June 18, 2012 -- The once-promising democratic transition in Egypt is in peril after a power grab by the generals and the courts — holdovers from Hosni Mubarak's repressive regime. This is not what Egyptians rallied and died for in Tahrir Square. It guarantees more turmoil. Given Egypt's importance in the Arab world, it sets a terrible example for other societies trying to get beyond autocratic rule.

After Mr. Mubarak was deposed 16 months ago, the generals

promised to transfer power to a civilian government by July 1. We were always skeptical, and they have now shown their true colors. On Wednesday, the ruling military council reimposed martial law two weeks after it expired. The following day, a panel of Mubarak-era judges ordered the dissolution of the newly elected Parliament, where the once-banned Muslim Brotherhood held a large majority. The generals quickly carried out the court order and claimed all legislative powers for themselves.

Then, on Sunday, the generals issued an interim constitution that removed the military and the defense minister from presidential oversight and named a 100-member panel to draft a new permanent charter, replacing one appointed by Parliament.

On Monday, as unofficial results suggested that Mohamed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood candidate, had defeated Ahmed Shafik, a former Air Force general and Mr. Mubarak's last prime minister, the generals were trying to calm things down, insisting Egyptians should "trust the armed forces." It will take a lot more than words to get democracy back on track.

Egyptians wanted real change. In the first round of presidential voting, two moderate candidates together got the most votes, but they didn't make it into the final round. There are serious questions about Mr. Morsi's and Mr. Shafik's commitment to the economic and political reforms that Egypt desperately needs. After trying to cultivate an image of moderation, the Brotherhood allied itself with the hard-line Salafis and joined in their calls for the implementation of Islamic law. But if Mr. Morsi is indeed the winner, he must be allowed to do the job.

Egyptians made their revolution and ultimately must make it succeed. The reformers are going to have to regroup. They will be stronger if they work together.

And they will be stronger if they have less equivocal backing from the Obama administration, which was quiet for too long. It sent the wrong message in March when it resumed military aid to Egypt — $1.3 billion annually — after a five-month hiatus, even though the generals had not repealed the emergency law or dropped prosecutions against employees of four American-financed democracy groups. The administration should have delayed some of the aid to show firm support for the democratic process.

American officials were right to warn the generals on Monday that they risk losing billions of dollars if they don't swiftly transfer power to the president, ensure elections for a new Parliament and begin writing a new constitution with help from a broad range of Egyptians. The United States needs to work with Egypt to maintain the peace treaty and a stable border with Israel. But an undemocratic Egypt in perpetual turmoil is no help to its own people or Israel or the rest of the region.

Article 2.

The Daily Beast

China Should Intervene in Syria, Not America

Niall Ferguson

June 18, 2012 -- The Arab Spring has plunged Syria into a bloody civil war. Now, with allegations flying that the Russians are supplying helicopters to the odious regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, a familiar debate is underway. Should we intervene?

There can be no morally credible argument against intervention—by someone. Leaving Syria to descend into the kind of sectarian violence that devastated neighboring Lebanon in the 1980s would condemn hundreds of thousands to premature, violent death. Syria is five times the size of Lebanon. The risks of leaving it to degenerate into a failed state are surely higher than the risks of intervention.

But why should it be the United States that once again attempts to play the part of global cop?

Since the early 1970s, the Middle East has absorbed a disproportionate share of American resources. Particularly since 9/11, it has consumed the time of presidents like no other region of the world. Yet it is far from clear that this state of affairs should continue, for three good reasons.

First, advances in fracking technology and discoveries of bountiful natural gas reserves mean that North America's dependence on Middle Eastern oil will diminish rapidly in the next two decades. In 1990 North America accounted for 29 percent of global liquid fuel consumption (mostly oil). By 2030, according to BP, that figure will be down to 19 percent.

Rula Jebreal and Richard Cohen on what's next in Syria.

Second, a new military intervention makes very little sense at a time when the U.S. defense budget is being slashed. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the latest National Defense Authorization Act will reduce spending by $554 million between 2013 and 2017.

