

From: Office of Terje Rod-Larsen
Sent: Wed 10/16/2013 10:30:45 AM
Subject: October 16 update

16 October, 2013

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Article 1.

The Wall Street Journal

Four Possible Deals with Iran

Amos Yadlin and Avner Golov

October 16 - Hopes are running high in many quarters that the West and Iran could begin to work out a deal over the Iranian nuclear program this week in Geneva. As the Iranian deputy foreign minister, Abbas Araqchi, put it before the negotiations began on Tuesday: "We need to move towards a trust-building road map with the Westerners." Such sweet talk—and the White House's strong desire to avoid a confrontation with Tehran—could result in a dangerous deal that would lift international sanctions on Iran without ensuring an end to the Islamic Republic's nuclear-weapons program.

This is not to say that any diplomatic solution would be a bad deal for the West. A diplomatic solution is welcome if it actually offers a better alternative than the two current options: bombing Iran's nuclear program or accepting Iran with a nuclear weapon.

We see four types of potential deals that the six major powers currently gathered in Geneva could make with Iran: an ideal agreement, a reasonable agreement, a bad agreement and an agreement in phases.

The ideal agreement for the so-called P5+1 (the permanent United Nations Security Council members—the U.S., Russia, China, the U.K. and France—plus Germany) consists of an Iranian commitment to dismantle its nuclear program. Tehran would stop enrichment at all levels—even for nonmilitary purposes. It would close Fordow, its underground enrichment facility, and the Arak reactor, which is capable of producing plutonium for a bomb. Iran would also have to ship out its entire stockpile of enriched uranium, which today is enough to produce five to seven bombs.

Such an agreement would meet the stipulated demands of the Security Council, as well as prior demands by the U.S. and Israel. In exchange, the West would lift all sanctions on Iran. A less good, but still reasonable, agreement would be a compromise that meticulously addresses the critical elements of Iran's nuclear program. Iran would retain its right to enrich uranium, but only to a low 3.5%-5% nonmilitary grade.

This agreement would put clear limits on Iran's centrifuges. The country, which currently has more than 19,000, would be allowed to keep a small, symbolic number to prove that Iran has the presumptive right to enrich for nonmilitary purposes. It would also cap the amount of enriched material, which the International Atomic Energy Agency would oversee. To ensure this, Iran would have to re-sign and implement the additional protocol, which would enable the IAEA to carry out much more

thorough inspections. The Iranians would also have to guarantee that the Arak reactor is not functional. Fordow would be closed, and all Iranian nuclear activity would have to be carried out at Natanz. Last, the transformation to fuel rods would be done outside of Iran to ensure that the Iranians won't ever be able to use the enriched uranium for a bomb in case they abandon the agreement in the future.

Although such an agreement does not meet the Security Council's demand for Iran to dismantle its nuclear program, it would give the West enough time to detect any Iranian violation—and, critically, to stop Iran from producing nuclear weapons if necessary. This compromise would prolong the Iranian breakout capacity timeline to years rather than months, and it may well be preferable to bombing Iran's nuclear program or accepting an Iranian nuclear weapon.

A bad agreement would have the West ease sanctions against Tehran in exchange for a partial dismantlement of its nuclear program. Such a deal could, for example, limit Iran's uranium-enrichment level to a nonmilitary grade, but wouldn't put a cap on Iran's stockpile of centrifuges or wouldn't force the regime to shut down the Arak reactor. This would be disastrous for Western interests, because it would allow Iran to manufacture a nuclear weapon rapidly and whenever it wants, under the cover of an agreement with the international community.

A fourth type of agreement would be a process of reciprocal, partial steps designed to build trust between the two sides. For example, Iran would agree not to continue to enrich to 20%, or would agree not to install new centrifuges, in exchange for sanction relief. This seems to be the type of agreement that the

P5+1 is pursuing.

