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Article 1.

The National Interest

Iran, Congress, Israel: Can Obama Bring All Three Together?

Dov S. Zakheim

October 4, 2013 -- Hassan Rouhani has come and gone from New York. So has Bibi Netanyahu. Barack Obama, the first American president to converse (over the phone) with his Iranian counterpart since the Shah was overthrown, is coping with a government that has shut down for an indefinite period. Where do things go from here?

The initial meeting between Secretary of State John Kerry and

Iran's new American-trained foreign minister, Javad Zarif, went well enough to ensure that the embryonic U.S.-Iranian dialogue would continue in the context of the P5+1 talks with Iran scheduled for October 15-16. So too did the October 2 letter endorsing Rouhani's overtures signed by 230 out of 290 members of the Iranian Majlis, virtually all of whom are followers of Ayatollah Khamenei, thereby signaling the Supreme Leader's support for Rouhani's charm offensive.

On the other hand, Netanyahu's speech to the UN made it clear not only that he personally, and his government generally, remains skeptical of the man he deems a "wolf in sheep's clothing," and that Israel would never tolerate a nuclear Iran, even if it meant launching an attack without the support of any other state (read: the United States).

The Jewish State has never really got past its suspicions of President Obama's intentions, despite his constant reassurances and beefed up program of military assistance. Jerusalem is well aware of the President's reluctance to commit American forces to any additional Middle Eastern adventures, most recently reflected in his eagerness to grab the lifeline that Vladimir Putin threw him on the issue of Syrian chemical weapons. The White House's outreach to Rouhani has only added depth to those suspicions. So too does the somewhat ironic fact that Khamenei, Israel's implacable opponent, thus far appears to have endorsed Rouhani's overtures. If Khamenei supports Rouhani, goes the Israeli logic, then there is no substance to any Iranian willingness to dismantle its nuclear program. The two men are simply buying time, as the Islamic Republic has done in the past when its nuclear-weapons program encountered technical hurdles that it had to overcome.

Israeli concerns notwithstanding, there is little to lose and much to gain in exploring a possible thaw with Iran, as long as Washington, and, for that matter, Europe, does not ease the sanctions that clearly are strangling the Iranian economy. It is clear that any deal would have to include reassurance that the West will not attempt to unseat the Ayatollahs, and permit Iran to “save face” on the nuclear issue by enabling it to maintain a truly peaceful program. Nevertheless, maintaining such a program is not necessarily synonymous with possessing an enrichment capability, and there is some evidence that the Western powers are prepared to make some concessions to Iran on this issue. Were the West to do so, it may be difficult for Obama to deliver on any promises to ease the American economic sanctions on Iran.

In order to have sanctions lifted, Obama will need to persuade Congress to pass legislation to that effect. Yet as the government shutdown has demonstrated once more, the President’s relations with Capitol Hill are in reality virtually non-existent. Indeed, if as Mr. Obama himself put it, “one faction of one party” could force its party, its chamber, and the Congress, to torpedo any agreement with the White House that would keep the government open (leaving aside the fact that neither the White House nor Congressional Democrats were prepared to reach any agreement that did not involve total capitulation by the other side), how much less likely would he be to get a Congress that overwhelmingly supports Israel on a bipartisan basis if Bibi Netanyahu stresses that easing sanctions will endanger his country’s survival. In other words, to have any sanctions lifted, the President will need Mr. Netanyahu's blessing. As for the Europeans, should they seek to go their own way and lift

sanctions in support of a deal that the Congress would reject, Capitol Hill could simply respond by imposing even stricter penalties against any European entity doing business with Iran.

It should be noted that even were Israel to acquiesce to an American deal with Iran, the Congress may be reluctant to lift those sanctions that address Tehran's abysmal human-rights record, or those imposed because of its support for international terrorism, which has cost many American lives over the past three decades. From Iran's perspective, the reasons that led the Congress to adopt sanctions would matter very little. The Ayatollahs would stress that they must all be removed.

Moreover, Khamenei in particular may not be satisfied with an American offer for a partial lifting of sanctions; nor might he trust American guarantees to avoid regime change after seeing the White House jettison its long time ally Hosni Mubarak and turn on Muammar el-Qaddafi within a few short years of obtaining his agreement to drop his support for terrorism. In addition, much in the same way as the Congress is likely to pay heed to Bibi Netanyahu's concerns, Khamenei will have to do the same for the Revolutionary Guard, whose hatred for all things Western, and especially all things American, is as visceral as it was during the early years after the 1979 revolution.

It is clear, therefore, that the likelihood of a successful deal to terminate Iran's nuclear-weapons program rests heavily on the preferences of two men, the Prime Minister of Israel and the Supreme Leader of Iran. Both of them have the ability to wreck the negotiations, either directly in the case of Khamenei or indirectly in the case of Netanyahu. Barack Obama will have to work very hard to convince both men to accept a deal that he desperately wishes to consummate (and thereby at last justify the

Nobel Prize he received so prematurely in 2009). Whether he has the ability to do so is an open question. First he must demonstrate that he can work with his fellow Americans to reopen the government. If he cannot successfully negotiate with Capitol Hill, he is unlikely to do better with two wily and hardheaded antagonists with whom his relations have been poor in one case and nonexistent in the other.