Finally, what is the point of humanitarian intervention in a region where no good deed goes unpunished? The United States has made its fair share of mistakes in the Middle East, no question. But the things we have gotten right—extricating Egypt from the Soviet embrace, upholding Kuwait's independence from Iraq, overthrowing the tyrants Saddam Hussein and Muammar Gaddafi—haven't exactly won many plaudits. Back in 2002, according to the Pew Global Attitudes survey, 30 percent of Turks and 25 percent of Jordanians had a favorable view of the United States. Today those figures are, respectively, 15 percent and 12 percent.

So if not us, then who? Or perhaps that should be: if not us, then Hu? That, after all, is the name of the current Chinese president.

In terms of geopolitics, China today is the world's supreme free rider. China's oil consumption has doubled in the past 10 years, while America's has actually declined. As economist Zhang Jian pointed out in a paper for the Brookings Institution last year, China relies on foreign imports for more than 50 percent of the oil it consumes, and half of this imported oil is from the Middle East. (China's own reserves account for just 1.2 percent of the global total.)

Moreover, China's dependence on Middle Eastern oil is set to

increase. The International Energy Authority estimates that by 2015 foreign imports will account for between 60 and 70 percent of its total consumption. Most of that imported energy comes through a handful of vital marine bottlenecks: principally, the straits of Hormuz and Malacca and the Suez Canal.

Yet China contributes almost nothing to stability in the oil-producing heartland of the Arabian deserts and barely anything to the free movement of goods through the world's strategic sea lanes.

True, China's defense budget is still a fraction—8 percent—of ours. But even the official figures, which are probably underestimates, reveal that it has gone up by a factor of two and a half in the past 10 years. According to the International Institute of Strategic Studies, China has invested not only in an aircraft carrier and a new combat aircraft, but also in "anti-satellite capacities, anti-ship ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and cyber-warfare capabilities."

Finally, the world is ready for the Chinese to participate more fully in international security. According to another Pew survey of 14 nations around the world, 42 percent of people now think China is the world's leading economic power, compared with 36 percent who think it's still the United States.

Under President Obama, U.S. grand strategy has been at best incoherent, at worst nonexistent. I can think of no better complement to the president's recent "pivot" to the Asia-Pacific region than to invite China to play a greater role in the Middle East—one that is commensurate with its newfound wealth and growing military capability.

Article 3.

Usa Today

Iranian nukes? No worries

Kenneth Waltz

The past several months have witnessed a heated debate over the best way for America and Israel to respond to Iran's nuclear activities. Although the U.S., the European Union and Iran have recently returned to the negotiating table, a palpable sense of crisis still looms.

It should not. In fact, a nuclear-armed Iran would probably be the best possible result of the standoff and the one most likely to restore stability to the Middle East.

The crisis over Iran's nuclear program could end in three ways. First, diplomacy coupled with sanctions could persuade Iran to abandon pursuit of a nuclear weapon. But that's unlikely: The historical record indicates that a country bent on acquiring nuclear weapons can rarely be dissuaded. Take North Korea, which succeeded in building its weapons despite countless rounds of sanctions and U.N. Security Council resolutions. If Tehran decides that its security depends on possessing nuclear weapons, sanctions are unlikely to change its mind.

The second possible outcome is that Iran stops short of testing a nuclear weapon but develops a breakout capability, the capacity to build and test one quite quickly. Such a capability might

satisfy the domestic political needs of Iran's rulers by assuring hard-liners that they can enjoy all the benefits of having a bomb (such as greater security) without the downsides (such as international isolation and condemnation).

Reconsider Israel

Israel, however, has made it clear that it views a significant Iranian enrichment capacity alone as an unacceptable threat. It would likely continue its risky efforts at subverting Iran's nuclear program through sabotage and assassination— which could lead Iran to conclude that a breakout capability is an insufficient deterrent, after all, and that only weaponization can provide it with the security it seeks.

The third possible outcome of the standoff is that Iran continues its course and publicly goes nuclear by testing a weapon. U.S. and Israeli officials have declared that outcome unacceptable, arguing that a nuclear Iran is an existential threat to Israel. Such language is typical of major powers, which have historically gotten riled up whenever another country begins to develop a nuclear weapon. Yet every time another country has managed to shoulder its way into the nuclear club, the other members have always changed tack and decided to live with it. In fact, by reducing imbalances in military power, new nuclear states generally produce more regional and international stability, not less.

