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Article 1.

The Washington Post

The United States' Middle East peace process paradox

Jackson Diehl

April 14, 2014 -- The Middle East “peace process” can look like an endless loop of diplomatic failures that leave Israelis and Palestinians stuck in in-trac-table conflict. So as the latest round of U.S.-sponsored negotiation teeters on the brink, it’s worth pointing out that during the course of the last 25 years the two peoples have made glacially slow but cumulatively enormous progress toward coexistence. In fact, they have traveled most of the path to a final settlement.

A decisive majority of Israelis and the political elite have given up the dream of a “greater Israel” and accepted that a state of Palestine will be created in the Gaza Strip and most of the West

Bank. That was out of the question in 1990, when Secretary of State James Baker threw up his hands in frustration and advised the parties to “call us . . . when you are serious about peace.”

Palestinians have dropped their denial of Israel’s right to exist and, for the most part, the tactics of terrorism and violence that undid the diplomacy of the Clinton administration. Once racked by suicide bombings and messy military sweeps, Israel, the West Bank and lately even Gaza have been islands of relative tranquility in a bloody region. Israeli troops that once patrolled every major Palestinian town are gone. They are replaced in the West Bank by competent Palestinian security forces whose commanders work closely with their Israeli counterparts — another once-inconceivable development.

True, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators are still far apart on the specific terms for the Palestine state, including where the border will be drawn, how former Palestinian refugees will be handled and whether and how Jerusalem will be divided. But, contrary to the claim of Secretary of State John F. Kerry, the time for a two-state settlement is not running out. In fact, the doomsayers who made that same argument 25 years ago, such as Israeli demographer Meron Benvenisti, had a more plausible case.

Then, Israel was aggressively expanding Jewish settlements. Now, all but a handful of the new housing it is adding is in areas near the 1967 border that both sides know will become part of Israel. Despite all the episodic furors over the settlements, careful studies have shown that 80 percent of their residents could be absorbed by Israel’s annexation of less than 5 percent of the West Bank — and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has hinted at his acceptance of the principle that the

territory could be swapped for land that is now part of Israel.

So why isn't this progress reflected in the diplomacy? Simple: Almost every positive development in Israeli-Palestinian relations has happened outside the "peace process." Israelis accepted Palestinian statehood because they realized their country could not keep the West Bank and remain both Jewish and democratic. Palestinians abandoned violence because it failed to end the occupation and was far more costly to Palestinians than to Israelis. Security cooperation works in the West Bank because Israel and the Palestinian authority share an interest in combating Islamic extremists.

The United States has helped to advance this process not by holding peace talks but by backing up the pragmatic decisions of Israeli and Palestinian leaders. George W. Bush helped Ariel Sharon make the decision to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and to carry out the first dismantlement of settlements in the West Bank by endorsing the principle that Israel would retain settlement blocs near its 1967 border. U.S. training and funding has helped create those Palestinian security forces.

The Obama administration could have kept the forward movement going by continuing to promote the construction of Palestinian institutions — including a democratic, corruption-resistant government — and by pushing Israel to turn over more security responsibility and remove impediments to the Palestinian economy. Instead it chose to embrace the ever-failing peace process and bet that it could quickly broker a deal between two very reluctant leaders: Netanyahu and Mahmoud Abbas.

The wager not only has foundered, but it also has partly reversed the more organic change that was underway. Freed from pressure from Washington, Abbas forced out his reformist prime minister and repeatedly postponed promised elections. He is now in the tenth year of the four-year term to which he was elected. Big-time corruption in his regime is back, as are serious human rights abuses. Rancor over the failing peace talks meanwhile is causing Israel to withhold cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, which could cause its collapse.

The moral of this story is that the United States can't produce a Mideast settlement by diplomatic blitzkrieg. It must rather patiently invest in the conditions and institutions that would make a deal possible — and not call a conference until conditions are ripe and leaders ready. By stubbornly refusing to recognize that principle, President Obama and Kerry probably have postponed Palestinian statehood. But the odds are that the evolution toward peace eventually will go on without them.

Article 2.

The National Interest

Khamenei's Nuclear Dilemma

Muhammad Sahimi

April 14, 2014 -- As nuclear talks between Iran and the P5+1 (the five permanent UN Security Council members, plus

Germany) continue, both sides have offered hope that they'll reach a comprehensive agreement. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Wendy Sherman, Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs who heads the U.S. delegation have both admitted that Iran has kept its promises under the Geneva Accord, signed between the two sides last November. The U.S. and its allies have also delivered on their part of the deal, hence providing Iran with slight, but still significant, relief from the crippling sanctions that they have imposed on Iran.

