

**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

**To:** J <jeevacation@gmail.com>

**Subject:** Re: January 24 update

**Date:** Fri, 24 Jan 2014 13:51:34 +0000

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Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 24, 2014, at 9:26 AM, J <jeevacation@gmail.com> wrote:

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Office of Terje Rod-Larsen <executiveoffice@ipinst.org>

**Date:** January 24, 2014 at 9:22:38 AM AST

**Subject:** January 24 update

24 January, 2014

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[Article 1.](#)

The Council on Foreign Relations

## **Small Steps to Syrian Transition?**

Interview with Edward P. Djerejian

January 23, 2014 -- *While the Geneva II talks on Syria that have begun in Switzerland "are positive developments," prospects are slim for "significant breakthroughs on the key issues of political transition," says Edward P. Djerejian, a former U.S. ambassador to Syria. In the coming days, Djerejian says, the parties may focus on limited cease-fires, possible prisoner exchanges, and ways to start alleviating the "tragic humanitarian crisis." If both sides believe they cannot win militarily, the talks could begin paving the way toward a political transition, says Djerejian.*

### **What are the chances for positive developments from the Geneva II talks, which have begun without any signs of goodwill?**

The prospects for any significant breakthroughs on the key issues of political transition are remote at this point, given how far apart the Syrian regime and the opposition groups are on the way forward. Nevertheless, the very fact that the conference has convened, that the Syrian government is represented at the foreign minister level at the opening, and that elements of the Syrian opposition—including the Syrian National Coalition—are participating, are positive developments. At least they have agreed to be in the same room together, albeit hurling strong invectives and accusations against one another. The goalposts of subsequent discussions will have to be relatively modest to have any chance of moving the agenda forward. Namely, the parties will likely focus on limited cease-fires in specific localities within Syria, possible prisoner exchanges, and so-called aid corridors to start alleviating the tragic humanitarian crisis in the country. These could be viewed as confidence-building measures that may—I emphasize, may—lead the parties to start addressing the framework of political transition in the

period ahead. Of course, there is also the dire prospect that the talks will break down, given that so much blood has been spilled and that revenge rather than reconciliation seems to be the prevailing sentiment among the parties to the conflict.

**Could these talks resemble the Vietnamese peace talks that began in 1968 but only ended in 1973—that is, over a very protracted period—because of the parties' mutual distrust?**

That is an interesting historic analogy, and there is the real possibility that the Syrian conflict can be protracted as long as the opposing sides still believe that they can "win" through military means and resistance. It is only when the calculus sets in that military victory is not possible that real compromise solutions can be pursued. The Syrian crisis at the very heart of the Arab world could, if prolonged, be a source of major regional disruption threatening the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all of Syria's neighbors—Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, and Israel.

Accordingly, the regional countries involved and the international community that all have a stake in peace and security should be mobilized to actively stem the crisis, bring the fighting to an end, and foster a political way forward. The stakes are simply too high for this crisis to become a major source of instability in the troubled Middle East.

**Is there any compromise that might appeal to all sides? The Assad government seems adamant that Bashar will not step down. The opposition is fragmented but united in demanding that the Assad regime be replaced. How would a "transition" government be set up? That is, after all, one of the conditions for Geneva II.**

As I said, first it will be important for both sides to conclude that neither one can prevail militarily for real compromise solutions to be explored. In the best of all worlds, and if there is limited progress along the lines I indicated at these talks, the very process of negotiations under the Geneva formula can allow the parties to begin to discuss tradeoffs and approaches for a framework of political transition that will involve hard compromises. For example, Bashar al-Assad has consistently indicated that presidential elections scheduled for June 2014 should be adhered to. Of course, he can be expected to rig those elections if he could. But if the Geneva formula moves forward and there is a process of constitutional and electoral reforms under strict international monitoring, that could

provide the political space for the opposition and regime representatives to contest the power structure in Syria at the ballot box.

**Did the United States make a mistake in not using military force over Assad's use of chemical weapons? Should it have been more decisive in its policy? Was it wrong in not permitting Iran to take part in the opening of the peace talks as desired by the UN and the Russians?**

The United States missed an opportunity two years ago to become more actively involved in supporting the Syrian non-radical opposition groups with stronger political and military support to try to level the playing field and allow the opposition to more effectively oppose the Assad regime's preponderance of military power, especially its air, missile, and heavy armor capabilities. We may have been in a more effective position today to influence events on the ground and at Geneva. Having said that, President Obama is right to avoid at all costs any U.S. military ground troops in Syria. On the chemical weapons issue, and despite the muddled way we got there, the end result is positive and quite an achievement that Syria is dismantling its significant chemical and biological weapons arsenal.

