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Article 1.

The Financial Times

## **America's neocons have been jolted back to life**

Edward Luce

June 22, 2014 -- Like a corpse that sits bolt upright when electrocuted, US neoconservatives keep springing back to life. The electric charge comes at regular intervals – Syria's use of chemical weapons, Russia's annexation of Crimea, China's growing maritime assertiveness, and now the return of Sunni extremism in Iraq. Their rehabilitation is abetted by the television networks: whenever there is a global setback, the same old faces run for the cameras and claim it is 1939. That is what they do. And the media loves them for it.

But there is something more credible about their current revival. Maybe that twitch is a 2016 presidential hopeful wondering whether there might, after all, be something to the doctrine they espouse. Churchill's definition of a fanatic is someone who

can't change their mind and won't change the subject. Every now and then the subject turns their way. Today's world, with all its seeming chaos, offers neoconservatives their best conversational opening since September 11 2001.

There are three things behind their growing self-confidence. First, the US public has stopped listening to Barack Obama, their supposed nemesis. Mr Obama's declining popularity derives largely from his inability to get things done at home. On the face of it, US public opinion supports his foreign policy goals. Overseas entanglements are unpopular. American boots on foreign ground are deeply unpopular. Mr Obama has been catering to the public on both counts. By the end of next year there will be no US troops in either Afghanistan or Iraq.

Yet beneath the headlines, Americans still want to be reminded that their country is the world's leader. Recent events have cast that into doubt. Mr Obama's landslide election was a repudiation of George W Bush, the man who gave neocons their global moment. Ergo the US public's repudiation of Mr Obama is an opportunity for their return. By the simple laws of hydraulics, the neocons are back.

Second, memories are short. In the swirling chaos of today's Iraq, it is easy to forget what was behind it all. Mr Bush's Iraq invasion took place before Facebook existed and before anyone had heard of Mr Obama. It is true that Dick Cheney, perhaps the most doubt-free exponent of the Iraq war, was booed off stage last week when he laid blame for the Iraq chaos at Mr Obama's door. "Rarely has a US president been so wrong about so much at the expense of so many," he wrote in The Wall Street Journal. The former vice-president is not noted for his deep self-

knowledge. His reception was thoroughly deserved. Yet his enablers are returning to respectability. Washington's TV studios now play regular hosts to the likes of Paul Wolfowitz, William Kristol, Robert Kagan and other members of the Project for the New American Century, the neocon group that was formed in the 1990s. None make any apology for their previous views on Iraq. Their closest friend is the media's amnesia – or perhaps its appetite for infotainment. Mr Cheney may be discredited, even among his own crowd. But those who lent him intellectual respectability are back. Churchill's definition of a fanatic is someone who can't change their mind and won't change the subject

Third, after a prolonged hiatus, geopolitics is returning with a vengeance. Unlike in the 1990s, when the neocons first gained serious influence, democracy is no longer obviously on the march around the world. History is not over. Back then, neocons offered themselves as the vanguard of the US unipolar moment. Today they claim America is in decline. On this point they may be right – though not for the reasons they state. The economic rise of others has diluted its relative dominance. The neocons say that US decline is the temporary effect of a weak president. They believe it can be reversed by a simple act of will. On this they are wrong. But the facts tend to fit with their world view. Three months ago President Vladimir Putin of Russia pulled off Europe's first territorial annexation since the second world war. There was precious little Mr Obama could do about it. The Middle East is digging itself ever further into sectarian battle lines. Again, Mr Obama is seemingly powerless. And China acquires a little bit more clout and military reach with each passing year. Ditto for Mr Obama's weakness. If this looks like

a world in which others are challenging US hegemony, that is because it is. All grist to the neocon world view. The reality is that it is a world they have hastened into being. America's global power derives almost as much from its credibility as from its economic and military might. The TV networks may have moved past Abu Ghraib, water boarding and Lynndie England. The Arab world has not. The men who predicted that Baghdad would greet US troops with flowers are back on our screens telling us how to fix Iraq. With a straight face they are blaming Mr Obama for the mess it is now in. Strange though it seems, they have become respectable again. Mr Obama, meanwhile, is sending 300 military "advisers" to help Nouri al-Maliki's government. Half a century ago, John F Kennedy did the same in Vietnam. He, too, was caught in a dilemma about aiding a government that was fuelling the insurgency that threatened to topple it. His generation, too, had its best and brightest. On Iraq, as with Vietnam, the act of remembering is essential.

[Article 2.](#)

Foreign Affairs

## **Iran's Plan to Win Iraq's Sectarian War**

Mohsen Milani

June 22, 2014 -- Although the Iranian debate about what to do

in Iraq has not been as loud as the one in the United States, it has been equally intense. That should come as no surprise. For Iran, a civil war in neighboring Iraq, or a partitioning of that country, is less an occasion for political score-settling (as in Washington in recent days) than a threat to national security.