If the West is considering striking such a deal, maintaining current economic sanctions on Iran is critical. Sanctions are the very leverage that could be used to elicit a reasonable or even good deal at the end of the process. Only after Iran proves its resolve to abandon all the key elements in its military nuclear program should sanctions be lifted, and not a moment before.

Of the four possible agreements between the West and Iran, neither the bad deal nor the deal in phases can ensure the end of Iran's nuclear program. They also don't offer an alternative preferable to currently available options. On the contrary, they give cover to Iran's nuclear program and place the decision-making power on the timing of nuclear-weapon breakout in the mullahs' hands.

By the end of Tuesday's negotiations, Iranian foreign minister Javad Zarif had offered a PowerPoint presentation, details publicly unknown but described as "very useful" by the spokesman for the European Union's top foreign-policy official at the talks. According to several reports, the basic outline of the Iranian proposal has Tehran offering to limit enrichment in exchange for the West easing up on sanctions. So far, it sounds like the worst kind of reciprocal agreement—one in which the West would be forced to give up on its key leverage.

In a recent interview President Obama said that he would not take "a bad deal." What he means by that isn't clear. The U.S., Europe and Israel must privately come to an agreement on what a bad deal would look like—and, just as important, get on the same page about the parameters of a good deal, which would ensure that Iran is years away from the bomb.

Western diplomats in Geneva need to find their way to a reasonable deal if reaching an ideal agreement proves impossible. A bad deal or even a phased agreement would be a defeat. In dealing with Iran, this is the hour of truth for Western diplomacy.

Gen. Yadlin, who is retired from the military, is a former chief of Israeli defense intelligence and the director of Israel's Institute for National Security Studies, where Mr. Golov is a researcher.

[Article 2.](#)

Foreign Policy

Democrats, Israel Lobby Threaten Iran Talks

Yochi Dreazen, John Hudson

October 15, 2013 -- The Obama administration is facing an unexpected hurdle in its new nuclear talks with Iran - a sizeable bloc of Democratic lawmakers who have made clear that they would break with the White House and fight any effort to lift the current sanctions on Tehran. The future of those sanctions is a key issue in this week's negotiations in Geneva between senior officials from Iran and the U.S., the most serious talks between

the two longtime adversaries in decades. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohamad Javad Zarif kicked off Monday's session with a PowerPoint presentation, delivered in English, which offered to put new limits on his country's nuclear program in exchange for easing the Western sanctions that have devastated the Iranian economy and decimated the value of its currency. The White House has already signaled a potential openness to that kind of deal, but a wide array of powerful Democrats -- including the top members of both the Senate and House foreign affairs committees -- strongly oppose lifting any of the existing sanctions on Iran unless Tehran offers concessions that go far beyond anything Zarif has talked about in Geneva. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, one of the most powerful lobbies in Washington, has also promised to do everything in its power to keep the punitive measures in place. "If the president were to ask for a lifting of existing sanctions it would be extremely difficult in the House and Senate to support that," Rep. Steve Israel (D-NY), chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, told The Cable. "I'm willing to listen but I think that asking Congress to weaken and diminish current sanctions is not hospitable on Capitol Hill."

"I'd say no," said Sen. Bob Casey (D-PA) when asked if he'd accept a presidential plea to lift sanctions. "They've got a long way to go to demonstrate the kind of credibility that would lead us to believe we can move in a conciliatory direction. And sanctions are what has strengthened the administration's hand."

Opposition from Democratic lawmakers represents more than just a political headache for the administration. Congress has the power to impose, modify or remove sanctions regardless of what the White House wants, and it has shown a willingness to

overrule the administration in the past. In late 2011, for instance, New Jersey Democrat Robert Menendez, a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, worked with Illinois Republican Mark Kirk to impose crushing sanctions on the Iranian central bank despite strong opposition from the administration.