**You've known President Bashar Assad. Were you surprised at how ruthless his policy has turned out in the face of the long civil war? Or is it in a way emblematic of his support for his family and his heritage?**

I met President Bashar al-Assad three times, and there was much hope when he came to power in 2000 that he would be a reformer because of his youth, [his] Western education along with that of his wife, and his early public statements. In one meeting, years before the Arab Spring, I asked him why reforms were not proceeding at a meaningful pace in Syria. His response was that the people have to be prepared for structural reforms and, therefore, he was embarking on "administrative reforms" to prepare the way. This position turned out to be a subterfuge. When the Arab Spring came to Syria in 2011, it became painfully evident that his words never matched his deeds. Many observers thought he would get out ahead of the young Syrian peoples' call for reforms, akin to what King Mohammed VI of Morocco did. Instead, he listened to the ruling clan and confronted peaceful protestors with the armed might of the

Syrian military and security apparatus, and, in a self-fulfilling prophecy, lit the fire of a civil and sectarian war in Syria. The rest is tragic history.  
*Edward P. Djerejian, Founding Director, James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Rice University.*

[Article 2.](#)

The Christian Science Monitor

## **How to piece Syria back together**

Editorial

January 23, 2014 -- After months of diplomacy by [Russia](#), the United States, and other nations, [Syria](#)'s regime and the main opposition National Coalition are set to start their first face-to-face negotiations Friday. The least that can be expected, assuming the talks don't falter, is a truce in a civil war that continues to shock the world's conscience with its atrocities.

The best that can be expected is a seed of consensus over how to create a legitimate government that will start to put Syria back together. This prospect of a real peace, however, is made difficult by the fact that each side comes to the table with weak legitimacy.

[President Bashar al-Assad](#) has lost the support of Syria's Sunni majority by his ruthless repression, including the use of torture and chemical weapons. On the other side, the National Coalition is fractured as a political opposition and largely ignored by rebels groups fighting within Syria. In this vacuum of legitimacy, it is up to other countries – either out of genuine concern over the slaughter in Syria or with a national interest in the war's outcome – to force a consensus at the talks in Switzerland. Oddly, it is Mr. Assad and his main backer, [Iran](#), that want to settle the question of legitimacy through elections. This may seem like an embrace of democracy. But given how the Assad family dynasty and Iran's ruling clerics have rigged elections in their countries, this path would require any election in Syria to be well-monitored by foreign groups and conducted without a war going on. Few expect Assad, who now holds the upper hand in the conflict, to agree to such a path.

The more likely course is an agreement in Geneva on a transitional government that will have enough power to hold fair elections and include Syrian leaders respected by both sides. That was the outline set forth by the United Nations in 2012 and on now needs a strong diplomatic push, especially by Russia, [Europe](#), and the US.

With nearly a third of Syrians displaced after almost three years of fighting, elections cannot be held soon. All sides must instead find alternative ways to create the qualities of a democracy without a formal democracy: stability, consensus, effective governance, and most of all, a sense of community around an inclusive identity.

Other countries can guide the negotiations toward those goals.

Ultimately, however, the Syrian sides must develop enough trust in each other that they seek an agreement. What legitimacy they didn't bring to the table can be forged at the table by achieving an agreement for all Syrians.

[Article 3.](#)

Bloomberg

## **Davos, the Iranian Chutzpah Festival**

Jeffrey Goldberg

Jan 23, 2014 -- Perhaps it's the altitude. Maybe it's the rich food -- or the rich people. Or maybe the word for chutzpah in Farsi is "Davos."

