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NYT

Israel's Big Question

Thomas L. Friedman

February 12, 2014 -- I've written a series of columns from Israel in the past two weeks because I believe that if Secretary of State John Kerry brings his peace mission to a head and presents the parties with a clear framework for an agreement, Israel and the Jewish people will face one of the most

critical choices in their history. And when they do, all hell could break loose in Israel. It is important to understand why.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, not without reason, is asking the Palestinians to recognize Israel as the “nation state of the Jewish people,” confirming that if Israel cedes them a state in the West Bank, there will be two-states-for-two-peoples. But, for Netanyahu to get an answer to that question, he will have to give an answer to a question Israelis have been wrestling with, and avoiding, ever since the 1967 war reconnected them with the heartland of ancient Israel, in the West Bank, known to Jews as Judea and Samaria. And that is:

“What is the nation state of the Jewish people?”

Kerry, by steadily making the answer to that question unavoidable, has set the whole Israeli political system into a roiling debate, with some ministers shrilly attacking Kerry and slamming Netanyahu for even putting the question on the table — as if the status quo were sustainable and just hunky-dory.

For instance, Kerry recently observed at a conference in Munich that if the current peace talks failed “there’s an increasing delegitimization campaign that’s been building up [against Israel]. People are very sensitive to it. There are talks of boycotts and other kinds of things.”

Some Israeli ministers and American Jewish leaders blasted Kerry for what they said was his trying to use the ██████ movement — “boycotts, divestment and sanctions” — as a club to pressure Israel into making more concessions. I strongly disagree. Kerry and President Obama are trying to build Israelis a secure off-ramp from the highway they’re hurtling down in the West Bank that only ends in some really bad places for Israel and the Jewish people.

I like the way Gidi Grinstein, the founder of the Reut Institute, a nonprofit that works on the thorniest problems of Israeli society, puts it: “We are in a critical moment in our history — far more significant than many realize.” Ever since 1936, “the Zionist movement has sought to establish a sovereign Jewish and democratic majority in Zion, and, therefore, eventually accepted the principle of two-states-for-two-peoples: a Jewish state and an Arab state.” Although there is a powerful settler movement in Israel that would like to absorb the West Bank today, the State of Israel has continued to tell the world and the Jewish people that, under the right

security conditions, it would cede control of that occupied territory and its 2.5 million Palestinians and forge a two-state deal.

If Kerry's mission fails — because either Israelis or Palestinians or both balk — he will either be tacitly or explicitly declaring that this two-state solution is no longer a viable option and “that would plunge Israel into a totally different paradigm,” said Grinstein, who recently authored [the book](#) “Flexigidity: The Secret of Jewish Adaptability.”

It would force Israel onto one of three bad paths: either a unilateral withdrawal from parts of the West Bank or annexation and granting the Palestinians there citizenship, making Israel a binational state. Or failing to do either, Israel by default could become some kind of apartheid-like state in permanent control over the 2.5 million Palestinians. There are no other options.

But what these three options have in common, noted Grinstein, is that they would lead to a “massive eruption of the ██████. movement” and “the ██████. movement at heart is not about Israel's policies but Israel's existence: they want to see Israel disappear. What is keeping the ██████. movement contained is that we're still in the paradigm of the two-state solution.” If that paradigm goes, he added, not only will the ██████. movement launch with new momentum, but the line between it and those around the world who are truly just critical of Israel's West Bank occupation will get blurred.

Furthermore, being the “nation state of the Jewish people,” means that the values of Israel cannot be sharply divergent from the values of the Jewish diaspora (the vast majority of American Jews vote liberal) or from the values of America — Israel's only true ally. Added Grinstein: “If that happens, the relationship between Israel and America and American Jewry will inevitably become polarized.”

To avoid that, no one expects Israel to concede to whatever Palestinians demand or to accept insecure borders or to give Palestinians a free pass on their excesses. And Kerry is not asking that. Israel should bargain hard and protect its interests. “But Israel has to be seen as credibly committed to ending its control over the Palestinians in the West Bank,” concluded Grinstein, otherwise it won't just have a problem with ██████., but eventually with America and a growing segment of American Jews — “turning Israel from a force of unity for Jews to a force of disunity.”

So responding to the Kerry plan, when it comes, is about something very deep: What is the nation state of the Jewish people — and how will Jews abroad and Israel’s closest ally, America, relate to it in the future?

[Article 2.](#)

The Daily beast

How AIPAC Botched Its Biggest Fight in Years

Eli Lake

February 11, 2014 -- Ordinarily, when Washington’s most powerful pro-Israel lobby asks senators to do something, lawmakers of both parties are happy to oblige. Not just some of them. All of them. On crucial Capitol Hill votes, measures favored by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, or AIPAC, often pass unopposed.

