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Article 1.

Foreign Policy

## **Think Again: The Muslim Brotherhood**

Eric trager

January 28, 2013

**"They're democrats."**

Don't kid yourself. Long before the Jan. 25 revolution that ousted Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, many academics and

policymakers argued that his main adversary -- the Muslim Brotherhood -- had made its peace with democracy. This was based on the assumption that, since the Muslim Brotherhood participated in virtually every election under Mubarak, it was committed to the rule of the people as a matter of principle.

It was also based on what typically sympathetic Western researchers heard from Muslim Brotherhood leaders, and what I heard as well. "Democracy is shura," Brotherhood Deputy Supreme Guide Khairat al-Shater told me during a March 2011 interview, referring to the Islamic jurisprudential tool of "consultation." The implication was that the Brotherhood accepted a political system that encouraged open debate.

Yet since the Muslim Brotherhood's candidate, Mohamed Morsy, was elected president in June, the exact opposite has been true. The Brotherhood's only real "consultation" has been with the Egyptian military, which the Brotherhood persuaded to leave power by ceding substantial autonomy to it under the new constitution. Among other undemocratic provisions, this backroom deal yielded constitutional protection for the military's separate court system, under which civilians can be prosecuted for the vague crime of "damaging the armed forces."

Meanwhile, the Brotherhood has embraced many of the Mubarak regime's autocratic excesses: Editors who are critical of the Brotherhood have lost their jobs, and more journalists have been prosecuted for insulting the president during Morsy's six months in office than during Mubarak's 30-year reign. And much as Mubarak's ruling party once did, the Brotherhood is using its newfound access to state resources as a political tool: It reportedly received below-market food commodities from the

Ministry of Supply and Social Affairs, which it is redistributing to drum up votes in the forthcoming parliamentary elections.

The Brotherhood's most blatantly undemocratic act, however, was Morsy's Nov. 22 "constitutional declaration," through which he placed his presidential edicts above judicial scrutiny and asserted the far-reaching power to "take the necessary actions and measures to protect the country and the goals of the revolution." When this power grab catalyzed mass protests, Morsy responded by ramming a new constitution through the Islamist-dominated Constituent Assembly, and the Brotherhood later mobilized its cadres to attack the anti-Morsy protesters, and subsequently extract confessions from their captured fellow citizens. So much for promises of "consultation."

As the Brotherhood's first year in power has demonstrated, elections do not, by themselves, yield a democracy. Democratic values of inclusion are also vital. And the Muslim Brotherhood -- which has deployed violence against protesters, prosecuted its critics, and leveraged state resources for its own political gain -- clearly lacks these values.

### **"They're Egypt's evangelicals."**

False. While it is certainly true that Muslim Brothers, like America's Christian evangelicals, are religious people, the Brotherhood's religiosity isn't its most salient feature. Whereas Christian evangelicals (as well as devout Catholics, orthodox Jews, committed Hindus, and so on) are primarily defined by their piety, the Muslim Brotherhood is first and foremost a political organization -- a power-seeking entity that uses religion as a mobilizing tool. As a result, the political diversity within the

evangelical community, including its quietist trend, cannot exist within the Muslim Brotherhood, which strives for political uniformity among its hundreds of thousands of members.

The Brotherhood achieves this internal uniformity by subjecting its members to a rigorous five- to eight-year process of internal promotion, during which time a rising Muslim Brother ascends through four membership ranks before finally becoming a full-fledged "active brother." At each level, Brothers are tested on their completion of a standardized Brotherhood curriculum, which emphasizes rote memorization of the Quran as well as the teachings of Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna and radical Brotherhood theorist Sayyid Qutb. Rising Muslim Brothers are also vetted for their willingness to follow the leadership's orders, and Muslim Brothers ultimately take an oath to "listen and obey" to the organization's edicts.

The Brotherhood's 20-member executive Guidance Office, meanwhile, deploys its well-indoctrinated foot soldiers for maximum political effect. The movement's pyramid-shaped hierarchy quickly disseminates directives down to thousands of five- to 20-member "families" -- local Brotherhood cells spread throughout Egypt. These "families" execute the top leaders' orders, which may include providing local social services, organizing mass demonstrations, mobilizing voters for political campaigns, or more grimly, coordinating violent assaults on anti-Brotherhood protesters.

By channeling deeply committed members through an institutionalized chain of command, the Brotherhood has discovered the key ingredients for winning elections in a country where practically everyone else is deeply divided. For this

reason, it is extremely protective of its internal unity: Its current leaders have largely dodged ideological questions -- such as explaining what "instituting the sharia [Islamic law]" means in practice -- to prevent fissures from emerging.

The Brotherhood has further maintained internal unity by banishing anyone who disagrees with its strategy. It excommunicated a former top official, Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, when he declared his presidential candidacy in mid-2011 despite the Brotherhood's policy at the time against nominating a presidential candidate -- and even after the Brotherhood reversed its own decision, Aboul Fotouh remained persona non grata. It similarly ousted top Brotherhood youths who opposed the establishment of a single Brotherhood party and called on the Brotherhood to remain politically neutral.

To be sure, the Brotherhood's long-term vision is religious: It calls for "instituting God's sharia and developing the Islamic nation's renaissance on the basis of Islam." But the Brotherhood views itself the key vehicle for achieving this vision, which is why it places such a priority on protecting its organizational strength and internal unity. Indeed, far from approximating a devout religious group akin to evangelical Christians, the Muslim Brotherhood's disciplined pursuit of power -- which includes indoctrinating members and using force against detractors -- makes it most similar to Russia's Bolsheviks.

**"They're essentially free-market capitalists."**

Not really. In the aftermath of the Muslim Brotherhood's rapid emergence as Egypt's new ruling party, the existence of wealthy businessmen within the organization's top ranks was taken as a

sign that it was a capitalist organization that would put Egypt's economic interests first and thus steer a moderate course. The Brotherhood's supposed capitalism was also taken as a sign that it would seek cooperation with the West as it pursued foreign direct investment.

But just as electoral participation doesn't necessarily make an organization democratic, being led by wealthy businessmen doesn't make the Brotherhood capitalist.

Not that the Muslim Brotherhood claims to be capitalist anyway. "It is not," Ashraf Serry, a member of the Brotherhood's economic policy-focused "Renaissance Project" team, told me during a June 2012 interview. The Brotherhood, he explained, believed in striking a balance between "the right to capture ... treasure" and "the ethics and values that secure the society" -- whatever that means.

