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Article 1.

NYT

The Third Intifada

Thomas L. Friedman

Feb. 4, 2014 -- Ramallah, West Bank -- For a while now I've wondered why there's been no Third Intifada. That is, no third Palestinian uprising in the West Bank, the first of which helped to spur the Oslo peace process and the second of which — with more live ammunition from the Israeli side and suicide bombings from the Palestinian side — led to the breakdown of Oslo. You get many explanations from Palestinians: they're too poor, too divided, too tired or that they realize these uprisings, in the end, did them more harm than good, especially the

second. But being here, it's obvious that a Third Intifada is underway. It's the one that Israel always feared most — not an intifada with stones or suicide bombers, but one propelled by nonviolent resistance and economic boycott.

But this Third Intifada isn't really led by Palestinians in Ramallah. It's led by the European Union in Brussels and other opponents of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank across the globe. Regardless of origin, though, it's becoming a real source of leverage for the Palestinians in their negotiations with Israel.

Secretary of State John Kerry was recently denounced by Israeli leaders for warning publicly that the boycott and campaign to delegitimize Israel will only get stronger if current peace talks fail. But Kerry is right.

Finance Minister Yair Lapid told Israel Army Radio on Monday that if no two-state solution is reached with the Palestinians, "it will hit the pocket of every Israeli." Israel's economy depends on technology and agricultural exports to Europe and on European investments in its high-tech industries. According to Lapid, even a limited boycott that curbed Israeli exports to Europe by 20 percent would cost Israel more than \$5 billion a year and thousands of jobs. That's why he added: "Israel won't conduct its policy based on threats. But to pretend that the threats don't exist, or that they're not serious, or it's not a process happening in front of us, is also not serious."

Just recently, the Israeli daily Haaretz reported that The Netherlands' largest pension fund management company, PGGM, "has decided to withdraw all its investments from Israel's five largest banks because they have branches in the

West Bank and/or are involved in financing construction in the settlements.” And The Jerusalem Post reported that Danske Bank, Denmark’s largest bank, has decided to boycott Israel’s Bank Hapoalim for “legal and ethical” reasons related to its operating in the settlements.

This Third Intifada, in my view, has much more potential to have a long-term impact because, unlike the first two, it is coinciding with the offer from the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, as part of a two-state deal, to let Israeli troops stay for five years as they make a phased withdrawal from the West Bank to the 1967 lines and to then let U.S.-led NATO forces fill in any strategic void to reassure Israel.

To put it differently, the Third Intifada is based on a strategy of making Israelis feel strategically secure but morally insecure.

The first two intifadas failed in the end because they never included a map of a two-state solution and security arrangements. They were more raw outbursts of rage against the occupation. You cannot move the Israeli silent majority when you make them feel strategically insecure and morally secure, which is what Hamas did with its lunatic shelling of Israel after it withdrew from Gaza; few Israelis were bothered by pummeling them back. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, though, got all he wanted by making Israelis feel strategically secure but morally insecure about holding any of his land.

This Third Intifada is also gaining strength because of the passing from the scene of two key leaders: Nelson Mandela and former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran. For Israel, Ahmadinejad was the gift who kept on giving: an Iranian

president who denied the Holocaust and rebuffed global efforts to get Iran to stop building a nuclear bomb. He was hard to love. The replacement of Ahmadinejad by the negotiation-friendly, Holocaust-recognizing Hassan Rouhani is much more problematic for Israel. But my gut also tells me that the death of Mandela has left many of his followers looking for ways to honor his legacy and carry on his work. On some college campuses, they've found it: boycotting Israel until it ends the West Bank occupation.

Israelis are right to suspect some boycotters of using this cause as a cover for anti-Semitism, given how Israel's misdeeds are singled out. But that doesn't mean that implanting 350,000 settlers in the West Bank and turning a blind eye to dozens of wildcat settlements — that even Israel deems “illegal” — is in Israel's interest or smart.

If Israel really wanted to slow down the boycott campaign, it would declare that as long as Kerry is trying to forge a deal, and there is hope for success, Israel will freeze all settlement activity to give peace its best chance. Unlikely, I know. But one thing I know for sure: this incessant trashing of Kerry by Israeli ministers, and their demand that Palestinians halt all “incitement” — but that Israel be free to keep building settlements in their face — is not winning Israel friends in Europe or America. It is only energizing the boycotters.

[Article 2.](#)

The National Interest

John Kerry's Risky Peace Gamble

James Kitfield

February 5, 2014 -- In preparing a U.S. plan for breaking the long impasse in Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, Secretary of State John Kerry threatens to clarify positions and issues long shrouded in ambiguity. U.S. negotiators have generally avoided offering prescriptive American positions or U.S. bridging proposals precisely because they tend to reveal significant gaps between Washington's vision of a two-state solution, and the aspirations of the two parties. By risking it now Kerry is conceding that the window for a negotiated peace is rapidly closing, and both the Israelis and Palestinians remain utterly incapable of making the necessary concessions on their own.