Last week was different. Very, very different. First, AIPAC was forced, in the wake of Democratic opposition, to retreat for the moment on the Iran sanctions bill the group had been pushing for months. Then, nearly every Republican in the Senate ignored AIPAC’s call for a retreat on the bill, and decided to keep on [pushing for a vote on it](#), anyway.

Somehow, on the issue arguably of most importance to both the Israeli government and America’s pro-Israel community—Iran and its nuclear ambitions—AIPAC didn’t merely fail to deliver. It alienated its most ardent supporters, and helped turn what was a bipartisan effort to keep Iran in check into just another political squabble. The lobby that everybody in Washington publicly backs somehow managed to piss off just about everyone.

Even the Israeli government isn’t happy with AIPAC’s handling of the sanctions bill. Sen. Bob Corker, the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said he had a “very direct conversation” with Ron Dermer, Israel’s ambassador to the United States, on the sanctions bill early last month. “AIPAC and Israel are in different places on this issue,” Corker said of his conversation with Dermer, who he said supported the sanctions bill now and not at a later date.

On Feb. 3, AIPAC senior members (known inside the organization as “key contacts”) began reaching out to Republican senators to say that now was not the time to vote on an Iran sanctions bill opposed fiercely by the White House, according to four Senate sources who spoke to The Daily Beast on condition of anonymity. Until then, AIPAC was willing to endure open criticism from the White House, which had described the sanctions push as a [rush to war](#). And why not? With 59 co-sponsors, the bill seemed almost guaranteed to pass.

Among the lawmakers reached were a handful of Republican senators, including Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell; Sen. Mark Kirk (the Republican co-sponsor of the bill AIPAC had been pushing to support until then), and Sen. Lindsey Graham, another stalwart ally of Israel.

AIPAC has many ways of communicating with Congress, but the “key contacts” are particularly important. They are AIPAC members that have a personal relationship with a given senator or congressman and are usually either a fundraiser, big donor, or a personal friend, such as a former college roommate, according to a former senior lobbyist for the group. Former AIPAC legislative liaison Ralph Nurnberger [defined the key contacts](#) as “someone who has enough of a personal relationship that the lobby can often be very effective. Unlike a professional insider in Washington, the key contact has a history with the member of Congress and is already considered an important political ally.

This is one reason why it was so unusual that the vast majority of Republicans on Wednesday evening told Harry Reid they were not going along with AIPAC. According to Senate staffers, the phone calls did not go well. “AIPAC is close to Schumer and Reid, who told them to pull back on the sanctions bill,” one GOP Senate staffer told The Daily Beast. “Republicans responded with a big middle finger.”

The extension of that middle finger began Tuesday afternoon at a weekly lunch for Republican senators. Kirk brought with him a draft of the letter to Reid and made the case to his colleagues to sign it, according to the staff members. A little more than a day later, he had the signatures of 42 out of 45 Republican senators on the letter.

Republicans and Democrats these days bicker all the time. But when it comes to Iran sanctions and pro-Israel legislation in general, the two

parties are almost always on the same page. In 2010, the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act, which first imposed a secondary boycott on Iran's oil sector, passed the Senate 99 to 0. In 2011, a Kirk-Menendez amendment to blacklist Iran's central bank from the global financial sector passed the Senate 100 to 0. In 2012, another Kirk-Menendez amendment passed the Senate 94 to 0. And last summer a resolution saying the United States would support Israel if it attacked Iran passed 99 to 0.

Menendez—Kirk's co-sponsor on the Iran sanctions bill—himself was caught off guard, according to Senate staffers. In his floor speech Thursday, Menendez added a line at the last minute that referenced the Republican effort to continue to push for a vote, [saying](#), "I hope that we will not find ourselves in a partisan process trying to force a vote on this national security matter before its appropriate time."

After the speech, AIPAC released a statement that said the group agreed with Menendez "that stopping the Iranian nuclear program should rest on bipartisan support and that there should not be a vote at this time on the measure.

That AIPAC press release prompted a rare rebuke from one of the group's biggest allies on the political right. William Kristol issued a statement from his organization, the Emergency Committee for Israel—a group that has also fought for the Kirk-Menendez bill—warning, "It would be terrible if history's judgment on the pro-Israel community was that it made a fetish of bipartisanship—and got a nuclear Iran."