For whatever reason, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, have been putting on a brass-neck display this week in Switzerland -- and Rouhani's [speech today](#) at the World Economic Forum was no exception. Rouhani and Zarif are busy trying, with intermittent success, to beguile the West into submission. (They've left the executions of Kurdish activists, the suppression of the Baha'i and the imprisonment of Christian pastors for the to-do lists of other senior Iranian officials.) In the course of the latest iteration of their charm offensive, they've made some inadvertently hilarious statements. My favorite might be [this tweet](#) yesterday that came from Rouhani's account (which is apparently [managed by aides](#)): "Terrorism will come back to haunt those who sponsor it. If a govt thinks it can topple another

govt by supporting terrorists, it's 100% wrong.” This is from the president of a country that sits on the U.S. State Department’s list of [state sponsors of terrorism](#), and that supplies skilled terrorists, financing and arms to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who has turned Syria into hell itself. Iran also funds and supplies a Lebanese militia, Hezbollah, that murders its political rivals and is responsible for terrorist acts around the globe. A comment nearly as audacious came from Zarif, who made this statement to [CNN’s Jim Sciutto](#) yesterday: “Why don’t we allow the Syrians to talk about how they can conduct a free and fair election? Why do people need to set an agenda and impose their agenda on the Syrian people?” Zarif is the foreign minister of a country ruled by an unelected “supreme leader,” talking about an Iranian client, Assad, who uses Iranian-supplied arms to kill political dissidents. Another candidate for most galling statement made by an Iranian leader comes from Rouhani’s Twitter [account](#) last week: “Our relationship w/ the world is based on Iranian nation’s interests. In #Geneva agreement world powers surrendered to Iranian nation’s will.” This tweet was deleted by unknown hands -- it was probably seen as a bit too pushy (or a bit too close to the truth) by the Iranian foreign ministry. Rouhani managed to be both impudent and on-message today in his address at Davos, where he announced “that one of the theoretical and practical priorities of my government is constructive engagement with the world.” By “world,” of course, he did not mean Israel, a member-state of the United Nations that Iran is seeking to annihilate. And he didn't seem to be referring to Iran’s many Arab neighbors, which the Iranian government has been seeking to destabilize and undermine for three decades. And he clearly wasn't making reference to Thailand, Georgia, Azerbaijan and the U.S., all of which are countries where Iranian-sponsored terrorists have recently been operating.

Rouhani, in his speech, made another assertion that could be characterized fairly as both bold and misleading: “I strongly and clearly state that nuclear weapons have no place in our security strategy, and Iran has no motivation to move in that direction.” Iran has spent billions of dollars in its pursuit of nuclear weapons technology, and in pursuit of the kind of highly enriched uranium that has only one purpose. It has suffered the loss of billions more because of sanctions designed to

prevent it from reaching the nuclear weapons threshold. But facts be damned: There's a charm offensive to be waged. And Davos is quite apparently ready to be charmed.

[Article 4.](#)

[The Washington Institute](#)

## **Will Israel and the United States Break Up Over Iran?**

[Robert Satloff](#)

Jan. 23 2014 -- Israel began the year facing a truly Dickensian moment—enjoying the best of times while staring at the worst of times.

Since Jewish DNA tends to accentuate the negative, let's first focus on the positive: the amazing resilience Israel has shown in the face of global economic adversity and the remarkable calm with which Israel has faced the regional chaos swirling around it.

First, the economy: If your early memories of Israel, like mine, included exasperating trips to Soviet-style banks to buy just enough shekels to get through the night, fearing the investment would lose half its value by sunrise, it is mind-boggling to think that Israel today has one of the strongest currencies in the world. That is a reflection of Israel's economic miracle. As former ambassador to the U.S. Michael Oren was fond of recalling, this miracle extends to such feats of technological and entrepreneurial chutzpah as exporting wine to France and caviar to Russia. Last summer, Israel achieved the highest cultural status in Western civilization when an Israeli brand of hummus was named the official dip of the National Football League.

Second, stability. Israel didn't completely escape the street protests that have engulfed the Middle East and much of the rest of the world during the past two years. Tens of thousands have camped out in Israeli cities, too. But there is a real difference: Protests that were about fundamental issues of life, death, and freedom in Cairo, Aleppo, Tunis, and Kiev were, in Israel, about real-estate prices and the high cost of cottage cheese.

Indeed, just as Israel now has a physical barrier helping prevent terrorist attacks, it seems to have a sort of political barrier against external uncertainty. Although chaos has become the new normal in the two largest states on Israel's border, Egypt and Syria, it hasn't affected the stability in Israel's "near abroad"—the inner circle of Israel, the West Bank, and Jordan. Even a hardened skeptic should note that the prospects for progress in Israeli–Palestinian negotiations are higher today than at any time in a decade, though the obstacles to a real breakthrough remain entrenched. There are many scenarios in which this relatively rosy picture could turn dark, of course, but it hasn't yet. This calm at the heart of the Middle East storm is striking.