U.S. officials have expressed optimism that the final and comprehensive agreement will end the dispute over Iran's nuclear program. The Iranians, and in particular Foreign Minister Javad Zarif and President Hassan Rouhani, have been saying the same for quite some time. But, of course, drafting the text of the agreement is one thing, the demand by P5+1 that Iran must drastically cut back on the scope of its nuclear program and whether Iran agrees, are completely difficult, and potentially deal-breaking issues. It is here that the role of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is paramount.

The fact is Mr. Khamenei is trapped between a rock—the Iranian nation—and a hard place—his hardline supporters. The Iranian people elected President Rouhani in a landslide last June, and have been demanding uprooting of the vast corruption under Mr. Rouhani's predecessor, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a functioning and robust economy, better relations with the West, and a more open and tolerant political system that puts Iran on a firm and definitive path toward a true and inclusive democracy. Resolving the nuclear dispute with the West and lifting of the sanctions represent major steps in this direction. Mr. Khamenei has supported the nuclear negotiations. As far back as 21 March

2013, he signaled a fundamental change in his position regarding nuclear negotiations with P5+1, and has consistently said that he supports the negotiations as long as Iran's nuclear rights are recognized and respected. In a speech on April 9, Mr. Khamenei emphasized again his support for the nuclear negotiations, although he also accused the U.S. of presenting an image of Iran's nuclear program and goals that are far from reality.

But, the hard place—Iran's hardliners that represent Khamenei's main social base of support—is not interested in a nuclear compromise. The hardliners have been using every opportunity and excuse to attack the Rouhani administration, have likened the nuclear deal to the Holocaust, have claimed that Iran has made too many concessions for too little in return, and have used the Majles [the Iranian parliament] to create problems for the government by constantly summoning various ministers, and in particular Mr. Zarif, to explain his position. They have even threatened to impeach him.

Mr. Khamenei has also made statements that the hardliners, both in Tehran and Washington, point to as indications that he is not interested in a reasonable compromise. For example, between the signing of the Geneva Accord and the beginning of the new round of negotiations in Vienna in February, Mr. Khamenei expressed his lack of hope for the negotiations to succeed. In particular, he said on February 17 that although he supports the nuclear negotiations, he does not believe that the negotiations with the U.S. "will go anywhere." The mainstream media in the U.S., the hawks and the Israel lobby that are looking for any excuse to scuttle the diplomatic process, quickly interpreted Khamenei's speech as indicating his unwillingness to

compromise. But, as explained elsewhere, Mr. Khamenei was misquoted: he supports the negotiations and is definitively interested in a diplomatic solution, but he is pessimistic about the prospects for better, nonhostile relations with the United States.

Likewise, Tehran's hardliners, and in particular some of the leading commanders of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps [IRGC] and intelligence officials in the Ahmadinejad administration, have also used Mr. Khamenei's pronouncements to justify their opposition to the nuclear negotiations. The opposition became louder after the European parliament approved a resolution in which it criticized Iran for its human-rights record and proposed to open an office in Tehran by the end of this year, presumably to enable the European Union to monitor the state of human rights in Iran. One member of the Majles, Nader Ghazipoor, declared that "the Iranian nation will not accept the disgrace of having another 'den of spies' on its 'sacred soil'," a reference to the old U.S. embassy in Tehran. Other hardline MPs suggested that the resolution will negatively impact the negotiations and have even suggested withdrawing from them. There is also another suggestion in the Majles to fingerprint members of European delegations that travel to Iran, presumably to "humiliate" them.

The fact is, nuclear negotiations with Iran would not have advanced as far as they have if the Rouhani administration did not have Mr. Khamenei's support. Therefore, the question is why Mr. Khamenei makes statements that might be interpreted as indicating his unwillingness to compromise. The answer, as already pointed out, is that he is trapped between rock and a hard place, and that the reasons for his statements that "please"

the hardliners are twofold.

One reason is, of course, that the hardliners, the most important base of support for Mr. Khamenei, oppose the negotiations. Some of the hardliners do so for ideological reasons. They do not trust the United States, and are afraid that President Rouhani and Mr. Zarif will make too many concessions in order to close Iran's nuclear dossier. Others oppose the negotiations because during the Ahmadinejad administration they gained their political and economic power as a result of the hostility of the U.S. toward Iran, and are afraid that if the negotiations succeed and the relations between the two nations improve, they will lose everything. Thus, in order to control such hardliners, Mr. Khamenei must appear resolute at home.

