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Article 1.

NYT

Hezbollah Unmasked

Thomas E. Donilon

February 17, 2013 -- On Feb. 5, after more than six months of investigations, the Bulgarian government announced that it believed Hezbollah was responsible for the attack last July that killed five Israeli tourists and a Bulgarian bus driver and injured dozens more in the resort town of Burgas. This report is significant because a European Union member state, Bulgaria, explicitly pointed a finger at Hezbollah and lifted the veil on the

group's continued terrorist activities. Europe can no longer ignore the threat that this group poses to the Continent and to the world.

The attack in Burgas was despicable. The Israeli tourists had just arrived at the city's airport and were boarding a bus for the Black Sea coast. A young man wearing a disguise tracked the tourists' movements, placed a bag with an explosive device in the cargo compartment of the bus and then walked away. The device exploded, killing six people, as well as the bomber.

The bomber's death was probably not part of Hezbollah's original plan. The group has always tried to employ strict operational security and most likely never intended for its involvement in this attack to be revealed.

But evidence recovered from the bomber's body included a fake Michigan identification card produced in Lebanon. Elsewhere in Bulgaria, investigators discovered that operatives used two other fake Michigan IDs. These led them to the true names of the bomber's two accomplices. They traveled to Bulgaria using Australian and Canadian passports and then returned to Lebanon using a circuitous route to hide their trail. After sharing information with Australian and Canadian security officials, Bulgaria's government stated that it believed both of these operatives were tied to Hezbollah's military wing.

If not for the accidental death of the bomber, there would very likely still be a debate over who conducted this terrible attack. But the Bulgarian investigation has once again proved to the world what Hezbollah has tried for years to hide: that it remains engaged in international terrorist attacks against civilians.

Hezbollah first gained notoriety in 1983 after bombing the United States Embassy in Beirut — an attack that killed 63 people. Shortly thereafter, Hezbollah bombed the American and French Marine Barracks in Beirut, killing 241 Americans and 58 French service members with one of the largest explosive devices ever detonated during a terrorist attack.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the group conducted kidnappings and airplane hijackings, two bombings in Buenos Aires, several in Paris and an attempted bombing in Bangkok. In 1996 it assisted in the Khobar Towers attack in Saudi Arabia, which killed 19 Americans. Thanks to this bloody record, in 1997 Hezbollah was among the first groups added to the State Department's list of foreign terrorist organizations.

Over the last decade, Hezbollah has worked assiduously to obscure its terrorist pedigree and convince the world that it is interested only in politics, providing social welfare services, and defending Lebanon. But it is an illusion to speak of Hezbollah as a responsible political actor. Hezbollah remains a terrorist organization and a destabilizing force across the Middle East.

Since 2011, the group has murdered civilians in Bulgaria, seen its activities disrupted in Cyprus and Thailand, and worked to plot attacks elsewhere. It is helping to prop up the brutal regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria; and it acts as a proxy for Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps in the region and beyond. In doing so, Hezbollah is putting the well-being of Lebanon and its people at risk.

Now that Bulgarian authorities have exposed Hezbollah's global terrorist agenda, European governments must respond swiftly.

They must disrupt its operational networks, stop flows of financial assistance to the group, crack down on Hezbollah-linked criminal enterprises and condemn the organization's leaders for their continued pursuit of terrorism.

The United States applauds those countries that have long recognized Hezbollah's nefarious nature and that have already condemned the group for the attack in Burgas. Europe must now act collectively and respond resolutely to this attack within its borders by adding Hezbollah to the European Union's terrorist list. That is the next step toward ensuring that Burgas is the last successful Hezbollah operation on European soil.

Thomas E. Donilon is the national security adviser to President Obama.

Article 2.

The National Interest

Why Doesn't Europe Think Hezbollah Is a Terror Group?

Benjamin Weinthal

February 18, 2013 -- The rift over counterterrorism strategy

between the United States and its trans-Atlantic partners will likely be on display next week in Brussels, where European foreign ministers are slated to discuss the Bulgarian government report issued earlier this month accusing Hezbollah operatives of blowing up an Israeli tour bus last July at Burgas, a Black Sea resort town, killing five Israeli tourists and a Bulgarian driver.

Many observers were surprised last week in Sofia when Bulgarian Interior Minister Tsvetan Tsvetanov declared that the two suspected perpetrators “were members of the militant wing of Hezbollah,” adding that investigators have found information “showing the financing and connection between Hezbollah and the two suspects.” Despite German and French lobbying for a deliberately nebulous statement about something along the lines of a Lebanese connection being behind the Burgas killings, the Bulgarians named names.

With the results of the Bulgarian inquiry front and center in the minds of European leaders, after an era of indifference in Europe to the Hezbollah threat, the debate over evicting Hezbollah’s members and organizational structure from continental Europe has taken on greater urgency.