The good news, then, is really good. The bad news, however, is really, really bad—at least, it could be. Ultimately, it all comes down to Iran and America.

Advocates of the "first-step" nuclear agreement reached between Iran and the U.S.-led coalition of nations say it has stopped the clock on Iran's nuclear progress to give diplomacy a chance to roll back the program altogether, thereby denying Iran the ability to become a state on the threshold of achieving a nuclear weapon. The agreement's detractors say that the Obama administration has squandered maximum leverage for minimal result, leaving the international coalition with less leverage to compel a comprehensive agreement that truly shuts the door on Iran's bomb-making potential. Though administration spokespeople have—disgracefully, in my view—attacked the bona fides of critics, reasonable people can disagree on this. I hope the deal's advocates are right; I have my doubts.

What is incontestable, however, is that Iran's march to regional influence continues apace—in Syria, where it is winning a stunning victory in partnership with Hezbollah and Bashar "the Butcher" al-Assad; in Iraq, where its influence is growing in the wake of America's departure; and even in the Gulf, where some local leaders see the writing on the wall and may be hedging their bets. Israel, however, can't hedge its bet—its relationship with America is too important.

To offer the obligatory reminder: Washington and Jerusalem have always had their differences, some truly profound. From 1948 to 1967, America opposed Israel's expansion beyond the borders envisioned in the U.N.

partition resolution. And America has never recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital, despite Israel's repeated requests. At times, the two nations even disagree on the reason for the lack of progress toward peace—is it Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories or the Arabs' refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the Jewish state? Despite all this, America and Israel have found a way to build a partnership that is the envy of countries around the world.

But given the depths of U.S.–Israeli division over Iran, this partnership may face its most severe test in 2014. It has been decades (1982) since an Israeli prime minister so directly opposed a diplomatic initiative of the American president. It has been even longer (1956) since an American president stated publicly and emphatically that he, not Israel's prime minister, knew what was in Israel's best interests.

Looking forward, even President Obama gave no more than 50–50 odds that U.S. diplomats will reach a comprehensive agreement with Iran. The alternative would likely be to extend the temporary deal, triggering a deeper crisis with Israel. That could heighten the potential for a unilateral Israeli military attack on Iran's nuclear sites, with U.S. –Israel ties suffering massive collateral damage. Since Israel needs American support when the dust clears, that might not qualify as the worst of times, but it comes close.

So let's hope 2014 sees U.S. diplomats pulling a nuclear rabbit out of the hat with a final Iran deal that meets Israel's concerns, consigning this moment of crisis to a chapter in some future history book. Otherwise, Israelis will have a lot more on their minds than the price of cottage cheese.

*Robert Satloff is executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.*

This article originally appeared in Moment magazine's January/February issue. Moment magazine is an independent bimonthly of politics, culture, and religion, co-founded by Nobel Prize laureate Elie Wiesel. For more go to [momentmag.com](http://momentmag.com).

[Article 5.](#)

The Diplomat

# Looking Ahead to Post-Obama U.S.-Iran Relations

Robert Mason

January 22, 2014 -- The permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany (P5+1) and Iran [hammered out an interim nuclear deal](#) (the so-called Joint Plan of Action) which entered into force on January 20. The Joint Plan of Action will involve Iran eliminating stockpiles of its more highly enriched uranium, dismantling some its enrichment related infrastructure, agreeing to more inspections and not to activate any more centrifuges. In return, Iran gets some sanctions relief.

However, given the poor history and number of irritants in each bilateral relationship between Iran and the West, it is likely that a broader politico-security deal with Iran, if there is to be one, will still be in the process of being negotiated a couple of years from now.