The text of the "Renaissance Project" is similarly ambivalent. On one hand, the platform emphasizes capitalist ideas such as ending monopolistic practices, encouraging foreign trade, reducing Egypt's deficit, and cutting many of the bureaucratic regulations that inhibit the emergence of new businesses. Yet it also envisions a large role for the state in managing Egypt's economy, including price controls for commodities, "strict oversight" of markets, "reconsideration" of the Mubarak-era privatizations of state-owned enterprises, and governmental support for farmers. And of course, there's a substantial Islamist component to the Brotherhood's economic agenda, which calls for establishing governmental Islamic financial institutions and using zakat (religiously mandated charity) and waqf (Islamic endowments) as tools for combating poverty.

What this hodgepodge of economic ideas means in practice remains unclear, because the Brotherhood has been rather skittish about making economic decisions since assuming power. While the Brotherhood has seemingly overcome its initial objections to accepting an interest-bearing loan from the International Monetary Fund (interest is forbidden in many interpretations of Islam), it has nonetheless postponed signing off on the loan repeatedly. And while Morsy has tried to implement certain policies for cutting government spending and raising revenue -- such as instituting a 10 p.m. curfew for restaurants and shops and increasing taxes on certain goods -- he has immediately backtracked on each occasion under pressure from his own Brotherhood colleagues.

If anything, the Brotherhood's economic policy is ultimately characterized by indecision -- both because of its contradictory economic ideas and the political challenges it faces. As Egypt enters a fiscal tailspin, with cash reserves falling from \$36 billion in February 2011 to approximately \$15 billion today, that isn't going to be good enough.

**"They accept the treaty with Israel."**

They never will. U.S. President Barack Obama's administration took comfort from Morsy's handling of the November Gaza war: From Washington's viewpoint, the Egyptian president resisted using the conflict as a pretext to break relations with Israel, and instead authorized negotiations with the Jewish state to achieve a relatively speedy ceasefire.

From the Muslim Brotherhood's perspective, however, Morsy preserved the movement's anti-Israel agenda. He stood by his

refusal to meet with Israelis by outsourcing those negotiations to Egyptian intelligence officials; the ceasefire strengthened Hamas, the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood; and the Egyptian government accepted no new responsibilities to stem the flow of weapons into Gaza. Far from yielding to the reality of Egyptian-Israeli relations, Morsy simply deferred their reassessment so that he could focus on his more immediate goal -- consolidating the Muslim Brotherhood's control at home. Indeed, one day after the Gaza ceasefire, Morsy issued his power-grabbing constitutional declaration, and rammed through a new Islamist constitution shortly thereafter.

This is, in fact, the very order of events that the Muslim Brotherhood envisions in its long-term program. As Shater explained during his April 2011 unveiling of the Brotherhood's "Renaissance Project," building an "Islamic government" at home must precede the establishment of a "global Islamic state," which is the final stage in achieving "the empowerment of God's religion." To be sure, consolidating power at home could take years, and the fact that the Brotherhood doesn't totally control Egypt's foreign-policy apparatus will also prevent it from scrapping the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty -- for now.

But the Muslim Brotherhood does aim to scrap the treaty, which simply cannot be reconciled with the anti-Israel and anti-Semitic hatred in which every Muslim Brother is thoroughly indoctrinated. This vitriol was perhaps most apparent in Morsy's now-infamous 2010 remarks, in which he called Jews "the descendants of apes and pigs." Even as president, Morsy's blatant bigotry remains irrepressible: In a meeting with a U.S. Senate delegation in Cairo, Morsy implied that the U.S. media was controlled by the Jews.

And while the Brotherhood's apologists claim that these are idle words on which the movement won't act, its leaders have repeatedly signaled the opposite. In recent months, the Brotherhood's political party drafted legislation to unilaterally amend the treaty, a Brotherhood foreign policy official told a private salon that Morsy was working to "gradually" end normalization with Israel, and Supreme Guide Mohamed Badie has twice called for Muslims to wage a "holy jihad" to retake Jerusalem.

Washington should stop deluding itself: It will not be able to change the Brotherhood's ideology on Israel. Instead, it should focus squarely on constraining the Brotherhood's behavior in order to prevent it from acting on its beliefs anytime soon. As the Brotherhood makes quite clear on its Arabic media platforms, it has no intention of reconciling itself to the reality of either the peace treaty or the very existence of Israel.

**"They can't lose."**

Expect the unexpected. In the immediate aftermath of Mubarak's ouster, many Egypt analysts took the Brotherhood at its word when it promised not to run for a majority of Egypt's first post-revolutionary Parliament, and many predicted that the Brotherhood would only win 20 to 30 percent of the seats. The Brotherhood's impressive succession of electoral victories and quick assumption of executive authority, however, has led to the rise of a new conventional wisdom: When it comes to the ballot box, the Muslim Brotherhood cannot lose.

Yet the lesson of the Arab Spring is that what appears to be stable at one moment can be toppled at another -- especially if

people are frustrated enough with the status quo. The conditions that sparked Egypt's 2011 uprising have only worsened in the past two years: The country's declining economy has intensified popular frustrations, and the constant labor strikes and street-closing protests indicate that the Brotherhood's rule is far less stable than it might appear on the surface. Meanwhile, Morsy's dictatorial maneuvers have forced an anti-Brotherhood opposition to form much more quickly than previously imagined.

Most importantly, a close look at voting data suggests non-Islamists are making critical gains among the Egyptian public. 57 percent of Egyptians voted for non-Islamist candidates during the first round of the 2012 presidential elections, and non-Islamist candidate Ahmed Shafiq won more than 48 percent in the second round -- despite being very unattractive to many Egyptians for having served as Mubarak's last prime minister. Moreover, though the Brotherhood successfully campaigned for the December constitutional referendum and won nearly 64 percent of the vote, turnout was only 33 percent -- meaning that the movement was only able to mobilize, at most, about 21 percent of the voting public.

To be sure, the Brotherhood is exceedingly likely to win the forthcoming parliamentary elections, and it may rule Egypt for some time. It is, after all, uniquely well organized, while its opponents are deeply divided: To the Brotherhood's theocratic right, the Salafists are split among a handful of competing organizations and, to its left, the field is even more fragmented among communists, socialists, Nasserists, old ruling party members, and a smattering of liberals. Perhaps most dangerously, the Brotherhood's quick ascent has empowered it

to shape Egypt's new political institutions, and it will likely tailor these institutions to perpetuate its reign.

But the Brotherhood's support isn't strong enough to preclude the emergence of a challenger. For that reason, the United States must ensure that it avoids the impression that it is putting all of its eggs in the Brotherhood's basket. Already, non-Islamists are asking why the United States has been loath to squeeze a new ruling party that is neither democratic nor, in the long run, likely to cooperate in promoting U.S. interests. Whether or not these non-Islamists can effectively challenge the Brotherhood right now -- and I am dubious -- they are right in challenging the Washington conventional wisdom that fails to see the Brotherhood for what it is: a deeply undemocratic movement concerned above all else with enhancing and perpetuating its own power.