Israel's regional nuclear monopoly, which has proved remarkably durable for more than four decades, has long fueled instability in the Middle East. In no other region of the world does a lone, unchecked nuclear state exist. It is Israel's nuclear

arsenal, not Iran's desire for one, that has contributed most to the crisis. Power, after all, begs to be balanced.

The danger of a nuclear Iran has been grossly exaggerated due to fundamental misunderstandings of how states generally behave in the international system.

One prominent concern is that the Iranian regime is inherently irrational. Portraying Iran that way has allowed U.S. and Israeli officials to argue that the logic of nuclear deterrence does not apply. If Iran acquired a nuclear weapon, they warn, it would not hesitate to launch a first strike against Israel, though it would risk an overwhelming response destroying everything the Islamic Republic holds dear.

Although it is impossible to be certain of Iranian intentions, it is far more likely that if Iran desires nuclear weapons, it is for the purpose of enhancing its own security, not to improve its offensive capabilities. Iran could be intransigent when negotiating and defiant in the face of sanctions, but it still acts to secure its own preservation.

Nevertheless, even some observers and policymakers who accept that the Iranian regime is rational still worry that a nuclear weapon would embolden it, providing Tehran with a shield that would allow it to act more aggressively and increase its support for terrorism. The problem with these concerns is that they contradict the record of almost every other nuclear weapons state dating to 1945. History shows that when countries acquire the bomb, they feel increasingly vulnerable and become acutely aware that their nuclear weapons make them a potential target in the eyes of major powers. This awareness discourages nuclear

states from bold and aggressive action. Maoist China, for example, became much less bellicose after acquiring nuclear weapons in 1964, and India and Pakistan have both become more cautious since going nuclear.

Drop the sanctions

Another oft-touted worry is that if Iran obtains the bomb, other states in the region will follow suit, leading to a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. But the nuclear age is now almost 70 years old, and fears of proliferation have proved to be unfounded. When Israel acquired the bomb in the 1960s, it was at war with many of its neighbors. If an atomic Israel did not trigger an arms race then, there is no reason a nuclear Iran should now.

For these reasons, the U.S. and its allies need not take such pains to prevent the Iranians from developing a nuclear weapon. Diplomacy should continue because open lines of communication will make the Western countries feel better able to live with a nuclear Iran. But the sanctions on Iran can be dropped: They primarily harm ordinary Iranians, with little purpose.

Most important, policymakers and citizens worldwide should take comfort from the fact that where nuclear capabilities have emerged, so, too, has stability. When it comes to nuclear weapons, now as ever, more could be better.

Kenneth Waltz is senior research scholar at the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies. This is a condensed version

of an article that will appear in the July-August issue of Foreign Affairs.

Article 4.

BBC

Fears grow for fate of Syria's chemical weapons

Jonathan Marcus

19 June 2012 -- Syria's significant stockpile of chemical weapons adds a frightening additional element to the crisis that threatens to engulf the regime of President Bashar al-Assad.

There are growing concerns - shared both in neighbouring countries and among key western governments - about the security of these weapons should the regime fall.

There are even persistent reports in the US that preparations are being made to secure such stocks in the event of a regime meltdown.

One aspect of the problem is the scale and scope of Syria's chemical weapons programme.

Leonard Spector, executive director of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies based in Washington, notes that: "Syria has one of the world's largest chemical weapon arsenals,

including traditional chemical agents, such as mustard, and more modern nerve agents, such as Sarin, and possibly persistent nerve agents, such as VX.

"Syria is thought to have a number of major chemical weapon complexes, some in areas of current conflict, such as the Homs and Hama regions. The bases are said to be guarded by elite forces, but whether they would stay at their posts if the Assad regime collapses cannot be predicted."

An additional concern is the manner in which the different kinds of chemical weapons are stored.

Mr Spector notes that while the mustard agent is believed to be stored in bulk form, rather than in individual munitions, other agents are thought to be in "binary" munitions, in which two innocuous solutions combine when the munition is fired to create the chemical warfare agent.