John Brennan, President Obama’s nominee to head the Central Intelligence Agency, launched the opening salvo in an effort to break the silence. Speaking last October at a policy event in Dublin, Ireland, Brennan (who currently serves as Obama’s top counterterrorism advisor) publicly chastised the Europeans for failing to include Hezbollah on their list of terrorist organizations. European opposition to a listing “makes it harder to defend our countries and protect our citizens,” Brennan stated. But his remarks went largely unnoticed by European

media outlets.

Washington has no shortage of reasons to want Hezbollah's military capability weakened. In January 2007, Hezbollah operative Ali Mussa Daqduq played a crucial role in the murders of five U.S. soldiers in Iraq. To the acute frustration of the Obama administration, Iraq's government set Daqduq free. He's reportedly back in Lebanon. But that's only the latest assault on American troops. Hezbollah has a history dating back to October 1983, a year after its founding, when it carried out a double suicide attack against U.S. and French military barracks in Beirut, killing 241 American servicemen and 58 French paratroopers.

Washington designated Hezbollah a terrorist entity in the 1990s. Since then, several Hezbollah financial nodes have been designated, too. And that effort will not likely cease any time soon. As Undersecretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David Cohen notes, "Before al-Qaeda's attack on the U.S. on September 11, 2001, Hezbollah was responsible for killing more Americans in terrorist attacks than any other terrorist group."

Washington is arguably more worried about Hezbollah these days than al-Qaeda, which officials have declared is in decline. U.S. National Counterterrorism Director Matthew Olsen said that, "when we are briefing the White House, Hezbollah, coupled with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds force, are the "terror threats at the top of the list." Last week (his first on the job), Secretary of State John Kerry urgently called upon "other governments around the world—and particularly our partners in Europe—to take immediate action to crack

down” on Hezbollah, adding, “We need to send an unequivocal message to this terrorist group that it can no longer engage in despicable actions with impunity .” The unanswered question is why the EU is moving at such a gingerly pace in responding to the Hezbollah threat—particularly given the fact that Bulgarian authorities claim the group murdered an EU citizen. Dr. Guido Steinberg, a Middle East expert with the Berlin-based Foundation for Science and Politics, told the Hamburger Abendblatt newspaper in February that, based on the EU preconditions for designating an organization a terrorist entity, “Hezbollah qualifies on all accounts.” Other European governments agree. The United Kingdom declared Hezbollah’s military wing a terrorist entity in 2008 because its members targeted British soldiers in Iraq for death.

Across the English Channel, the Netherlands is the only EU country to consider Hezbollah’s entire apparatus—ranging from charity work to political and military functions—a terrorist organization.

Matthew Levitt, an analyst at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, argues that the inner workings of Hezbollah’s organizational structure do not allow for a separation into military and political wings. Using statements from Hezbollah’s top leadership, Levitt demonstrates that the organization has repeatedly affirmed its monolithic nature. As Hezbollah’s second most senior official, Naim Qassem, put it last year, “We don’t have a military wing and a political one; we don’t have Hezbollah on one hand and the resistance party on the other.”

The EU’s reluctance to outlaw Hezbollah revolves around three core political and security issues. First, Germany, Cyprus,

France, Sweden, Austria, Belgium and other EU states are wary of taking any action that might destabilize Lebanon's fragile coalition government, in which Hezbollah largely plays the kingmaker role.

Second, EU nations have troops on the ground in Southern Lebanon as part of the UNIFIL mission to monitor a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Lebanon and help demilitarize Hezbollah. There are serious question marks over the efficacy of the EU presence in southern Lebanon. As my colleague Jonathan Schanzer notes, “ Conservative estimates suggest that Hezbollah maintains an arsenal of some 70,000 rockets.”

Third, Europe is worried about the possibility of new Hezbollah strikes in Europe if it stands up to the militant group and its Iranian backers. According to the most recent German domestic intelligence agency report, the number of Hezbollah members in the Federal Republic stands at almost 1000 .

The current EU discourse—including the Bulgarian foreign minister Nickolay Mladenov's suggestion to entertain a ban of Hezbollah's military wing—is tending toward partial terror designation. The EU calculus could, however, change if Hezbollah's role in aiding Syrian war crimes against opposition forces becomes too much to stomach. The UN calculates that the number of deaths in Syria increased from 60,000 last month to a likely figure of 70,000 today.

Benjamin Weinthal is a European affairs correspondent for the Jerusalem Post and a fellow with the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. He just returned from Sofia, Bulgaria.

Article 3.