Dov Zakheim served as the undersecretary of defense (comptroller) and chief financial officer for the U.S. Department of Defense from 2001–2004 and as the deputy undersecretary of defense (planning and resources) from 1985-1987. He also served as DoD's civilian coordinator for Afghan reconstruction from 2002–2004. He is a member of The National Interest 's advisory council.

Article 2.

NYT

Bibi's Tired Iranian Lines

Roger Cohen

October 3, 2013 -- Never has it been more difficult for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel to convince the world that, as he put it in 2006: "It's 1938. Iran is Germany." He tried again at the United Nations this week. In a speech that strained

for effect, he likened Iran to a 20th-century “radical regime” of “awesome power.” That would be the Third Reich.

Among those who question this approach is David Harris, the executive director of the American Jewish Committee. Referring to the new Iranian president, Hassan Rouhani, he wrote in the Israeli daily Haaretz that, “Simply implying, for instance, that anyone who sits down with Rouhani is a modern-day Neville Chamberlain or Édouard Daladier won’t do the trick. To the contrary, it will only give offense and alienate.”

When Netanyahu’s staunchest supporters — the leaders of the American Jewish community — question his approach to Iran, the Israeli prime minister needs to stop calling Rouhani “a wolf in sheep’s clothing,” his favored epithet, and start worrying about crying wolf.

It is not just that the world has now heard from Netanyahu of the imminent danger of a nuclear-armed Iran for a very long time. It is not just that Israel has set countless “red lines” that proved permeable. It is not just that the Islamic Republic has been an island of stability compared to its neighbors Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. It is not just that, as Rouhani’s election shows, Iran is no Nazi-like totalitarian state with a single authority but an authoritarian regime subject to liberalizing and repressive waves.

No, Netanyahu’s credibility issue is rooted in the distorted priorities evident in a speech that was Iran-heavy and Palestine-lite. The real challenge to Israel as a Jewish and democratic nation is the failure to achieve a two-state peace with the Palestinians and the prolongation of a West Bank occupation

that leaves Israel overseeing millions of disenfranchised Palestinians. A recent Pew Research Center survey found that only 17 percent of American Jews think that the continued building of West Bank settlements is helpful to Israel's security.

Iran has long been an effective distraction from the core dilemma of the Jewish state: Palestine. But global impatience with this diversionary strategy is running high.

Iran has much to answer for. Rouhani's "Iran poses absolutely no threat to the world or the region" is a preposterous statement. It has hidden aspects of its enrichment program. It has taken American and Israeli lives and attacked U.S. interests, through the Revolutionary Guards, Hezbollah and other arms of its security apparatus. It has placed odious Israel hatred and America-as-Satan at the core of its revolutionary ideology. President Obama is right to demand transparent, verifiable action for any deal.

What Iran has not done is make a bomb or even, in the view of Western intelligence services, decide to do so. Rouhani's call for "time-bound" negotiations on a nuclear deal should therefore garner full Western engagement without Israel acting as a spoiler.

It is not in Israel's interest to be a spoiler. Limited, highly monitored Iranian enrichment — accepted in principle by Obama but rejected by Netanyahu — is a far better outcome for Israel than going to war with Tehran. But, of course, any deal with Iran would also have to involve a change in the Iranian-American relationship. Israel does not believe that is in its interest, hence some of the bluster.

Netanyahu should cut the bluster and shift focus, instead, to Israeli-Palestinian talks. In the past, he has been able to turn to Congress and leading American Jewish groups for support when he felt isolated. During Obama's first term, when tensions were high between the two leaders, he got 29 standing ovations in Congress. But today Harris's questioning of Israel's approach is not the only sign of shifts.

It was striking that the Obama administration sent Vice President Joe Biden to address the growing J Street organization, which is pro-Israel but not uncritical of Israel, at its annual conference in Washington this week. It is also striking that Louis Susman, who is close to Secretary of State John Kerry and was the U.S. ambassador to Britain, has joined the J Street board. I am told he may soon be joined on the board by Samuel Kaplan, the former U.S. ambassador to Morocco.

Harris has agreed to debate Jeremy Ben-Ami, the executive director of J Street, in New York later this year. In the past, leaders of major Jewish organizations tended to shun J Street, as has the powerful American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

What all this means is that if Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations get close to a tipping point in the coming months, there will, for the first time, be an organized, well-funded American Jewish constituency committed to a two-state outcome trying to push Netanyahu over the line, rather than comfort him in rejection.

That is significant. Netanyahu should adjust to changed circumstances rather than rehearse tired Iranian tropes.

World Affairs Journal

In Nuke Talks with Iran, Learn from North Korea

Gordon G. Chang

3 October 2013 -- “We have to test diplomacy,” President Obama said in the Oval Office on Monday, with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his side. The American leader was hopeful that the historic 17-minute phone call with Hassan Rouhani, his Iranian counterpart, on Friday signaled the Islamic Republic’s intent to come to terms with the international community over its controversial nuclear program.