In my forthcoming book on Iranian foreign policy, *Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia: Economics and Diplomacy in the Middle East* (I B Tauris, 2014), I make the argument that active containment of Iran has failed and that active engagement (consistent diplomacy and the utilization of a range of soft power tools, mainly economic, to support and achieve clear diplomatic objectives) will help rebuild relations between Iran and the West. The U.S. and its Western allies could include positive measures such as sanctions relief and eventually sanctions removal, foreign direct investment to develop Iran's oil and gas industry, and technology transfer from countries such as Japan to achieve this objective. But such engagement requires time. I also argue that a deal with Iran not only hinges on the success of the preliminary nuclear deal, but also on the success of any renewed cooperation in other areas. For example, should there be clear headway made from bringing Iran into informal or formal talks on the future of Syria (e.g. Geneva II) or Afghanistan, then this could contribute to confidence and sustain future diplomatic engagement.

Syria

It is difficult to identify where Syria might be by the end of the decade given the current stalemate in the conflict. The situation remains

fundamentally tied to establishing facts on the ground by the Syrian military and opposition forces. No matter how surprising the election of a moderate, Hassan Rouhani, was in the recent Iranian presidential elections, Iran's solid political, financial and military alliance with Syria will endure because the mutual fear of insecurity and rationale for resistance to U.S. or Israeli regional hegemony remains.

It is therefore highly likely that after this initial nuclear negotiation, the U.S. and Iran will encounter some serious ideological and geo-strategic obstacles that will be far more difficult to resolve than a compromise on technical details for a nuclear program that Rouhani has already [explicitly stated](#) has "no place in Iran's security doctrine." Given the current dynamic, Iran's relationship with the West is unlikely to change dramatically in the coming years. At best, there could be more economic cooperation, particularly in signing new oil and gas contracts and in settling past debts. The relationship remains fundamentally constrained by the Israeli government and the U.S. Congress which take a skeptical view of any Iranian foreign policy reform and a punitive approach to sanctions enforcement and tightening. It also remains constrained by the ultra-nationalist hardliners in Iran (including the IRGC) whose interests are best served by maintaining an anti-Western policy and those in the political establishment who are unwilling to cede further concessions to the West on sensitive security matters without reciprocal concessions.

#### Managing the Diplomatic Track

It is therefore possible amid tight institutional constraints that the Obama administration has done all it can do on Iran and will leave a legacy of improved relations without any overall political reconciliation. The lack of normalized relations will continue to perpetuate the negative aspect of relations between Iran and the Gulf States because the U.S. will be unable to leverage substantial ties with Iran into a win-win regional security strategy. Although the strategic rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran for dominance in the Islamic world and accusations about alleged Iranian interference in the domestic affairs of the Gulf States are likely to continue, there are signs the United Arab Emirates (UAE) may be moderating its stance on Iran. Besides speculation that secret talks between the UAE and Iran over an unresolved islands dispute in the Persian Gulf are close to a successful conclusion, the ruler of

Dubai and prime minister of the UAE, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, has [publicly stated his support for sanctions against Iran to be lifted](#). Whilst such negotiations and gestures may lead to improved bilateral relations between the UAE and Iran, it is doubtful they will facilitate meaningful changes in the region.

The U.S. Congress has [already expressed resistance](#) to rolling back sanctions against Iran. Although the Democrats have a slim majority in the Senate (52 Democrats versus 46 Republicans as of December 2013), about half of all senators back a bill for onerous new sanctions against Iran called the [Nuclear Weapons Free Iran Act](#) proposed by Senator Robert Mendez (D-NJ). It is unclear if the bill will achieve the two-thirds majority needed to pass, but President Obama has already threatened to veto it since it would compromise the current diplomatic agreement. However, the bill probably would gain the necessary congressional support if Iran was perceived to have broken the agreement. Such a unilateral move without close coordination with western allies could be enough to undermine the entire sanctions regime.

Robert Gates recently [asserted](#) that: "There is no international problem that can be addressed or solved without the engagement and leadership of the United States...", and yet the U.S. government has been unable to solve the Iranian conundrum for the past 30 years, even when it was in its interests to do so immediately post 9/11. What U.S. foreign policy has lacked in the Middle East is diplomatic ambition. Whereas hundreds of billions of dollars have been pumped into the War on Terror over the past decade, little headway has been made in policy areas that could have contributed more to bridging the old ideological and sectarian divides that have manifested themselves in new Middle East conflicts. Lack of tangible progress on the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) has not only created a jaundiced view of the issue by those most familiar with it, but some Israeli politicians are now [openly skeptical](#) of U.S. arbitration. Nevertheless, the successful conclusion of a two-state solution would make it infinitely easier to be optimistic that progress could be made on other regional issues. Importantly, the conclusion of the MEPP would help define borders, ensure the recognition of Israel by all the states in the Arab world, and contribute to an overall reduction in regional tensions.