Iranian policymakers understand that, and their recent public statements make it possible to discern the basic outlines of Iran's strategy. On the one hand, Tehran will shore up the Shia-dominated government of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki as it organizes Shia-dominated military forces and informal militias to combat the Sunni insurgents that have gained control of northwestern Iraq. On the other hand, Tehran will attempt to frame the conflict in Iraq in nonsectarian terms, presenting it, instead, as a war against terrorism. That rhetoric, Tehran hopes, will convince the West, particularly the United States, to send political and military support.

There are obvious tensions between the rhetorical and operational aspects of this strategy, and Iranian policymakers may be less capable of finessing those tensions than they would like to think.

Since the end of the war between Iraq and Iran in 1988 and the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, Iran's priority has been to ensure that Iraq would never again invade it. To that end, it has focused on establishing a Shia-dominated government in Baghdad that is friendly to Tehran. It has also cultivated Shia political networks in Iraq and created a number of powerful Shia militias. As a result, Iraq has become a clear Iranian ally and a major trading partner. This has tipped the strategic balance of power in the region in favor of Iran and against its rival, Saudi Arabia.

Iran is not likely to undo all that progress by abandoning its ally; solidarity is a mainstay of the political rhetoric of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. When the city of Mosul fell to the Sunni insurgent group Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), Tehran's immediate instinct was to quickly offer military help to Maliki, whom it has long backed. But this is not simply a matter of personal loyalty. Iran's strategic priority in Iraq is ensuring that Iraq's government remains dominated by Shia, with or without Maliki at the helm.

In the days since Iranian President Hassan Rouhani announced that he would be sending help to Maliki, if asked by Iraq, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) has taken the lead in coordinating the military operations of Iraqi security forces. (There have already been reports that Qassim Suleimani, commander of the Quds division of IRGC, has been dispatched to Baghdad to assist Maliki.) IRGC's rather successful involvement in Syria's civil war -- where it trained and fought alongside Syrian government forces -- has given it practice in combating ISIS and other Sunni extremist groups. But IRGC also knows the Iraqi terrain very well. During the U.S. occupation of Iraq, it trained thousands of Iraqi fighters and gained an intimate familiarity with the fault lines of the country's politics.

Iran can also help mobilize the Shia militias in Iraq that have mostly been dormant in recent years. It will surely try to regroup and re-arm the Iranian-trained Badr Brigade (although many of its members have since joined the Iranian national security forces). It will probably also take the more controversial step of encouraging the Shia militant cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's powerful Mahdi Army to join the fight. During the U.S. occupation of

Iraq, Sadr famously ordered his militia to fight U.S. troops, and he gained a reputation for recklessness as a political and military leader. Tehran has repeatedly intervened on Maliki's behalf to subdue the erratic cleric's militia. But Tehran now seems to have changed its mind about Sadr, at least for the duration of the current crisis. After a recent trip to Iran, Sadr declared that he would instruct his militia to defend Shia shrines against ISIS.

Finally, Iran may turn to smaller Shia insurgent groups, including Asaib Ahl al-Haq, an offshoot of the Mahdi Army, and Kataib Hezbollah. Iran reportedly created and trained both. Now they are among the militias that IRGC expects to respond to its commands. (Both of those groups have also been fighting in the Syrian civil war and thus are already familiar with ISIS.)

Iran believes that the Sunni insurgency can only be defeated if Iraq's fractious Shia militias agree to cooperate. Fortunately, Iranian-born Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the most popular Shia religious leader in Iraq and perhaps the world, has encouraged them to do just that. After the fall of Mosul to ISIS, Sistani issued a fatwa urging all Shia to unify and join the government security forces for a fight against ISIS. This was an unprecedented move: even at the peak of the sectarian civil war during the U.S. occupation, Sistani had refused to issue a fatwa to urge the faithful to take arms. Sistani's intervention proved an important turning point; ISIS seemed to be on the verge of reaching Baghdad, but the fatwa seemed to stall him. It produced a steady number of volunteers for the Iraqi national security services and Shia militias, and put pressure on Maliki's political opponents in Baghdad to back the embattled prime minister.