*Eric Trager is the Next Generation fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.*

Article 2.

SPIEGEL

## **Radical Past: Former Associate Calls Morsi a 'Master of Disguise'**

Dieter Bednarz and Volkhard Windfuhr

1/28/2013 -- Is Mohammed Morsi a peacebroker or a virulent anti-Semite? A former member of the Muslim Brotherhood, who has known Morsi for 13 years, believes that behind the Egyptian president's veneer of goodwill towards Israel lies a deep-seated hatred.

Mohammed Morsi can be very sympathetic, even toward Jews, as evidenced by an extremely friendly letter the Egyptian president sent to Israel last October. The president had personally written the letter of accreditation, for his new ambassador in Tel Aviv, to his counterpart Shimon Peres, whom he addressed as a "Dear Friend." In the letter, Morsi clearly invoked the "good relations" that "fortunately exist between our countries," and pledged to "preserve and strengthen" them.

The government in Jerusalem had not expected such warm words from a president who had emerged from the Muslim Brotherhood. Unsure whether they were perhaps the victims of a forgery, the Israelis published the letter. But Cairo confirmed that it was indeed genuine, and Jerusalem reacted with relief. The Jewish state had lost a reliable partner with the ouster of Morsi's predecessor Hosni Mubarak, and now there was hope that perhaps Morsi would not confirm all of Israel's fears.

But the Egyptian president, who is visiting Berlin this week and will meet with Chancellor Angela Merkel, a champion of Israel, appears to be a man with two faces. He is conciliatory as Egypt's leader, saying that he wants to be the "president of all Egyptians," even though only about a quarter of the country's 50 million eligible voters voted for him. And, of course, he insists

that his country will fulfill all of its obligations from the Mubarak era, including both the peace treaty with Israel and a policy of close cooperation with the United States.

In mid-January, however, Western diplomats and politicians saw a very different Mohammed Morsi, a man filled with hate for the "Zionist entity," the term Islamists use for the Jewish state. An almost three-year-old video, published by the Washington-based Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), depicts an Islamist who is practically foaming at the mouth, as he rants about the Israelis in an interview with an Arab network. Speaking in a deep and firm voice, he calls them "bloodsuckers" and "warmongers," and says that there can be no peace with these "descendants of apes and pigs."

It was apparently more than just a regrettable moment of madness for Morsi, claims a prominent former member of the Muslim Brotherhood. After all, he says, the current president served as general inspector of the Muslim Brotherhood for years, which put him in charge of the group's online service. That service includes quotes about Israelis and Jews that testify to the same hatred as the lapses in the video.

Despite outrage internationally and at the White House over the video, Morsi was unperturbed by the furor over his remarks. In the end, his spokesman said that Morsi's words had been taken out of context, but offered no further explanation or apology. When SPIEGEL reporters appeared at the presidential palace in the Cairo suburb of Heliopolis last week after having received approval for an interview with Morsi, they were turned away.

All a Pretense

To comprehend the Egyptian president and grasp how the Muslim Brotherhood shapes its members, it helps to speak with men who knew Morsi during his time with the Islamist organization -- and who also have the courage to speak openly about the group. Abdel-Jalil el-Sharnoubi, 38, talks about how dangerous this can be. Last October, after he had spoken about quitting the Brotherhood to Egyptian newspapers and in TV appearances, masked men opened fire on Sharnoubi's car with submachine guns.

For Sharnoubi, a lanky man, keeping a constant eye out for suspicious characters has become second nature. He takes a cautious look around as he walks into the Café Riche in downtown Cairo, and when he sits down, he makes sure that he has a good view of the entire establishment. He orders tea, rolls himself a cigarette and then tells the story of his time with the Muslim Brotherhood and the current president, to whom he derisively refers as "doctor."

When they first met in 2000, both men were already successful. Sharnoubi, the son of an imam in the Nile delta, joined the Brotherhood at 13. He eventually advanced within the regimented organization to become a member of its information committee. Morsi, for his part, had made it into the Egyptian parliament. Because members of the Muslim Brotherhood were not allowed to run for political office under Mubarak, Morsi masqueraded as an "independent." The two men had had "a lot of contact with each other" to further their goal of spreading the Brotherhood's message as widely as possible, says Sharnoubi.

For information expert Sharnoubi, Morsi was "a typical man from the country, a fellah with peasant origins who quickly

integrated himself into the machine." At the time, claims Sharnoubi, Morsi was "downright submissive to the Brotherhood's leadership." Morsi was apparently completely opposed to the Brotherhood becoming more open, as Sharnoubi had advocated. "He fought against any internal democratization."

It seemed "inconceivable" to Sharnoubi that Morsi's group would one day assume power in Egypt. In fact, he says, he would have "found it even less likely" that Morsi, a modest member of parliament, would become president. Even in the highest government position, Morsi cannot have shed the Brotherhood's mission like an old suit, says Sharnoubi. "A man like Morsi, with such deep convictions, can't do that. If we hear anything else from him, it'll be a pretense." He explains that Morsi owes his survival under autocrat Mubarak to this "talent for assimilation," and that he is a "master of disguise."

'Any Cooperation with Israel is a Serious Sin'

There is too much at stake now, says Sharnoubi. There are the aid payments from Europe and the United States, which Egypt's ailing economy urgently needs. And Morsi himself also needs the West's goodwill. If there is a "power struggle with democratically minded forces," he says, the president will depend on intercession from Washington, Brussels and Berlin.

Sharnoubi wasn't surprised by the Morsi hate video. "Agitation against the Israelis is in keeping with the way Morsi thinks. For the Morsi I know, any cooperation with Israel is a serious sin, a crime." Morsi's choice of words is also nothing new, says Sharnoubi. As proof, he opens his black laptop and shows us

evidence of the former Muslim Brotherhood member's true sentiments.

Indeed, the video gaffes do not appear to be a one-time occurrence. In 2004 Morsi, then a member of the Egyptian parliament, allegedly raged against the "descendants of apes and pigs," saying that there could be "no peace" with them. The remarks were made at a time when Israeli soldiers had accidentally shot and killed three Egyptian police officers. The source of the quote can hardly be suspected of incorrectly quoting fellow Brotherhood members: Ichwan Online, the Islamist organization's website.

Few people are as familiar with the contents of that website as Sharnoubi, who was the its editor-in-chief until 2011. The current president became the general inspector of the organization in 2007, says Sharnoubi. In this capacity, Morsi would have been partly responsible for the anti-Jewish propaganda on the website, which featured the "banner of jihad" at the time and saw "Jews and Zionists as archenemies." The threats are attributed to the undisputed leader of the Brotherhood, Mohammed Badi. According to the website, Badi's creed is: "Resistance is the only solution against Zionist-American arrogance and tyranny."