These might be more easily transported and used than the bulk agent.

Mr Spector adds: "US officials believe Syria's chemical arms are stored in secure bunkers at a limited number of sites and have not been dispersed into the field."

Beyond the intelligence services there is little hard and fast detail on Syria's chemical weapons programme.

Unlike Libya, which had signed the Chemical Weapons Convention and was in the process of dismantling its stocks when Muammar Gaddafi's regime collapsed, Syria has not joined the convention and thus has never made any formal declarations of its stocks.

Indeed as Charles Blair, a Senior Fellow at the Federation of American Scientists underlines, Libya is not a terribly useful precedent when considering the potential problems surrounding Syria's chemical arsenal.

Libya's arsenal was much smaller; stocks of mustard agent were essentially old; locations of stockpiles were known and the Libyan authorities were co-operating in their destruction.

Crucially too, says Mr Blair, there are huge differences in the two countries' potential abilities to deliver chemical weapons.

"Libya was able to deliver its sole CW agent via aerial bombs only - a militarily ineffective manner in this case," he says.

"Syria, by comparison, is thought to possess a variety of platforms for chemical weapons delivery - an open-source CIA report lists aerial bombs, artillery shells and ballistic missiles."

There is considerable discussion as to the nature of the threat Syria's weapons pose.

Leonard Spector says that there are multiple dangers.

"Conceivably, the Assad government could use some of these agents against rebel forces or even civilians in an effort to intimidate them into submission," he says.

"Or insurgents could overrun one of the chemical weapon sites and threaten to use some of these weapons, in extremis, if threatened with overwhelming force by the Syrian army."

The scenario that is causing the greatest concern, he says, is the possible loss of control over Syria's chemical arsenal leading to the transfer of chemical weapons to Hezbollah, in Southern

Lebanon, or to al-Qaeda.

Special forces

Components of both organisations are now operating in Syria as one of the groups challenging the Assad regime, he says.

Such a link-up between al-Qaeda-affiliated groups and weapons of mass destruction has haunted US military planners for more than a decade.

In the face of such concerns there has been considerable pressure, not least from Washington, for the US to come up with plans to secure the Syrian weapons in the event of the collapse of the regime.

There has been a succession of press reports displaying various degrees of bravado suggesting US Special Forces are being readied to swoop in and take over Syria's chemical weapons infrastructure.

The reality is more complex. Such a mission would require significant numbers of "boots on the ground" in highly volatile circumstances.

As Charles Blair makes clear: "The Iraq experience demonstrates the difficulty of securing highly sensitive military storage facilities."

He argues that in Syria the challenges are likely to be greater "because no foreign army stands poised to enter the country to locate and secure chemical weapons manufacturing and storage facilities".

Of course, as Leonard Spector points out, details of US

contingency planning are not known.

"The most desirable plan would be to urge the weapons' current custodians to remain in place during any transition of power, and to place the sites under the supervision of an international contingent that could monitor the weapons' security, as decisions were made about how to manage or destroy them in the future," he says.

However, he adds: "For the US to attempt to secure the sites in the face of armed resistance by Syrian forces would be extremely demanding, given the number of the sites involved and their considerable size."

Of course if the Assad regime were to go, a whole new set of issues emerges.

Would any new Syrian government agree to join the convention and agree to eliminate its chemical weapons stocks?

Or, as Leonard Spector notes, would they instead "insist on retaining them as a counter to Israel's nuclear capabilities and as a bargaining chip in future negotiations with Israel over the Golan Heights?"

Article 5.

The Wall Street Journal

A Leaderless World: Signs of disorder grow as American influence recedes

Editorial

June 18, 2012 -- Not so long ago much of the world griped about an America that was too assertive, a "hyperpower" that attempted to lead with too little deference to the desires of those attending the G-20 meeting today in Mexico. Well, congratulations. A world without U.S. leadership is arriving faster than even the French hoped. How do you like it?

• In Syria, a populist revolt against a dictator threatens to become a civil war as Russia and Iran back their client in Damascus and the West defaults to a useless United Nations. The conflict threatens to spill into neighboring countries.