Al-Monitor

Kerry Puts Middle East First

Geoffrey Aronson

February 17 -- Events in the Middle East, so far from the typical American experience, can exert a direct and often malicious influence on American life. In the last two decades, hundreds of thousands of Americans have served in harm's way throughout the Middle East as soldiers in the war on terror. President Barack Obama has noted the "vital national-security interest of the United States to reduce these conflicts, because whether we like it or not, we remain a dominant military superpower, and when conflicts break out, one way or another we get pulled into them. And that ends up costing us significantly in terms of both blood and treasure." The administration recognizes the connection, in "blood and treasure," between the costly American interventions in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere and the festering conflict between Israel and Palestine. Gen. James Mattis, commander of US Central Command (CENTCOM), acknowledged the clear and direct connection between the unresolved contest over Palestine and the threat posed to US interests in the region. In congressional testimony in March 2011, Mattis stated: "[L]ack of progress toward a comprehensive Middle East peace affects U.S. and CENTCOM security interests in the region. I believe the only reliable path to lasting peace in this region is a viable two-state solution between Israel and Palestine. This issue is one of many that [are] exploited by our adversaries in the region, and it is

used as a recruiting tool for extremist groups. “The lack of progress also creates friction with regional partners and creates political challenges for advancing our interests by marginalizing moderate voices in the region. By contrast, substantive progress on the peace process would improve CENTCOM’s opportunity to work with our regional partners and to support multilateral security efforts.” One year earlier, Mattis’ predecessor, Gen. David Petraeus, made a similar point, saying, “The enduring hostilities between Israel and some of its neighbors present distinct challenges to our ability to advance our interests. [...] The conflict foments anti-American sentiment, due to a perception of US favoritism for Israel. Arab anger over the Palestinian question limits the strength and depth of US partnerships with governments and peoples, and weakens the legitimacy of moderate regimes in the Arab world. Meanwhile, al-Qaeda and other militant groups exploit that anger to mobilize support [...]” As a recent study-group report of the Stimson Center (of which I am a member, in the interest of full disclosure) concludes, “The failure to secure Israel’s future on terms other than via its continuous unilateral use of force and unending occupation, and the associated failure to establish a Palestinian state at peace with Israel, represents a significant strategic liability for the United States.”

The United States, for the first time in memory, will soon have combat veterans serving as secretaries of state and defense. They can identify first hand with the difficulties of today’s generation of fighting men and women battling little-understood, shadowy enemies in far-flung hamlets and valleys halfway across the globe. Chuck Hagel, Obama’s nominee for secretary of defense, has roused the hackles of colleagues in the Senate in part

because of his reluctance to use force in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. Kerry, for his part, has spoken eloquently of the connection between Palestine and Peshawar.

"So much of what we aspire to achieve and what we need to do globally — what we need to do in the Maghreb and South Asia, South Central Asia, throughout the Gulf — all of this is tied to what can or doesn't happen with respect to Israel-Palestine," Kerry said at his confirmation hearing. "And in some places it's used as an excuse. In other places it's a genuine, deeply felt challenge."

Like his recent predecessors, Democrat and Republican alike, Kerry thinks that he knows what the happy ending in Palestine looks like — the creation of a Palestinian state at peace with Israel — but he has yet to figure out who to take on the journey or how to convince them to join him in order to prevent the “disastrous” consequences of continuing failure. Kerry’s inaugural foreign trip as secretary of state will be to the Middle East, where he will lay the groundwork for a presidential visit to Israel, the West Bank and Jordan in mid-March.

The administration is at pains to lower expectations for these trips.

“The president is not prepared, at this point in time, to do more than to listen to the parties, which is why he has announced he’s going to go to Israel,” explained Kerry on Feb. 13. “It affords him an opportunity to listen. And I think we start out by listening, and get a sense of what the current state of possibilities are and then begin to make some choices. “It would be a huge mistake, almost an arrogant step, to suddenly

be announcing this and that without listening first, so that's what I intend to do. That's what the president intends to do.”

Kerry has hardly had enough time to buy pens for his office, let alone craft a new initiative to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict. Despite a clear sense of the status quo's costs, the administration has not determined how badly it wants an agreement and exactly what it is prepared to do to make that happen — not yet, anyway. Its energies are instead focused on preparing a visit to listen to the inmates in the asylum, where useful advice is sure to be in short supply.

Geoffrey Aronson has long been active in Track II diplomatic efforts on various Middle East issues. He writes widely on regional affairs.

Article 4.

The National Interest

Mr. Erdogan Goes to Shanghai

Ariel Cohen

February 18, 2013 -- Prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan wants Turkey to join the European Union. But recently he announced he wants to join the Shanghai Cooperation

Organization (SCO). Three things he should know about SCO: It's not based in Shanghai (the HQ is in Beijing); it provides little real cooperation (it barely manages to soothe differences between Moscow, Beijing and other members); and it offers no real organization (the staff is tiny).

Turkey will not find a welcoming home in SCO. Today it harbors Russia, China and the five Central Asian countries as full members, with Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Iran and Mongolia holding “observer” status. Today Turkey—along with Belarus and Sri Lanka—rates as a “dialogue partner.”

Certainly Russia and Central Asia are important markets for Turkish construction, food and tourism industries. Its trade in the region grew to \$62 billion in 2012. But the marketplace can't compare with that offered by EU and NATO nations. Europe and the United States boast a combined GDP of \$32 trillion, versus the SCO nations' combined \$10 trillion. So why did Erdoğan announce that he had told Russian President Vladimir Putin that if Turkey were allowed to join SCO “we will forget about the EU”?