It was under the editorship of Sharnoubi, who stresses that he condemns the "Israeli government's settlement policy," that Morsi gave a self-promoting interview in May 2009. Referring to the Israelis, the current president said: "They all have the same nature. They are equally shaped by shrewdness, deception and hate." He added that their only objectives are "killing, aggression and subjugation."

Former fellow Muslim Brotherhood member Sharnoubi expects "no words of regret, at least not sincere ones," for his offensive remarks in the scandalous film. Anti-Israeli rhetoric, he says, is a "cornerstone of the Brotherhood's ideology."

Sharnoubi assumes that cordial moves like the letter to Peres have only one goal: "To secure and expand the dominance of the Brotherhood." Only recently, the president issued a decree that gave him absolute powers, and Morsi currently controls all three branches of government. "He has secured more power than his predecessor Mubarak ever had."

Sharnoubi's vision of a future Egypt under the Muslim Brotherhood is horrifying. "They will infiltrate all areas of our society: government offices and ministries, schools and universities, as well as the police and the military. They will eliminate their enemies."

Isn't he exaggerating?

"Not in the least," says Sharnoubi, noting that the Brotherhood is already infiltrating the security apparatus. "The Brotherhood will never give up its power without a fight."

When he leaves the café, Sharnoubi looks toward Tahrir Square, where there is no end to the turmoil. Last Friday, once again, there was rioting and there were clashes between Morsi opponents and the police, and some were killed or injured. For Sharnoubi, this is "merely a small foretaste of an imminent popular uprising."

Article 3.

The Wall Street Journal,

# **What to Ask Chuck Hagel About Iran's Nuclear Threat**

John Bolton

January 28, 2013 -- The confirmation hearing for Chuck Hagel as defense secretary on Thursday will provide senators with a critical opportunity to probe the nominee's views on Iran's nuclear-weapons program. Let's hope the hearing is more illuminating than last week's listless hearing for John Kerry as secretary of state. Some enlightenment about the administration's attitude toward Iran in President Obama's second term would be helpful.

Meanwhile, on Jan. 18, Herman Nackaerts, the chief inspector of the International Atomic Energy Agency, returned to Vienna from Iran after once again being barred from inspecting the Parchin military facility, where weaponization work has likely been underway. The charade of talks about the inspection will resume on Feb. 12. The Iranian regime is also toying with the West on restarting more general negotiations about its nuclear program.

Yet Mr. Obama, still misreading the ayatollahs, appears to remain fixed on the notion Iran can be cajoled or pressured into ending its 20-year drive for nuclear weapons. While earlier diplomacy rested on political mistakes in reading Iran's intentions, recent efforts have added debilitating mistakes in basic physics.

For the past decade, too many in the West hoped that negotiations, accompanied by incentives and disincentives, would lead Iran to renounce nuclear weapons. Until recently, the sine qua non of every diplomatic initiative has been that Tehran must cease all enrichment-related activities. Iran, however, has consistently rejected any limits on enrichment, supposedly for reactor fuel or medical research, and protracted negotiations have gained the regime valuable time to perfect and expand its nuclear program.

The West has fundamentally weakened its case by accepting Iran's line that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty provides the country with a "right" to "peaceful" nuclear activities. This claim distorts basic treaty principles. Tehran cannot claim treaty "rights" while simultaneously violating parallel commitments not to pursue nuclear weapons. Materially breaching a treaty voids the entire agreement, including "rights" found elsewhere in the deal. Iran has readily exploited the West's bad lawyering and worse political judgment, and it has made no reciprocal concessions.

Failing to slow Iran through diplomacy or sanctions should by now have taught a lesson to even the most credulous. With Mr. Kerry and Mr. Hagel poised to join the Obama administration, the temptation for the new arrivals to jump-start the stalled negotiations is distressingly clear.

It is too late to get Mr. Kerry on the record before his appointment, but senators in the Hagel confirmation hearing should pin him down regarding his attitude toward a disastrous U-turn the West made last spring. That is when Western negotiators dropped their insistence that Iran halt all uranium

enrichment, conceding instead that the regime could enrich to commercial, "reactor-grade" levels (approximately 4% of the U-235 isotope) if it stopped enriching to approximately 20%, purportedly to fuel a research reactor.

U.S. negotiators subsequently deluged the press with arguments that such a deal would be a major Western victory because 20% enrichment is far more dangerous than 4% enrichment, being much closer to the 90%+ level used in nuclear weapons. That sounds superficially plausible: 4% is arithmetically lower than 20%, and both are a long way from 90%.

Isn't it better to stop Iran from getting to 20%, the reasoning goes, even if it means conceding that they can enrich to 4%? No. Mr. Obama's negotiators are playing with numbers they don't really understand. Their crude physics is seriously flawed, based on a misunderstanding of the work required to enrich uranium to weapons-grade levels. As a result of the misreading, the negotiators' military-political conclusions are erroneous.

Here's the basic fact that puzzles us laymen, but not nuclear physicists: It takes much more work to enrich U-235 from its 0.7% concentration in natural uranium to reactor-grade levels (4% or 20%) than it takes to enrich from either of these levels to weapons-grade (90%+). Enrichment is simply the physical process of separating fissile U-235 isotopes from the unnecessary U-238 isotopes. Enriching 0.7% natural U-235 to 4% requires most of the work (70%) needed to enrich to levels over 90%. From 4%, enriching to 20% takes merely 15%-20% more of the work required to reach 90%+.

How can this be? To get from 0.7% to 4% U-235 concentration

requires removing considerably more U-238 than doing the lesser amount of work to reach 20% and then 90%. Specifically, as an observer once described it: Natural uranium has 140 atoms of U-238 for every one of U-235. Enriching to 4% removes 115 of the U-238 atoms. Enriching to 20% means removing only 20 more U-238 atoms, and reaching 90% enrichment from there requires eliminating four-or-so more.

Accordingly, the amount of additional work required to increase either 4% or 20% enriched-uranium stockpiles to weapons-grade levels is of little consequence. The Non-Proliferation Education Center estimates the difference between the two reactor-grade levels to be only about three weeks of further enrichment for enough weapons-grade uranium for one nuclear device. As the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control explains, "In either case, further enrichment to weapon-grade would take a matter of weeks or months, depending on the number of centrifuges devoted to the task."

In seeking a superficially reasonable deal, the West thus made a senseless concession by allowing enrichment even to 4%. Enrichment to any higher level will require mere baby steps to reach the Tehran regime's nuclear-arms destination. This problem cannot be solved by international inspections. Tehran would simply be too close to a "break-out" point that it could quickly achieve after expelling inspectors.