The second reason is that Mr. Khamenei is trying to create a political cover for himself and his authority, in case the negotiations fail. He recognizes that he does not have the authority that Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, enjoyed with the people. When he declared to the nation in 1988 that he would end the war with Iraq, he also took full responsibility for it, after opposing it for six years after Iran's military had beaten back the Iraqi army and expelled it from Iran's territory. Mr. Khamenei is maneuvering to put himself in a position to be able to declare that he knew all along that the U.S. is not interested in a diplomatic resolution to the conflict, if the negotiations fail, and that the failure is not his fault. Thus, his pessimism about reaching an agreement with the U.S. is mostly for his hardline supporters, as well a way of securing his own authority.

But, despite the fact that the hardliners are the most important

base of support for Mr. Khamenei, he also recognizes that they have been cornered by the track record of Ahmadinejad that he himself had helped bring to power and had strongly supported for at least six years. Hardly a day goes by without the discovery of another major Ahmadinejad-era corruption case. In addition, Iran's economy suffered greatly during Ahmadinejad's second term. In particular, it contracted by about 5.7 percent in 2012, and by 1.7 percent during most of 2013. These, together with the extreme political repression that the hardliners imposed on the nation as a result of the Green Movement of 2009-2010, created an explosive situation, but also completely discredited the hardliners. Cracks have emerged within the hardline movement, and many have expressed regrets for supporting Ahmadinejad. Gholam-Ali Haddad Adel, the influential conservative and father-in-law of Mr. Khamenei's son, Mojtaba, was quoted saying "God regrets creating Ahmadinejad." This has provided Mr. Khamenei with flexibility for maneuvering, even though he should take the lion's share of blame for what happened during the Ahmadinejad administration.

Mr. Khamenei's support for the nuclear negotiations is not, however, indefinite. The Rouhani administration must be able to show tangible results to the nation, and demonstrate that it did not cross the red lines that Mr. Khamenei has set for the negotiations, namely, recognition of Iran's right to peaceful use of nuclear technology, particularly uranium enrichment. Thus, talk of dismantling a major part of Iran's nuclear infrastructure, espoused by the neocons, as well as Israeli and Saudi Arabian lobbies in the United States, will also not go anywhere. Iran will not agree to it, but time and again it has demonstrated its willingness to make major concessions and to follow a prudent

approach, only to be rebuffed by the United States and its allies. Asking Iran to give up a major part of its nuclear infrastructure is tantamount to demanding that it surrender its sovereignty and national rights. It will not happen.

As the author has emphasized repeatedly—if Washington is interested in a diplomatic resolution of the dispute with Iran, which in turn will have a tremendously positive effect on peace and stability in the Middle East, especially in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Afghanistan, it should recognize the Rouhani administration’s domestic constraints, and offer compromises that President Rouhani can take home and demonstrate to his nation, including the hardliners, that diplomacy with the U.S. can work. That would also ensure continuation of Mr. Khamenei’s support for Rouhani, and marginalizing the hardliners.

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Article 3.

The Washington Post

European Union nations see an uptick in economic security at just the right time

Editorial

April 14, 2014 -- Vladimir Putin's seizure of Crimea and destabilization of Ukraine have added geopolitics to a list of Europe's woes that had previously been headed by economics. In fact, if not for Mr. Putin's land grab, the big story out of Europe might be its surprising economic comeback.

That's a relative judgment, to be sure; Europe has come back only in comparison to the disaster it faced two years ago, or to the even larger collapse that many forecast. Still, after many long months of negative growth and high unemployment, heavily indebted governments such as those of Spain and Italy can now access credit markets at rates not much higher than Germany, Europe's economic powerhouse. Even Greece sold five-year bonds at manageable interest rates on Thursday; the European Commission predicts the Greek economy to grow in 2014 for the first time in half a decade, albeit only by 0.6 percent.

These results are a tribute not only to these countries' willingness to impose wrenching austerity. They also bespeak an implicit bailout from the European Central Bank, whose president, Mario Draghi, persuaded would-be investors in official debt that the ECB would do "whatever it takes" to shore up the currency, the euro, in which that debt is denominated. But the progress hardly means that the region's problems are well and truly behind it. That could only be said once it resumes sustainable economic growth, which, in turn, hinges on the resumption of growth in the second and third largest economies after Germany: France and Italy.

France and Italy are plagued not only by insufficient demand, which austerity worsens, but also by overregulation and job-destroying tax systems. Entrenched interest groups have fended off structural reform for years. Fortunately new prime ministers, Matteo Renzi in Italy and Manuel Valls of France (the latter an appointee of President François Hollande), are proposing fiscal policies that actually address the high cost of doing private-sector business in their respective countries. Since these policies include tax cuts, however, they also might increase French and Italian borrowing in the short term, above the levels permitted by the European Union.