Although Tehran's goal is to keep Iraq's Shia government in power -- and its opponents in ISIS openly want to establish a Sunni-only state -- Iran is very unlikely to admit publicly that its strategy is overtly sectarian. Iranian officials are exceptionally careful not to identify the ISIS as a Sunni organization, or even as an indigenous Iraqi group, but rather as a takfiri, or infidel, group that relies on the support of outside countries. Khamenei recently warned that "some regional countries unfortunately do not take heed of the danger of [the] takfiri groups, which will threaten them in future ... eventually these countries will be forced to eradicate these extremists, with a high price." Although Khamenei did not identify which countries he had in mind, the Iranian media consistently point to Saudi Arabia as the main source of funding for ISIS and other Sunni jihadists. Rouhani has emphasized that Iran has "no option but to confront terrorism in Iraq."

Framing its intervention as an antiterrorist bid allows Iran to publicly and privately pressure the United States and the West to back (or at least not oppose) its efforts. Some Iranian policymakers believe that there is good reason to collaborate with the United States in fighting ISIS. Just as they worked together to overthrow the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001, Iranians want to work with Washington to prevent the partition of Iraq. They appreciate that, although the United States and Iran don't necessarily need to cooperate militarily in Iraq, political cooperation between Washington and Tehran will be indispensable for restoring stability in Iraq.

But Iran seems more reluctant to admit that the United States has a somewhat different vision of how peace can sustainably be restored in Iraq. Iraq will not remain stable so long as Shia

exclusively dominate the Iraqi central government. ISIS' rapid advances were only possible because the population of Sunni-majority areas of Iraq felt entirely alienated from the political process in Baghdad and believed that ISIS offered them a better opportunity to govern their own affairs. In that sense, there is simply no military solution to the lingering crisis in Iraq. Iran, as the most powerful regional player in Iraq, would be wise to pressure Maliki to make meaningful concessions to the Sunni population and involve them in the central government's decision-making in order to make them feel that they are an integral part of a new Iraq. That would allow Iran to not only defeat ISIS but to sustain its favorable position in Iraq and to lay the foundation for a more cooperative relationship with the United States in the region. Otherwise, Iraq will remain a perpetual security threat on Iran's western border.

*Mohsen Milani is Professor of Politics and the Executive Director of the Center for Strategic and Diplomatic Studies at the University of South Florida.*

[Article 3.](#)

Al Monitor

## **Saudi king's short victory lap in Egypt**

Bruce Riedel

June 22, 2014 -- It had the feel of a victory lap, albeit short and quick. Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz visited Cairo on June 20 to congratulate Egypt's new President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on his inauguration. For the ailing monarch it was a symbol of the kingdom's success in turning back what he labeled the "strange chaos" of the Arab Spring.

The king never left his specially built royal airplane at the airport, and received Sisi inside its palatial interior. The stop was only a couple of hours between Morocco, where the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques was recuperating from medical treatment and Saudi Arabia. Still, Abdullah is the first foreign head of state to visit Sisi since his inauguration. Abdullah was the only head of state Sisi mentioned in his inaugural address.

The king's official party included Prince Bandar bin Sultan, who resigned as the kingdom's intelligence czar earlier this year. The prince's inclusion in the Cairo visit shows he remains a player in Saudi decision-making.

Abdullah was the first foreign leader to congratulate Sisi after his coup last July, only minutes after he seized power. Sisi was Egypt's defense attache in Riyadh before becoming director of military intelligence.

Since the coup, the kingdom has organized a multi-billion bail out for Egypt, along with its Gulf allies Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. Sisi has said they have provided or promised \$20 billion so far. Abdullah has called for a donor's conference to raise more money for Egypt.

The success of the counter-revolution in Egypt and the defeat of

the Muslim Brotherhood there is a major success for the king. The Brotherhood has become the kingdom's bogeyman, which is very ironic since it was once the kingdom's protege. It has been outlawed as a terrorist organization along with al-Qaeda in the kingdom.

The king was deeply alarmed by the start of the Arab awakening in 2011, chaos seemed to be swirling around the kingdom, and its allies such as Tunisia's Ben Ali and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak were dropping like flies. But three years later, Sisi has restored autocracy in Cairo, a pro-Saudi government holds onto power in Yemen and the Sunni royal family remains in charge in Bahrain. In all three cases the kingdom has worked hard to prevent revolution. It's expensive — \$30 billion or so a year according to one Saudi estimate — but so far so good. In its immediate neighborhood on the Arabian Peninsula and in the Arab world's most populous state, Egypt, the revolution is thwarted for now.

Of course, the same cannot be said for Saudi policy in Syria and Iraq. The rise of the al-Qaeda-inspired Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) is deeply worrisome for the Saudis. While they welcome the defeat of Iraq's Shiite government and the pressure on Syrian President Bashar al-Assad from the Sunni jihadists, the royals know ISIS is their enemy, too.