Once Iran is legitimized for enriching to reactor-grade levels—contrary to multiple Security Council resolutions requiring the cessation of all enrichment-related activities—any remaining possibility of stopping it from making nuclear weapons effectively disappears. Moreover, once "negotiations"

recommence, the pressure on Israel not to strike militarily against Iran's nuclear program will swell yet again. And Iran will continue to chug steadily ahead with its ever-broader, deeper and more-threatening weapons plans.

Before the West makes one of its biggest mistakes in three decades of dealing with the ayatollahs, senators on Thursday must find out from Chuck Hagel where he stands.

*Mr. Bolton, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, is the author of "Surrender Is Not an Option: Defending America at the United Nations" (Simon & Schuster, 2007).*

Article 4.

Project Syndicate

## **Obama's Year of Iran**

Anne-Marie Slaughter

28 January 2013 -- As US President Barack Obama begins his second term, he will have to devote much of his attention to figuring out how to get America's domestic finances in order. But foreign-policy issues loom large as well, and, notwithstanding the ongoing conflict in Syria and the possible spread of war across Africa's Sahel region, the consensus in Washington is that 2013 will be the "year of decision" on Iran.

Obama began his first administration with an offer to engage with the Islamic Republic; as he memorably put it in his first inaugural address in 2009, “We will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist.” He repeated that commitment, although much more obliquely, in his second inaugural address: “We will show the courage to try and resolve our differences with other nations peacefully – not because we are naive about the dangers we face, but because engagement can more durably lift suspicion and fear.”

As the American scholar and activist Hussein Ibish recently argued, Obama has appointed a cabinet designed to give him maximum room to negotiate a deal with Iran. In particular, naming military veterans as Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense will provide him with valuable domestic political cover for an agreement that would inevitably require lifting sanctions on Iran and almost certainly recognizing its right to enrich uranium at a low level of concentration. That should signal to Iran’s rulers not only that the US is serious about a deal, but also that whatever the US offers is likely to be the best deal that they can get.

The Obama administration has assembled an extraordinary coalition of countries to impose economic sanctions that are having a demonstrable effect on the price and availability of goods in Iran and on the ability of even powerful institutions, such as the Revolutionary Guard, to do business.

But coalitions do not hold together forever, and the pain of sanctions often cuts both ways, affecting buyers as well as sellers. Countries like South Korea and Japan, for example, have curtailed their imports of Iranian oil only reluctantly; countries

like China and Russia rarely play straight on sanctions in the first place.

Moreover, Obama can threaten that “all options are on the table” only so many times without losing credibility with the Iranians and other countries in the Middle East. As Brookings Institution foreign-policy expert Suzanne Maloney points out, countries in the region and beyond are already dismayed at the lack of US leadership concerning Syria. If the US gives negotiations one more serious try (a credible offer and a genuine willingness to engage), gets rebuffed, and then does nothing, it will effectively declare itself a paper tiger. At that point, the sanctions coalition will most likely disintegrate amid a much broader loss of confidence in US leadership.

The US has thus painted itself into a corner. Former US National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski recently argued strongly against military action, proposing, instead, a strategy that would continue sanctions and extend deterrence. Like US policy toward the Soviet bloc during the Cold War, “An Iranian military threat aimed at Israel or any other US friend in the Middle East would be treated as if directed at the United States itself and would precipitate a commensurate US response.”

I can certainly see the wisdom in Brzezinski’s approach. But Obama has marched the US and its allies too far down the current path. Moreover, and crucially, Brzezinski forgets that Obama’s determination to stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon does not stem only from his concern for Israel’s security or the stability of the wider Middle East.

Obama has repeatedly committed himself to the goal of turning

the world in the direction of “global zero” – a world without nuclear weapons. He believes (as do former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and George Shultz, former Secretary of Defense William Perry, and former Senator Sam Nunn) that unless the world finds a way to live without nuclear weapons, we will find ourselves in an international system in which 30-50 states possess them, raising the danger of accidental or deliberate launch to an unacceptably high level. Convincing great powers to eliminate their nuclear arsenals might seem as politically fanciful as pushing gun-control legislation through the US Congress, but on that issue, too, Obama has made clear that he is willing to try.

However logical or attractive a containment policy might be, and however disastrous the consequences of bombing are likely to be, Obama’s commitment to realizing global denuclearization as part of his legacy implies that he will not allow another country to acquire a nuclear weapon on his watch, as his predecessors allowed India, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan to do. Thus, the stakes for both the US and Iran are very high.

Other countries would do well not to underestimate Obama’s resolve; governments that have relations with Iran should emphasize that the time to make a deal is now. And countries like Turkey and Brazil (and perhaps India and Egypt) could play a useful role by devising face-saving ways for the Iranians to meet the international community’s demands, together with longer-term alternatives for fuel enrichment that would be consistent with reducing the global nuclear threat. America’s allies, in turn, must be prepared to close ranks with it on both the outlines of a deal and the willingness to strike militarily.

The art of statecraft is not to choose between war and diplomacy as if they were mutually exclusive alternatives, but to understand how they fit together. In the case of Syria, the West has repeatedly called for diplomacy while ruling out any military action, with predictably bad results. The US will not make that mistake with Iran.

*Anne-Marie Slaughter, a former director of policy planning in the US State Department (2009-2011) and a former dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, is Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University. She is the author of The Idea That Is America: Keeping Faith with Our Values in a Dangerous World.*

Article 5.

Newsweek

## **Gaddafiphilia: A perverse nostalgia takes hold in the West**

Fouad Ajami

Jan 29, 2013 -- We were bound to come to it: a lament for the fall of Gaddafi. Mali had come apart, and there were “strategic analysts” bemoaning the demise of the Libyan dictatorship.

Thousands of Malian Tuareg mercenaries enlisted by Gaddafi had returned to Mali with weaponry and little to do. In the Financial Times of Jan. 14, Gaddafi was described as the “West’s ally in the fight against jihadist groups.” Britain, France, and the United States should have spared him: he had kept the lid on disorder in the Sahara. To be sure, he had intended mass slaughter in Benghazi, but two years later, it was time to utter the impermissible: perhaps the West’s strategic interest would have been served by his iron grip on his country.

A few days later, the nostalgia for the Libyan dictatorship was in full bloom. The four-day standoff at a natural-gas plant in the Sahara between the Algerian security forces and a band of terrorists led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar, part pirate, part jihadist, was to serve as a vehicle for a full-scale revisionism about the fall of Gaddafi, and about the harvest of the Arab Spring as a whole. In a compelling piece of analysis and reporting, Robert F. Worth in The New York Times gave this revisionism its fullest expression to date. The jihadist surge in North Africa, he wrote, was proof that the “euphoric toppling of dictators in Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt has come at a terrible price.” Worth quotes the warning that Gaddafi had made as he attempted to hold off the tide. “Bin Laden’s people would come to impose ransoms by land and sea. We will go back to the time of Redbeard, of pirates, of Ottomans imposing ransoms on boats.” You have to hand it to Gaddafi: even as he brought down Western airliners and sowed mayhem wherever he could, he had a gift of posing as a useful ally of the West. To the bitter end, he held on to the claim that he was preferable to the chaos that would sweep in were he to fall. Little more than a year after he was pulled out of a drainage pipe and given the brutal end meted

out to him, there was retrospection that the penal colony he ran was not such a bad thing for the peace of North Africa after all.