It is far from clear that Iran will offer enough concessions in the current talks for the administration to seriously consider softening or lifting the current sanctions. The Rouhani government has insisted on the right to continue enriching uranium on its own soil, something the White House opposes. Tehran has also yet to signal a clear willingness to shutter its underground, heavily-fortified nuclear plant at Qom, a source of particular concern for both the U.S. and Israel because it is largely impervious to airstrikes, or to dismantle any of its centrifuges. Even if Rouhani signed off, meanwhile, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, could veto the deal.

Still, the Obama administration's chief nuclear negotiator, Wendy Sherman, told a Senate panel earlier this month that the White House was willing to potentially soften some of its sanctions if Tehran took "verifiable, concrete actions" to delay its nuclear program. Sherman also urged lawmakers to hold off on imposing new sanctions on Iran until Tehran detailed its potential nuclear concessions at this week's talks. Sherman's testimony sparked predictable outrage from Republicans like Kirk, who said her comments showed that the White House was pursuing a policy of "appeasement," but many Democrats were just as upset. Massachusetts Senator Ed Markey said the U.S. "should not relax the sanctions one inch while Iran's intentions are still unknown."

Markey is far from the only Democrat who believes that the White House needs to not just keep the current measures in place but also prepare to add newer, tougher ones.

"The intent of sanctions is to force Iran to halt and dismantle its nuclear weapons program," lawmakers from both parties wrote in a letter this week signed by prominent Democrats like Senator Patty Murray of Washington, the head of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. "Once this goal has been accomplished in a real, transparent, and verifiable way we will be prepared to remove existing sanctions in a measured, sequenced manner. However, at this time, we reaffirm that a credible military threat remains on the table and we underscore the imperative that the current sanctions be maintained aggressively."

Trita Parsi, the president of the National Iranian American Council, a group that lobbies on behalf of the Iranian American community, said Tehran would almost certainly reject any call to entirely dismantle its nuclear program before the current measures are softened or removed.

"The bar being set by the senators is wholly unrealistic," Parsi said. "To say that existing sanctions won't be lifted is a non-starter."

Meanwhile, as the voices of Iran hawks dominate the halls of Congress, Democratic lawmakers who support a less rigid opening position have been largely silent, such as Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN) or Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass).

Some have chalked up the relative silence to the shutdown.

"We're in such a weird situation on the Hill with the shutdown

and all the oxygen is pretty much going to that fight," said Rep David Price (D-NC) who gathered 131 signatures in favor of engagement with Rouhani in July.

Others chalked up the lack of administration support to a desire to wait-and-see how the talks unfold. "Rouhani is still a little bit of a mystery to everyone," said a top Senate aide whose boss leans dovish. "On one hand, we've seen this movie before -- crazy nuke states pretend to negotiate while buying time to enrich (a la North Korea) ... [B]ut his perceived openness seems to have the implicit backing of the mullahs -- which adds a new element to these negotiations, and one that could result in some actual concessions."

Still, lawmakers like Menendez, Murray and Kirk show no signs of softening their positions. Their demands to maintain the current measures reflect, in part, the success of a concerted lobbying campaign by AIPAC. The pro-Israel group has sat out some recent potential fights over large-scale U.S. weapons sales to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in order to focus all of its energy on Iran. During its annual conference in February, AIPAC sent hundreds of volunteers to Capitol Hill to personally lobby lawmakers from their home states to support tough measures on Iran. It has also drafted templates of letters lawmakers could send the White House under their own names calling for continued sanctions on Iran.

Iran is one of the few issues that bind Democrats and Republicans, so AIPAC is in some ways preaching to the choir. Israel said he hadn't been lobbied by the group, but he said it had no reason to.

"Maybe they're not talking to me because they know my profile is strong and deep on this issue," Israel said.