• Iran continues its march toward a nuclear weapon despite more than three years of Western pleading and (until recently) weak sanctions. Israel may conclude it must strike Iran first to defend itself, despite the military risks, because it lacks confidence about America's will to act. If Iran does succeed, a nuclear proliferation breakout throughout the Middle East is likely.

• Again President of Russia, Vladimir Putin snubbed President Obama's invitation to the G-8 summit at Camp David and is complicating U.S. diplomacy at every turn. He is sending arms and antiaircraft missiles to Syria, blocking sanctions at the U.N. and reasserting Russian influence in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Mr. Obama's "reset" in relations has little to show for it.

• In Egypt, the military and Muslim Brotherhood vie for power after the Arab spring—with the U.S. largely a bystander. The democrats don't trust an America that helped them too little in the Mubarak days, while the military doesn't trust a U.S. Administration that abandoned Mubarak at the end. Egypt is increasingly unwilling to police its own border with Israel or the flow of arms into Gaza.

• The countries of the euro zone stumble from one failed bailout to the next, jeopardizing a still-fragile global economy. The world's most impressive current leader, Germany's Angela Merkel, rejected Mr. Obama's advice to blow out her country's balance sheet with stimulus spending in 2009 and is thankful she did. Her economy is stronger for it.

The Obama Administration has since played the role mainly of Keynesian kibitzer, privately taking the side of Europe's debtors in urging Germany to write bigger checks and ease monetary policy. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner elbowed his way into a euro-zone finance ministers meeting last September and then criticized European policies, and lately Messrs. Obama and Geithner have been blaming Europe for America's economic problems. No wonder Frau Merkel doesn't much care what the U.S. thinks.

• The countries of South Asia are recalculating their interests as the U.S. heads for the exits in Afghanistan. Pakistan demands the extortion of $5,000 a truck to carry supplies to U.S. forces, while continuing to provide sanctuary for Taliban leaders. Iran extends its own influence in Western Afghanistan, while the Taliban resist U.S. entreaties to negotiate a cease-fire, figuring they can wait out the departure.

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For the Putins of the world and many American liberals, these signs of fading U.S. influence are welcome. They have finally tied down the American Gulliver. The era of "collective security" through the U.N. has arrived, and, whatever the future difficulties, at least there will be no more Iraqs.

An image released by the Syrian opposition's Shaam News Network showing a road blocked with burning tires in Damascus on Sunday.

But note well that the substitute for U.S. leadership is not a new era of U.N.-administered peace. It is often a vacuum filled by the world's nastiest actors. That is nowhere clearer than in Syria, where Russia and Iran have a free run to fortify the Assad dictatorship. The price is high in human slaughter, but it may be higher still in showing other dictators that it hardly matters anymore if an American President declares that you "must go." What matters is if you have patrons in Moscow, Beijing or Tehran.

The other claim, especially popular in Europe and China, is that this American retreat is inevitable because the U.S. is weaker economically. There's no doubt the recession and tepid recovery have sapped U.S. resources and confidence, but economic decline is not inevitable. It is, as Charles Krauthammer put it in 2009, "a choice."

America can choose to stay on its current path toward a slow-growth entitlement society that spends its patrimony on domestic handouts, or it can resolve to once again be a dynamic, risk-taking society that grows at 3% or more a year.

What the U.S. can't do is expect to grow at the 2% annual rate of the Obama era and somehow finance both ObamaCare and the current American military. On present trend, America's defense budget will inevitably shrink as Europe's military spending has to 3%, then 2% or less, of GDP.

There are always limits to U.S. power, and American leadership does not mean intervening willy-nilly or militarily. It does require, however, that an American President believe that U.S. pre-eminence is desirable and a source for good, and that sometimes this means leading forcefully from the front even if others object.

Without that American leadership, the increasing signs of world disorder will be portents of much worse to come.

Article 6.