The powers that be within the European Union — German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Mr. Draghi — would be wise to grant Mr. Valls and Mr. Renzi the fiscal wiggle room they need. It's one thing to borrow for current consumption, which is what France and Italy have done, in spades, until now. It's quite another to borrow for purposes of enhancing an economy's growth capacity. To the extent that France and Italy are at last genuinely and verifiably doing the latter — a big if, admittedly — they should get the support of their European partners. At a time when Mr. Putin is moving tanks on Ukraine's borders and brandishing Europe's gas supplies as a political weapon, Europe can ill afford any additional crises, economic or political. Indeed, if they needed any additional reasons to value unity and pragmatism in their mutual economic dealings, the Russian leader has supplied them.

Al Monitor

Who betrayed Egypt's revolution?

Wael Nawara

April 11, 2014 -- A few days ago, activist Shahenda Maklad, 76, despite being sick and bedridden, carried herself to the Lawyers Syndicate where she signed a notarized affidavit supporting (former) Field Marshal Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's candidacy for Egypt's presidential race. The law requires that a candidate must get a minimum of 25,000 such affidavits with at least 1,000 of them per governorate from 15 of Egypt's 27 governorates.

As soon as news leaked that Maklad was supporting Sisi, she was brutally attacked on social media with some activists accusing her of stooping too low and smearing her entire history of struggle. In response, to their attacks, Maklad criticized the elitist activists who use banners of "martyrs' blood" for their own egotistic gain while having no feet to stand upon in the street among Egyptians.

To this day, Maklad continues to fight for what she believes in. In January, she demanded the removal of Mohamed Ibrahim, the minister of interior, and condemned torture and brutal police practices against detainees. Last week, Maklad was one of the supporters of the women's sit-in at the presidential palace, demanding the release of activists Ahmed Douma and Ahmed Maher, sentenced for three years in prison for violating the demonstration law. Yet, while opposing certain actions of the

interim government, she was brave enough to break ranks with her usual club and announce near the end of last year that the majority of Egyptians are looking forward to having Sisi as Egypt's next president. Following her own conviction, she decided to support him and not her lifelong friend and leftist opposition compatriot, Hamdin Sabahy.

In 1997, Maklad, along with three of her friends, Wedad Mitry, Safinaz Kazem and Amina Rachid, was featured in a highly acclaimed Canadian documentary film, "Four Women of Egypt." During Morsi's reign, Shahenda's iconic image of being hushed in front of the presidential palace on Dec. 5, 2012, by the heavy hand of one of the Brotherhood's leaders/thugs and a close aide to Morsi, aggravated many Egyptians and thousands rushed to the street in demonstration moved by this particular photo. Robert Mackey of The New York Times' blog The Lede headlined that image as "Clash of Cultures Within Egypt Made Visible in Single Frame of Video."

Maklad has been an Egyptian heroine and a symbol of Egypt's revolution(s) since forever. She was a co-founder of virtually every opposition movement formed in the past few decades, including Kifaya, the National Association for Change and Egyptian Women for Change. The list is pages long. Hers could be seen as a "Lifelong Trip to Tahrir" as the headline of Radwan Adam's article suggested in February 2012, one year after Egypt's January revolution. Adam further recalled when Che Guevara and Gamal Abdel Nasser went to Kamshish to salute the young woman, who dared to rebel against feudalism and lost her husband who was assassinated in the fight, along with her peasant friends.

Since then, Maklad has championed the cause of poor farmers. I remember before 2011 being invited to the launch of the “farmers union,” which she founded a few months before the January 2011 revolution. She is simply the personal hero of many people. That does not mean she could do no wrong. But to imply that she sold out the revolution is a little silly and screams of ignorance and fake moral superiority.

Maklad is not the only activist pushed outside the exclusive “revolutionary club” presided upon by a few self-appointed hard-core activists. According to overzealous revolutionaries, the list of exiled members is long and includes, believe it or not, Abdel Gelil Mostafa, former head of Kifaya and National Association for Change; Ibrahim Eisa, the renowned journalist who was tried and persecuted during Hosni Mubarak’s rule; Kamal Khalil, an iconic leader of almost every important uprising, demonstration and protest; Ahmed Fouad Negm, a revolutionary poet who was persecuted by every regime since the 1960s; Salah Adly, a leader of the communist movement; and Bahaa Eddin Shaaban, leader of the National Association for Change and the Egyptian Socialist Party.

Many activists and revolutionaries have become so disillusioned and frustrated with the popular tide turning against their lofty discourse. Shokeir, a Twitter activist, may have best expressed this isolation and estrangement in a few simple words: “Wait for no one,” which expressed aloneness, despair and loss of faith. The screaming pain of despair, aloneness and loss of faith could only be equaled by the sad relief of when you no longer have high expectations, or any expectations, from anyone and as a result feel the comfort of never having to be disappointed again.