Certainly hardliners on both sides understand that a U.S. framework for peace significantly ratchets up the pressure to compromise. That's the subtext to Israeli defense minister Moshe Yaalon's comments last month that Kerry is "inexplicably obsessive" and "messianic" in his quest for a peace agreement, and that his plan is "not worth the paper it is printed on." When Kerry recently stated the obvious, noting that failure to reach a deal will likely increase Israel's isolation and the risk of more European boycotts of Israeli products, Israel's minister of strategic affairs Yuval Steinitz called the comments "hurtful," "unfair," and "intolerable." "Israel cannot be expected to negotiate with a gun to its head," he told Israel Radio.

"With the original nine-month deadline for talks approaching in

April, Kerry's plan is perceived by all sides as a 'take it or leave it' prescription from America, and for that reason an outright rejection of it is unlikely because no one wants to suffer the consequences of causing the collapse of the peace talks," said Ori Nir, a spokesman for Americans for Peace Now, which advocates for a two-state solution to the conflict. "But the Israeli right in particular feels pressured by the framework, and they have mounted an intense 'Do Not Succumb to Kerry' campaign."

For all the fear and pushback, the forthcoming "Kerry Plan" will seem familiar to anyone who studied earlier U.S. proposals such as the "Clinton Parameters," and George W. Bush-embraced "roadmap for peace." The framework will reportedly call for an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank based roughly on pre-1967 lines, with land swaps in order to incorporate major West Bank settlements into Israel proper; call on Palestinians recognize Israel as a Jewish state and forego the right of major refugee returns to Israel, in exchange for Israel agreeing that Arab East Jerusalem serve as the capital of Palestine; and include detailed security arrangements for the strategic Jordan Valley.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appears deeply conflicted about the framework. He's at once resentful of the constant prodding of Kerry (whose trips to the region are already in the double digits), yet mindful that the status quo of a democratic and Jewish state that occupies the territory of millions of Arab Palestinians is not sustainable in the long run. Netanyahu also understands that his acceptance of the U.S. framework could shake his rightwing political coalition.

“There’s no doubt that when Kerry points out that failure of the peace talks will have consequences, such as a European boycott of Israel or a third intifada, Netanyahu and the Israeli political establishment view that as pressure from the United States,” said Aaron David Miller, a scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center and former Middle East adviser to six U.S. presidents. On the other hand, he notes, Netanyahu can claim to have gotten three things from the Kerry framework that no other Israeli Prime Minister has ever received: detailed security arrangements for the Jordan Valley, and U.S. acceptance of the Israeli positions that a peace agreement must recognize the Jewish nature of Israel, and not include the right of return to Israel of Palestinian refugees.

“On the issue of Jerusalem serving as the capital of both states, and a deal based loosely on pre-1967 borders, the U.S. position is closer to the Palestinians,” said Miller, author of the book The Much Too Promised Land: America’s Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace. “On those issues it’s unclear to me what formula Netanyahu is prepared to accept, but there will probably be enough wiggle room in the framework to keep talks alive. Kerry will get his piece of paper: it remains to be seen how consequential it ultimately proves.”

There’s a truism often used to explain decades of failed diplomacy to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: the United States cannot want peace more than the two parties. With his high-energy diplomacy and high-risk framework, Kerry is testing the proposition and telling the world that the United States still wants a peace agreement quite a bit. And if the Israelis or Palestinians are willing to risk less for peace, they should be ready to accept the consequences.

James Kitfield has written on foreign policy and national security issues from Washington, D.C. for over two decades as a contributing editor and former senior correspondent for National Journal, publishing hundreds of magazine features and web stories and reporting from dozens of countries in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and Africa.

[Article 3.](#)

Al Monitor

Turkey-Israel ties may be linked to gas pipeline

Semih Idiz

February 4, 2014 -- Following months of bargaining over compensation for pro-Palestinian Turkish activists killed by Israeli commandos on the Mavi Marmara on May 31, 2010, Turkey and Israel appear close to a deal that could pave the way to normalized relations in the near future. This development comes almost a year after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, under pressure from President Barack Obama, apologized to Turkey over the Mavi Marmara raid.

Ankara accepted the apology, but then appeared to be in no a rush to normalize relations, leaving US and Israel officials

wondering whether Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan was sincere about re-establishing ties with the Jewish state. Developments in the Middle East, however, especially in Syria, which is going haywire for Turkey, are clearly weighing on Ankara and forcing its hand.

Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc, who's coordinating the compensation talks with Israel, has said that he "feels a settlement is close." Arinc, answering reporters' questions in Ankara Feb. 3, reiterated, however, that one of Turkey's demands is that Israel lift its siege on Gaza. He said that while Israel was permitting certain goods and medicines into the Palestinian enclave, it had not fully lifted the blockade. "We are not at the [place] where we can put down our signature yet," Arinc asserted. He also said that both the United States and Israel were keen on an agreement. Diplomatic sources have told Al-Monitor that if a compensation deal is agreed on, Ankara will likely soften its demand regarding Gaza.

Meanwhile, in another sign that Ankara is looking to rebuild bridges, not just with Israel but also with the Jewish Diaspora, the Erdogan government authorized the Foreign Ministry to send a high-level representative to this year's Holocaust commemorations, held Jan. 27 in Istanbul. The Foreign Ministry said in a Jan. 26 statement that Deputy Foreign Minister Naci Koru would represent Turkey at the event, which was jointly organized by Istanbul's Jewish community and Kadir Has University. The statement added that the commemoration aims "to raise consciousness, particularly among the young generation, about the Holocaust and the crimes against humanity by reminding the public of the importance of this issue."

After a six-month lull because of differences, the compensation talks resumed in December, when an Israeli delegation was invited to Turkey for talks. That meeting is now being followed up by the arrival of a Turkish delegation of senior diplomats and legal experts in Israel a few days ago.

Government sources informed Al-Monitor that instead of agreeing to an arrangement for direct compensation for the families of the Turks killed, the two countries would sign an agreement under international law. It would then be subject to parliamentary approval, following which payment would be made to Turkey, which would in turn pay the families of the deceased. The same sources indicated that such an agreement would result in the dropping of cases filed in Turkey against senior Israeli government and military officials in office at the time of the Mavi Marmara raid.

According to Israeli media reports citing official sources, the sides are said to have all but agreed on a figure of \$20 million in compensation after Turkey lowered its demand of \$30 million, and Israel raised its offer of \$15 million. Meanwhile in Turkey, the English-language Hurriyet Daily News quoted a diplomatic source as saying, “There are positive developments with regard to fixing the compensation issue. An agreement is almost ready and is waiting for the finalization of some minor issues before being submitted to the two countries’ leadership.” The sides are currently concentrating on the “small print,” a diplomatic source informed Al-Monitor, reiterating that the Erdogan government intends to seek parliamentary approval for the deal. The source said Erdogan does not want any hitches in parliament over the wording of the agreement.

Although the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) has enough parliamentary seats to ratify a deal, the issue remains emotionally charged, not only because it involves the death of nine Turkish citizens, but also because of the widespread sympathy for the Palestinian cause in Turkey. In addition to possible parliamentary opposition, Erdogan, beleaguered by a domestic corruption scandal, must consider the sensitivities of his grass roots Islamist supporters in the lead up to crucial local elections at the end of March. He also wants to avoid grumbling within AKP over any deal reached. Speculation in Ankara indicates that full normalization of ties with Israel will most likely be left until after local elections, even if a compensation deal is concluded before then.

While Erdogan appears to be maintaining his hard-line positions not only on Israel, but also on Syria and Egypt, diplomats argue that this is really for domestic consumption at this stage. They contend that his government is trying to reestablish the influence in the region that Turkey lost after the Arab Spring due to a series of miscalculations. Diplomats also note, however, that things have not gone so well for Israel either, pointing out that it currently faces more isolation in the region than at any time in the past. This is thought to be putting pressure on Netanyahu to normalize relations with Ankara.

The recent warning by US Secretary of State John Kerry that Israel could face international boycotts if the peace talks with the Palestinians fail of course prompted an angry and defiant response from Israel. Commentary in the Israeli media, however, suggests that the country would indeed suffer if faced with further boycotts, especially from Europe.

It's noteworthy in this regard that trade between Turkey and Israel has never stopped, and has even registered annual increases, despite diplomatic relations hitting rock bottom following the Mavi Marmara incident. According to the Turkish Foreign Ministry, bilateral trade between the two countries, which stood at \$ 3.4 billion in 2008, rose to \$4.4 billion in 2011 and exceeded \$4 billion in 2012.

Meanwhile, energy officials and pundits are increasingly talking about a natural gas pipeline between Turkey and Israel that would not only meet Turkey's needs, but would also provide Israel with a viable option for transporting the vast quantities of natural gas (far in excess of its own needs) that it discovered off its coast to world markets.

In an article for Bloomberg, Matthew Bryza, a former US ambassador to Azerbaijan who's not on the board of Turcas Energy Group AS, which is backing an Israel-Turkey gas pipeline, asserted: "Turkish officials have indicated that the restoration of relations with Israel could occur in tandem with an agreement to build an Israel-Turkey natural gas pipeline."