Netanyahu, in his Tuesday [speech](#) to the UN General Assembly, delivered a direct attack on the Islamic Republic, which he accused of trying to build an atomic arsenal. The Israeli leader also issued a warning that diplomatic efforts might worsen the situation, and in this regard talked about the world’s less-than-impressive efforts to stop North Korea.

North Korea shows what can go wrong with diplomacy. Kim Il Sung, the first leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, started trying to weaponize the atom in earnest in the late 1970s. The regime detonated its first device in October 2006, a quarter century later. During that period, there were many opportunities to stop the nuclear program, but at most every turn

the North, one of the weakest states on earth, was able to best the United States, the most powerful nation in history, and its many allies in the international community.

How did that happen? It almost goes without saying that successive administrations made every possible mistake. Perhaps the principal one is that Washington failed to maintain a consistent policy. Its mish-mash approach ensured that the effect of coercive tactics—the only ones with any chance of succeeding against a militant regime determined to possess nukes—were undermined by agreements. Those deals gave the ruling Kim family the space to continue its nuclear program at crucial moments.

As a statement from Netanyahu's office declares, "a bad agreement is worse than no agreement at all." The Agreed Framework, the landmark 1994 deal, highlights much of what was and remains wrong with bargains America makes with weaponizing rogues in general and Pyongyang in particular. That year, Bill Clinton had skillfully managed to orchestrate one of those rare moments of unity when most of the world—including China—agreed to impose tougher measures on North Korea for its renegade nuclear program.

Pyongyang was livid and was threatening war, but Clinton was not blinking. But just as the international community was within days of finally taking decisive action against the Kim regime, in walked an itinerant peacemaker. Jimmy Carter, on his own initiative, flew to Pyongyang in June to broker a deal with the ailing Kim Il Sung. The proposed arrangement Carter devised, unfortunately, dissolved the global unity for sanctions that could have convinced Kim to come to terms with Washington.

We now know that the Kim regime was on the ropes at that time , and it was even more fragile when the dictator died of a heart attack in July. Yet the signing of the Carter deal in October, which became known as the Agreed Framework, rescued the North at a critical moment. It provided an economic lifeline and, more importantly, signaled to the Pyongyang elite America's acceptance of Kim family rule when succession to Kim's son, Kim Jong Il, was in doubt.

The US and the world arrived at many agreements with the Kims—father, son, and grandson—about their nuclear program. Every one of the bargains solved the moment's crisis yet none of them provided a lasting solution. Each of them could be seen as sensible in its time yet damaging in the long run , postponing the resolution of critical issues to a future when North Korea would be stronger and better-armed. If there is one thing that analysts agree, it is that time now favors a North Korea that is expanding its arsenal as the years pass.

So as Netanyahu tells us, it may not be a good idea to sign a deal with an Iran facing severe difficulties. Too often we see agreements as progress when they prove to be injurious to the interests of the world by buying precious time for proliferators. The road to today's nuked-up North Korea is, unfortunately, littered with well-intentioned but ill-advised treaties, accords, and understandings.

Will President Obama sign another one?

Gordon G. Chang is the author of The Coming Collapse of China and Nuclear Showdown: North Korea Takes On the

World. He lived and worked in China and Hong Kong for almost two decades as a lawyer.

Article 4.

The Washington Post

What a war in 1973 can tell us about handling Iran in 2013

David Ignatius

As U.S.-Iranian diplomacy heats up, and the Israeli prime minister expresses concern about the risks of negotiations, it's fascinating to look back 40 years to the prelude to the 1973 Arab-Israeli war — when a hauntingly similar set of circumstances prevailed.

For nearly a year before the war began on Oct. 6, 1973, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat had been engaged in secret negotiations with the United States on a deal that might have made peace between Egypt and Israel. A new Israeli study argues that the 1973 conflict might have been preventable if this diplomacy had been given a greater chance.

“Israeli elected leaders of the period, although well meaning, failed to understand realities and acted with arrogance, with overconfidence and political blindness,” writes Yigal Kipnis in his new book, “1973: The Road to War.” The book, based on

recently revealed Israeli records, was published in Hebrew last year; an English translation is being released this month.

Israel has long been anxious about the United States negotiating deals with its adversaries. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made this worry clear in his address to the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday, calling Iranian President Hassan Rouhani “a wolf in sheep’s clothing” and saying he doesn’t believe the Iranian leader’s offer to President Obama last week to negotiate a deal on the nuclear issue.

A similar wariness toward negotiations dominated Israeli thinking in 1973. America’s secret diplomacy was led by Henry Kissinger, who was national security adviser to President Richard Nixon and then became his secretary of state.

Kissinger had begun a secret correspondence with Egypt in April 1972, and in March 1973 he took the next step by holding a secret meeting in Armonk, N.Y., with Sadat’s national security adviser, Hafez Ismail.