From the perspective of Republican supporters of Israel, AIPAC's emphasis on bipartisanship in the Obama era has too often meant accommodating a president who has openly clashed with Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, on some of the most important issues. While Obama has in some cases gone way beyond his predecessors in supporting Israel—such as his funding the development of a rocket defense shield known as Iron Dome—the president has also fought publicly with Netanyahu on the construction of settlements and more recently on whether Iran would be able to keep a nuclear enrichment program in a final deal with world powers.

This has created a dissonance at times between the Israeli government and the organization that lobbies to strengthen the U.S.-Israel

relationship. Netanyahu's first reaction to the interim deal in November after being briefed by Secretary of State John Kerry, for example, was to call it the "deal of the century" for Iran. By contrast, AIPAC took a more muted tone, saying it had a "difference of strategy" with the Obama White House.

AIPAC's muted tone on the Iran talks opposed by Israel's government led the group to focus on how to allow Democrats to support a sanctions bill opposed by the leader of their party. On a Dec. 18 conference call to pro-Israel activists and lobbyists, AIPAC Executive Director Howard Kohr told his ground troops to focus on how AIPAC had an "honest policy disagreement not a personality disagreement with Obama," according to a recording of the call played for The Daily Beast.

In making the case for the Kirk-Menendez sanctions, AIPAC said it would enhance Obama's leverage in negotiations with Iran. Democratic and Republican Senate staffers both said this argument was a way to appeal to Democrats who did not want to be in open conflict with Obama. The president responded by saying he did not need such leverage and the sanctions bill would destroy the delicate negotiations with Iran.

Corker was one of three members of his party who did not sign Kirk's letter. In an interview Monday, he said AIPAC members did not call him. He was not critical of other Republicans, but he said the letter would not get the Senate any closer to passing new sanctions on Iran that may preserve the economic pressure on the country that he assessed was dissipating during the negotiations.

Corker said AIPAC now "finds itself twisted in a knot."

"Obviously they are trying to navigate keeping access to the administration and candidly their support of Israel and their support of the Democratic Party. They find themselves in a very tough spot," he said.

But Republicans weren't the only ones upset with AIPAC. In the instance of Debbie Wasserman-Schultz, the chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee, AIPAC sent a letter to supporters asking her to support the sanctions she was telling her constituents in Florida that she supported. The letter, however, included a link to a highly critical article about her from the Washington Free Beacon. A member of AIPAC's national board and a [donor to Wasserman-Schultz](#), Bruce Levy then criticized the letter in an interview with Foreign Policy magazine.

This incident came despite AIPAC's concerted effort to woo Democrats for more than a decade. In 2003, the group authorized a study (known inside the organization as an internal strategic planning exercise) about how to reach out to core Democratic constituencies, according to former lobbyists for the organization. "AIPAC had been vexed for some years by allegations that it was tilted to the Republicans and had moved away from Democrats," said Steve Rosen, the group's former director of foreign policy who was fired by AIPAC in 2005 after the Justice Department alleged that he solicited classified information from a Pentagon analyst. In Obama's first year in office the Justice Department dropped its prosecution.

Rosen said AIPAC at the time thought the charge that it was tilting right was "a false allegation," he said, "it was repeated so often that something had to be done about it. This was an effort to build stronger links to many of the core constituencies of the Democratic Party."

As a result of the study, AIPAC hired specialized staff to make the case for the Jewish state to Hispanics, blacks, Reform Jewish rabbis, and eventually even labor unions. (The exercise also resulted in a renewed effort to reach out to evangelical Christians, a core Republican constituency.)

But the price of bipartisanship in the Obama era at least has been an unwillingness until recently to openly oppose the president. For example, despite the opposition of many Republicans and other pro-Israel groups such as Christians United for Israel, AIPAC chose last January not to weigh in on the [nomination fight of Chuck Hagel](#), the current defense secretary. In September, after President Obama said he would be seeking a war authorization from Congress to strike Syria, AIPAC lobbied Congress for the resolution [at the request of the White House](#). At the time, even the Israeli government was reticent about AIPAC's push for the resolution, according to one former senior Israeli official.

When AIPAC supported the Kirk-Menendez sanctions bill over the objections of the White House, it marked a new phase for the lobby. "There are a lot of Democratic senators who are up for election this year," one Republican Senate staff member said. "I bet they would vote against the White House if AIPAC pushed for a vote."

That vote may eventually come. On Friday, AIPAC President Michael Kassen issued a statement he said he had hoped would clarify what he said

was a mischaracterization that AIPAC no longer supported the Kirk-Menendez legislation. “We still have much work to do over the coming months,” he said. “It will be a long struggle, but one that we are committed to fighting.”