Two years on, we speak of the Arab rebellions in a manner we never did of the fall of communist dictatorships. A quarter century ago, it was only cranks who bemoaned the end of the communist tyrannies in Europe. There was chaos aplenty in those post-communist societies and vengeful nationalist feuds; those captive nations weren't exactly models of liberalism. In Yugoslavia, a veritable prison of contending nationalisms, the fall of the state that Josip Broz Tito held together by guile and fear, ethnic cleansing, and mass murder, had put on display the pitfalls of "liberty" after decades of repression. And still, faith in the new history was to carry the day.

That moment in freedom's advance was markedly different from the easy disenchantment with the Arab rebellions. Those had been dubbed an Arab Spring, and it was the laziest of things to announce scorching summers and an Islamist winter. The Arab dictatorships had been given decades of patience and indulgence, but patience was not to be extended to the new rebellions: these were to become orphans in the court of American opinion. American liberalism had turned surly toward the possibilities of freedom in distant, difficult lands. If George W. Bush's "diplomacy of freedom," tethered to the Iraq War, had maintained that freedom can stick on Arab and Muslim soil, liberalism ridiculed that hopefulness. This was a new twist in the evolution of American liberalism. In contrast to its European counterpart, American liberalism had tended to be hopeful about liberty's prospects abroad. This was no longer the case. The Arab Awakening would find very few liberal promoters.

Nor was American conservatism convinced that these Arab rebellions were destined for success. Say what you will about the wellsprings of conservative thought, the emphasis is on the primacy of culture in determining the prospects of nations. For good reasons, Arab and Islamic culture was deemed to present formidable obstacles to democratic development. The crowd would unseat a dictatorship only to beget a theocratic tyranny. Iran after the Pahlavis was a cautionary tale.

In all fairness, the Arabs themselves had not trusted their own ability to overthrow entrenched tyrannies. On the eve of the changes that swept upon the Arab world in late 2010, monarchies and military despots alike seemed to be immovable. Better 60 years of tyranny than one day of anarchy, goes a maxim of (Sunni) Islam. Fear of chaos played into the hands of the rulers. Who in late 2010 would have predicted the fall of Gaddafi? He had ruled for four decades; he had the instruments of repression and the oil wealth of the state at his disposal. There was no national army to speak of, no institutions, no settled bureaucracy, and no room for a free economy. The glue of the realm was the ruler—his megalomania, his cult, his erratic will. On his western border was Zeine al-Abdine bin Ali, master of Tunisia. He had been a policeman before his rise to power in 1987: over the course of a quarter century, he had put in place a kleptocracy that revolved around his family—and that of his reviled wife. Tunisians knew better than to run afoul of the extended ruling clan. No one could have foreseen the storm that an impoverished fruit vendor from a forlorn town would unleash on the country with his self-immolation.

And the rule of Hosni Mubarak, anchored in the Army and the police and a servile political party, seemed to confirm the image

of Egypt as the “hydraulic society” of Oriental despotism. Egypt had known tumult in the first half of the 20th century and a rich history of labor unrest and political agitation. But in the reign of Mubarak, the country seemed broken and domesticated. So secure was the ruler and his immensely powerful wife, the couple set the stage for dynastic succession. One of the ruler’s two sons was everywhere, pronouncing on political matters big and small. Sycophants surrounded the dauphin, placed their bets on him. The ruler had closed up the political universe, and 80 million Egyptians had become spectators to their own destiny.

From one end of the Arab world to the other, this seemed like the dictators’ paradise. History’s democratic tides had bypassed the Arabs. There was no intellectual class with the tools and the temperament necessary to take on the rulers. The intellectuals had been cowed or bought off or had opted for exile. On the margins of political life, there was a breed of Islamists biding their time. The secularists were too proud, too steeped in the conceit of modernism to take the religious alternative seriously.

There is no need to retrace the course of the storm that upended the autocratic order. We know it broke upon Tunisia, but that it was in Egypt, on Jan. 25, 2011, that the rebellion found a stage worthy of its ambitions. Eighteen magical days of protests in Cairo’s Tahrir Square overthrew the Mubarak dictatorship, and provided the impetus for a wider Arab revolt. This had always been Egypt’s role and gift in Arab life—to show other Arabs the way. In record time, revolts would hit Libya, Bahrain, Yemen. Even Syria would succumb to the contagion. Two years later we can see both the things Arabs had in common, and the specific maladies that afflicted each of the lands. Egypt and Tunisia had a strong sense of national identity, and old bureaucracies. The

regimes had fallen but the state had survived. There was no massive bloodletting: the ballot was the arbiter of the new order, and it went the way of the Islamists—Annahda in Tunisia, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. The chasm between the Islamists and their secular rivals would come to shape Tunisian and Egyptian politics alike.

Libya was a ruined country, a war had been fought to topple the dictator; foreign intervention had given the Libyans freedom from the despotism. The country was awash in arms, but the Islamists had not carried the day. A national election in 2012 thwarted them. Old tribal alliances, and a nascent secular coalition of professionals and ordinary Libyans who had taken up arms against Gaddafi, along with former exiles who returned to reclaim their country, prevailed at the polls. Regionalism remains a nemesis—the split between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica had not gone away, indeed it had intensified under the dictatorship.

Bahrain's rebellion, a principally Shia revolt against a Sunni dynasty, came up against the harsh limits imposed by Saudi power. There is a causeway that connects Bahrain to Saudi Arabia, appropriately named after the late King Fahd. The causeway was put to use as the Saudis dispatched their troops to Bahrain to put down the rebellion. The regime rode out the challenge, but the crisis endures, and there is no end in sight to the estrangement between the populace and the rulers. An American naval base serves as the headquarters of the Fifth Fleet; it gives the Bahraini dynasty room for maneuver. Yemen rid itself of the cynical acrobat Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had kept the wretchedly poor land on edge. But Yemen's troubles are bigger than a ruler's failings. The place, the Arab world's

poorest country, is running out of water, and there are secessionist movements in both north and south. The sacking of a despot has not ameliorated the misery of the land. This is Afghanistan with a coastline, al Qaeda's new frontier.