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan dropped that bomb on Jan. 25. With Turkish hopes for the EU membership diminishing, he declared the SCO to be a viable alternative to the European Union . “I said to Russian President Vladimir Putin, ‘You tease us, saying, ‘what [is Turkey] doing in the EU?’ Now I tease you: Include us in the Shanghai Five and we will forget about the EU.’”

The Turkish foreign ministry quickly seconded the prime minister's announcement. “With regard to our work with the

Shanghai Cooperation Organization, of course we want to be an observer state—that is a secondary category [for cooperation within the organization]. We want to enhance our cooperation with this organization within possible bounds,” Selçuk Ünal, Ministry spokesperson, said at a press conference.

The announcement was panned by the main opposition party leader, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, who presented it as a sign that Turkey is being dragged into a monolithic political regime similar to the regimes of some SCO members. “The prime minister’s proposal, saying ‘let’s become a member of the Shanghai Five and leave the EU,’ is evidence showing what kind of a model, standard and future is being designed for Turkey,” he said. However, during an earlier visit to Beijing, Kılıçdaroğlu expressed support for the government’s bid to join the Shanghai Club.

How serious is Erdoğan about jumping to SCO? As Daniel Pipes notes, the prime minister has established a record of straight talk . Pipes also cites a Turkish analyst’s observation that “The EU criteria demand democracy , human rights , union rights, minority rights, gender equality, equitable distribution of income, participation and pluralism for Turkey. SCO as a union of countries ruled by dictators and autocrats will not demand any of those criteria for joining.” Unlike the European Union, Shanghai members will not press Erdoğan to liberalize. Indeed, they may encourage his dictatorial tendencies that so many Turks already fear.

Additionally, SCO fits Erdoğan’s Islamist impulse to defy the West and to dream of an alternative to it. SCO meetings bristle with anti-Western sentiments. For example, when Iran’s

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad addressed the group in 2011 in Shanghai, no one rebuffed his conspiracy theory about 9/11 being a U.S. government inside job used “as an excuse for invading Afghanistan and Iraq and for killing and wounding over a million people.”

Conversations with senior Turkish political operatives familiar with Ankara’s political culture and negotiating style suggest a three-part explanation: frustration with the long EU accession process, bluffing, and the need to draw attention. Turkey has been knocking on the EU’s door since the 1960s. Its continuing accession has been dubbed “the longest courtship on Earth.” Now, Erdoğan is threatening to walk away from a snobbish store, which refuses to sell him the goods—and go to a store next door, which sells shoddier and cheaper merchandise.

Additionally, the prime minister and the majority of Turks do not believe that EU membership is to their benefit, especially as it is ailing politically and financially. Nevertheless, being in the same club with its rival Iran and its historic adversary Russia is hardly a welcome choice. Thus, Erdoğan is making a threatening noise, hoping to cut a better deal with Europe.

The situation with the United States is more complicated. Ankara understands potential geopolitical tensions between Washington, Moscow and Beijing, and nevertheless threatens to join the SCO. U.S. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland reacted on January 28 that Turkey’s possible membership in the Shanghai Cooperation would be “interesting,” and added the telling reminder that Turkey is also a NATO member.

Another recent spat involved Prime Minister Erdoğan and his deputy party chief criticizing U.S. ambassador Francis Ricciardone's remarks on long judiciary detention periods in Turkey. On February 5, Ricciardone decried incarceration of military leaders in Turkey who were behind bars “as if they were terrorists” at a press conference with Ankara media bureau chiefs. “When a legal system produces such results and confuses people like that for terrorists, it makes it hard for American and European courts to match up.” he said.

Erdoğan, however, called Ricciardone's criticisms of the Turkish judiciary “unacceptable.” “No one should be mistaken about our patience, tolerance and friendliness. Turkey is not anybody's scapegoat. Turkey is not a country with which to meddle in its internal issues or its executive, legislative and judiciary systems. And certainly not a country whose foreign policy guidelines can be dictated [by others],” Erdoğan said. The deputy chairman and spokesperson for the ruling Justice and Development AKP, Huseyin Celik, also attacked the U.S. ambassador's remarks, and got a letter from Ricciardone expressing regret in return—but no apology.

The United States and Turkey are also at odds over the short detention of Suleiman Abu Ghaith, a former Al Qaeda spokesman who was later released to a hotel in Ankara. All these disagreements add up: the much anticipated visits of secretary of state John Kerry to Ankara and of Erdoğan to Washington got postponed. Even without Erdoğan's Shanghai gambit, the relations between Turkey, the United States and the EU are at a very sensitive stage. But the threats to quit the West and join the SCO are unhelpful, unrealistic and unseemly.

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Article 5.

The Diplomat

Turkey: Abandoning the EU for the SCO?