[Article 3.](#)

Bloomberg

Five Things You Need to Know About the Iran Nuclear Talks

Jeffrey Goldberg

October 15 - Five quick observations about tomorrow's negotiations between the so-called P5 + 1 (the permanent United Nations Security Council members and Germany) and the Islamic Republic of Iran. (More observations to come, undoubtedly.):

1. This meeting represents the first actual negotiation between Iran and the P5 + 1. Previous iterations of these negotiations were held even though there was no possible chance of agreement. They were held in part to demonstrate a Western willingness to talk and to forestall an Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear sites: It would have been exceedingly hard for Israel to attack Iran while negotiations -- even useless negotiations -- were taking place. This remains particularly true today.
2. The Iranian delegation is going to Geneva in order to offer the minimum concessions necessary to win the maximum level of

sanctions relief (the sanctions that deny Iran access to the international banking system are the most crucial). These concessions could include a promise of increased transparency, in which the international community might be granted greater visibility into Iranian nuclear sites. But because the Iranians have already promised to reject any call to ship out enriched uranium, whatever the Iranians offer this week -- here comes a bold prediction -- will not put Iran on a quick path to the easing of sanctions.

3. However: One of the American delegates to these talks is Adam Szubin, the director of the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, which oversees the sanctions regime. His presence at the talks may be a signal that the U.S. is willing to put sanctions relief on the table quickly.

4. My impression is that the Barack Obama administration would not particularly mind rewarding interim Iranian concessions with the unfreezing of certain Iranian assets held in Western banks. This would cause an uproar among hardliners -- the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, would certainly be unhappy -- but the White House could state, truthfully, that it has not tampered with the sanctions. A one-time transfer of cash to Iran does not necessarily signal permanent change, although it would certainly be interpreted that way in many quarters.

5. Reducing Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium is an important goal, but a more important goal for the West would be to make sure Iran isn't building redundant enrichment facilities. There is a chance, of course, that Iran already has secret nuclear facilities (both the Natanz facility and the Fordo facility were carefully hidden from prying eyes for several years before they were

discovered), so redundancy might be an intelligence problem, rather than a negotiations problem. But it seems useful to remember that real redundancy in the Iranian nuclear apparatus -- 15 or 20 or 30 different facilities, spread throughout the country -- would make it much harder for Obama (to say nothing of Netanyahu) to credibly threaten military force. It is the all-options-are-on-the-table threat that, with sanctions, is bringing Iran to the table.

Article 4.

Al Jazeera

Reinforcing US Middle East policy

Edward P. Djerejian

October 15 - Dean Acheson once described foreign policy as "one damn thing after another" and recent events in the Middle East certainly lend credence to that thought. Syria, Egypt, Iran and Iraq all pose serious threats to regional peace and security. The decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict, if not resolved, can lead to another crisis. The United States has been closely involved in all these countries and has expended much blood and treasure in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is now weariness in America over our involvement in the Middle East, especially militarily. President Obama addressed these issues in his UN General Assembly speech on September 24 and made clear that while overextension in the region is to be avoided, the United

States cannot turn away from the Middle East given our national security interests and our humanitarian values.

The recent confluence of events in Syria, Egypt, Iran, and in the Israeli-Palestinian context present complex challenges to US policy interests and policy formulation, but also unique opportunities. The convoluted scenario leading to the US-Russian agreement to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons stockpile is an opportunity not only to try to rid the Syrian regime of its WMD capabilities, but also to build US-Russian cooperation into a political solution to the Syrian civil war. There is no military solution to the Syrian crisis, only a political solution that produces a cease-fire between the regime and the opposition and a political transition leading to a post-Asad era. The international community, including Russia and Iran, has no interest in an unstable Syria.

The election of President Hassan Rouhani of Iran is another opportunity that should be exploited to determine if his conciliatory words toward constructive engagement with the international community and especially the United States can be turned into actual deeds by the Iranian regime led by the Ayatollah Khameni. President Obama stated his clear but guarded intent to engage with Iran and Rouhani reiterated a similar intent for "constructive engagement" with the international community, especially the United States. The nuclear issue, terrorism, Iran's role in Syria and support of Hezbollah, its influence in Afghanistan and now in Iraq, its potential threat to Arab Gulf security, and its policy toward Israel are all compelling national security interests for the United States and our allies.