Republicans appear keen on fighting that struggle as well. But it’s not clear whether they will be taking direction from the lobby anymore.

Eli Lake is the senior national-security correspondent for The Daily Beast. He previously covered national security and intelligence for The Washington Times. He is one of the few journalists to report from all three members of President Bush’s axis of evil: Iraq, Iran, and North Korea.

[Article 3.](#)

TIME

Palestinian Official Says ‘Armed Resistance’ an Option if Peace Talks Fail

Karl Vick

Feb. 11, 2014 -- The Palestinian official who headed [Yasser Arafat](#)’s security force at the start of the second intifadeh is warning that armed conflict may well follow the failure of current peace talks with Israel. “They should expect a reaction,” Jibril Rajoub tells TIME in an interview. “We have to ring the bell. Uncle Sam should understand that there is a new fascist doctrine among the Israelis, and this is a real threat to their interests in the [Middle East](#), and even in the whole world.”

Rajoub, who now holds the title of minister of youth and sport in the [Palestinian Authority](#) (PA), stops short of declaring the West Bank will erupt if U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry fails to coax a final agreement from the talks, set to end in April. But the vehemence of Rajoub’s message is clearly meant to draw attention, as was the place he first delivered it — a [television studio in Tehran](#).

Rajoub’s Jan. 28 visit to Iran was extraordinary for a senior official of Fatah, the secular movement that dominates the Palestinian Authority led by Mahmoud Abbas. Iran has been the major sponsor of Hamas, the

militant Islamist group that drove Fatah out of the Gaza Strip in 2007. Rajoub says Abbas sent him to Tehran in order to encourage Iran's new President Hassan Rouhani in his effort toward a more moderate foreign policy (including outreach to Gulf countries that are close to Fatah) and to enlist Iran's efforts in Fatah's [long-promised reconciliation](#) with Hamas. But Tehran also provided an effective stage for broaching the option of violent struggle — something [Fatah has avoided](#) for at least a decade. Abbas continues to forswear violence, instructing PA forces to work with Israeli security to thwart any attacks. Should the peace talks break down, the confrontation he calls for would be limited to the diplomatic arena, including the option of charging Israel before the International Criminal Court.

But violent incidents have risen in the West Bank over the past year, and a recent poll [found a plurality of Palestinians believe armed resistance more likely](#) than negotiations to deliver the statehood that has not emerged from two decades of talks.

“Now we are engaged in negotiations. We hope this will lead us to our national goals,” Rajoub says. “But if talks fail or collapse, the Israelis will not keep behaving as the bully of the neighborhood while enjoying security and stability, expanding settlements and humiliating Palestinians. Resistance will be an option, including armed resistance, within the [occupied] territories against the occupation.” He rules out the possibility of attacks in Israel, pointedly telling his Iranian interviewer “there must not be bus bombings in Tel Aviv.”

The warning is only that — Rajoub says a decision to return to arms would be a collective one — but Rajoub is a fitting choice for delivering it. Jailed for 17 years by Israel, he was a militant in his youth, running Fatah cells in the Hebron Hills. [As head of Preventive Security under Yasser Arafat](#), he ran the largest intelligence and enforcement apparatus across the West Bank. After the 1993 Oslo accords promised Palestine a state, he also worked closely with Israeli security, in order to thwart violence aimed at derailing the pact. Interviews with former chiefs of Israel's domestic security agency make up the entirety of the [Oscar-nominated documentary](#) *The Gatekeepers*, and when their talk turns to discovering that some Palestinians turn out to believe ardently in peace, the image on the screen is Rajoub's. He lowers his gaze at the reminder.

“Who, you think, changed?” Rajoub asks. He says the good faith shown to Palestinians by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is gone with Rabin, assassinated by a militant Jewish settler in 1995. Hardcore supporters of settlements, which currently number 200 and keep Palestinians off more than 40% of the West Bank, now dominate the right-wing Likud party of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has announced regular expansions of settlements during the current round of talks — an act considered illegal by most of the international community. Meanwhile, extremist settlers routinely harass Palestinians on the ground, uprooting olive trees and [vandalizing mosques](#).

“Enough, enough, enough,” Rajoub says. “Dogs enjoy rights in Europe and America better than the Palestinian in their homeland.”

“I am still committed, but my people are losing hope.”

Karl Vick has been TIME's Jerusalem bureau chief since 2010, covering Israel, the Palestine territories and nearby sovereignties. He worked 16 years at the Washington Post in Nairobi, Istanbul, Baghdad, Los Angeles and Rockville, MD.