In a further sign that Turkey and Israel are inching their way toward normalized ties, the two countries arrived at an agreement in December that allows the Israeli national carrier El Al to resume flights to Turkey after a gap of more than five years. El Al halted flights after Turkey refused to comply with Israeli security demands at Turkish airports. The Israel carrier is expected to resume flights this summer, leading Turkish tour operators to hope that this will increase the number of Israelis visiting Turkey, especially if normalization is secured. The number of Israeli tourists dropped from 514,000 in 2008 to

around 80,000 in 2011 after the Mavi Marmara incident.

While prospects for the normalization of diplomatic and political ties look much better than before, this is, after all, the Middle East.

The Syrian crisis has spawned common threats, especially from jihadist groups, to Turkey and Israel, increasing their need for cooperation. Most diplomats agree that the two countries can contribute more to peace and stability in the Middle East by cooperating rather than by fighting. This is why they anticipate an early normalization of Turkish-Israeli relations.

Semih Idiz is a columnist for Al-Monitor's Turkey Pulse. A journalist who has been covering diplomacy and foreign policy issues for major Turkish newspapers for 30 years, his opinion pieces can be followed in the English-language Hurriyet Daily News.

Article 4.

TIME

Iranian Foreign Minister Lays Out Condition for Iranian Recognition of Israel

Karl Vick

Feb. 04, 2014 -- One day after senior Israeli government officials raised eyebrows at an international conference by remaining in the room when Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif took the stage to speak, Zarif told a German television interviewer that Tehran could restore diplomatic relations with Israel in the event of a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians. "Once the Palestinian problem is solved the conditions for an Iranian recognition of Israel will be possible," Zarif said in the interview Monday. The statement was not the first suggestion from a senior Iranian official that the Islamic Republic could find a way to reconcile itself with the existence of Israel – but it may be the most hopefully timed. More than a decade ago, the reformist Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, who held office from 1997 to 2005, also moved to ratchet back the maximalist position often articulated by Iranian hardliners who called for erasing Israel from the map. Khatami framed the issue in less absolutist terms, saying that if the Palestinians negotiated a state of their own next to Israel, why should Iran be "more Palestinian than the Palestinians"? But Khatami did not have what Zarif's boss, President Hassan Rouhani, apparently enjoys, at least for now: the blessing of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Nor was Iran in the early stages of a possible realignment of its relations with the United States – a tentative rapprochement that has emerged in recent months that both looms behind and guides negotiations on the future of Iran's nuclear program. The stakes are high in the nuclear talks; some experts warn Iran might be just months away from the ability to build a nuclear weapon. But the spirit of bonhomie surrounding the talks – there were many smiles and handshakes between negotiators at the talks in Geneva in late November and at the U.N. General Assembly two months earlier

– rises from hopes that their success will be the bridge that ushers Iran back into what President Obama calls “the community of nations.” In Syria, where Obama has acknowledged Iran played a role in the removal of chemical weapons, a way may open for serious talks on ending the horrific civil war, in which Tehran is deeply involved on the side of President Bashar Assad. A more moderate Iran might also encourage the transition of Hizballah – the Shiite militia it created in Lebanon a generation ago to combat Israel – from a military organization with a formidable terrorist capability into an exclusively political entity. Washington also would like to see Iran ratchet down its support for the most militant Palestinian groups, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas, which rules the 1.7 million Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip. This is where Israel comes in. Should U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry manage to cajole both Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (led by Mahmoud Abbas, head of the secular Fatah faction) into a peace deal, Iran would have one more rationale for moderating its position. And that’s why the subtle diplomatic signals both Tehran and Jerusalem sent one another over the last couple of days made news: They may have been small, but they were encouraging. Those kind of signals have rarely been seen between those two capitals in recent years.

Karl Vick has been TIME's Jerusalem bureau chief since 2010, covering Israel, the Palestine territories and nearby sovereignties.

The Weekly Standard

If Tehran breaks its promises, we're unlikely to know

Gabriel Schoenfeld

February 10, 2014 -- President Obama is rushing to implement the six-month interim agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran that went into effect last week. Together with five other world powers, he is now working to negotiate a long-term agreement aimed at keeping Iran from developing a nuclear bomb. He regards his opening to Iran as a signature achievement of his presidency and has proudly declared that diplomacy opened a path to “a future in which we can verify that Iran’s nuclear program is peaceful and that it cannot build a nuclear weapon.”

If we assume that negotiations do not collapse and some sort of long-term accord is struck, there will still be thorny questions. A preeminent one concerns Iranian compliance. How much confidence can we have that the ayatollahs will not press ahead with their nuclear program in clandestine facilities, as they have done in the past? And if they do press ahead, how much confidence can we have that our intelligence agencies will catch them?