Has it all been in vain? The martyrs' blood and the high hopes for democracy, dignity and social justice? Questions of self-doubt and the deafening silence are heard from the youth, in particular those who participated in the 18-day uprising that ended 30 years of Mubarak's rule and engaged in the countless Friday sit-ins and marches that followed. Some envy the martyrs who honorably died by gunfire in their glory only to leave us revolutionaries to die by the sword of silence, in the shadows created by the absence of cameras and the silence screaming from departing microphones and vanishing media attention.

It is unfair to ask revolutionaries to be "wise" and calculating. That is just against the nature of revolution. You cannot be exactly pragmatic and prudent and at the same time face armored vehicles and security forces with bare chests. But is it just about being young, passionate and idealistic? Is it just about the promises made to friends bleeding in your arms while you watch life slip away from their dimming eyes? In many cases, I would say yes. This is the case. In other cases, it is more about identifying with a certain exclusive club that gets more exclusive when members are kicked out on charges of betraying the revolution. It may even be about that monstrous collective ego that can only be fed by crushed images of those once considered great and heroic symbols of struggle. It probably does make one feel morally superior when everyone else is eventually found guilty of treason.

In the beginning it was easy. Just vilify the foul, high officials and top aides of the Mubarak regime. Then the label was extended to include everyone who was once a member of the National Democratic Party. Then it was yet expanded again to

include those who ever had anything to do with or even shaken hands with anyone related to the Mubarak regime. It was expanded again to include those who voted for Ahmed Shafik or Amr Moussa in the 2012 presidential elections. And as the monster needs to be continuously fed, new flesh must come at the end from the activists themselves, leaving only a handful of revolutionaries who belong to that exclusive club, who secretly even have smaller circles of who is really true revolutionary and who is so and so. At the end, a few are left at the feet of the Press Syndicate, each taking a mental selfie while really admiring his ability to ignore a camera that doesn't exist in the first place.

There is a unique Egyptian sound gesture, which comes from between the front teeth to barely escape through tightly, pressed lips. It is a subtle gesture expressing utter sorrow and disgust. Many activists make that sound as they exchange tales of those who betrayed the revolution and sold out the blood of the martyrs. You cannot help but wonder: Who actually betrayed the revolution?

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The National Interest

Let Asia Go Nuclear

Harvey M. Sapolsky, Christine M. Leah

April 14, 2014 -- America's policy of opposing the proliferation of nuclear weapons needs to be more nuanced. What works for the United States in the Middle East may not in Asia. We do not want Iran or Saudi Arabia to get the bomb, but why not Australia, Japan, and South Korea? We are opposed to nuclear weapons because they are the great military equalizer, because some countries may let them slip into the hands of terrorists, and because we have significant advantage in precision conventional weapons. But our opposition to nuclear weapons in Asia means we are committed to a costly and risky conventional arms race with China over our ability to protect allies and partners lying nearer to China than to us and spread over a vast maritime theater.

None of our allies in Asia possess nuclear weapons. Instead, they are protected by what is called extended deterrence, our vaguely stated promise to use nuclear weapons in their defense if they are threatened by regional nuclear powers, China, North Korea and Russia. We promise, in essence, to trade Los Angeles for Tokyo, Washington for Canberra, and Seattle for Seoul, as preposterous as that might seem.

In order to avoid such a test of our will, the United States attempts to contain China in particular, but others as well, via a conventional force buildup—the so-called pivot to Asia. We

station tens of thousands of troops in Japan and South Korea, and are expanding our presence in Guam, Australia, Singapore, and the Philippines. The conventional challenge is China's ability to deny access for US forces in or near the island chains that are our Asian allies and that at the same time guard China. As China's military grows the access issue becomes more problematic because of China's ability to saturate the zone with missiles and aircraft that can threaten our military presence. The Air-Sea Battle operational concept, a costly networking of missile defenses, long-range-strike capabilities and naval forces has been the US military's response. Billions are being spent by the United States to assure our Asian allies of our will to protect them conventionally as well with extended nuclear deterrence.

But there is a better, cheaper way to provide security in Asia. We should encourage our allies to acquire their own nuclear weapons. With nuclear weapons Australia, Japan and the others would have the capability to protect themselves from bullying. Nearly all of the allies are rich enough and technologically advanced enough to acquire and maintain nuclear forces. And those who are not—the Philippines, for example—lose much of their vulnerability once the focus shifts away from conventional defenses of the island chains. Nuclear weapons helped prevent the Cold War from turning hot. In Asia they can stop a conventional arms race that is forcing the United States to invest in weapons that can block the Chinese military on its doorstep, thousands of miles from our own. Let our Asian allies defend themselves with the weapon that is the great equalizer.