ISIS is a very dangerous enemy for the monarchy because its extreme sectarian ideology has many supporters in the kingdom. Hundreds of young Saudi men have flocked to ISIS to fight with it, others send money to help it. Some parts of Saudi public opinion seemed thrilled to see ISIS seize Mosul and threaten the Shiite holy cities in Iraq, after all, the Saudis themselves

pillaged Najaf and Karbala two centuries ago.

But the kingdom is deeply concerned that the ISIS jihadists are uncontrollable and plotting against the House of Saud. Scores of ISIS supporters were arrested last month and ISIS leaflets have been confiscated in Saudi cities calling for violence against the state. Al-Qaeda's terror offensive in the kingdom in 2004-2005 remains a fresh memory for the king, one he does not want to repeat.

The royals also fear that Iran will be the ultimate beneficiary of the jihadist spring in Iraq and Syria. The thought of American jets providing air support for Shiite armies in Mesopotamia is not comforting to Abdullah. Rather, it underscores deep Saudi fears that Washington and Tehran are on the verge of a rapprochement at the expense of Saudi and Sunni interests.

Even if there is no Iranian-American entente, the Saudis see Iran growing more powerful with client states in Damascus, Beirut and Baghdad. The impact on the restive Shiites in Manama and the kingdom's eastern province is alarming. A Shiite crescent was the nightmare scenario Jordan's King Abdullah foresaw years ago; his Saudi fellow monarch shares it today. The Saudis know Jordan is very vulnerable today to ISIS terror attacks.

So, Abdullah's victory lap was appropriately short. The Saudis have helped stoke the fire of sectarian violence in the Middle East for years, now the flames are out of control and may burn for years to come.

*Bruce Riedel is the Director of the Intelligence Project at the Brookings Institution. His new book, "What We Won: America's Secret War in Afghanistan, 1979-1989" will be published in*

*July.*

Article 4.

Today's Zaman

## **Will Islam or democracy determine Turkey's direction?**

Murat Aksoy

June 22, 2014 -- The title of the 33rd Abant Platform meeting was "Turkey's Direction." The moderator of the opening session, Seyfettin Gürsel, said, "Nobody would have believed a few years ago that such a meeting would be held under this title."

He is right indeed. A few years ago, we were talking about negotiations with the European Union, making a new constitution and democratization. How about today? Now we are discussing whether Islamic references, authoritarianism or democracy will determine Turkey's direction.

Main difference of Turkey

In the session, Turkey's place in the global system and the future direction of Turkish foreign policy were discussed in detail in reference to recent developments in the Middle East. The common view that emerged out of these discussions suggested that the Middle East policy is flawed and it needs to be reviewed. So what happened? Why is Turkey's Middle East

policy currently in a stalemate? Why is Turkey currently associated with terror organizations rather than democratization? Even though it is a predominantly Muslim country, Turkey is different from other Muslim countries, because it is a democracy that employs a secular approach to state administration. Turkey is also an EU candidate country that is able to reconcile Islam and democracy. For this reason, Turkey has served as a model and source of inspiration for many Islamic countries. And it has become one of the main targets of radical groups and organizations because of this. Turks have been attacked in Somalia, and Turkish soap operas have been banned because they were found to be contrary to Islamic and social values in some countries. Turkey, which was a model for the Arab Awakening, decided to become a leader in the region by virtue of its Sunnism, an interpretation of Islam, rather than democratic political values and the advantages the country held; this led to the collapse of the Turkish image in the region. We have come to this point because Turkey extended support to former Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi not because of democratic principles but because of ambitions to serve as a regional leader, and Turkish foreign policy focused on the removal of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Syria rather than the protection of rights and freedoms for the people.

This is not the AK Party we voted for

I admit that when voting for the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) in 2011, the only things we cared about were further democratization, normalization and making a new constitution. However, the AK Party did not pay attention to the wishes and expectations of the people who had voted for them; instead, it politicized its cultural identity, believing the conditions were

right to do this. They preferred a majoritarian approach over plurality in domestic politics and sectarian politicization over the democratic model. This policy of the AK Party became evident in its foreign policy when Assad was not toppled in Syria and a coup was staged in Egypt and in domestic policy when the Gezi Park protests were brutally repressed and Erdoğan made some pretty harsh statements.

Islam or national interest?

Can Turkey become the leader of the Middle East for Sunni Muslims by focusing on its Sunni identity? I think this is the most important question. There are now various religious sects, orders and interpretations in Muslim countries with their different approaches to Quran and the sunnah. We need to realize this when it comes to the internalization of Islam or Islamic values and joint action by Muslim nations: Being a Muslim does not invalidate the existing borders of a nation-state. Some countries are attempting to act as a protector of other Muslim countries to the extent that they trust in those countries' power. And some countries even do this by acting under the auspices of non-Muslim Western countries. This tells us that as long as the nation-state system remains alive, relations between Muslim countries will be determined by politics, not religion.