[Article 4.](#)

The National Interest

Syria: The Wages of Inaction

[Julie Lenarz](#), [Michael Miner](#)

February 11, 2014 -- The unrest in Syria has quickly spiraled beyond a sectarian civil war and into a regional crisis. [Two million](#) refugees have poured into Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey at a rate surpassing several thousand a day, with more than 6.5 million displaced overall. Iran and Saudi Arabia are doing battle through proxy forces. Iraq is experiencing the worst eruption of violence in recent years with the resurrection of Al Qaeda. [According to the United Nations](#), 84 percent of the 733 people killed in January were civilians. Hezbollah's support for the Assad regime has led to a series of deadly suicide bombings in Lebanon by the Abdullah Azzam Brigades in an attempt to draw the country deeper into Syria's bloody war. An Al Qaeda surge is viewed with great concern in Israel, and

while the country has always been an integral part of the terrorists' narrative, this escalating regional crisis puts Israel in the firing line. Three years ago, President Obama and his foreign-policy team were right to be [skeptical about forceful intervention](#) and how that might compound an internal problem in lieu of any comprehensive international solution. The realist lens suggests underlying problems in Syria had little to do with the vital interests of the United States, and could only be solved by Syrians themselves. Limited engagement can also limit immediate security concerns for the United States and even work to an [advantage](#) . Equally, one could argue that intervention should have taken place long ago and that the West's apathy has encouraged adversaries to push their agenda harder on all fronts. Continued inaction will result in long-term negative consequences that will compound US national-security challenges in the future. Escalating regional conflict composed of transnational actors is decidedly more dangerous to American interests than an internal civil war. The realization that Syria constitutes not only a heartbreaking humanitarian crisis but also a [geopolitical nightmare](#) is finally hitting home. Behind closed doors at the [\[9\]Munich Security Conference](#), Secretary of State John Kerry admitted to a senior delegation of US Congressmen that his administration's Syria policy is collapsing. Geneva II has reached a dead end before it even started and is unlikely to produce ground-changing results. The decommissioning of Assad's chemical and biological weapons is moving forward painfully slow. To date, [only four percent](#) of the Priority One chemicals have been removed and even if the process is eventually successful, Assad will continue to slaughter with conventional weapons. Kerry went so far as to suggest that arming moderate rebel groups will be necessary to confront the real and direct threat of a growing terrorist presence. This has been a declared policy for some time, yet the promised US weapons never arrived and there has been little to no progress on this front.

Time and unrelenting tragedy has allowed for increasing clarity of the dangers transcending borders and the illusion of geography. There are now well over [seven thousand](#) foreign fighters in the country, with hundreds of hardline Islamist Europeans able to move freely around Europe and potentially the rest of the world. As [Senator Lindsey Graham](#) recently warned: "Eventually you've got to confront them, so to me, it's a choice of,

do we hit them after they hit us, or do we hit them before they hit us?” Domestic and foreign jihadists are gaining significant battlefield experience, networking with ideologically driven groups, and attracting young men and women to their cause whom have fewer and fewer options by the day. Where and what these nonstate actors choose to do following any sort of conclusion to major hostilities should greatly concern the United States and its Western allies. This is a lesson the West has learned before, tragically so. Learning it again is a result every policy maker in Washington and London should be doing their utmost to avoid. Regardless of how the conflict in Syria ends, these individuals, organizations, and ideologies may very well turn to examine who supported what side or whom failed to support the winners or losers. Arriving at justification for terrorism is never hard for an extremist to manage once they reach the point of no return, with zero options and nothing to lose. Preventing that point of no return should be a priority for US foreign policymakers. No engagement, or even ongoing limited engagement, suspends the ability to shape the narrative in a positive light for the West and the forces battling extremism around the world. A reassessment of the situation shows that not only is increased engagement necessary, but the United States and its Western allies should rally the international community to the defense of a common good. Targeted support, humanitarian aid, and asymmetrical operations to limit the Assad regime can both support favorable allies and protect innocent civilians. In a first step, the West should make it abundantly clear that Assad’s days are numbered and the transfer of power is the only acceptable outcome for the United States and the international community. Additional intelligence support and aid to opposition forces, with significant increases based on measured results, may offer a way to support the underpinnings of a democratic civil society while mitigating a potentially extremist outcome. Second, an international cooperative effort to identify, disrupt and deny support to the most extreme groups on either end of the spectrum can encourage social and political moderation. Further development aid, humanitarian services and civilian assistance are major efforts that the majority of the population would benefit from; most especially women and children who will play decisive roles in the next generation of Syrian society.