The Arab Awakening met its cruelest test in Syria. The fissures of the country had been concealed by the dictatorship, and they were to give the new rebellion the fury and poison of a religious schism. It had been forbidden to speak of the Alawi-Sunni cleft in the country. The orthodoxy of the regime had insisted on its secularism, the sectarian identity of the rulers was the truth that was off-limits for four decades. No sooner had the rebellion erupted in the Sunni countryside than Syria was to be plunged into a sectarian war. As the rebellion approached its second anniversary, an estimated 60,000 people had been killed. In the north, the ancient city of Aleppo was reduced to rubble. Several hundred thousand Syrians had fled to neighboring countries. The rebellion has not been able to topple the regime, and the rulers have not been able to crush the rebellion. The very future of Syria—its borders and territorial unity—has been called into question. Clearly, this was not the place for a peaceful, democratic transformation. This was the forbidding landscape of an unsparing religious war. A rebellion that is answered by fighter planes and cluster bombs and Scud missiles bespeaks of a country with a pathology all its own.

These were, on some level, prison riots that had erupted in the Arab world. The dictators had robbed these countries of political efficacy and skills; in the aftermath of the dictators, we were to see in plain sight the harvest of their terrible work. These rulers had been predators and brigands: they had treated themselves and their offspring, and their retainers, to all that was denied

their subjects. The scorched earth they left behind is testament to their tyrannies. Liberty of the Arab variety has not been pretty. But who, in good conscience, would want to lament the fall of the dictators?

Article 6.

Bloomberg

## **In Israel, Time Is Running Out for a Two-State Solution**

Jeffrey Goldberg

Jan 28, 2013 -- Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, suffered a historic setback last week. Voters repudiated his Likud Party in favor of the novice centrist Yair Lapid and his party, Yesh Atid.

The blow to Netanyahu's ego was enormous, the humiliation profound and the consequences obvious: Netanyahu will almost certainly be ... Israel's next prime minister.

In other words, don't believe the hype. Yes, Netanyahu's party lost ground, and yes, the silent middle of the Israeli electorate believes he should pay more attention to social and economic issues. But Netanyahu will remain Israel's prime minister.

And this will undoubtedly have consequences for Israel's moribund peace process with the Palestinians. Immediately after

the election, speculation ran rampant that the supposed revolt of Israel's center meant that talks might be revived. This may be so, but there are also some pretty compelling reasons to believe the process will remain comatose for the foreseeable future.

Because I am a chronic optimist, let me first outline the reasons that there might now be a sliver of a chance to revive the peace process:

1. The inclusion of Lapid in Netanyahu's next coalition government -- which seems like a certainty -- means the prime minister will have to accede to Lapid's demand that he jump-start negotiations with the Palestinian Authority, led by Mahmoud Abbas.
2. U.S. allies in the Middle East and Europe -- particularly Jordan's King Abdullah II and U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron -- are desperate to see President Barack Obama retake the initiative and pressure Netanyahu and Abbas to begin talks in earnest, and they're beginning to lobby Obama intensively.
3. Senator John Kerry, Obama's nominee to replace Hillary Clinton as secretary of state, is deeply invested in finding a way to restart negotiations. His power is not negligible, and perhaps he has fresher ideas than the previous generation of Middle East peace negotiators, typified by the longtime diplomat Dennis Ross.
4. The Palestinian Authority still exists. This is something of a miracle. It hasn't yet been replaced by Hamas, or by chaos.
5. Sara Netanyahu, Benjamin's wife, doesn't seem to like Naftali Bennett, the head of the hard-right Jewish Home party, who

opposes the creation of a Palestinian state on even a portion of the West Bank. Bennett is a former employee of the prime minister's and has been publicly, if obliquely, critical of his wife. As a result, he might be excluded from the coalition. Yes, this sounds insane, but such is Sara Netanyahu's power.

6. Many Israelis worry about their country's demographic future; they realize Israel can't maintain permanent control over millions of Palestinians without threatening its democratic character or its status as a Jewish-majority homeland. These Israelis don't constitute the so-called peace camp -- the small minority who are eager to make concessions to the Palestinians -- but they would accept a compromise deal, so long as they thought they weren't being played for suckers.

And now, reasons to be negative:

1. Netanyahu is still Netanyahu. Under great pressure from the U.S., Netanyahu did endorse, in principle, the idea of two states for two peoples in 2009. But he has done nothing since to advance that goal. He has frozen settlement growth temporarily -- again under intense U.S. pressure -- but he invariably unfreezes the settlements, and his government seems to be devising new ways to prevent the birth of a Palestinian state each day.

2. Abbas is still Abbas. Netanyahu isn't exactly rejecting the extended hand of a flawless peace partner. Abbas is weak and vacillating, and has proved himself adept at rejecting reasonable offers from Israeli interlocutors.

3. The Palestinians are still engaged in a civil war. Lest we forget, Hamas, a group that seeks Israel's destruction, is still in control of half of the would-be state of Palestine, and it hasn't

made up with the Palestinian Authority, which controls some of the West Bank. It is difficult to imagine a scenario in which Israel would make concessions to a Palestinian Authority that isn't in a position to rule Palestine.

4. Lapid isn't a peacenik. He's a centrist who doesn't feel great affection for the Palestinians. He rose to prominence as an advocate for a set of domestic issues, not for his love of the two-state solution.

5. Kerry and Cameron may want to orchestrate meaningful negotiations, but Obama apparently does not -- he sees no reason for optimism, and doesn't seem ready to expend political capital in pursuit of peace talks that might go nowhere.

6. The timing is most unpropitious. The immediate concern of Israeli leaders is the security of the Syrian chemical- weapons stockpile. Israel may very well launch pre-emptive strikes on Syrian targets to prevent the transfer of those weapons to Hezbollah, the anti-Israel, Iranian-proxy terrorist group. Israelis are also preoccupied with the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood across the Middle East, the chaos in Egypt and, of course, Iran's nuclear ambitions. In this combustible atmosphere, it is difficult to imagine Israel's leaders agreeing to cede the high ground overlooking Tel Aviv to the Palestinians.

I do think there will be movement on the peace process -- or the facsimile of movement -- in the coming months. But there is no indication that either side is ready to address the two most toxic issues: the status of Palestinian refugees and the future of Jerusalem. So Obama isn't wrong to have his doubts. He should remember, however, that this next four-year period might represent the last chance to bring about a two-state solution.

*Jeffrey Goldberg is a Bloomberg View columnist and a national correspondent for the Atlantic.*

Article 7.

NYT

## **Sitting Down With Amos Oz**

Roger Cohen

January 28, 2013 -- Tel Aviv -- AMOS OZ, the novelist whose stories and tales have probed the soul of Israel with an intimate insistence, greeted me to his book-lined apartment with a quick Hebrew lesson. I must understand that the key word, Yiddish really, is “fraiers” — or suckers.