Raffaello Pantucci and Alexandros Petersen

February 17, 2013 -- Recent moves suggest Turkey could make a bid for entry into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. It would be a mistake. The European Union is in a rut. Its once-vaunted economy and “ever closer” integration is facing the tough challenges of a dogged recession and anti-EU sentiment in some of its most powerful member states. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that some EU aspirants appear lukewarm about their prospects and continued desire to join the club. For Turkey, probably the most unfairly spurned EU aspirant, it makes a lot of sense to at least explore alternatives.

After all, Turkey’s economy is booming – leaping from \$614.6 billion in 2009 to \$775 billion in 2011 (in current U.S. dollars)

according to World Bank figures. Reflecting the country's position at the global cross-roads, Istanbul's Ataturk Airport international traffic more than doubled between the years 2006 and 2011. Last year alone its passenger volume increased by 20%, making it Europe's 6th busiest airport. The country's regional and global profile has grown since it first evinced a desire to join the EU. European leaders should only be surprised that Turkey has maintained its interest in the EU for so long.

However, even as it makes sense to decision-makers in Ankara to reconsider their relationship with the EU, it is not a strategically sound choice for Turkey to consider membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as an alternative. Already a "dialogue partner" with the SCO, late last month, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced that he had made an overture to Russian President Vladimir Putin about joining the SCO, stating "If we get into the SCO, we will say good-bye to the European Union. The Shanghai Five [former name of the SCO] is better — much more powerful." Erdogan also noted that Turkey has more "common values" with the SCO member states.

The issue, however, is that the SCO remains a nascent organization that is still in the process of defining itself. Absorbing new members, or figuring out the protocols for new members to be formally acceded, is merely one of the many problems the SCO faces. The Organization's security structures, including the unfortunate-acronym RATS Center [Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure], have yet to fully flesh out their purpose in advancing regional security in a very militarily tense region. Meanwhile, China continues to dominate the SCO's economic agenda, including negotiations to establish an SCO Free Trade

Area (FTA), an SCO Development Bank, and Beijing offering \$10 billion in loans for member states. All of this alarms Russian strategists who see China encroaching on Moscow's Central Asian interests. Nonetheless, all of this results in a minimal concrete presence, something we found first-hand as we travelled around Central Asia over the past year, finding little tangible evidence of the Organization's footprint on the ground.

Further complicating matters, Turkey is not the only country that has expressed an interest in becoming a full member. In fact, Pakistani and Indian officials both said their countries were interested in becoming full-fledge members at the Prime Minister's Summit in Bishkek last December. Iran too has expressed an interest in joining the organization, although Moscow recently said this would not be possible so long as Tehran remains under UN sanctions. All three countries currently languish as "observers," a status that Pakistan and India have held since 2005 and one that is considered superior to the 'dialogue partnership' that Turkey was only accorded last June. Still, both Pakistan and India – strategically important allies for China and Russia respectively – would undoubtedly feel put out were Turkey allowed to jump the queue.

None of this is to say that Turkey does not have a key role to play in Central Asia, the SCO's primary area of operations. Waiting for visas in Bishkek, we found ourselves jostling with Turkish truckers getting visas to Kazakhstan, whilst in the city's downtown, eager students at the Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University told us how exciting it would be to visit Turkey. In neighboring Uzbekistan, our driver told us how he preferred to fly Turkish airlines and how convenient the country was linguistically. This ethnic proximity is something that China in

particular has sought to cultivate – in April last year, Erdogan broke protocol when he started his Chinese trip with a stopover in Urumqi, capital of historically Turkic Uighur Xinjiang.

Eager to attract outside investment to encourage prosperity as a salve for ethnic tensions between Uighur and Han Chinese and historical underdevelopment, the Urumqi government has established a Turkish-Chinese trade park outside the city, offering Turkish investors favorable rates and support to develop businesses in the province. Turkey is clearly a significant regional player and its SCO “dialogue partner” status reflects this. But full membership is a step too far and one that seems out of whack with the Organization’s current trajectory.

Far more likely, Erdogan is hinting at a shift in orientation in frustration at the West’s relationship with his country. Europe has repeatedly proven an awkward partner and the United States has demonstrated little appetite to get overly involved in the problems that sit right on Turkey’s border. Aware of his nation’s geopolitical location at a global crossroads, Erdogan is highlighting that he has options.

Still, the reality is that joining the SCO would not heighten Turkey’s global stature or teach the West a lesson. U.S. and NATO policymakers keep an eye on the SCO, but none seriously view it as a strategic counterweight. In some respects, Western strategists have been far more eager than their Chinese counterparts about the possibility of an SCO role in stabilizing Afghanistan after Western combat forces depart in 2014. In the past year, the Organization has expressed some interest in doing more in Afghanistan, but it remains light years away from replacing NATO as a security guarantor.

As an ascendant power in Eurasia, Turkey may find it useful to keep in a toe in the SCO. However, full membership is not in the offing. And even if it were, Turkey's decision-makers would quickly find that China's multilateral cover for its bilateral engagement in Central Asia is still an empty shell.