Akin to the need for US engagement with Russia on Syria, the United States should explore the Iranian offer to engage in a dialogue - not for the sake of talk alone, but to determine if there is real common ground upon which agreements may be reached. To do so, everything will have to be put on the table. Rouhani has prioritised the nuclear issue as the first agenda item to be discussed to try to reach an agreement under an accelerated time frame. This is an ambitious but welcome development. Nevertheless, any US-Iran dialogue will have to address all the major issues as well as the mutual interests of both sides in order to achieve sustainable results.

To the Obama administration's credit, it has reinitiated direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations to try to achieve a permanent two-state solution. In this central issue, the United States is engaging in intensive diplomacy that goes beyond conflict management to conflict resolution. That should be the paradigm it follows toward the Syrian crisis and Iran. The United States can react to "one damn thing after another" in the Middle East or it can make the difficult but much more strategic effort to help resolve the underlying issues catalysing conflicts throughout the region. It is a question of political will and commitment to promote and safeguard our national security interests and humanitarian values. In this respect, this is not a formula for overextension in the Middle East, but for the deliberate conduct of coherent and reinforcing diplomacy to achieve progress on issues that affect regional and global peace and security.

In so doing, we must accept the possibility of failure. An important question is whether or not a political consensus can be achieved in Washington between the Republicans and Democrats to pursue such a policy on a bipartisan basis. The

stakes are high and one can only hope, perhaps idealistically, for a return to the days when partisan politics stopped at the water's edge. While Acheson decried "events" forcing foreign policy decision-making, under the Truman administration he and his colleagues (George Marshall, George Kennan, Will Clayton and others) guided US foreign policy formulation to its apex with great initiatives that shaped the international landscape, such as the Marshall Plan, the containment policy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and the creation of the United Nations. Can we emulate today, admittedly in different historical circumstances, that bridge from conflict management to conflict resolution?

Edward Djerejian is the founding director of Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy and a former US ambassador to Syria and Israel.

[Article 5.](#)

Politico

America's role in the world

Michael O'Hanlon and Jeremy Shapiro

October 15 - President Barack Obama's reluctance to intervene in Syria has occasioned yet another round of soul-searching on America's role in the world. His reflective speech at the U.N. General Assembly has led commentators to wonder whether the

United States remains willing to play its traditional and indispensable role in maintaining world order. “Nation-building at home” is the newest term of art, and even the dreaded I-word is making one of its periodic comebacks. Bill Keller of The New York Times sees a “new isolationism” creeping across the land, while Sen. John McCain alleges that there are 15 isolationists in the Senate GOP caucus.

This debate on America’s role in the world is not new — indeed, it is a constant and a healthy conversation. America’s expansive commitments and unique power deserve constant re-evaluation. But however one feels about the wisdom of deeper involvement in Syria — and the two of us disagree among ourselves on that point — it should be easy to see that Obama’s America is not retreating and will not retreat from the world. More than 50,000 U.S. troops remain in Afghanistan — more than when Obama took office in early 2009. The president has committed to do what is necessary to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. Recent events have created greater hope for a diplomatic resolution with Iran, but the United States is still committed to that promise and the military option is still on the proverbial table. That is a huge prospective commitment, even if the odds of that being necessary in the future may be (thankfully) declining. The “rebalancing” to Asia has manifested itself in numerous military and nonmilitary measures that have certainly gotten China’s attention, among its other effects.

Obama’s record shows that he recognizes America’s capacity to project military power around the world is its unique strength and an underpinning to the global order. He has therefore used American military forces repeatedly in such diverse locales as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Libya, Somalia and Uganda,

among others. The U.S. military retains its global presence and American forces continue, again uniquely, to patrol every ocean and to protect the global commons.

But Obama also sees an America that is weary of war, fiscally constrained and in the view of many sometimes reckless in its use of force. Whatever one's views on the latter point, there is little doubt in the eyes of most Americans that the wars of the past dozen years have been very difficult and costly — and that they are not to be repeated.