Turkey against Arabia

We are observing the reflection of the division in the Islamic world in two major centers: Saudi Arabia, which represents Sunnism, and Iran, which represents Shiism. Egypt's leadership in the Arab world is cultural, rather than political or religious. Saudi Arabia and Iran are two leading countries in the Muslim

world because of their different religious interpretations and abundant natural resources. And we should admit that their leadership stems from the strength of their religious interpretations as well as their political and economic positions. There are also movements emanating from the Sunni tradition that believe they represent the only true version of Islam and try to “correct” the others. These groups, emerging as Salafi movements at the present time, rely on violence as their only source of legitimacy. Al-Qaeda was an example of this. And now the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is a current case. It is obvious that ISIL enjoys strong support from Arabia, which considers its regional interests rather than any reference to Islam. Turkey, which supported the al-Nusra Front and the Free Syrian Army (FSA) in Syria in their fight against Assad, was also one of the supporters of ISIL.

The facts being told by realpolitik

Turkey has been trying to replace Egypt in political terms and Arabia in a sectarian sense in the Middle East. But Arabia has blocked Turkey from becoming a leader in the region. Saudi Arabia, which supported Turkey in its opposition against Assad, has been the main supporter of the coup against Morsi in Egypt. The AK Party criticized former Organization of Islamic Cooperation head Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu for not calling the intervention in Egypt a coup; however, the AK Party failed to make a call to Saudi Arabia, which had extended material support to the coup in that country.

Turkey relied on an ethical and normative position and stance in both Egypt and Syria. However, political relationships are shaped by real political facts as well. This is the major flaw of Turkey.

The dream of becoming regional leader through a sectarian stance in the Middle East has proved to be a failure, as evidenced by the developments in Syria and Egypt and the growing influence of ISIL in Iraq. However, despite this, the AK Party still tries to consolidate its support base by reference to a religious discourse in domestic politics. And, in addition, it is also becoming more authoritarian to sustain its social legitimacy.

Universal, not religious values

However, the remedy is rediscovering democracy and secularism rather than sectarianism and the politicization of Islam for Turkey. It is now obvious that its democratic-secular political model, secular politics and its relations with the West and EU candidacy are Turkey's greatest assets and political values. What needs to be done is to return to these values. Turkey can be a Muslim country; but Islamic values cannot be the only reference of the political system. For this reason, the direction of Turkey is either a return to democracy or an authoritarian tendency based on a reference to political Islam.

*Murat Aksoy is a journalist and writer based in İstanbul.*

[Article 5.](#)

NYT

## **Turkey's Best Ally: The Kurds**

## Mustafa Akyol

June 22, 2014 -- Istanbul — When the Iraqi city of Mosul was captured on June 10 by the armed militias of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS, many world leaders were shocked and concerned. Turkey's leaders were more alarmed than most; ISIS militants stormed the Turkish consulate in Mosul and kidnapped 100 Turkish citizens, some of them diplomats. As I write, the hostages, including two babies, are still in the hands of ISIS.

Back in Turkey, a heated media debate abruptly came to a halt after Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in his usual authoritarian tone, asked the media “to follow this issue silently.” Two days later, an Ankara court issued a gag order, banning all sorts of news and commentary on the events in Mosul. The reason, the court explained, was first “to protect the safety of the hostages” but also to prevent “news that depicts the state in weakness.”

But Turks need to discuss their state's weaknesses, and the mistakes made in the multiple crises along the country's southeastern borders. And they should do this without falling into the deep polarization that has plagued Turkey's political landscape recently. This is not about being for or against Mr. Erdogan; it is about Turkey's future security and its relationship with its troubled southern neighbors.

In fact, Mr. Erdogan and his professor-turned-foreign minister Ahmet Davutoglu deserve credit for abandoning Turkey's traditional conservative foreign policy, which only focused on protecting the status quo and responding to new developments

defensively. Mr. Davutoglu's famous goal of having "zero problems with neighbors" was an expression of the vision that the world around Turkey might change and that Turks could play a pivotal role in shaping it.

This vision worked well for a while, and the Erdogan-Davutoglu team even felt that, with the chain of Arab Revolutions in 2011, the time had come for their moderately Islamic "Turkish model" to serve as an example for the whole region. This was not a bad idea, the veteran Turkey and Middle East expert Graham Fuller explains in his new book, "Turkey and the Arab Spring." Yet too much idealism, if not ideology, along with overestimating Turkey's power, led to some serious mistakes.

In Syria, Turkey's first mistake was to underestimate the durability of President Bashar al-Assad, who had quickly turned from friend to enemy. The second mistake was to underestimate the threat posed by radical jihadist groups such as ISIS that had gradually overshadowed the more moderate and democratic-minded Syrian opposition.