Finally, whilst the Obama administration has managed to avoid becoming embroiled in the Arab Spring, it has not managed to resolve the crises in Yemen, Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria. The U.S.-Iran deal and the MEPP could therefore be the beginning of the U.S. government regaining traction on vital Middle East issues. At the same time, the Obama administration must remain cognizant that it is the only actor capable of managing a resurgent Iran and providing security guarantees to the Gulf states and Israel to allay their fears and limit any hard power responses.

#### Post Obama U.S.-Iran Relations

Under the next U.S. president, the pendulum should swing back from the extremes of the George W. Bush administration's military adventurism and the Obama administration's largely hands-off policy during the Arab Spring to a point where the U.S. government becomes a strategic enabler in the Middle East. In this sense the U.S. government could use its vast resources to set the preconditions (including helping to activate the political will of the region's political leaders) necessary to concluding revised security and economic treaties. The cases of chemical weapons use against Iranian and Syrian civilian populations as well as widespread concern about the Iranian nuclear program all point to the urgency of implementing a new regional security agenda which is acceptable to all stakeholders.

The U.S. government should be championing this with the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) signatories in the Gulf States and across the region (including NPT non-signatories such as Israel, India and Pakistan) where the U.S. could leverage its strong bilateral relationships into forming an agreement on applying revised Safeguard Agreements and Additional Protocols. This would be a logical extension of the Iranian nuclear deal which has raised the bar of transparency and verification, and it could become a possible interim step to establishing a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East (WMDFZME). The incentive for Israel to finally declare its nuclear arsenal and submit to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) controls would be the immediate implementation of substantial additional measures designed to enhance its national security. For Iran, such an agreement would further undermine its resistance ideology.

Whilst Obama's main foreign policy legacy so far appears to be in establishing the Action Plan with Tehran, only with the U.S. government engaging more ambitiously and actively on the MEPP and on other security and economic issues can a broader legacy with Iran and the Arab world be realized.

*Dr. Robert Mason is Lecturer in International Relations at the British University in Egypt.*

[Article 6.](#)

The Washington Post

## **The United States needs to tell Turkey to change course**

Morton Abramowitz, Eric Edelman and Blaise Misztal

Jan. 23 2014 -- Whatever his achievements over the past decade, Turkey's prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is destroying his country's parlous democracy. That is a profound problem for Turks and Turkey's Western allies. Staying silent, out of fear that speaking out would harm some short-term interests, risks Turkey's longer-term stability.

Last month police [arrested more than 50 people](#) close to Erdogan's government — including prominent business executives and sons of government ministers — on charges of corruption. While graft has long permeated Turkish governments, these allegations are unprecedented. They reach [high levels of government](#) and involve not just domestic transgressions but also [sizable evasions of Iranian sanctions](#).

Rather than ensuring a meticulous examination of these charges, Erdogan is burying them. He has [removed the case's lead prosecutors](#) and some [3,000 police officers nationwide](#), sought to increase government control over a weak judiciary, [limited the ability of police to conduct independent investigations](#), prevented journalists from reporting on the case and [mounted a media campaign](#) to destroy his enemies — particularly the followers of powerful religious leader Fethullah Gulen, who were once his strongest allies. And, as he did when protests erupted

against his government last summer, Erdogan portrays the events as a massive plot against him. He has also implicated other opposition parties and foreign powers and even [threatened to expel the U.S. ambassador](#). These are not the actions of a politician simply seeking to stave off scandal. Erdogan is exploiting the allegations to further stifle dissent and strengthen his grip on Turkey.

His tactics are not new. When challenged, Erdogan has sought to destroy his opponents rather than compromise. After effectively [sidelining the military's political influence](#), Erdogan went after other centers of power: [media](#), [business leaders](#) and [civil society](#); now, the Gulenists, a strong, politically effective community. The prime minister has exploited crises — whether real or manufactured — to undermine the rule of law.

The protests in Gezi Park last year and the present scandal are neither isolated domestic disturbances nor simple political infighting. Their occurrence and the government's reaction are symptomatic of a struggle between an increasingly authoritarian government, which seeks to reduce resistance to its rule, and opposition movements ranging from secular liberals to conservative Gulenists.