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Article 6.

YaleGlobal Online Magazine

Is China Choking on Success?

Robert A. Manning

15 February 2013 – BEIJING -- A popular app on smartphones in Beijing is the US Embassy's Air Quality Index measurement. No wonder: Until last year, even as the air in China's capitol has increasingly come to resemble that of an airport smoking area, its ruling elite have refused to make public its air-quality levels

or even admit a problem. The levels of the nasty particulate PM2.5 – which measures 2.5 microns or less, small enough to enter lungs and bloodstreams – are some 40 times higher than the 25 micrograms per cubic meter deemed an acceptable level by the World Health Organization.

The entire city of Beijing is choking on its success, subjected to air quality that's the equivalent of smoking two packs a day.

Air quality is so bad that the Beijing government temporarily shut down more than 100 factories and ordered many government vehicles off the streets. According to a recent New York Times report, Beijing has reached new records for pollution, “beyond index” measurements, according to US Embassy Twitter account. Moreover, such pollution is surging all over northern China. Complaints have gone viral on China's blogosphere, with even state news media reporting it.

The putrid, poisonous air is an apt metaphor for the current Chinese predicament and challenges facing China's new leaders: The state-centric economic model is unsustainable, exceeding the limits of utility. China's citizens are paying a steep environmental price for breakneck development over the past 34 years – and increasingly question the legitimacy of a political elite and policies lacking in transparency and accountability.

Beijing is not alone. Consider that China features seven of the world's 10 most polluted cities, and then game out a new wave of urbanization over the coming generation projected to add 350 million more to the country's urban population. By 2025 there will be 221 Chinese cities with a million or more people living in them – well connected with smartphones. By comparison, Europe has 35 cities with 1 million or more.

China's rapid urbanization contributes to continuing growth of energy demand, which helps explain why despite large-scale investments in nuclear power, wind and solar, 70 percent of its energy still comes from coal, a percentage that's remained steady over the past two decades.

The smog encapsulates many core problems that must be overcome to keep China on a growth trajectory to meet the needs of its citizens, particularly a growing middle class. In a rare bit of candor, Wang Yuesi, an atmospheric physicist and member of a government working group on haze reduction, told the Financial Times that "coal burning and car emissions" interacting with a particular weather pattern were the immediate cause of the problem. Remarkably, Wang added, "Only if reform of the political system is put on the agenda will the economic system and the [environmental] management system be able to catch up."

Xi Jinping and his colleagues, expected to take the reins of power in March, are all too aware of the depth of problems facing China, of which the smog is so emblematic. China's state-centered, investment-driven export growth model is clearly one of diminishing returns.

This was the premise of China 2030, [1] a report last year co-sponsored by the World Bank and the Chinese State Development and Reform Commission, a leading policy body. China 2030 outlines the sweeping reforms necessary if Beijing is to realize its goal of becoming "a modern, harmonious, created, and high income society."

As the report states, "Realizing China's vision for 2030 will

demand a new development strategy” – one that requires strengthening the rule of law, with a greater role for private markets and “increased competition in the economy.” Importantly, the strategy argues that “reforms of state enterprises and banks would help align their corporate governance arrangements with the requirements of and permit competition with the private sector on a level playing field.”

The strategy also argues for a new strategic direction of “green growth,” viewing environmental protection and climate-change mitigation not as burdens, but as growth opportunities. Beyond the toll on public health, it’s estimated that environmental damage accounts for roughly 5 percent of annual GDP loss.

Although incoming President Xi and many in the standing politburo are viewed as likely reformers, thus far there are few signs of a sea change in China’s approach to development. The Chinese political elite are part of a wide network encompassing those who lead state banks and state-owned enterprises. Thus, it’s no surprise that China’s major state-owned oil companies have lobbied against enforcing higher fuel-efficiency standards, even as the number of autos in Beijing has jumped from 3 million in 2008 to more than 5 million in 2012.

This is the dilemma for China’s leaders, who know they must pursue far-reaching reforms that will have no small impact on the endemic corruption and the perquisites that come with Communist Party membership and government jobs, which benefit much of China’s upper echelon. But leaders appear somewhat perplexed as to how to implement specific new policies, navigating between competing interest groups. Instead, recent efforts to keep economic growth in the 7 to 8 percent

range have involved more stimulus spending, with state banks funneling renminbi to Chinese state-owned industry.

Over time, such behavior will only make growth and reform that much more difficult. These internal dilemmas may help explain Beijing's assertive, nationalist actions over disputed islets in the East China Sea with Japan and the South China Sea with the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia. The maritime disputes may be a popular short-term distraction, but won't alleviate pressures for change.

However, at the end of the day, the legitimacy of the China's ruling Communist Party has been based on performance. And more than three decades of double-digit economic growth have been part of a successful social contract. But the price of breakneck growth has been enormous environmental damage, growing inequality and a development model that has run its course. In the face of 400 million internet users and increasing access to smartphones, ubiquitous social media sites and blogs, Beijing confronts a credibility and accountability crisis on a near daily basis.