To be fair, Turkey didn't willingly nurture a Qaeda offshoot beyond its borders. But by focusing so singularly on toppling Mr. Assad, and turning a blind eye for quite some time to the anti-Assad extremists, it unwittingly helped create a monster.

Yet still there is one bright spot in the region — and it is a direct result of Mr. Davutoglu's "zero problems" vision: Iraqi Kurdistan, which is now Turkey's best ally in Iraq, if not the whole region.

This is deeply ironic, of course, because for decades Turkey was paranoid about Kurds and their political ambitions — both at

home and abroad. The Erdogan-Davutoglu team, along with President Abdullah Gul, gradually turned this bitterness with the Kurds into reconciliation and eventually an alliance.

The alliance between Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan has grown over the past five years, as Turkey invested heavily in the partly autonomous Iraqi region, opened a consulate in its capital Erbil, and Mr. Erdogan even befriended its leader, Masoud Barzani.

The relationship was further cemented earlier this month, when Ankara signed a 50-year deal with Iraqi Kurdistan's leaders, allowing them to export Kurdish oil to the world via a pipeline that runs through Turkey. The deal, which was opposed by Iraq's central government in Baghdad, indicates that Turkey now sees Iraqi Kurdistan as a strategic partner, and cares very little about the territorial integrity of Iraq that it used to obsess about.

It's no wonder, then, that a spokesman for Mr. Erdogan's party recently announced that Turkey would support Iraqi Kurds' bid for self-determination. "The Kurds of Iraq can decide for themselves the name and type of the entity they are living in," he said — a clear departure from traditional Turkish policy.

Apparently, Turkey is now willing to welcome Iraqi Kurds, perhaps even Syrian ones, as allies and to serve as a buffer between Turkey and the chaos in both of those countries. This could prove a very wise strategy, especially if it can be combined with a successful domestic peace process that ends the long-running conflict with Turkey's own Kurdish nationalists, who for years used bases in northern Iraq and Syria to attack Turkish soldiers in the majority-Kurdish southeastern regions of the country.

But Turkey's leaders need to show the same sort of wisdom and flexibility on other issues, too. The reconciliation with the Kurds was partly possible because Mr. Erdogan and his colleagues largely freed themselves from the ideological constraints of ethnic Turkish nationalism, which was a hallmark of most of their secular predecessors.

Yet the masters of the New Turkey seem to have their own ideological constraint — Sunni Islamism. They should be able to outgrow that, and instead of taking a side in the region's growing Sunni-Shiite divide, they should champion reconciliation, be more wary of Sunni extremists, and reach out to non-Sunni Muslims — both at home and abroad. If they do not, many of Turkey's recent diplomatic accomplishments could be overshadowed and reversed by sectarian strife.

*Mustafa Akyol is the author of "Islam Without Extremes: A Muslim Case for Liberty."*

[Article 6.](#)

NYT + WSJ

## **Fouad Ajami Is Dead at 68**

NYT

## **Expert in Arab History**

Douglas Martin

June 22, 2014 -- Fouad Ajami, an academic, author and broadcast commentator on Middle East affairs who helped rally support for the United States invasion of Iraq in 2003 — partly by personally advising top policy makers — died on Sunday. He was 68.

The cause was cancer, the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, where Mr. Ajami was a senior fellow, said in a statement

An Arab, Mr. Ajami despaired of autocratic Arab governments finding their own way to democracy, and believed that the United States must confront what he called a “culture of terrorism” after the 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. He likened the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein to Hitler.

Mr. Ajami strove to put Arab history into a larger perspective. He often referred to Muslim rage over losing power to the West in 1683, when a Turkish siege of Vienna failed. He said this memory had led to Arab self-pity and self-delusion as they blamed the rest of the world for their troubles. Terrorism, he said, was one result.

It was a view that had been propounded by Bernard Lewis, the eminent Middle East historian at Princeton and public intellectual, who also urged the United States to invade Iraq and advised President George W. Bush.

Most Americans became familiar with Mr. Ajami’s views on

CBS News, CNN and the PBS programs “Charlie Rose” and “NewsHour,” where his distinctive beard and polished manner lent force to his authoritative-sounding opinions. He wrote more than 400 articles for magazines and newspapers, including The New York Times, as well as a half-dozen books on the Middle East, some of which included his own experiences as a Shiite Muslim in majority Sunni societies.

Condoleezza Rice summoned him to the Bush White House when she was national security adviser, and he advised Paul Wolfowitz, then the deputy secretary of defense. In a speech in 2002, Vice President Dick Cheney invoked Mr. Ajami as predicting that Iraqis would greet liberation by the American military with joy.