The president has sought to acknowledge those two truths both by sharpening America's nonmilitary tools for international engagement and by exercising greater prudence and restraint in the use of force than some of his predecessors. This reflects a sense that American power is not enhanced by unnecessary wars that waste resources and erode American will. He also talks about ending the major wars in Iraq and Afghanistan even while continuing to prosecute military operations on several fronts. To some, his rhetoric is not sufficiently Churchillian; to others, he may hedge and cover his political flanks more than would be advisable. But whatever one's take on his communications strategies, the actions should not be forgotten.

Obama's priorities are clear: maintaining great-power peace, preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and combating Al Qaeda and related groups — on these matters, very little retrenchment is visible in U.S. policy. Creating stability in places like Syria, Libya, Iraq and Egypt, while desirable in principle, is a second-tier priority in the president's eyes — especially in light of the evident difficulty of making a difference for the better in such places over the past decade.

Within the confines of that overall approach, it is possible to differ on very important specifics about how best to deploy scarce U.S. resources and political capital. Are U.S. military forces in Europe still necessary or useful? Did the United States do enough in Libya, where the world's collective role in helping Libyans build a post-Qadhafi state has been minimalist? Should the United States intervene militarily in Syria? They are not easy questions, and at times this administration has stumbled in trying to answer them. So has Congress, especially in its willingness to tolerate sequestration and even a government shutdown and a debt default — blunders that could pose far greater threats to American internationalism than anything emanating from the White House.

Michael O'Hanlon is a senior fellow in foreign policy studies at The Brookings Institution. Jeremy Shapiro is a visiting fellow at Brookings and a former State Department official.

[Article 6.](#)

The Huffington Post

Palestinians in a Jewish State

Nadim Nashif

October 15 - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's much-ballyhooed speech at the UN has been described as "Iran-heavy

and Palestine-lite." The problems Netanyahu is seeking to distract attention from are not limited to the Palestinian territory Israel occupied in 1967 but also extend to the basic rights of the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

The latest round of peace negotiations, or rather, negotiations about peace negotiations, has a distinctly hollow ring to it. Secretary of State John Kerry's determination to restart the 'peace process' in any form, regardless of Israel's increasing intransigence, contained more than a hint of desperation. The gradual disappearance of the peace process from Israeli political discourse, and the reluctance of Israeli politicians to discuss the occupation or solutions to it, suggests a climate in Israel's corridors of power which is ill-suited to any meaningful progress being made in the long-running saga of peace negotiations.

Israel has appeared somewhat bemused at the enthusiasm of its American ally but it stands to gain little from actively resisting Kerry's initiative. Instead, it has openly declared its willingness to attend negotiations, while simultaneously pursuing a 'business as usual' strategy which seems almost purposefully designed to extinguish trust and kill off expectations.

Recently, 17 members of Netanyahu's governing coalition wrote a letter insisting that "Israel will not return to the Oslo outline, and will not hand further parts of the motherland to the Palestinian Authority." The governing coalition is clearly not serious about a meaningful peace deal and the Israeli military, at the government's behest, is doing its utmost to force Palestinian negotiators away from the table by creating an extremely tense climate. Israeli forces have killed six Palestinians since talks

began, including civilians.

Crucially, Netanyahu seems fixated on obtaining formal recognition of Israel as a Jewish state by the Palestinians, and indeed the Arab world as a whole. To be clear, Israel is already a Jewish state, one which clearly defines itself as such, and one which since its inception has pursued policies to strengthen, reinforce, and increase its Jewish character. These policies are pursued through all the means available to the state, whether it be violence through the destruction of Palestinian homes and villages, through legal rulings legislating the confiscation of Arab lands, or through countless, successive government policies which formalize Jewish hegemony and superiority over the indigenous Arab population.