That struggle has entered a new phase. [Turkey has important local elections](#) at the end of March, followed by presidential and parliamentary campaigns. Erdogan has not yet declared whether he will seek the presidency or reelection as prime minister, but he is intent on continuing to run Turkey. These allegations, and his subsequent actions, could lower his vote tallies; they have given the opposition parties new life.

Turkey's democratic decline creates a pressing dilemma for the United States. Erdogan's current course would take Turkey from an imperfect democracy to an autocracy. Such a fate for a close ally and NATO member would have profound implications for our partnership, the United States' beleaguered credibility and the prospects for democracy in the region. It would also threaten Turkey's economy.

Secretary of State John Kerry, with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu in tow, recently made some [modest, generalized public references](#) to U.S. devotion to democracy and the rule of law while insisting that the United States would stay out of Turkish domestic politics and rhapsodizing on the bilateral relationship. Not surprisingly, Davutoglu agreed.

Erdogan's denunciation of supposed U.S. meddling puts Washington in a difficult position: If the United States weighs in on the scandal, it might give his accusations merit and rally more supporters to his side.

Yet for much of Erdogan's rule, the U.S. approach has been mostly public silence on unfavorable developments, with occasional private rebukes. As we argued in a [recent Bipartisan Policy Center report](#), this strategy has not succeeded. It has not [influenced important aspects of Erdogan's foreign policy](#), which have often diverged from U.S. policy; moderated his confrontational rhetoric; or led to a less antagonistic domestic policy. Indeed, U.S. silence all these years might have encouraged Erdogan.

U.S. policymakers should lay aside their reluctance to confront the disastrous impact of Erdogan's dictatorial tendencies and remind the Turkish leader of the importance the United States attaches to Turkey's political stability and democratic vitality. Particularly as their influence is greater than it appears: While Turks do not trust the United States, neither do they like to be at odds with it.

Erdogan has exploited Turkey's partnership with the United States and his close personal relationship with President Obama to burnish his legitimacy. U.S. condemnation of his recent actions — publicly and even more strongly in private — might temper his posturing. However significant U.S. interests with Turkey are, neither silence nor platitudes will help halt its political descent.

Erdogan is doing great harm to Turkey's democracy. The United States should make clear, privately and publicly, that his extreme actions and demagoguery are subverting Turkey's political institutions and values and endangering the U.S.-Turkey relationship.

*Morton Abramowitz and Eric Edelman are former U.S. ambassadors to Turkey and co-chairs of the Bipartisan Policy Center's Turkey Initiative. Blaise Misztal is acting director of foreign policy at the center.*

[Article 7.](#)

The Atlantic

## **What Jobs Will the Robots Take?**

Derek Thompson

Jan 23 2014 -- It is an invisible force that goes by many names. Computerization. Automation. Artificial intelligence. Technology. Innovation. And, everyone's favorite, ROBOTS.

Whatever name you prefer, some form of it has been stoking progress and killing jobs—from seamstresses to paralegals—for centuries. But this time is different: Nearly half of American jobs today could be automated in "a decade or two," according to a [new paper](#) by Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael A. Osborne, discussed recently in [The Economist](#). The question is: Which half?

Another way of posing the same question is: Where do machines work better than people? Tractors are more powerful than farmers. Robotic arms are stronger and more tireless than assembly-line workers. But in the past 30 years, software and robots have thrived at replacing a particular kind of occupation: the average-wage, middle-skill, routine-heavy worker, especially in manufacturing and office admin.

Indeed, Frey and Osborne project that the next wave of computer progress will continue to shred human work where it already has: manufacturing, administrative support, retail, and transportation. Most remaining factory jobs are "likely to diminish over the next decades," they write. Cashiers, counter clerks, and telemarketers are similarly endangered. On the far right side of this graph, you can see the industry breakdown of the 47 percent of jobs they consider at "high risk."

And, for the nitty-gritty breakdown, here's a chart of the ten jobs with a 99-percent likelihood of being replaced by machines and software. They are mostly routine-based jobs (telemarketing, sewing) and work that can be solved by smart algorithms (tax preparation, data entry keyers, and insurance underwriters). At the bottom, I've also listed the dozen jobs they consider least likely to be automated. Health care workers, people entrusted with our safety, and management positions dominate the list. If you wanted to use this graph as a guide to the future of automation, your upshot would be: Machines are better at rules and routines; people are better at directing and diagnosing. But it doesn't have to stay that way.