In the years following the Iraqi invasion, Mr. Ajami continued to support the action as stabilizing. But he said this month that Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki had squandered an opportunity to unify the country after American intervention and become a dictator. More recently, he favored more aggressive policies toward Iran and Syria. Mr. Ajami’s harshest criticism was leveled at Arab autocrats, who by definition lacked popular support. But his use of words like “tribal,” “atavistic” and “clannish” to describe Arab peoples rankled some. So did his belief that Western nations should intervene in the region to correct wrongs. Edward Said, the Palestinian cultural critic who died in 2003, accused him of having “unmistakably racist prescriptions.”

Others praised him for balance. Daniel Pipes, a scholar who specializes in the Middle East, said in Commentary magazine in 2006 that Mr. Ajami had avoided “the common Arab fixation on

the perfidy of Israel.”

Fouad Ajami was born on Sept. 19, 1945, at the foot of a castle built by Crusaders in Arnoun, a dusty village in southern Lebanon. His family came from Iran (the name Ajami means “Persian” in Arabic) and were prosperous tobacco farmers. When he was 4, the family moved to Beirut.

As a boy he was taunted by Sunni Muslim children for being Shiite and short, he wrote in “The Dream Palace of the Arabs: A Generation’s Odyssey” (1998), an examination of Arab intellectuals of the last two generations. As a teenager, he was enthusiastic about Arab nationalism, a cause he would later criticize. He also fell in love with American culture, particularly Hollywood movies, and especially Westerns. In 1963, a day or two before his 18th birthday, his family moved to the United States.

He attended Eastern Oregon College (now University), then earned a Ph.D. at the University of Washington after writing a thesis on international relations and world government. He next taught political science at Princeton. In 1980, the School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University named him director of Middle East studies. He joined the Hoover Institution in 2011.

Mr. Ajami’s first book, “The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967” (1981), explored the panic and sense of vulnerability in the Arab world after Israel’s victory in the 1967 war. His next book, “The Vanishing Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon” (1986), profiled an Iranian cleric

who helped transform Lebanese Shia from “a despised minority” to effective successful political actors. For the 1988 book “Beirut: City of Regrets,” Mr. Ajami provided a long introduction and some text to accompany a photographic essay by Eli Reed.

“The Dream Palace of the Arabs” told of how a generation of Arab intellectuals tried to renew their homelands’ culture through the forces of modernism and secularism. The Christian Science Monitor called it “a cleareyed look at the lost hopes of the Arabs.”

Partly because of that tone, some condemned the book as too negative. The scholar Andrew N. Rubin, writing in The Nation, said it “echoes the kind of anti-Arabism that both Washington and the pro-Israeli lobby have come to embrace.”

Mr. Ajami received many awards, including a MacArthur Fellowship in 1982 and a National Humanities Medal in 2006. He is survived by his wife, Michelle. In a profile in The Nation in 2003, Adam Shatz described Mr. Ajami’s distinctive appearance, characterized by a “dramatic beard, stylish clothes and a charming, almost flirtatious manner.”

He continued: “On television, he radiates above-the-frayness, speaking with the wry, jaded authority that men in power admire, especially in men who have risen from humble roots. Unlike the other Arabs, he appears to have no ax to grind. He is one of us; he is the good Arab.”

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## **Fouad Ajami on America and the Arabs**

June 22, 2014 -- Editor's note: **Fouad Ajami, the Middle Eastern scholar and a contributor to these pages for 27 years, died Sunday at age 68.** Excerpts from his writing in the Journal are below, and a related editorial appears nearby:

**"A Tangled History," a review of Bernard Lewis's book, "Islam and the West," June 24, 1993:**

The book's most engaging essay is a passionate defense of Orientalism that foreshadows today's debate about multiculturalism and the study of non-Western history. Mr. Lewis takes on the trendy new cult led by Palestinian-American Edward Said, whose many followers advocate a radical form of Arab nationalism and deride traditional scholarship of the Arab world as a cover for Western hegemony. The history of that world, these critics insist, must be reclaimed and written from within. With Mr. Lewis's rebuttal the debate is joined, as a great historian defends the meaning of scholarship and takes on those who would bully its practitioners in pursuit of some partisan truths.

**" Barak's Gamble," May 25, 2000:**

It was bound to end this way: One day Israel was destined to vacate the strip of Lebanon it had occupied when it swept into that country in the summer of 1982. Liberal societies are not good at the kind of work military occupation entails.