Obama’s faith that “we can verify” Iranian compliance glides over the fact that the U.S. track record in unmasking covert

nuclear programs is checked at best. This is not because our intelligence agencies are incompetent—although sometimes they are—but because the task is exceptionally hard. Just last week, a three-year study by a Pentagon subunit, the Defense Science Board, concluded that U.S. intelligence agencies “are not yet organized or fully equipped” to detect when foreign powers are constructing nuclear weapons or adding to existing arsenals. What is more, their ability to find “small nuclear enterprises designed to produce, store, and deploy only a small number of weapons” is “either inadequate, or more often, [does] not exist.”

Past intelligence lapses in the nuclear realm go back to the dawn of the atomic age and include a failure to foresee the first Soviet A-bomb test in 1949, the first Soviet H-bomb test in 1953, and the first Indian nuclear test in 1974. After the first Gulf war, the U.S. intelligence community was astonished to learn that Iraq was only months away from putting the final screw in a nuclear device. In the run-up to the second Gulf war, the CIA blundered in the opposite direction, declaring with high confidence—“a slam dunk” in CIA director George Tenet’s notorious phrase—that Saddam Hussein was developing nuclear weapons. He was not. More recently, North Korea constructed a uranium enrichment facility that, despite intense scrutiny by American intelligence, went unnoticed until the North itself chose to reveal it.

The case of Syria is especially pertinent to our efforts to monitor Iran.

By the late 1990s, U.S. intelligence detected glimmerings that Syria might be embarking on some sort of nuclear project. But the agency had trouble making sense of the evidence it was gathering. It perceived that North Korea was helping Syria with

a joint venture involving North Korean nuclear experts, but as a senior U.S. intelligence official explained in a briefing, we “had no details on the nature or location of the cooperative projects.” By 2003, U.S. intelligence had concluded that the activity involved work at sites “probably within Syria,” but they “didn’t know exactly where.” The fog of intelligence had set in: “We had this body of evidence, kind of almost like a cloud of, boy, there is something going on here but we can’t get a whole lot of precision about it.”

By 2005, the United States had made more progress in determining what was transpiring. Satellite photos revealed a “large unidentified building under construction” set in a canyon in eastern Syria near the Euphrates River at a juncture called al Kibar. But American intelligence analysts could not say much more. All they had was images of a structure that was “externally complete,” but it was “hard to figure out, looking at that building, what its purpose is.”

One problem was that “it certainly didn’t have any observable, externally observable characteristics that would say, oh, yeah, you got yourself a nuclear reactor here—things like a massive electrical-supply system, massive ventilation, and most importantly a cooling system.” Another problem was that though the structure closely resembled North Korea’s plutonium reactor at Yongbyon, America’s highly skilled photo-interpreters could not connect the dots between the two facilities. The oversight was not their fault; the Syrians had erected curtain walls and a false roof to disguise the building’s shape and conceal typical features of a reactor. The multibillion-dollar, ultra-high-tech tools of U.S. intelligence were foiled by one of the most low-cost and ancient techniques of warfare: camouflage.

Only in 2007, just as the reactor was ready to be loaded with uranium fuel, did U.S. intelligence conclude that Syria had built a gas-cooled, graphite-moderated reactor. It reached this judgment not by dint of its own collections efforts but thanks to incontrovertible evidence provided by Israel: photographs of the building's interior. Under our eyes but without our seeing, the Syrians had come breathtakingly close to possessing an operational generator of the nuclear bomb ingredient plutonium.

“This was a significant failure on the part of U.S. intelligence agencies,” writes former defense secretary Robert Gates in his new memoir. Gates notes that “Syria for years had been a high-priority intelligence target for the United States” and that “early detection of a large nuclear reactor under construction in a place like Syria is supposedly the kind of intelligence collection that the United States does superbly well.” The failure clearly shook Gates and led him to ask President Bush: “How can we have any confidence at all in the estimates of the scope of the North Korean, Iranian, or other possible programs?”

That was the right question to ask in 2007 and it remains the right question to ask about Iran today.

It is especially significant that the CIA was undaunted by its own lapse. After Israel presented the United States with photographs of the interior of the building at al Kibar, the CIA told President Bush that while it now had high confidence that the structure was a nuclear reactor, it still had low confidence that Syria was engaged in a project to develop nuclear weapons. The reason for the low confidence estimate: It had scoured Syria and not been able to locate or identify any other components of a Syrian nuclear program. This was not a conclusion without

consequences. In the wake of the WMD intelligence fiasco that precipitated the second Gulf war, President Bush was reluctant to strike the Syrian reactor without a rock-solid CIA judgment behind him. Israel was not so reluctant. It destroyed the reactor in an air raid on September 6, 2007.