Project Syndicate

A Rio Report Card

Jeffrey D. Sachs

18 June 2012 -- One of the world's pre-eminent scientific publications, Nature, has just issued a scathing report card in advance of next week's Rio+20 summit on sustainable development. The grades for implementation of the three great treaties signed at the first Rio Earth Summit in 1992 were as follows: Climate Change – F; Biological Diversity – F; and Combating Desertification – F. Can humanity still avoid getting

itself expelled? We have known for at least a generation that the world needs a course correction. Instead of powering the world economy with fossil fuels, we need to mobilize much greater use of low-carbon alternatives such as wind, solar, and geothermal power. Instead of hunting, fishing, and clearing land without regard for the impact on other species, we need to pace our agricultural production, fishing, and logging in line with the environment's carrying capacity. Instead of leaving the world's most vulnerable people without access to family planning, education, and basic health care, we need to end extreme poverty and reduce the soaring fertility rates that persist in the poorest parts of the world.

In short, we need to recognize that with seven billion people today, and nine billion by mid-century, all inter-connected in a high-tech, energy-intensive global economy, our collective capacity to destroy the planet's life-support systems is unprecedented. Yet the consequences of our individual actions are typically so far removed from our daily awareness that we can go right over the cliff without even knowing it. When we power our computers and lights, we are unaware of the carbon emissions that result. When we eat our meals, we are unaware of the deforestation that has resulted from unsustainable farming. And when billions of our actions combine to create famines and floods halfway around the world, afflicting the poorest people in drought-prone Mali and Kenya, few of us are even dimly aware of the dangerous snares of global interconnectedness.

Twenty years ago, the world tried to address these realities through treaties and international law. The agreements that emerged in 1992 at the first Rio summit were good ones: thoughtful, far-sighted, public-spirited, and focused on global

priorities. Yet they have not saved us. Those treaties lived in the shadow of our daily politics, imaginations, and media cycles. Diplomats trudged off to conferences year after year to implement them, but the main results were neglect, delay, and bickering over legalities. Twenty years on, we have only three failing grades to show for our efforts. Is there a different way? The path through international law engages lawyers and diplomats, but not the engineers, scientists, and community leaders on the front lines of sustainable development. It is littered with technical arcana about monitoring, binding obligations, annex-I and non-annex-I countries, and thousands of other legalisms, but has failed to give humanity the language to discuss our own survival. We have thousands of documents but a failure to speak plainly to one other. Do we want to save ourselves and our children? Why didn't we say so? At Rio+20 we will have to say so, clearly, decisively, and in a way that leads to problem-solving and action, not to bickering and defensiveness. Since politicians follow public opinion rather than lead it, it must be the public itself that demands its own survival, not elected officials who are somehow supposed to save us despite ourselves. There are few heroes in politics; waiting for the politicians would be to wait too long. The most important outcome in Rio, therefore, will not be a new treaty, binding clause, or political commitment. It will be a global call to action. Around the world, the cry is rising to put sustainable development at the center of global thinking and action, especially to help young people to solve the triple-bottom-line challenge – economic well-being, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion – that will define their era. Rio+20 can help them to do it. Rather than a new treaty, let us adopt at Rio+20 a set of Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs, that will

inspire a generation to act. Just as the Millennium Development Goals opened our eyes to extreme poverty and promoted unprecedented global action to fight AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, the SDGs can open the eyes of today's youth to climate change, biodiversity loss, and the disasters of desertification. We can still make good on the three Rio treaties, by putting people at the forefront of the effort. SDGs to end extreme poverty; decarbonize the energy system; slow population growth; promote sustainable food supplies; protect the oceans, forests, and drylands; and redress the inequalities of our time can galvanize a generation's worth of problem-solving. Engineers and technology wizards from Silicon Valley to São Paolo to Bangalore to Shanghai have world-saving ideas up their sleeves.

Universities around the world are home to legions of students and faculty intent on solving practical problems in their communities and countries. Businesses, at least the good ones, know that they can't flourish and motivate their workers and consumers unless they are part of the solution.

The world is poised to act. Rio+20 can help to unleash a generation of action. There is still time, just barely, to turn the F's to A's, and to pass humanity's ultimate test.

Jeffrey D. Sachs is a professor at Columbia University, Director of its Earth Institute, and a special adviser to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. His books include The End of Poverty and Common Wealth.