The Next Big Thing

Predicting the future typically means extrapolating the past. It often fails to anticipate breakthroughs. But it's precisely those unpredictable breakthroughs in computing that could have the biggest impact on the workforce.

For example, imagine somebody in 2004 forecasting the next ten years in mobile technology. In 2004, three years before the introduction of the iPhone, the best-selling mobile device, the Nokia 2600, looked like this: Many extrapolations of phones from the early 2000s were just ["the same thing, but smaller."](#) It hasn't turned out that way at all: Smartphones are hardly phones, and they're bigger than the Nokia 2600. If you think wearable technology or the "Internet of Things" seem kind of stupid today, well, fine. But remember that ten years ago, the future of mobile appeared to be a minuscule cordless landline phone with Tetris, and now [smartphones sales are about to overtake computers.](#)

Breakthroughs can be fast.

We might be on the edge of a breakthrough moment in robotics and artificial intelligence. Although the past 30 years have hollowed out the middle, high- and low-skill jobs have actually increased, as if protected from the invading armies of robots by their own moats. Higher-skill workers have been protected by a kind of social-intelligence moat. Computers are historically good at executing routines, but they're bad at finding patterns, communicating with people, and making decisions, which is what managers are paid to do. This is why some people think managers are, for the moment, one of the largest categories immune to the rushing wave of AI.

Meanwhile, lower-skill workers have been protected by the Moravec moat. Hans Moravec was a futurist who pointed out that machine technology mimicked a savant infant: Machines could do long math equations instantly and beat anybody in chess, but they can't answer a simple question or walk up a flight of stairs. As a result, menial work done by people without much education (like home health care workers, or fast-food attendants) have been spared, too.

But perhaps we've hit an inflection point. As Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee pointed out in their book [Race Against the Machine](#) (and in their new book [The Second Machine Age](#)), robots are finally crossing these moats by moving and thinking like people. Amazon has

bought robots to work its warehouses. Narrative Science can write earnings summaries that are indistinguishable from wire reports. We can say to our phones I'm lost, help and our phones can tell us how to get home.

Computers that can drive cars, in particular, were never supposed to happen. Even ten years ago, many engineers said it was impossible. Navigating a crowded street isn't mindlessly routine. It needs a deft combination of spacial awareness, soft focus, and constant anticipation--skills that are quintessentially human. But I don't need to tell you about Google's self-driving cars, because they're one of the most over-covered stories in tech today.

And that's the most remarkable thing: In a decade, the idea of computers driving cars went from impossible to boring.

### The Human Half

In the 19th century, new manufacturing technology replaced what was then skilled labor. Somebody writing about the future of innovation then might have said skilled labor is doomed. In the second half of the 20th century, however, software technology took the place of median-salaried office work, which economists like David Autor have called the "hollowing out" of the middle-skilled workforce.

The first wave showed that machines are better at assembling things. The second showed that machines are better at organization things. Now data analytics and self-driving cars suggest they might be better at pattern-recognition and driving. So what are we better at?

If you go back to the two graphs in this piece to locate the safest industries and jobs, they're dominated by managers, health-care workers, and a super-category that encompasses education, media, and community service. One conclusion to draw from this is that humans are, and will always be, superior at working with, and caring for, other humans. In this light, automation doesn't make the world worse. Far from it: It creates new opportunities for human ingenuity.

But robots are already [creeping into diagnostics and surgeries](#). Schools are already experimenting with software that replaces teaching hours. The fact that some industries have been safe from automation for the last three decades doesn't guarantee that they'll be safe for the next one. As Frey and Osborne write in their conclusion:

While computerization has been historically confined to routine tasks involving explicit rule-based activities, algorithms for big data are now rapidly entering domains reliant upon pattern recognition and can readily substitute for labour in a wide range of non-routine cognitive tasks. In addition, advanced robots are gaining enhanced senses and dexterity, allowing them to perform a broader scope of manual tasks. This is likely to change the nature of work across industries and occupations. It would be anxious enough if we knew exactly which jobs are next in line for automation. The truth is scarier. We don't really have a clue.

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