What does all this mean for our dealings with Tehran? “With respect to Iran, the Syrian episode reminds us of the ability of states to obtain nuclear capability covertly,” is what U.S. intelligence itself has said about its own failure. But President Obama does not appear to take the reminder all that seriously. Even if inspectors were free to roam Iran at will, the ability of American intelligence to monitor a country whose territory is nearly 10 times larger than Syria’s would be in doubt. But under the preliminary agreement with Iran struck by President Obama in November, International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors are not free to roam at will; it appears they will be confined to those nuclear facilities that the IAEA already knows about.

In any longer term agreement with Iran, far-reaching and highly intrusive verification provisions are going to remain crucial. But even in the unlikely event that the United States and its negotiating partners persuade Iran to grant inspectors unlimited access to all potential nuclear sites on its territory, our ability to detect violations will still be limited. It may be difficult to conceal a large structure like a nuclear reactor from the lenses of American satellites (although Syria found it easy enough for a time). It is far easier to conceal facilities housing centrifuges for uranium enrichment, which can be underground and do not require the kinds of cooling facilities that reactors demand. The leaders of our spy agencies may boast of the kinds of intelligence collection that they have been reputed to do

“superbly well.” But history shows that their tools are limited and their record spotty.

For more than 20 years, Iran has violated IAEA safeguard agreements, developed covert nuclear facilities, and sought to mislead the West about the scope and pace of its activities. As the American people weigh the value of an agreement with a regime that has a consistent record of cheating on international accords—not to mention lying, inciting hatred, terrorizing, and murdering—they would do well to understand that if the agreement is violated, we may not find out until it is far too late to rectify our oversight, for at that point, Iran will already have achieved its terrible goal.

Gabriel Schoenfeld, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, is the author of Necessary Secrets: National Security, the Media, and the Rule of Law and, most recently, A Bad Day on the Romney Campaign: An Insider’s Account.

[Article 6.](#)

Foreign Policy in Focus

Egypt’s Fateful Choice: Democracy or Authoritarianism?

Adil E. Shamoo

February 4, 2014 -- Back in the days of Hosni Mubarak, Egyptian elections were won with an overwhelming majority due to the machinery of state intimidation. Egyptians saw the same tactics used again in the recent constitutional vote. Egyptians went to the polls in mid-January to approve a constitution drafted by the appointees of the military-backed government, known as the Committee of 50. The 37-percent voter turnout in this last vote was slightly higher than the 33 percent who turned out for the approval of the constitution in 2012. This minority of voters approved the new constitution by 98 percent. Egypt's latest constitution has several improvements over the 2012 constitution. The new constitution reduces the role of religion in legislating laws. It prohibits torture and gives women full rights to be protected from all forms of violence. However, the new constitution also makes the military and the police independent of the civilian government — for example, the military budget will have no legislative oversight. And the defense minister must be from the military, though this provision will expire after two presidential terms. Despite some encouraging constitutional reforms, however, the current military government in Egypt is showing signs that it has no intention of ushering in a new era of democracy. The use of intimidation, such as preventing opponents of the new constitution from campaigning against it, to guarantee near universal support for the new document indicates that the military has little patience for democratic procedures. Instead, the military might be looking for inspiration from other military-led governments in the region.

Tens of millions of Egyptians demanded the military overthrow of Mubarak in 2011. Then, in the 2012 presidential election, a

majority of Egyptians voted for the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi, who edged out a military-backed candidate in the second round of voting. But Morsi's rule was not to last. Since he won a free election, Morsi's unpopularity should not to be compared to Mubarak's. Still, Morsi proved incompetent, and his popularity rapidly plummeted. Tens of millions of Egyptians returned to the street to demand his removal from office, and the military deposed and imprisoned Morsi last July. Since then, the military-led government has killed more than a thousand people and arrested thousands of Muslim Brotherhood members on various charges, including staging illegal demonstrations and terrorism. Having declared the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization, the government is confiscating its financial assets and dismantling all of the social services and educational programs associated with the organization. The deposed president Morsi and dozens of other Brotherhood leaders have been charged with espionage and conspiring against the Egyptian state with Islamist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah. These likely trumped-up charges could result in the death penalty for Morsi and his compatriots. Meanwhile, there is growing unrest. Frequent terrorist attacks, carried out by factions such as Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis and other groups in the Sinai, have left dozens of civilians and security personnel dead. Recently the Islamists even shot down a helicopter. The state repression continues as well — more than 60 Egyptians were killed over two days during the recent anniversary of Egypt's 2011 revolution. The Muslim Brotherhood retains considerable support among an estimated one-third of Egyptians. The harsh and brutal techniques used against them, if history is any guide, could backfire on the military. It would not be surprising if splinter groups from

Muslim Brotherhood carry out terrorists act against the government. Terrorism could delay Egypt's moribund economic advancement even further, and the new government will be blamed for all economic ills. As its popularity sinks, the populace will revolt again. Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, the leader of the coup last July to remove Morsi from power, has said that in "the military we are as united as one man's heart, and we adhere to democracy." Sisi appears to be grooming himself as the savior of Egypt in the way that Gamal Abdel Nasser styled himself in the 1950s. Nasser built a large following and a cult of personality in Egypt and throughout the Arab world. However, there are two other models — Turkey and Algeria — that Egypt could follow too.