By insisting on official recognition of Israel as a Jewish state, Netanyahu and his coalition seek to legitimize Israel's pursuit of undemocratic policies to bolster the Jewishness of the state. Democratic norms and the spirit of modern participatory democracy require a citizen-state relationship based on equality of citizenship. Israel instead supports an unequal citizenship whereby the citizen-state relationship is conceptualized as an ethno-religious relationship, privileging Jews above its Arab Palestinian citizens. To illustrate the point, a Jewish American who voices an interest in emigrating to Israel will receive a heightened form of Israeli citizenship compared to the country's original Palestinian citizens, enabling them to settle in areas barred to Palestinians, or to bring a spouse of their choosing to the country.

Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish state would condemn the estimated 1.3 million Palestinians with Israeli

citizenship to a permanent status of inequality, prejudice their quest for equality, and pre-empt the right to claim equality. There is a danger that by instituting the West Bank (or parts of it) as a Palestinian state and Israel as a Jewish one, the conflict will be seen as solved by the international community, ignoring the lives of Israel's Palestinian citizens and their children while legitimizing their dispossession and unequal allocation of rights and resources on the basis of Israel's agreed-upon 'Jewish' character.

Any settlement to the conflict must involve recognition of the individual and collective rights of all parties, Jews and Arabs. The pursuit of discriminatory policies with the justification that Israel is a Jewish state is both unethical and undemocratic. Yet Israel is actively promoting in its schools the idea of Israel as a Jewish state and downplaying the importance of being a democratic state. Palestinians, who represent some 20 percent of Israel's population, have long faced discrimination in the Israeli educational system, but after recent years brought mild improvements are now once again facing open efforts in the school textbooks to diminish their standing and to disparage the notion of equality of citizenship.

It is illogical for a country with mixed demographics to define itself on the identity of just one sector of society, in the same way that it would be unimaginable for the United States to characterize itself as a Christian state. Forced dispossession and the exile of most Palestinians from the areas now under Israeli jurisdiction mean that Jews now make up 75 percent of the population of Israel.

Those Palestinians who managed to remain should not continue

to suffer from second-class citizenship simply because their identity is at odds with the identity of the new majority population. Neither should the normalization of this status become a pre-requisite for a peace deal. The Obama administration should take every opportunity to remind Netanyahu that the United States takes equal rights very seriously both in the occupied territories and within Israel itself. Clearly, such rights are absent for Palestinians in both geographical areas. President Obama should note the discrimination and clearly state that the United States does not approve. At long last, Prime Minister Netanyahu should be put on notice.

Nadim Nashif is founder and Director of Baladna, the Association for Arab Youth and a Policy Member of Al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network

Article 7.

Bloomberg

Enough Already With the Worrying About America's Jews

J.J. Goldberg

October 15 - Leading voices of U.S. Judaism have expressed

despair over a recent survey that found sharply declining interest in the religion among American Jews. The Pew Research Center survey, the most comprehensive study of American Jews in more than a decade, also suggests a new peak in what was already a high rate of interfaith marriage.

Slightly more than one-fifth of those interviewed identified themselves as Jewish by “culture” or “ancestry” and chose “none” when asked their religion. Among those “Jews of no religion,” or about 1.2 million adults, fully two-thirds said they weren’t raising their children as Jews.

Rabbis and community leaders across the country fret that American Jews, except the most Orthodox, are rapidly dissolving into the broader American landscape. Commentary magazine called the Pew study “a portrait of a shrinking community.” The Jewish Week of New York, in an editorial titled “Losing Our Faith,” wondered “whether Judaism can survive long-term in this country without religious belief and practice at its core.”

In fact, after a close examination of the numbers, the new survey shows a population in the midst of a healthy growth spurt, though it seems to have escaped the notice of many rabbis and other Jewish community leaders.

Skepticism’s Role

To begin with, consider the raw numbers. Pew found a Jewish population in the U.S. of either 6.3 million or 6.7 million, depending on your definition (specifically, whether you include about 300,000 children being raised as “partly Jewish”). The last widely accepted population estimate, in 1990, was 5.5 million.

As for rising intermarriage, that's a misreading of the Pew report, which shows that intermarriage has leveled off, after rising steadily from 1970 until about 1995.