To be sure, intervention has many different dimensions and increased engagement does not equate to invasion with thousands of American and British troops. Nor does it mean unquestioned support for ideologically extreme militias simply because they oppose a greater evil. The next generation of Syrians is looking for strong leadership and will turn to whomever can help them survive perpetual acts of genocide and tyrannical brutality. The question is, how much longer does the next generation actually have?

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[Article 5.](#)

Stratfor

New Dimensions of U.S. Foreign Policy **toward Russia**

[George Friedman](#)

February 11, 2014 --The struggle for some of the most strategic territory in the world took an interesting twist this week. Last week we discussed what appeared to be a significant shift in German national strategy in which Berlin seemed to declare a [new doctrine of increased assertiveness](#) in the world -- a shift that followed intense German interest in Ukraine. This week, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, in a now-famous cell phone conversation, declared her strong contempt for the European Union and its weakness and counseled the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine to proceed quickly and without the Europeans to piece together a specific opposition coalition before the Russians saw what was happening and took action.

This is a new twist not because it makes clear that the United States is not the only country intercepting phone calls, but because it puts U.S. policy in Ukraine in a new light and forces us to reconsider U.S. strategy toward

Russia and Germany. Nuland's cell phone conversation is hardly definitive, but it is an additional indicator of American strategic thinking.

Recent U.S. Foreign Policy Shifts

U.S. foreign policy has evolved during the past few years. Previously, the United States was focused heavily on the Islamic world and, more important, tended to regard the use of force as an early option in the execution of U.S. policy rather than as a last resort. This was true not only in Afghanistan and Iraq, but also in Africa and elsewhere. The strategy was successful when its goal was to destroy an enemy military force. It proved far more difficult to use in occupying countries and shaping their internal and foreign policies. Military force has intrinsic limits.

The alternative has been a shift to [a balance-of-power strategy](#) in which the [United States](#) relies on the natural schisms that exist in every region to block the emergence of regional hegemony and contain unrest and groups that could threaten U.S. interests. The best example of the old policy is Libya, where the United States directly intervened with air power and special operations forces on the ground to unseat Moammar Gadhafi. Western efforts to replace him with a regime favorable to the United States and its allies have not succeeded. The new strategy can be seen in Syria, where rather than directly intervening the United States has stood back and allowed the warring factions to expend their energy on each other, preventing either side from diverting resources to activities that might challenge U.S. interests.

Behind this is a schism in U.S. foreign policy that has more to do with motivation than actual action. On one side, there are those who consciously support the Syria model for the United States as not necessarily the best moral option but [the only practical option](#) there is. On the other, there are those who argue on behalf of moral interventions, as we saw in Libya, and removing tyrants as an end in itself. Given the outcome in Libya, this faction is on the defensive, as it must explain how an intervention will actually improve the moral situation. Given that this faction also tended to oppose Iraq, it must show how an intervention will not degenerate into Iraqi-type warfare. That is hard to do, so for all the rhetoric, the United States is by default falling into a balance-of-power model.

The Geopolitical Battle in Ukraine

[Russia](#) emerged as a problem for the United States after the Orange Revolution in 2004, when the United States, supporting anti-Russian factions in [Ukraine](#), succeeded in crafting a relatively pro-Western, anti-Russian government. The Russians read this as U.S. intelligence operations designed to create an anti-Russian Ukraine that, as we have written, would directly challenge Russian strategic and economic interests. Moreover, Moscow saw the Orange Revolution (along with the Rose Revolution) as a dress rehearsal for something that could occur in Russia next. [The Russian response](#) was to use its own covert capabilities, in conjunction with economic pressure from natural gas cutoffs, to undermine Ukraine's government and to use its war with Georgia as a striking reminder of the resurrection of Russian military capabilities. These moves, plus disappointment with Western aid, allowed a more pro-Russian government to emerge in Kiev, reducing the Russians' fears and increasing their confidence. In time, Moscow became more effective and assertive in playing its cards right in the Middle East -- giving rise to the current situations in Syria and Iran and elsewhere.

Washington had two options. One was to allow the balance of power to assert itself, in this case relying on the Europeans to contain the Russians. The other was to continue to follow the balance of power model but at a notch higher than pure passivity. As Nuland's call shows, U.S. confidence in Europe's will for and interest in blocking the Russians was low; hence a purely passive model would not work. The next step was the lowest possible level of involvement to contain the Russians and counter their moves in the Middle East. This meant a very limited and not too covert support for anti-Russian, pro-European demonstrators -- the re-creation of a pro-Western, anti-Russian government in Ukraine. To a considerable degree, the U.S. talks with Iran also allow Washington to deny the Russians an Iranian card, although the Syrian theater still allows the Kremlin some room to maneuver.