In a sense, China and the US face somewhat similar challenges. The China 2030 report could represent Beijing's version of the report from the bipartisan Simpson-Bowles Commission, appointed by President Barack Obama, which proposed in 2010 a broad array of tax, budget and entitlement policy reforms that have been met with a stony silence from both the Obama administration and congressional Republicans. Both major powers understand the challenges awaiting them, but find it extremely difficult to contemplate, let alone implement, the actual steps required.

One suspects that sooner or later both Beijing and Washington will likely gradually take on reform steps in a piecemeal approach. Former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, now deceased, described his approach to reform as, “crossing the river by feeling for stones.” That pragmatic approach is likely to be followed by his successors, but whether they can do so and keep China’s economic wheels turning sufficiently, let alone without making it still more difficult to breathe, is another question.

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Article 7.

Tablet

A World without Jews

Adam Kirsch

February 13, 2013 -- The title of David Nirenberg’s new book, Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition, uses a term pointedly different from the one we are used to. The hatred and oppression of Jews has been known since the late 19th century as anti-

Semitism—a label, it is worth remembering, originally worn with pride by German Jew-haters. What is the difference, then, between anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism? The answer, as it unfolds in Nirenberg’s scholarly tour de force, could be summarized this way: Anti-Semitism needs actual Jews to persecute; anti-Judaism can flourish perfectly well without them, since its target is not a group of people but an idea.

Nirenberg’s thesis is that this idea of Judaism, which bears only a passing resemblance to Judaism as practiced and lived by Jews, has been at the very center of Western civilization since the beginning. From Ptolemaic Egypt to early Christianity, from the Catholic Middle Ages to the Protestant Reformation, from the Enlightenment to fascism, whenever the West has wanted to define everything it is not—when it wants to put a name to its deepest fears and aversions—Judaism has been the name that came most easily to hand. “Anti-Judaism,” Nirenberg summarizes, “should not be understood as some archaic or irrational closet in the vast edifices of Western thought. It was rather one of the basic tools with which that edifice was constructed.”

This is a pretty depressing conclusion, especially for Jews destined to live inside that edifice; but the intellectual journey Nirenberg takes to get there is exhilarating. Each chapter of “Anti-Judaism” is devoted to an era in Western history and the particular kinds of anti-Judaism it fostered. Few if any of these moments are new discoveries; indeed, Nirenberg’s whole argument is that certain types of anti-Judaism are so central to Western culture that we take them for granted. What Nirenberg has done is to connect these varieties of anti-Judaism into a convincing narrative, working with original sources to draw out

the full implications of seminal anti-Jewish writings.

The main reason why Judaism, and therefore anti-Judaism, have been so central to Western culture is, of course, Christianity. But Nirenberg's first chapter shows that some persistent anti-Jewish tropes predate Jesus by hundreds of years. The Greek historian Hecataeus of Abdera, writing around 320 BCE, recorded an Egyptian tradition that inverts the familiar Exodus story. In this version, the Hebrews did not escape from Egypt but were expelled as an undesirable element, "strangers dwelling in their midst and practicing different rites." These exiles settled in Judea under the leadership of Moses, who instituted for them "an unsocial and intolerant mode of life." Already, Nirenberg observes, we can detect "what would become a fundamental concept of anti-Judaism—Jewish misanthropy." This element was emphasized by a somewhat later writer, an Egyptian priest named Manetho, who described the Exodus as the revolt of an impious group of "lepers and other unclean people."

As he will do throughout the book, Nirenberg describes these anti-Jewish texts not in a spirit of outrage or condemnation, but rather of inquiry. The question they raise is not whether the ancient Israelites were "really" lepers, but rather, why later Egyptian writers claimed they were. What sort of intellectual work did anti-Judaism perform in this particular culture? To answer the question, Nirenberg examines the deep history of Egypt, showing how ruptures caused by foreign invasion and religious innovation came to be associated with the Jews. Then he discusses the politics of Hellenistic Egypt, in which a large Jewish population was sandwiched uneasily between the Greek elite and the Egyptian masses. In a pattern that would be often repeated, this middle position left the Jews open to hostility

from both sides, which would erupt into frequent riots and massacres. In the long term, Nirenberg writes, “the characteristics of misanthropy, impiety, lawlessness, and universal enmity that ancient Egypt assigned to Moses and his people would remain available to later millennia: a tradition made venerable by antiquity, to be forgotten, rediscovered, and put to new uses by later generations of apologists and historians.”