“Most Israelis,” he suggested, “would wave goodbye to the West Bank but they don’t want to be suckers, they don’t want the Gaza scenario to repeat itself. First and foremost, these elections were about internal affairs, the middle class, state and synagogue, the draft, with a silent consensus that the occupied territories do not matter that much. Israelis are no longer interested. They vote with their feet. They don’t go there, except for the settlers and right-wing extremists. This means that if Israelis can be reassured that by renouncing the West Bank they are not going to get a lousy deal — not going to be ‘fraiers’ — they are quietly ready to do it.”

With religious-nationalist sentiment strong, even if the elections demonstrated an Israeli turn against extremism, I suggested Oz might be optimistic. But he insisted that at the end of the day some 70 percent on both sides — kicking and screaming and crying injustice — were ready for two states. “If I may use a metaphor,” Oz said, “I would say that the patient, Israeli and Palestinian, is unhappily ready for surgery, while the doctors are cowards.”

Among the cowards, would he include Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu? “Yes I think Netanyahu is a coward,” he declared. But the victory of the center in the election could alter the equation. “It means,” Oz said, “that there will be more pressure on Netanyahu from the dovish side in Israel and from the outside world, so that his cowardice may work the other way.”

Israel — perched in a hostile neighborhood, its borders undefined, beset by internal rifts between the religious and secular, unsure what to make of the Arab upheaval around it — craves normality. Its citizens today are more concerned about violent crime than political violence. Not one Israeli was killed in 2012 in the West Bank. Its packed malls purr with affluence. Iran was a nonissue during the campaign. The Palestinian conflict, despite the odd spasm, has receded, enough anyway for people to vote en masse for a political novice, the telegenic Yair Lapid, a mystery wrapped in good looks at the head of a party with a reassuring-disquieting name: There Is a Future.

Oz, up in Tel Aviv for the weekend from his home in the desert town of Arad, has lived the entire past of the modern state of Israel. His credo as a novelist is that humankind is open-ended: People are capable of surprising not only others but themselves.

He calls this “the single most promising phenomenon in history.” Lapid, in effect a political vessel awaiting content, is a character in search of meaning and, as such, of interest to Oz.

“He is a phenomenon, a manifestation of the desire of the middle class for normalization. Israelis want to be like Holland,” Oz told me. “It is a legitimate desire even if it tends to ignore fundamental issues, like the conflict with the Arabs. I don’t know if Lapid has ideas and I’m not sure he knows. What Lapid will do is a mystery not just to me — it is probably a mystery to him!”

At 73, Oz has been surprised often enough not to regard the worst as inevitable, even if war has been Israel’s leitmotif since 1948. He asks this question: “Who ever expected Churchill to dismantle the British Empire, or De Gaulle to take France out of Algeria, or Sadat to come to Jerusalem, or Begin to give back the whole of Sinai for peace, or Gorbachev to undo the whole Soviet bloc?”

His message to the incoming Israeli government is clear: Peace is impossible without boldness; nothing is beyond the capacity of an open-ended, surprise-prone humanity.

There is wistfulness in his gaze on the Israel he loves. He marvels at what he calls “a cultural golden age” of literary and scientific achievement. He deplores — and abhors — what he sees as a creeping questioning of Israel’s existence in Europe and elsewhere, one that “goes way beyond legitimate criticism of Israeli policy” and in part reflects anti-Americanism because “if the United States is the devil then Israel must be Rosemary’s Baby.”

At the same time he does not hide his own disappointments. “Building settlements in occupied territories was the single most grave error and sin in the history of modern Zionism, because it was based on a refusal to accept the simple fact that we are not alone in this country,” he told me. “The Palestinians for decades also refused the fact that they are not alone in this country. Now, with clenched teeth, both sides have recognized this reality and that is a good basis.”

He went on: “Loss of contact may be healthy for a while after 100 years of bloody conflict; loss of contact may be a blessing. But loss of contact can be based on a fence built between my garden and my neighbor’s garden. It cannot be based on a fence built right in the middle of the neighbor’s garden. So a fence may not be a bad idea except that this fence is located in the wrong place.” Israel’s separation barrier, closing off the West Bank, is, in other words, an unacceptable land grab.

Israel was a dream. The only way, Oz notes, to keep a dream rosy and intact and unsullied is never to live it out. This is true of everything — traveling, writing a novel, a sexual fantasy. Israel is now a fulfilled dream, one that exceeds the wildest dreams of his parents. So, Oz concludes, “The disappointment is not in the nature of Israel, it is in the nature of dreams.”

Here is his political credo. There cannot be one state because Israelis and Palestinians cannot become one happy family (“they are not one and they are not happy.”) So “the only solution is turning the house into two smaller apartments.” Two states, absolutely, are the only answer. Palestinians and other Arabs once treated Israel like a passing infection: If they scratched themselves hard enough it would go away. Israel treated

Palestine as no more than “the vicious invention of a pan-Arabic propaganda machine.” These illusions have passed. Reality now compels a compromise — “and compromises are unhappy, there is no such thing as a happy compromise.”

And what of Hamas? “At least what we can do is solve the conflict with the Palestine Liberation Organization and reduce the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to an Israel-Gaza conflict. This will be a big step forward. Then we will see. Hamas may change as the P.L.O. did. The Palestinian Authority is ready for a state in the West Bank, unhappy about it, sure, but ready. They will go on dreaming of Haifa and Jaffa just as we will dream of Hebron and Nablus. There is no censorship on dreams.”

And the Palestinian right of return? “The right of return is a euphemism for the liquidation of Israel. Even for a dove like myself this is out of the question. Refugees must be resettled in the future state of Palestine, not Israel.”

Two final thoughts from Oz worth the consideration of Israeli politicians: On the nature of tragedy and the nature of time.

“The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a clash of right and right. Tragedies are resolved in one of two ways: The Shakespearian way or the Anton Chekhov way. In a tragedy by Shakespeare, the stage at the end is littered with dead bodies. In a tragedy by Chekhov everyone is unhappy, bitter, disillusioned and melancholy but they are alive. My colleagues in the peace movement and I are working for a Chekhovian not a Shakespearian conclusion.”

And this: “I live in the desert at Arad. Every morning at 5 a.m. I start my day by taking a walk before sunrise. I inhale the silence.

I take in the breeze, the silhouettes of the hills. I walk for about 40 minutes. When I come back home I turn on the radio and sometimes I hear a politicians using words like ‘never’ or ‘forever’ or ‘for eternity’ — and I know that the stones out in the desert are laughing at him.”

Sit down with Oz. That is my advice to the next Israeli government — and to all the deluded absolutists, Arab and Jew, of this unnecessary conflict whose unhappy but peaceful ending is not beyond the scope of open-ended human imagination.