The United States is not prepared to intervene in the former Soviet Union. Russia is not a global power, and its military has many weaknesses, but it is by far the strongest in the region and is able to project power in the former Soviet periphery, as the war with Georgia showed. At the moment, the U.S. military also has many weaknesses. Having fought for more than a decade in the core of the Islamic world, the U.S. military is highly focused

on a way of war not relevant to the former Soviet Union, its alliance structure around the former Soviet Union is frayed and not supportive of war, and the inevitable post-war cutbacks that traditionally follow any war the United States fights are cutting into capabilities. A direct intervention, even were it contemplated (which it is not), is not an option. The only correlation of forces that matters is what exists at a given point in time in a given place. In that sense, the closer U.S. forces get to the Russian homeland, the greater the advantage the Russians have.

Instead, the United States did the same thing that it did prior to the Orange Revolution: back the type of intervention that both the human rights advocates and the balance-of-power advocates could support. Giving financial and psychological support to the demonstrators protesting Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich's decision to reject a closer relationship with Europe, and later protesting the government's attempt to suppress the demonstrations, preserved the possibility of regime change in Ukraine, with minimal exposure and risk to the United States.

Dissatisfaction with the German Approach

As we said last week, it appeared that it was [the Germans](#) who were particularly pressing the issue, and that they were the ones virtually controlling one of the leaders of the protests, Vitali Klitschko. The United States appeared to be taking a back seat to Germany. Indeed, Berlin's statements indicating that it is prepared to take a more assertive role in the world appeared to be a historic shift in German foreign policy.

The statements were even more notable since, over the years, Germany appeared to have been moving closer to Russia on economic and strategic issues. Neither country was comfortable with U.S. aggressiveness in the Middle East and Southwest Asia. Both countries shared the need to create new economic relationships in the face of the European economic crisis and the need to contain the United States. Hence, the apparent German shift was startling.

Although Germany's move should not be dismissed, its meaning was not as clear as it seemed. In her cell phone call, Nuland is clearly dismissing the Germans, Klitschko and all their efforts in Ukraine. This could mean that the strategy was too feeble for American tastes (Berlin cannot, after all, risk too big a confrontation with Moscow). Or it could mean that when the Germans said they were planning to be more assertive, their new

boldness was meant to head off U.S. efforts. Looking at this week's events, it is not clear what the Germans meant.

What is clear is that the United States was not satisfied with Germany and the European Union. Logically, this meant that the United States intended to be more aggressive than the Germans in supporting opponents of the regime. This is a touchy issue for human rights advocates, or should be. Yanukovich is the elected president of Ukraine, winner of an election that is generally agreed to have been honest (even though his constitutional amendments and subsequent parliamentary elections may not have been). He was acting within his authority in rejecting the deal with the European Union. If demonstrators can unseat an elected president because they disagree with his actions, they have set a precedent that undermines constitutionalism. Even if he was rough in suppressing the demonstrators, it does not nullify his election. From a balance of power strategy, however, it makes great sense. A pro-Western, even ambiguous, Ukraine poses a profound strategic problem for Russia. It would be as if Texas became pro-Russian, and the Mississippi River system, oil production, the Midwest and the Southwest became vulnerable. The Russian ability to engage in Iran or Syria suddenly contracts. Moscow's focus must be on Ukraine. Using the demonstrations to create a massive problem for Russia does two things. It creates a real strategic challenge for the Russians and forces them on the defensive. Second, it reminds Russia that Washington has capabilities and options that make challenging the United States difficult. And it can be framed in a way that human rights advocates will applaud in spite of the constitutional issues, enemies of the Iranian talks will appreciate and Central Europeans from Poland to Romania will see as a sign of U.S. commitment to the region. The United States will re-emerge as an alternative to Germany and Russia. It is a brilliant stroke. Its one weakness, if we can call it that, is that it is hard to see how it can work. Russia has significant economic leverage in Ukraine, it is not clear that pro-Western demonstrators are in the majority, and Russian covert capabilities in Ukraine outstrip American capabilities. The Federal Security Service and Foreign Intelligence Service have been collecting files on Ukrainians for a long time. We would expect that after the Olympics in Sochi, the Russians could play their trump cards. On the other hand, even if the play fails, the United States will have demonstrated that it is back in

the game and that the Russians should look around their periphery and wonder where the United States will act next. Putting someone in a defensive crouch does not require that the first punch work. It is enough for the opponent to understand that the next punch will come when he is least expecting it. The mere willingness of the United States to engage will change the expectations of Central Europe, cause tensions between the Central Europeans and the Germans and create an opening for the United States.