Since Kamal Ataturk founded modern Turkey in 1923, the Turkish military has viewed itself as the ultimate guardian of the republic, retaining influence in all aspects of public life and launching a series of coups in 1971, 1980, and 1997. Many Turkish military leaders were trained in the United States, and Washington has maintained strong ties to the institution. Since the early 2000s, however, the tide has turned in favor of civilian rule. Taking advantage of an economic crisis in 2002, the religiously conservative Justice and Development Party (AKP) took power under the leadership of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Erdogan's government has won three consecutive elections and increasingly marginalized the military as a political actor. Turkey's democracy is decidedly imperfect, but its democratic institutions are now among the most stable in the region.

In Algeria, the opposite scenario has played out. In 1991, just as the majority of Algerians were about to vote for the Islamic

Salvation Front (FIS) to govern the country, the military took power. With a vengeance, the military killed, imprisoned, tortured, and assassinated a large number of FIS leaders and members. Islamist parties formed an underground guerrilla force, and a civil war began. The military fought back the insurgency, but more than 150,000 civilian died during the conflict. Sisi's statements indicate that he prefers the Turkish model. However, his actions against the Muslim Brotherhood and Morsi's supporters suggest otherwise. The military's all-out war against the Brotherhood indicates that the government, following the Algerian model, desires the total decimation of the Muslim Brotherhood so that it can never again be a viable party.

The one positive aspect of what is happening in Egypt is that Tunisia's rival factions, in part out of fear of what is happening in Cairo, recently came together to form a government to oversee the next free and democratic election. Furthermore, with input from secularists and Islamists alike, Tunisia recently drafted and passed a modern, progressive constitution granting women equal rights with men.

Egypt can still follow the Turkish model — and perhaps now the Tunisian model as well — of a civilian government democratically chosen through free and fair elections. Or it can go down the Algerian path of conflict, killing, imprisonment, assassination, and possibly civil war. The Obama administration should do everything within its power to encourage the first choice, so that Egypt can hold free and fair elections, root out corruption, and improve the economy.

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[Article 7.](#)

Asharq Al- Awsat

Whoever thinks Assad will leave is deluded

Abdul Rahman Al-Rashed

3 Feb, 2014 -- US Senator John McCain was among the first to adopt the Syrian people's cause as his own, warning that the ongoing conflict will not disappear if the US just turns its back on it. As things happened, everything he predicted and warned about has turned out to be right. He warned that not supporting the opposition would give the Syrian regime the impression that it has a green light to act beyond any limits, that it would reject negotiations and continue indulging in committing brutal crimes.

He warned that chaos in Syria would attract terrorist groups and that letting the Free Syrian Army (FSA) fight Assad's well-equipped army alone would be a loss to the world. He described Russia's, Iran's and Hezbollah's interventions as dangerous expansions that one must not remain silent about in the already

turbulent Middle East and that it would export war to the rest of the region.

Almost everything he said has become a reality. Syria is a failed state today and a hotbed for Iranians, Hezbollah, Iraqi militias, Al-Qaeda, and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). It is a war in which the regime has used a variety of banned weapons. It has shelled cities and towns using jets, cannons, tanks, chemical weapons and explosive barrels. Despite this systematic murder, supported by the Russians and the Iranians, the international community has done virtually nothing in response.

Syria's war has indeed expanded, now threatens Turkey, Lebanon, and even Jordan. Al-Qaeda-affiliated ISIS now moves around freely between Syria and Iraq, recruiting thousands of youths who will later fight outside Syria.

Senator McCain said on Saturday that the Geneva conference was doomed to fail because of Assad's reliance on military supremacy, adding that the FSA needs US support in order to shift the balance of power and save Syrians from their desperate plight.

What McCain is saying is real. Assad has not allowed and will not allow food and aid to reach those who are hungry and cold. These besieged people have no aid except the little they are receiving from charitable donations, and the FSA brigades fighting by their side. Some of them have been forced to accept the governance of Al-Qaeda and ISIS who have offered their services to protect them and take care of them at a time when the major global powers have turned their back on them.

The US must understand that Al-Qaeda and its affiliates like

ISIS are the only hope for the millions of people besieged and confronting death through hunger, cold or gunfire. Ever since its expulsion from Afghanistan in 2001, Al-Qaeda has found no haven or greeting place like the one it has found in Syria today—largely due to the tragedy committed by the axis of evil, Assad, Iran, Hezbollah and Iraq, and the world's betrayal of the majority of the Syrian people.