The Egyptians were then threatening publicly to attack Israel to regain territory lost in the 1967 war. But Ismail told Kissinger that Sadat preferred a peace initiative that would allow Egypt to regain most of the Sinai and decouple it from the larger Arab-Israeli dispute. That’s what actually was negotiated in the Camp David Accords — five years later, after thousands of lives had been lost.

According to Kipnis, Sadat was ready to begin formal negotiations in September 1973. “We think before the first of September we should have the preliminary phase agreed,” Ismail told Kissinger.

Kissinger successively briefed Yitzhak Rabin and Simcha Dinitz, the Israeli ambassadors to Washington in 1973, on the details on his secret conversations. These exchanges were so sensitive that the Israelis referred to Kissinger by the code name “Shaul,” and to Nixon as “Robert.” Rabin informed his boss, Prime Minister Golda Meir, about a March 1973 telephone conversation in which Kissinger laid out the elements of the Egyptian peace offer: “Shaul views . . . a significantly important change” in Egyptian policy, including provisions that would protect Israeli security.

But Meir and other Israeli leaders were wary. “With regard to politics, Meir was determined to prevent any negotiations. . . . For her, Sadat was the enemy and not to be believed,” writes Kipnis.

By Oct. 6, Kissinger was frustrated. Kipnis explains: “More than eight months had passed since he had found out about Sadat’s aspiration to motivate a political process; he was aware of Sadat’s demand to reach an agreement by September. More than a few times during the last few months, Kissinger had urged Israel to let him launch his initiative — and he had been refused.”

Meir’s disdainful assessment of Egypt was shaped partly by a Mossad agent named Ashraf Marwan inside Sadat’s inner circle. Marwan warned incorrectly six times that Egypt was about to go to war. When he gave a final warning a day before hostilities began, it wasn’t taken seriously. Israelis now wonder if he was a double agent.

The 1973 story is painful because we know how it turned out.

Egypt and Syria attacked Israel on Yom Kippur. Israeli political leaders may have mistrusted Sadat's peace overtures, but Israeli military intelligence had also doubted his readiness for war. Israel, surprised and vulnerable, suffered more than 2,500 dead; Arab losses were far higher.

"I do not want to blame anyone, but over the course of 1973, the war could have been prevented," Kissinger told Meir after it was over, according to Kipnis.

As Netanyahu thinks now about Iran, he faces a dilemma similar to what confronted Meir: Are peace offers from Israel's adversaries serious, or simply a cover for belligerent actions? One lesson of 1973 is that it's worth testing through negotiations whether the proposals are real.

Article 5.

Al-Monitor

Hezbollah and Rouhani

An Al-Monitor Correspondent in Beirut

October 3 2013 -- Hezbollah leaders are convinced that no matter who the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran is, it will not change Tehran's position in principle vis-à-vis the party. Moreover, their analysis rejects all speculation that a reformist president in Tehran will lead to less support for Hezbollah. They seem to believe that Tehran's decision

regarding its relationship with Hezbollah is controlled by two stable institutions whose power within Iran's governing system does not change regardless of who becomes president. The first institution is represented by the supreme leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, backed by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and the second is the hub of ayatollahs in Qom that has tremendous doctrinal and moral influence in Iran.

Hezbollah does not receive financial support from the Iranian state, but from khums funds. Khums is the Shiite religious obligation of the rich to contribute one-fifth of their income to their religious reference. Qom and Khamenei receive such alms from Shiites around the world. The revenue from khums is estimated to be in the millions of dollars annually. The ayatollahs and IRGC, not the Iranian state, have authority over this money and decide how to distribute it.

An examination of the details governing Hezbollah's relationship with Iran reveals connections to the religious and ideological power structures in Iran rather than official government institutions. The IRGC is the organized power of the revolution, and its stature is equivalent to official political and military structures. Over time, it became the first defense committee in Iran and the country's military arm, carrying out the decisions of the supreme leader locally and abroad. The IRGC has major military wings outside Iran. Hezbollah is considered one of them, although it has some independence at the level of its military structure and breadth of maneuvers in Lebanon.

A high-level leadership arrangement for Hezbollah was created

to liaise with the Supreme Command of the IRGC. It is said to consist of a jihadist council of seven members led by Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah and representatives of military and security agencies, in addition to an Iranian appointed by Tehran to oversee the permanent coordination mission.

The most effective officer at the field level in the IRGC is Gen. Qasem Soleimani, the official commissioned by the supreme leader and the command of the IRGC to manage Iran's direct and indirect military wings in Iraq and Syria (i.e., the forces of Iraqi Hezbollah and Lebanese Hezbollah in addition to a large contingent of conventional army forces, totaling some 200,000 men according to information from certain sources), Lebanon (through Hezbollah and the Resistance Brigades), Yemen (through the Houthis) and Sudan and Gaza (through Islamic Jihad).

In any case, Hezbollah is an integral part of the IRGC and ideological powers in Iran. Thus, Hezbollah's relationship with Tehran goes beyond mere politics, but has doctrinal significance as well. Within Iran's political distribution map, the party is aligned with the supreme leader's stance vis-a-vis reformists. It should be noted, however, that the internal conflict in Iran is not, to a large extent, between the supporters and opponents of the Islamic revolution. Rather, it is between two schools of thought within the Islamic revolution.