Tailored proliferation would not likely be destabilizing. Asia is not the Middle East. Japan, South Korea, Australia, and even Taiwan are strong democracies. They have stable political

regimes. Government leaders are accountable to democratic institutions. Civilian control of the military is strong. And they don't have a history of lobbing missiles at each other—they are much more risk-averse than Egypt, Syria or Iran. America's allies would be responsible nuclear weapon states.

A number of Asian nations have at one time or another considered going nuclear, Australia for example, with tacit U.S. Defense Department encouragement in the 1960s. They chose what for them was the cheaper alternative of living under the US nuclear umbrella. Free nuclear guarantees provided by the United States, coupled with the US Navy patrolling offshore, have allowed our allies to grow prosperous without having to invest much in their own defense.

Confident that the United States protects them, our allies have even begun to squabble with China over strings of uninhabited islands in the hope that there is oil out there. It is time to give them a dose of fiscal and military reality. And the way to do that is to stop standing between them and their nuclear-armed neighbors. It will not be long before they realize the value of having their own nuclear weapons. The waters of the Pacific under those arrangements will stay calm, and we will save a fortune.

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NYT

Ambiguities of Japan's Nuclear Policy

Norihiro Kato

April 13, 2014 -- Tokyo — When Yasunari Kawabata became the first Japanese to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1968, he gave a speech called “Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself” that presented a benignly aesthetic portrait of the so-called Japanese spirit larded with references to classical poetry, the tea ceremony and ikebana. When Kenzaburo Oe received the prize in 1994, he titled his lecture, “Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself,” and offered a critical take on the country’s ambiguities, starting its being part of Asia and simultaneously aligned with the West.

I was reminded of the contrast between Japan the Beautiful and Japan the Ambiguous late last month when, during the third Nuclear Security Summit in the Hague, the Japanese government announced that it would hand over to the United States more than 700 pounds of weapons-grade plutonium and a vast supply of highly enriched uranium. It struck me then that the ambiguities of Japan’s policy on nuclear weapons might be coming up against the nationalist agenda of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, also the author of “Towards a Beautiful Country: My Vision for Japan.”

Although Japan does not have nuclear weapons, it has a nuclear weapons policy. The strategy was set out by the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs in 1969 in an internal document whose existence was kept secret until the daily Mainichi Shimbun published it in 1994. That paper states that “for the time being we will maintain the policy of not possessing nuclear weapons” but also “keep the economic and technical potential for the production of nuclear weapons, while seeing to it that Japan will not be interfered with in this regard.” Known as “technological deterrence,” this posture is inherently ambiguous, and has been made more so still by the ministry’s insistence that the document was a research paper rather than a statement of policy.

In a 2000 essay about the future of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the disarmament advocate Jonathan Schell drew a distinction between capacity and intention in describing the range of positions states may adopt on nuclear weapons. At the time, Sweden had the capacity to produce such weapons but not the intention; Libya had the intention but not the capacity. Japan, by contrast, stands out as the only nation that has both the capacity and the intention to produce nuclear weapons but does not act on its intention. It has pioneered a type of nuclear deterrence that relies not on any overt threat, but on the mere suggestion of a latent possibility.

Despite all the evidence to this effect, the Japanese government has continued to deny that it has pursued technological deterrence because acknowledging this would both contravene the spirit of the N.P.T. and anger the Japanese people, who remain strongly opposed to nuclear weapons. Thus Japan has managed to signal to other countries that it could produce nuclear weapons, and that it would if it had to, while simultaneously making it hard for anyone, either at home or abroad, to object.

On the one hand, since the 1970s Japan has pursued a pacifist foreign policy best symbolized by its Three Non-Nuclear Principles: “Japan shall neither possess nor manufacture nuclear weapons, nor shall it permit their introduction into Japanese territory.” On the other hand, starting in the 1950s it has implemented a nuclear energy policy centered on a closed nuclear fuel cycle, which yields nuclear materials that can be used to run so-called fast-breeding reactors. Japan has one such facility, which it uses for research, but it has been plagued by problems and is not commercially viable. Although the fuel cycle yields plutonium through the reprocessing of spent fuel, Japan has managed to escape the usual restrictions on the possession of such materials by stressing its commitment to the Three Non-Nuclear Principles and so, implicitly, its special status as the only country in the world to have suffered atomic bombings.

But now the two props of Japan’s not-so-secret strategy of technological deterrence are falling apart. The Abe cabinet has adopted a confrontational stance toward Japan’s East Asian neighbors. It has weakened the country’s previous commitment to not exporting arms to certain types of countries, including those subject to arms embargoes or involved in international conflicts. Other countries, sensing that the Abe administration may want to jettison the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, have begun expressing concern over Japan’s stores of plutonium.