With his chapters on Saint Paul and the early church, Nirenberg begins to navigate the headwaters of European anti-Judaism. Paul, whose epistles instructed small Christian communities in the Near East on points of behavior and doctrine, was writing at a time when Christianity was still primarily a Jewish movement. In his desire to emphasize the newness of his faith, and the rupture with Judaism that Jesus Christ represented, he cast the two religions as a series of oppositions. Where Jews read scripture according to the “letter,” the literal meaning, Christians read it according to the “spirit,” as an allegory predicting the coming of Christ. Likewise, where Jews obeyed traditional laws, Christians were liberated from them by faith in Christ—which explained why Gentile converts to Christianity did not need to follow Jewish practices like circumcision. To “Judaize,” to use a word Paul coined, meant to be a prisoner of this world, to believe in the visible rather than the invisible, the superficial appearance rather than the true meaning, law rather than love. More than a theological error, Judaism was an error in perception and cognition, a fundamentally wrong way of being in the world.

The problem, as Nirenberg argues in the richest sections of his book, is that this is an error to which Christians themselves are

highly prone. Paul and the early Christians lived in the expectation of the imminent end of the world, the return of Christ, and the establishment of the new Jerusalem. As the end kept on not coming, it became necessary to construct a Christian way of living in this world. But this meant that Christians would have need of law and letter, too, that they would need to “Judaize” to some degree.

That is why the theological debates in the early church, leading up to Saint Augustine, were often cast as arguments about Judaizing. Marcion, a 2nd-century-CE heretic, followed Paul’s denigration of “the letter” to the point of discarding the entire Old Testament (as the Hebrew Bible was now known); to keep reading Jewish scriptures was to miss the point of Christ’s radical newness. On the other hand, Justin Martyr, Marcion’s orthodox opponent, believed that this reduction of the Old Testament to its merely literal content was itself a way of repeating a “Jewish” error. In other words, both Marcion and Justin each accused the other of Judaizing, of reading and thinking like a Jew. This, too, would become a pattern for subsequent Christian (and post-Christian) history: If Judaism was an error, every error could potentially be thought of as Jewish. “This struggle to control the power of ‘Judaism,’ ” Nirenberg writes, “will turn out to be one of the most persistent and explosive themes of Christian political theology, from the Middle Ages to Modernity.”

With the rise of Catholic polities in the Middle Ages, anti-Judaism took on a less theological, more material cast. In countries like England, France, and Germany, the Jews held a unique legal status as the king’s “servants” or “slaves,” which put them outside the usual chain of feudal relationships. This

allowed Jews to play a much-needed but widely loathed role in finance and taxation, while also demonstrating the unique power of the monarch. The claim of the Capet dynasty to be kings of France, Nirenberg shows, rested in part on their claim to control the status of the Jews, a royal prerogative and a lucrative one: King after king plundered “his” Jews when in need of cash. At the same time, being the public face of royal power left the Jews exposed to the hatred of the people at large. Riots against Jews and ritual murder accusations became popular ways of demonstrating dissatisfaction with the government. When medieval subjects wanted to protest against their rulers, they would often accuse the king of being in league with the Jews, or even a Jew himself.

Accusations of Jewishness have little to do with actual Jews

The common thread in Anti-Judaism is that such accusations of Jewishness have little to do with actual Jews. They are a product of a Gentile discourse, in which Christians argue with other Christians by accusing them of Judaism. The same principle holds true in Nirenberg’s fascinating later chapters. When Martin Luther rebelled against Catholicism, he attacked the church’s “legalistic understanding of God’s justice” as Jewish: “In this sense the Roman church had become more ‘Jewish’ than the Jews.” When the Puritan revolutionaries in the English Civil War thought about the ideal constitution for the state, they looked to the ancient Israelite commonwealth as described in Judges and Kings.

Surprisingly, Nirenberg shows, the decline of religion in Europe and the rise of the Enlightenment did little to change the rhetoric of anti-Judaism. Voltaire, Kant, and Hegel all used Judaism as a

figure for what they wanted to overcome—superstition, legalistic morality, the dead past. Finally, in a brief concluding chapter on the 19th century and after, Nirenberg shows how Marx recapitulated ancient anti-Jewish tropes when he conceived of communist revolution as “the emancipation of mankind from Judaism”—that is, from money and commerce and social alienation. And this is not to mention some of Nirenberg’s most striking chapters, including one on the role of Judaism in early Islam and one devoted to a close reading of Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*.

Nirenberg has a sure grasp of a huge variety of historical and intellectual contexts, and, unlike many historians, he is able to write elegantly and clearly about complex topics. Not until the very end of *Anti-Judaism* does he touch, obliquely, on the question of what this ancient intellectual tradition means for Jews today. But as he suggests, the genealogy that connects contemporary anti-Zionism with traditional anti-Judaism is clear: “We live in an age in which millions of people are exposed daily to some variant of the argument that the challenges of the world they live in are best explained in terms of ‘Israel.’ ” For all the progress the world has made since the Holocaust in thinking rationally about Jews and Judaism, the story Nirenberg has to tell is not over. Anyone who wants to understand the challenges of thinking and living as a Jew in a non-Jewish culture should read *Anti-Judaism*.

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