One school prefers extremism, while the other preaches moderation. Regardless, both sides believe in the concept of the velayat-e faqih, guardianship of the jurist, or at least the reformist wing has not raised the banner for toppling or challenging it. During certain periods, trends within Hezbollah

have mirrored the distribution of Iran's internal political scene. During the tenure of the reformist Iranian president Mohammad Khatami, a trend supporting him emerged in Hezbollah. Thus, the party's command expelled some members to punish them for their support [of Khatami], of particular note, Nayef Karim, who had been Hezbollah's media officer for a while. Of more importance, within pro-Iran Lebanese Shiite circles, there was Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, who years before his death, in 2010, had admonished, "Do not link Lebanon's Shiites to the velayat-e faqih in Tehran."

Many Hezbollah members are considered Fadlallah's muqallidin, from the root taqlid, which means "to follow" or "to imitate." In other words, they adhere to the fatwas issued by Fadlallah on how to carry out daily religious duties. Fadlallah lived during the time of Imam Ruhollah Khomeini, when Hezbollah first emerged. He was viewed as the last spiritual guide of the party. Fadlallah did not oppose the principle of velayat-e faqih, but he opposed the concept of one wali al-faqih, guardian of the jurists, for the entire Shiite world.

Fadlallah thought that Khomeini was regarded as the sole religious reference to all Shiite Muslims worldwide because Khomeini was exceptional as an imam. After Khomeini's death, however, Iran had to take into account the particularities of Shiite communities around the world, as their circumstances and the nature of their problems differed from country to country. Thus, every country needed its own Shiite religious authority.

The Iranian supreme leader, Khamanei, opposed this concept and was backed by Hezbollah in this regard. The party therefore launched a campaign against Fadlallah. It warned its members

about his muqallidin and ordered them to stop following him. They were to follow the wali al-faqih, Ayatollah Khamenei. Fadlallah was thus forced to abandon his position in order to restore the relationship with Tehran and Hezbollah.

During Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency in Iran, there was some divergence between Ahmadinejad and Khamenei. Hezbollah, as usual, was in the thick of it, siding with the supreme leader against Ahmadinejad. The difference then was between two theories. While Ahmadinejad advocated hujjat al-Islam (proof of Islam), Khamenei stressed the concept of the guardianship, that is, the supreme leader as religious authority.

Hujjat al-Islam is based on the idea that the true wali al-faqih is the awaited Imam — al-Mahdi, whom Shiites believe will bring them justice and salvation. Khamenei, on the other hand, is seen merely as a revered religious reference, but is not the Imam, as this title is reserved for al-Mahdi. Advocates of the guardianship theory, on the other hand, strongly believe that the supreme leader is the representative of the Hidden Imam, al-Mahdi. Although Ahmadinejad managed to drum up support for his theory, especially from large segments of the poor rural areas of Iran, Khamenei clipped his wings and managed to remove him from power without a trace of his influence remaining within the state.

In light of the foregoing, there have been significant differences in interpreting the concept of the velayat-e faqih in Iranian centers of power. Hezbollah is at the core of these differences, as it is among the most prominent supporters of the velayat-e faqih, guided by the person of the supreme leader, who is protected by the most powerful institution in Iran, the IRGC.

In short, Hezbollah's presence in Iran is not dependent on the political power structure, but on being part of the nation's religious establishment. The party is also deeply involved in defending the Supreme Guide's line against other currents present within the Islamic environment based on the theory of velayat-e faqih.

Those well informed about the internal political situation in Iran affirm that Hezbollah, for a number of reasons, is not concerned about the ascendance of Rouhani to power as a moderate and reformist president.

First, Rouhani is part of the velayat-e faqih regime in Iran. He has used various approaches to sustain the regime and make it more viable, by modernizing some of its policies, while maintaining the velayat-e faqih.

Second, both Hezbollah and Rouhani answer to the highest authority in Iran, the supreme leader. Indeed, whether Rouhani will be able to fulfill his visions and get his policies through Iran's decision-making apparatus depends on the supreme leader.

Third, it's apparent that Hezbollah is seen as the most successful strategic investment for Iran outside its borders, compared to all other such models Tehran has established. Hezbollah has defended Iran's security in the Arab-Israeli conflict and secured its position on the shores of the Mediterranean and within the Levant.

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correspondents for the protection of our authors or their sources. Different authors may have written the individual stories identified on this page.

Article 6.

NYT

When Israel Stepped Back From the Brink

Avner Cohen

October 3, 2013 -- NEXT week is the 40th anniversary of the Yom Kippur War, perhaps the most traumatic moment in Israel's history. On Oct. 7, 1973 — the second day of the war — Israel's borders along the Suez Canal in the south and the Golan Heights in the north collapsed under a massive assault by a coalition of Arab armies. Israel was caught unprepared.

The previous morning, Oct. 6, Moshe Dayan, Israel's defense minister and a hero of the 1967 Six-Day War, had been so confident of Israel's security that he'd opposed mobilizing the entirety of the reserve force, despite intelligence reports indicating that an Arab military offensive was imminent.