At the same time, the government is finding it increasingly difficult to explain why Japan should maintain its fuel-cycle policy. In the wake of the Fukushima disaster in 2011, none of Japan’s 48 commercial nuclear reactors is currently in operation, and popular opinion is mounting against the idea of developing

more special fast-breeder reactors.

To make matters worse, the U.S.-Japan nuclear cooperation agreement that came into force in 1988 — which allows Japan to recover and store plutonium derived from fuel the United States supplied for Japan's power plants — is set to expire in 2018. The agreement had widely been expected to be renewed. But then in January the U.S. government requested the return of some plutonium and highly enriched uranium it lent to Japan for research purposes under another, older, agreement. (These are the materials Japan agreed to return last month.) On the face of it, Washington's request appears to be merely one part of a broader effort to ensure the security of nuclear materials. Yet it has sparked speculation both in Japan and abroad that the U.S. government is worried about the Abe government's belligerence and may be reconsidering extending the 1988 cooperation agreement.

If Mr. Abe keeps pushing ahead with his confrontational agenda, his government may lose Washington's support. In that case, Japan will either have to submit to the same rules that apply to other countries on nuclear materials or isolate itself by openly flouting them. One can only hope that Japan's unusual approach to nuclear deterrence will, in the end, have a deterrent effect on Mr. Abe himself — that ambiguity will win out over beauty.

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The Hindu

Dancing with the nuclear djinn

Praveen Swami

The Bharatiya Janata Party's election manifesto promises to review India's nuclear doctrine. What does this portend?

April 12, 2014 -- He saw the signs of the approaching doomsday all around him: in moral degradation, in casual sex, in the rise of western power, in space travel, in our high-tech age. God, wrote Pakistan's nuclear-weapons guru Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood in *Mechanics of the Doomsday...*, had not privileged man to know when it would come, but "the promised Hour is not a far off event now." It would come as a "great blast," perhaps "initiated by some catastrophic man-made devices, such as sudden detonation of a large number of nuclear bombs."

Long mocked by his colleagues for his crazed beliefs — the physicist Pervez Hoodbhoy records him as saying, "djinn, being fiery creatures, ought to be tapped as a free source of energy" — and condemned to obscurity after his arrest on charges of aiding the Taliban, Mr. Mahmood may yet be remembered as a prophet.

The doctrine debate

India's next government will, without dispute, find itself dancing with the nuclear djinn Mr. Mahmood helped unleash. In its election manifesto, the Bharatiya Janata Party has promised to "study in detail India's nuclear doctrine, and revise and update it to make it relevant to [the] challenges of current times." Mr. Seshadri Chari, a member of the group that formulated this section of the party's manifesto said: "why should we tie our hands into accepting a global no-first-use policy, as has been proposed by the Prime Minister recently?"

The debate will come in dangerous times. Pakistan has been growing its arsenal low-yield plutonium nuclear weapons, also called tactical or theatre nuclear weapons. Estimates suggest some 10-12 new nuclear warheads are being added to the country's 90-110 strong arsenal, and new reactors going critical at Khushab will likely boost that number even further. New Delhi must respond — but the seeds of a nuclear apocalypse could sprout if it gets that response wrong.

Mr. Chari's grasp of fact doesn't give much reason to hope for much else: India's no-first-use commitment was made by a government his party led, not Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. In 1998, battling to contain the international fallout from the Pokhran II nuclear tests, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee promised Parliament that "India would not be the first to use nuclear weapons." Later, in August 1999, the National Security Advisory Board's draft nuclear doctrine stated that India would only "retaliate with sufficient nuclear weapons to inflict destruction and punishment that the aggressor will find unacceptable if nuclear weapons are used against India and its forces."

The no-first-use posture, scholar Ashley Tellis has noted in his magisterial book, *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture*, was founded on a pragmatic judgment of India's strategic circumstances. Even if India needed to fight shallow cross-border wars, Dr. Tellis argued, its "nominal military superiority over Pakistan and its local military superiority, allow such operations to be conducted by conventional means alone."

For more than a decade-and-a-half, the commitment has held, but there have been signs it is fraying at the edges. In 2003, India announced it reserved the right to deliver a nuclear-weapons response to a chemical or biological attack, a significant caveat to the no-first-use promise. Then, in a speech delivered at the National Defence College, National Security Adviser, Shivshankar Menon, appeared to add a caveat to India's nuclear doctrine, saying in passing that it committed to "no first use against non-nuclear weapon states." This was interpreted by some observers to mean India might consider first strikes against nuclear-weapons states.

Dr. Singh reiterated Mr. Vajpayee's formulation early this month — but there is at least some reason to believe the caveats reflect ongoing debates at the highest levels of the strategic community.