Conferences in Geneva and UN envoys will not put an end to the war in Syria. The cause will grow and grow unless world powers intervene. The formula has become as follows: Assad will not win because he cannot govern the sweeping majority of the Syrian people who rebelled against him and broke the barrier of fear three years ago.

Since this majority does not have adequate weapons, it will not be able to topple the regime. The war will therefore continue and Syria will become a breeding ground for terrorism and a major exporter of chaos to the region and the world.

The solution lies in forcing Assad to exit power and in supporting the FSA, which represents all Syrians whether Muslims, Christians, Arabs or Kurds, and which is willing to accept any form of civil governance imposed by the UN to democratically run the country without Assad.

This opportunity is diminishing. By this I mean that the capabilities of the FSA and the Syrian National Coalition are diminishing—unless the world rises up to support them, making them the only representatives of the Syrian people, and helping them fight both Assad and Al-Qaeda.

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Article 8.

Al Jazeera

The Gulf and Iran: New realities, new strategies

Bulent Aras

4 Feb 2014 -- An Iranian nuclear deal is likely to put an end to the status quo between the Gulf and Iran. While the US withdrawal from Iraq shook the balances, a nuclear deal would mean an unprecedented rise in Iran's power in the region. This development has put a political distance between the countries in the Gulf region.

But not all members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are on the same wavelength. Oman has adopted a neutral approach, while playing the role of facilitator in US-Iran relations when it hosted preparatory diplomacy for the nuclear deal. Qatar is vying to position itself as a key regional and international player. The UAE is confused and has sided with Saudi Arabia, while also attempting to ease its own tensions with Iran. Saudi Arabia has intensified its proxy wars against Iran, feeling both

threatened and betrayed by the recent US-Iran rapprochement.

Meanwhile, the Arab Spring uprisings are continuing and have major implications for the region. A new collective consciousness for change has resulted in a strong societal will for the transformation of autocratic ruling systems. It has also empowered non-state actors and intensified transnational interaction. The wider international picture is in no better shape. At the same time, on the international arena, the search for a balance of power in the post-Cold War era persists and has left considerable power vacuums and room for manoeuvring for global players.

Iran's increasing regional power and divergent foreign policies are not a desirable development for the Gulf countries. These difficulties require thinking outside the box, leaving behind the burden of the past and looking forward.

The shifting regional order presents Gulf countries with three challenges. The first one is overcoming their differences in order to embrace a new idea of collective power which would mobilise political efforts to restructure the political landscape in the region.

GCC countries are immune, to a considerable extent, to the Arab Spring spirit because of their small populations and rich economies. However, the demands for good governance, universal rights and freedoms are not likely to disappear. There is an urgent need to take societal demands into serious consideration, engage in constructive dialogue with citizens and put domestic issues in order. Once there is progress on this front, then GCC involvement in other countries facing similar challenges would be more uniform and constructive.

Diminish differences

The second challenge is to work on strengthening the GCC structure and diminishing differences on regional issues. No one expects a total consensus on every issue. However, the new regional setup necessitates thinking beyond immediate interests and setting an agenda to deal with the situation in the medium-to-long term. However, the aftermath of the nuclear deal would mean a tectonic shift in the regional balance of power and no country can handle this change on its own. There is an urgent need for a new initiative of collective action within the GCC if countries want to prevent the Council from becoming a dysfunctional organisation.

The third challenge is developing a common strategy to deal with Iran. The Iran nuclear deal would result in a certain degree of moderation in Iranian foreign policy. It will also have an impact on its domestic arena, especially in terms of potential economic opening. However, the impact of the deal will not majorly affect the structure of the Iranian regime. Therefore, potential moderation of Iranian foreign policy is not likely to completely alleviate tensions in the region.

In their efforts to regain regional cohesion, Gulf states will have to take decisive measures on three key issues. The first one is minimising sectarian tension. There is a potential danger of the spread of sectarian conflict at the societal level throughout the region. One way to prevent this is to nip it in the bud, by containing it at the state level.

The second issue is selective engagement with Iran to create channels for moderation in regional politics. This engagement should be undertaken collectively with great coordination.

The third one is to strengthen the partnership with Turkey, which can balance out Iran's power and at the same time maintain economic and political ties with it. Turkish foreign policy toward Egypt created friction with some GCC countries, but the issues at stake are too high to keep a distance. Turkey can help the GCC deal with Iran's regional influence.

The status quo in the Gulf region is not sustainable. A new spirit of regional cooperation with careful risk assessment and future-oriented planning would help to restructure regional order. The alternative risks bringing about a collapse of regional structure, which cannot be repaired at a later stage even at a high cost.

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