Just one day later, after visiting the front lines, Mr. Dayan was transformed into a prophet of doom. In a well-documented episode, he warned his generals of the demise of the "Third

Temple,” a reference to the modern state of Israel. Mr. Dayan believed the country was fighting for its survival, and his mind turned to options of last resort. Israel’s nuclear arsenal, which first came into being on the eve of the 1967 war, had by 1973 grown to 10 or 20 atomic weapons. It was Israel’s ultimate insurance policy at a time of existential threat.

In the four decades since the 1973 war, rumors have blossomed that Israel stood at the nuclear brink during that war’s darkest hours. A number of journalists and scholars have asserted that during a dramatic meeting in one of the war’s early days, a panic-stricken Mr. Dayan persuaded the Israeli war cabinet, including the prime minister, Golda Meir, to arm the country’s weapons with warheads for possible use.

Some analysts have even claimed that Israel used this “nuclear alert” to blackmail the Nixon administration into providing Israel with a huge airlift of military supplies. Although these stories were based on anonymous sourcing and circumstantial evidence, they have become a central part of the lore surrounding the Yom Kippur War. Even my own early scholarship was to some degree influenced by this mythology. But in a January 2008 interview I conducted, Arnan Azaryahu, a senior aide to an Israeli cabinet minister at the time of the war, negated and refuted the nearly four-decade-old mythology alleging that Israel almost reached the nuclear brink in 1973. (A video of a three-minute segment from the interview with subtitles [can be viewed here](#). Though I have had the video for five years, I chose not to release it until after Mr. Azaryahu’s death in 2008.)

Mr. Azaryahu’s testimony, released now for the first time, sheds

new light on a critical moment in the history of the Yom Kippur War and of the nuclear age. Although he was never a policy maker, Mr. Azaryahu was a senior political insider. As a trusted aide and confidant to Yisrael Galili, a minister without portfolio and Ms. Meir's closest political ally, Mr. Azaryahu was privy to some of Israel's most fateful decisions. In the early afternoon of Oct. 7, as a fierce battle with Syrian forces raged and the Israeli Army appeared to be losing its grasp on the Golan Heights, Mr. Azaryahu was waiting for his boss, Mr. Galili, outside the prime minister's office in Tel Aviv, where a small group of ministers had hastily convened to discuss the desperate military situation. Shalheveth Freier, then the director general of the Israeli Atomic Energy Commission, suddenly arrived and uneasily took a seat several benches away from Mr. Azaryahu outside of the office. The two had known each other for years, but Mr. Freier's silence and body language suggested he was deeply uncomfortable.

Then, as the meeting adjourned, Mr. Dayan, casually leaning against the door and talking as if he were raising only a minor point, asked the prime minister to authorize Mr. Freier to initiate the necessary preparations for a "demonstration option" — that is, a demonstration of Israel's nuclear weapons capability.

According to Mr. Azaryahu's account, Mr. Dayan gave the impression that he'd already authorized such a demonstration and all that was needed was Ms. Meir's approval. Mr. Dayan explained that an immediate authorization of preparatory steps for a nuclear blast would save precious time and allow the order to detonate a bomb to be executed rapidly should the need arise. At that point, Mr. Azaryahu told me, Mr. Galili and the deputy prime minister, Yigal Allon, spoke up to oppose Mr. Dayan's

plan, saying it was premature to consider the nuclear option and that Israel would prevail using conventional weapons.

Siding with her two senior ministers, the prime minister told Mr. Dayan to “forget it.” He responded by saying that he remained unconvinced but that he respected the prime minister’s decision. He then left the room.

Mr. Azaryahu’s testimony is the first and only credible Israeli eyewitness account to date of the nuclear dimension of the Yom Kippur War. This secrecy is because of Israel’s code of silence on all nuclear matters. Given the institutional censorship around this issue, it’s not surprising that this episode was not publicly known until now. Indeed, this article could not have been written about openly in the Israeli media until first published by “foreign sources” like this newspaper and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, to which I have donated my collection of documents and video footage.

Although the Azaryahu interview leaves many questions unanswered, it challenges the popular and misguided narrative that the Israeli government, influenced by Mr. Dayan’s gloom, was on the verge of using nuclear weapons in October 1973. Moreover, Mr. Azaryahu’s testimony reveals that Israel’s leadership, with the notable exception of Mr. Dayan, recognized the danger of the nuclear brink and wisely refused to approach it. In that meeting, Israel’s leaders, especially Ms. Meir, demonstrated remarkable restraint at a time when the country’s survival hung in the balance.

Avner Cohen, a professor at the Monterey Institute of

International Studies and a senior fellow at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, is the author of “Israel and the Bomb” and “The Worst-Kept Secret: Israel’s Bargain With the Bomb.”

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Asharq Al-Awsat

The Middle East and Obama’s Redirection

Amir Taheri

October 4, 2013 -- Quietly but surely, President Barack Obama has embarked on what could be a strategic redirection of United States foreign policy. It would be in everyone’s interest to take note of that change and adapt to a new international scene.