Then there's the alarm over growing numbers of Jews disavowing religion. That's simply wrong, for two reasons.

First, it's a statistical error. Pew compared the proportion of "Jews of no religion" in its survey -- 22 percent -- with a parallel figure in the last major survey a decade ago: 7 percent.

Alas, that previous survey, the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01, was a multimillion-dollar fiasco. Delayed for two years, it was subjected to two outside commissions of inquiry. One was led by Mark Schulman, who was then the head of the prestigious American Association for Public Opinion Research; his report found the survey to be riddled with dozens of mishaps and methodological missteps.

One error was a Jewish population count of 5.2 million, which led to a panic that Jews were disappearing. Another was a decision not to examine the religious attitudes of persons with "weak Jewish connections." This led, among other things, to a serious undercount of nonreligious Jews. The final text warned readers repeatedly not to compare its findings with other surveys. Apparently the warning wasn't repeated often enough.

To get a clearer picture, it's best to look back another decade to the generally well-regarded 1990 survey. Its 5.5 million Jews included 1.1 million "of no religion." That's 20 percent, statistically identical to this year's figure. In other words, there has been no change.

No less important, religious skepticism is an integral and, to many minds, honored part of modern Judaism. Over the last two centuries, since the Enlightenment, this cast of mind has been the norm, not the exception. Modern Israel was founded by secular Jews rebelling against religious passivity. Today, just 20 percent of Israelis call themselves religious -- by which Israelis mean Orthodox -- and 37 percent say they are moderately traditional. The remaining 42 percent are firmly secular, twice the proportion of American Jews.

Even among the majority of American Jews who told Pew they're Jewish by religion, only 17 percent said being Jewish is mainly a matter of religion, and just 39 percent said they're certain God exists.

Feared Collapse

But what about the two-thirds of nonreligious Jews who say they aren't raising their children as Jews? Doesn't that point to a looming demographic collapse?

Not likely. The 1990 survey found that close to half of all Jews getting married at the time were marrying non-Jews, and only 28 percent of interfaith couples said they were raising their children as Jews. This led to another panic. Today, a generation later, Pew has caught up with those children, who are now adults. Whatever their parents intended, almost half identify unambiguously as Jews -- about 23 percent by religion and 23 percent without. It seems the ones who were "raised as Jews" became Jews by religion. The rest adopted their parents' skepticism along with their heritage.

These are the folks we used to call "half-Jews," though the term

has largely fallen out of favor.

What sort of Jews are they? Here's what we know: They're more likely to marry non-Jews, and they are less likely to fast on Yom Kippur or donate to Jewish charities than adults with two Jewish parents.

They're less tribal than two-parent Jews. Inevitably so: The gentiles whom traditional Jews know as "the Other" are the grandparents and cousins of these offspring of mixed marriages. In that and many other ways, they're changing the nature of American Judaism. That's the point: Jewish life in America is evolving, not disappearing.

In at least one important way, they're more Jewish than the two-parent Jews: If Jews are outliers in white America, starkly more liberal and more Democratic than their neighbors, the mixed-heritage Jews and "Jews of no religion" are even more liberal and more Democratic. And no surprise: They are the living evidence that America has accepted and embraced Jews as no society in history has done. They owe their very existence to tolerance and diversity.

Jewish Experience

At the same time, if the Jewish experience is to be an outsider, the people with mixed parents are outsiders among the outsiders. Jews are never fully at home wherever they call home. The products of two-faith parents aren't quite at home even among their fellow Jews. They are the paradox of the new Jewish experience in America.

Will their children be Jewish? Who knows? They themselves

weren't supposed to be Jewish, but they are. And they have a choice.

But this good news will never convince the hand-wringers. Every new survey provides new evidence that the end is just around the corner.

In May 1964, Look magazine published a cover story titled "The Vanishing American Jew." Forty-nine years later, Look has vanished, but the Jews are still here. The children are turning out fine.

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