**"Show Trial: Egypt: The Next Rogue Regime?" May 30, 2001:**

If there is a foreign land where U.S. power and influence should be felt, Egypt should be reckoned a reasonable bet. A quarter century of American solicitude and American treasure have been invested in the Egyptian regime. Here was a place in the Arab world—humane and tempered—where Pax Americana had decent expectations: support for Arab-Israeli peace, a modicum of civility at home.

It has not worked out that way: The regime of Hosni Mubarak has been a runaway ally. In the latest display of that ruler's heavy handedness, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, a prominent Egyptian-American sociologist, has recently been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment on charges of defaming the state. It was a summary judgment, and a farce: The State Security Court took a mere 90 minutes to deliberate over the case.

**"Arabs Have Nobody to Blame But Themselves," Oct. 16, 2001:**

A darkness, a long winter, has descended on the Arabs. Nothing grows in the middle between an authoritarian political order and populations given to perennial flings with dictators, abandoned to their most malignant hatreds. Something is amiss in an Arab world that besieges American embassies for visas and at the same time celebrates America's calamities. Something has gone terribly wrong in a world where young men strap themselves with explosives, only to be hailed as "martyrs" and avengers.

**"Beirut, Baghdad," Aug. 25, 2003:**

A battle broader than the country itself, then, plays out in Iraq. We needn't apologize to the other Arabs about our presence there, and our aims for it. The custodians of Arab power, and the vast majority of the Arab political class, never saw or named the terrible cruelties of Saddam. A political culture that averts its gaze from mass graves and works itself into self-righteous hysteria over a foreign presence in an Arab country is a culture that has turned its back on political reason.

Yet this summer has tested the resolve of those of us who supported the war, and saw in it a chance to give Iraq and its neighbors a shot at political reform. There was a leap of faith, it must be conceded, in the argument that a land as brutalized as Iraq would manage to find its way out of its cruel past and, in the process, give other Arabs proof that a modicum of liberty could flourish in their midst.

**"The Curse of Pan-Arabia," May 12, 2004:**

Consider a tale of three cities: In Fallujah, there are the beginnings of wisdom, a recognition, after the bravado, that the insurgents cannot win in the face of a great military power. In Najaf, the clerical establishment and the shopkeepers have called on the Mahdi Army of Muqtada al-Sadr to quit their city, and to "pursue another way." It is in Washington where the lines are breaking, and where the faith in the gains that coalition soldiers have secured in Iraq at such a terrible price appears to have cracked. We have been doing Iraq by improvisation, we are now "dumping stock," just as our fortunes in that hard land may be taking a turn for the better. We pledged to give Iraqis a chance at a new political life. We now appear to be consigning them yet again to the same Arab malignancies that drove us to Iraq in the first place.

**" Bush of Arabia," Jan. 8, 2008:**

Suffice it for them that George W. Bush was at the helm of the dominant imperial power when the world of Islam and of the Arabs was in the wind, played upon by ruinous temptations, and when the regimes in the saddle were ducking for cover, and the broad middle classes in the Arab world were in the grip of historical denial of what their radical children had wrought. His was the gift of moral and political clarity. . . .

We scoffed, in polite, jaded company when George W. Bush spoke of the "axis of evil" several years back. The people he now journeys amidst didn't: It is precisely through those categories of good and evil that they describe their world, and their condition. Mr. Bush could not redeem the modern culture

of the Arabs, and of Islam, but he held the line when it truly mattered. He gave them a chance to reclaim their world from zealots and enemies of order who would have otherwise run away with it.

**" Obama's Afghan Struggle," March 20, 2009:**

[President Obama] can't build on the Iraq victory, because he has never really embraced it. The occasional statement that we can win over the reconcilables and the tribes in Afghanistan the way we did in the Anbar is lame and unconvincing. The Anbar turned only when the Sunni insurgents had grown convinced that the Americans were there to stay, and that the alternative to accommodation with the Americans, and with the Baghdad government, is a sure and widespread Sunni defeat. The Taliban are nowhere near this reckoning. If anything, the uncertain mood in Washington counsels patience on their part, with the promise of waiting out the American presence.

**"Pax Americana and the New Iraq," Oct. 6, 2010:**

The question posed in the phase to come will be about the willingness of Pax Americana to craft a workable order in the Persian Gulf, and to make room for this new Iraq. It is a peculiarity of the American presence in the Arab-Islamic world, as contrasted to our work in East Asia, that we have always harbored deep reservations about democracy's viability there and have cast our lot with the autocracies. For a fleeting moment, George W. Bush broke with that history. But that older history,

the resigned acceptance of autocracies, is the order of the day in Washington again.

It isn't perfect, this Iraqi polity midwived by American power. But were we to acknowledge and accept that Iraqis and Americans have prevailed in that difficult land, in the face of such forbidding odds, we and the Iraqis shall be better for it. We have not labored in vain.