The redirection in question is taking shape in three ways.

First, it reflects the growing isolationist move in the United States. That mood is felt across the spectrum of opinion in the US, beyond the traditional Democrat-vs.-Republican divide. Obama is presiding over a U-turn from his initial—some might say idealistic—promises of engagement with actual or putative adversaries.

The undeclared response to the problems of others is simple: Let them stew in their own juice.

Next, the Obama redirection is designed as a move towards realpolitik. In his address to the United Nations General Assembly last month, the president put the emphasis on America's concrete and largely material interests in the international arena. In his new narrative, the US was no longer the semi-mythical beacon destined by history to shine the light of freedom on the world as a whole.

Over the past two centuries, Americans have often been told that America is more than just another country; it is also an ideal to be shared with others less fortunate. Whether Obama ever subscribed to that notion is moot. What is certain now is that he does not regard the concept of American "exceptionalism" as a serious basis for making foreign policy.

Obama's new direction is designed to reshape US foreign policy as a tool for tackling clearly circumscribed and contingent problems with the help of others—even when the cost of involvement for the US is negligible.

Finally, recent statements by Obama and his close foreign policy aides show that the new direction is meant to downgrade the strategic importance of certain regions—notably Western Europe and the Middle East—while upgrading others, such as the Pacific Rim and Asia.

This attempted redirection is made possible by several factors.

The first is that the American public is no longer persuaded that the US faces a strategic adversary strong enough to challenge, let alone threaten, it on a global scale. Russia's Vladimir Putin may try to score a few cheap hits by backing the Syrian despot Bashar Al-Assad, but Russia is in no position to re-become an

existential threat to the US. The Khomeinist mullahs may continue their shenanigans for a bit longer, but their doomed regime is in no position to do any more mischief.

The second factor is that US dependence on oil imports, chiefly from the Middle East and North Africa, is being rapidly reduced. In fact, the US might even return as a net exporter of energy within the next four to five years. At the same time, the share of the European Union in trade and in investment in the US economy continues its relative decline, while the so-called emerging economies and the North American Free Trade Agreement members consolidate their respective positions as America's rising partners.

The third factor is that for the first time in years, Obama is in a genuinely dominant position within his own administration. George W. Bush had to contend with his powerful vice president, Dick Cheney, while his two secretaries of state pursued their own respective agendas. Nor could Bush's two secretaries of defense, Donald Rumsfeld and Robert Gates, be ignored. In his first term, Obama, too, had to contend with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton who, some might say rightly, thought she knew more about the world than the obscure junior senator from Illinois. Nor could Obama ignore such strong personalities as Gates, Leon Panetta and David Petraeus.

Now, however, Obama is surrounded by ageing senators who have reached their highest level of incompetence and are fully aware that they are where they are at Obama's pleasure. This is why Secretary of State John Kerry and Vice President Joe Biden were able to quickly forget their oratorical feats on Syria to reflect Obama's decision to throw the Syrian people to the

wolves.

Obama's redirection of US foreign policy may not last beyond his current tenure, which is also his last. Nevertheless, it entails many risks for nations that have counted on US power to help impose international law and, when necessary, tip the balance in favor of allies in conflict with adversaries.

Bully powers pursuing thuggish policies in a number of regions may seize the opportunity provided by the US retreat to heighten their aggressive profile. Signs of this are already visible in Russia's relations with a number of its so-called near neighbors, China's saber-rattling over island disputes with Vietnam, while the Philippines and even Japan are other examples. The Khomeinist regime's heightened activism in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon is yet one more example.

One way to cope with the planned US retreat is to sit it out, allowing the Obama administration to float to its inevitable end. Another is to use the retreat as a theme for another bout of Obama-bashing.

Both courses are open to question.

A more useful approach would be to embark on a pedagogic campaign to persuade the American public that isolationism is a dangerous gamble in a global system that lacks a mechanism for stability. For example, abandoning the estimated 7 million Syrians refugees and displaced persons may sound like a clever instance of the Obamaseque "let them stew in their own juice" doctrine. But what if the refugee camps and the areas where displaced persons try to survive under Bashar Al-Assad's bombs become marshlands where the mosquitoes of terror are bred by

the thousands?

Today, Americans are advised that they may not be safe in more than 40 countries across the globe. The Obama retreat could sharply increase that number. The US needs and deserves something better than a “Fortress America” strategy.

It is unlikely that Obama might change course due to any argument. He genuinely thinks that he is the greatest strategist in recent history, if not ever. So mocking or attacking him will change nothing. What is needed is to devise policies that would enable the region to maintain a measure of stability until the current cycle of US isolationism is closed, as it is bound to.

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Today's Zaman

Dynamics of Qatar foreign policy: solution finding

Emrah Usta

3 October 2013 -- What is the main axis of Qatar's foreign policy? What are the reasons behind the world's interest in this emirate of the Gulf? What is the driving force behind the quick rise of Qatar to a country that will host the World Cup in 2022? These and similar questions are frequently being asked in international circles, particularly including in the West and Turkey. Yet, this emirate's policy is no different from those of other monarchies in the Gulf. These similarities can be summed up as follows: (1) Conceptualizing its vast resources of oil and natural gas and developing an oil-based diplomacy, (2) tapping the power of single-center administration as an emirate, (3) having sustainable economic welfare at home and abroad, (4) establishing ties with Iran independently of Saudi influence, and (5) coming with a good understanding and implementation of the synthesis of West-based modernization with Islam.