From its genesis, questions have hung over India's no-first-use commitment. How would India react to credible intelligence that an imminent Pakistani first-strike against its own nuclear arsenal, would degrade its ability to retaliate? How might India deal with an attack that came from an insurgent group operating from within Pakistani territory, which seized control of a nuclear weapon? In addition, as the scholar Vipin Narang has argued,

India has not committed against using its superior air power against Pakistani missile launchers armed with nuclear warheads — confronting its western adversary in a “use-it-or-lose-it” dilemma.

Bharat Karnad, a strategic affairs commentator who will likely influence a future BJP-led government’s nuclear thinking, thus described no-first-use as something of a pious fiction: “one of those restrictions which countries are willing to abide by except in war.”

Dangerous future

This much, we do know: the next government, whoever forms it, will command a more lethal nuclear arsenal than ever before. Hans Kristensen and Robert Norris have noted that while India’s nuclear arsenal, at some 80-100 warheads, is smaller than that of Pakistan, it is set to expand. India is introducing new missiles and is inducting almost-impossible-to-target nuclear-powered submarines. The experts estimate that India already has a weapons-grade plutonium stockpile of 520 kilograms, enough for 100-130 warheads, but will need more from the prototype fast-breeder reactor at Kalpakkam to meet the needs of its growing arsenal.

India’s strategic establishment seems certain it needs these weapons — but remains less than clear on just how and under what circumstances they might be used.

The threat from the east is relatively predictable. For years now, India has periodically suffered from dragon-under-the-bed nightmares — the prospect that a more aggressively nationalist China, whose conventional forces are expanding and

modernising dramatically, could initiate a war to settle the two countries' unresolved conflicts. China is bound by a no-first-use pledge, but some experts fear India's conventional forces might be overwhelmed. It is improbable, though, that these losses would pose an existential threat to India.

“Ironically,” Dr. Narang has written, “China doubts India's no-first-use pledge for the same reasons the United States doubts China's: that in a crisis, no rhetorical pledge physically prevents the state from using nuclear weapons first.” For India's nuclear strategists, this is a good thing: China's fears should deter it from a large-scale war.

The TNW challenge

From the east, though, the threat is more complex. In the wake of the 2001-2002 India-Pakistan crisis, the Indian Army began acquiring the resources to fight limited conflicts at short notice — in essence, wars of punishment for acts of terrorism. Pakistan responded by growing its Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNW) arsenal, for use against advancing Indian formations inside its own territory. Last year, eminent diplomat Shyam Saran lucidly explained the thinking. Pakistan hopes “to dissuade India from contemplating conventional punitive retaliation to sub-conventional but highly destructive and disruptive cross-border terrorist strikes.”

From Cold War experience, Pakistan likely knows its nuclear-weapons strategy makes no sense. In 1955, historian David Smith has recorded, a NATO exercise code-named Carte Blanche concluded that a war using TNWs would leave two million dead in the north German plains. Exercise Sagebrush

later concluded that all participating military formations would also end up being annihilated. Exercise Oregon Trail, conducted from 1963-1965, showed that when forces concentrated to fight conventionally, they “offered lucrative nuclear targets” — but if they “dispersed to avoid nuclear strikes, the units could be defeated by conventional tactics.”

Pakistan’s generals know expert studies, like that of A.H. Nayyar and Zia Mian, demonstrate that TNWs would be near-useless in stopping an Indian armoured thrust into Pakistan. The generals know that TNWs have to be dispersed, vastly increasing the risks of miscalculation by local commanders, accidental use, or even theft. Ejaz Haider, a Pakistani strategic commentator, has bluntly stated that the confused state of the Pakistan’s TNW doctrine “essentially means we don’t know what the hell to do with them.”

India doesn’t either. Purely symbolic gestures like revoking the no-first-use policy will yield no dividends, though. If Pakistan is desperate enough to use TNWs, thus inviting an Indian second strike, it certainly won’t be deterred by a threat to unleash Armageddon first. Backing down on no-first-use will, moreover, deny India the fruits of being seen as a responsible nuclear-weapons state, one of the reasons Mr. Vajpayee made his call in the first place.

It isn’t clear, though, that reason will prevail: Mr. Mahmood, after all, isn’t the only crazed South Asian in shouting distance of a nuclear bomb. In 1999, as war raged in Kargil, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh journal organiser had these words for Mr. Vajpayee: “Arise, Atal Behari! Who knows if fate has destined you to be the author of the final chapter of this long

story. For what have we manufactured bombs? For what have we exercised the nuclear option?”

It is critical that voices like these be nowhere near the ears of the leaders whose hands hover over our nuclear button.

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