The Qatari emirate's membership of various international organizations, mainly the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Group of 77 and the Arab League, helps to promote the country in international circles. What distinguishes Qatar from other Gulf countries is its liberal attitude toward freedoms instead of resorting to coercion or control, its emphasis on the need to safeguard cultural and Islamic values and its ability to understand world politics in depth. The small county in the Gulf has taken various impressive foreign policy moves particularly during the Arab Spring process. Qatar has lent support to the Muslim Brotherhood during the Arab Spring revolutions and pursued the third-way policy regarding the coup d'état in Egypt, which is proof of the flexibility of Qatar's foreign policy. When the emirate openly gave support to the military operation during the Libya crisis, it

helped Arabs to overcome the strong psychological threshold. Qatar's foreign policy faced similar reactions in the case of the Palestinian issue. The visit paid without much fanfare by Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani to Gaza last year secured the support of Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal. During this visit, he promised to give \$400 million to Meshaal for infrastructure investments in Gaza, and this can be seen as proof of the fact that former Qatari emir was employing various factors in maintaining a balance between al-Fatah and Hamas in the context of Gazan domestic politics.

In the summer months of this year, Qatar saw a change of power and new Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani has all the signs of a strong and visionary leader with the potential to take Qatar further. In addition to its investments in the Middle East, Qatar is also showing interest in Asia and Africa, working through its Qatar Foundation and extending a helping hand to the oppressed and dispossessed people in these continents. Mehran Kamrava, who is a professor at the School of Foreign Service in Qatar (SFSQ) of Georgetown University and the director of the Center for International and Regional Studies and a respected intellectual, has an interesting book about Qatar's history and foreign policy titled "Qatar: Small State, Big Politics." In this book, Kamrava explains the modern history of Qatar with an emphasis on how the country managed to blend its historical heritage with the developmental progress of recent years. The book discusses a number of topics ranging from the Qatar National Vision 2030 to Al Jazeera as well as six American universities established in the country during last 10 years and major corporations and organizations. It is one of a kinds in terms of assessing Doha's overactive diplomacy, big

ideas, natural power and policies regarding the Persian Gulf.

The void created by the Arab Spring revolutions

One of the reasons why Qatar has come to the forefront of the Gulf countries is the Arab Spring revolutions and the continuing political void that resulted from these revolutions. The weakest link in Qatar's foreign policy in the Middle East is related to its own sense of belonging, which may potentially lead to problems about principles. But this young state's foreign policy may be regarded as normal in terms of transformation and maturation. The proof that the emirate is pursuing an independent and original foreign policy is that it can develop relations with Iran. Qatar's administration also chose to approve the recent rapprochement between Iran and the US in the face of the concerns voiced by the Gulf countries. Qatar has also moved closer to the European Union, particularly developing serious ties with the UK, Germany and France. The studies Abdullah Baabood, the director of the Cambridge-based Gulf Research Centre and Qatar University Gulf Studies, conducted about the EU and the Gulf countries offer us an interesting perspective. Noting that there are few studies conducted by the EU about the Arab world, Baabood argues that the EU should revise its approach to the region and there are various areas for potential dialogue between the EU and the Arab world. This may help Qatar to further boost its ties with Europe.

On the other hand, it is clear that the foreign policy adopted by Qatar as a country seeking to adopt a mediation role as regards various issues across the Arab world has a flexible structure. Sometimes, this allows Qatar to develop multifaceted policies. At other times, it encourages the country to pursue unilateral

interventionist policies. Qatar enjoys a serious influence and negotiating power over organizations like al-Shabab, particularly in Somalia, and it has fairly good relations with Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia. Qatar hosts the US Central Command (CENTCOM) facilities. The country is obviously capable of coming up with multidimensional foreign policy. Iran's nuclear and missile capacity, which is threat to many Gulf countries, is also a concern for Qatar. Nevertheless, Qatar has developed good ties with Iran and even engaged in rapprochement in certain areas. Qatar's foreign policy has been delicately poised between concerns for Iran's nuclear activities and concerns for energy supply security.

It can be argued that the Doha-based Al Jazeera, which has emerged as a global media network, has been giving Qatar's foreign policy a positive push. In the country, which has rapidly growing media and innovation technology sectors, huge investments are being made in the field of education and infrastructure, which will enable the country to direct its foreign policy into more diverse areas in future. The country is making assertive preparations for the future with its established universities, well-educated citizens and rapidly growing economy.

Despite certain issues about immigration policies, Qatar has dynamics that are driving the country forward. With its flexible foreign policy, Qatar may emerge as the driving force of a potential Gulf union. The Doha administration's emphasis on stability in the face of the situation in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain is promising.

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