The Pressure on Russia

Of course, the question is whether and where the Russians will answer the Americans, or even if they will consider the U.S. actions significant at all. In a sense, Syria was Moscow's move and this is the countermove. The Russians can choose to call the game. They have many reasons to. Their economy is under pressure. The Germans may not rally to the United States, but they will not break from it. And if the United States ups the ante in Central Europe, Russian inroads there will dissolve. If the Russians are now an American problem, which they are, and if the United States is not going to revert to a direct intervention mode, which it cannot, then this strategy makes sense. At the very least it gives the Russians a problem and a sense of insecurity that can curb their actions elsewhere. At best it could create a regime that might not counterbalance Russia but could make pipelines and ports vulnerable -- especially with U.S. help. The public interception of Nuland's phone call was not all that embarrassing. It showed the world that the United States, not Germany, is leading the way in Ukraine. And it showed the Russians that the Americans care so little, they will express it on an open cell phone line. Nuland's obscene dismissal of the European Union and treatment of Russia as a problem to deal with confirms a U.S. policy: The United States is not going to war, but passivity is over.

George Friedman is the Chairman of Stratfor, a company he founded in 1996 that is now a leader in the field of global intelligence.

[Article 6.](#)

The National Interest

Five Futuristic Weapons That Could Change Warfare

[J. Michael Cole](#)

February 12, 2014 -- Predicting which five weapons will have the greatest impact on the future of combat is a problematic endeavor, as the nature of warfare itself is fluid and constantly changing. A system that could be a game-changer in a major confrontation between two conventional forces—say, China and the United States—could be of little utility in an asymmetrical scenario pitting forces in an urban theater (e.g., Israeli forces confronting Palestinian guerrillas in Gaza or Lebanese Hezbollah in the suburbs of Beirut). [The world's best fifth-generation stealth combat aircraft](#) might be a game-changer in some contexts, but its tremendous speed and inability to linger makes it unsuitable to detect and target small units of freedom fighters operating in a city, not to mention that using such platforms to kill a few irregular soldiers carrying AK-47s is hardly cost effective. Special forces equipped with hyperstealth armor and light assault rifles firing “intelligent” small-caliber ammunition would be much more effective, and presumably much cheaper. Another challenging aspect is choosing how we define revolution in the context of weapons development. Do we quantify impact using the yardstick of destructiveness and casualty rates alone? Or conversely, by a weapon’s ability to achieve a belligerent’s objectives while minimizing the cost in human lives? What of a “weapon” that obviates kinetic warfare altogether, perhaps by preemptively disabling an opponent’s ability to conduct military operations? Keeping in mind the scenario-contingent nature of warfare, we can nevertheless try to establish a list of weapons systems, most of which are already in the development stage, that will, if only for a brief instant, change the nature of warfare. By trying to strike a balance between conventional warfare and irregular operations, our list is inherently incomplete but shows trends in the forms of warfare that are likely to affect our world for decades to come.

5. ‘Hyper Stealth’ or ‘Quantum Stealth’

Using naturally occurring metamaterials, scientists have been designing lightwave-bending materials that can greatly reduce the thermal and visible

signatures of a target. The science behind it is relatively straightforward, though skeptics remain unconvinced and say they will believe it when they don't see it: The "adaptive camouflage" renders what lies behind the object wearing the material by bending the light around it. The military implications of such developments are self-evident, as "invisibility cloaks" would make it possible for fighters—from ordinary soldiers to special forces—to operate in enemy territory undetected, or at least buy them enough time to take the initiative. Such capabilities would reduce the risk of casualties during military operations while increasing the ability to launch surgical and surprise attacks against an opponent, or conduct sabotage and assassination. A Canadian firm has reportedly demonstrated the material to two command groups in the U.S. military and two groups in the Canadian military, as well as to federal counterterrorism teams. Of course, this technology would also have a serious impact on operations should it become available to nonstate actors like guerrilla forces and terrorist groups.

4. Electromagnetic Rail Guns

EM rail gun launchers use a magnetic field rather than chemical propellants (e.g., gunpowder or fuel) to thrust a projectile at long range and at velocities of 4,500 mph to 5,600 mph. Technology under development has demonstrated the ability to propel a projectile at a distance of 100 nautical miles using 32 megajoules.

The extended velocity and range of EM rail guns provides several benefits both in offensive and defensive terms, from precision strikes that can counter even the most advanced area defense systems to air defense against incoming targets. Another advantage of this technology is that it eliminates the need to store the hazardous high explosives and flammable materials necessary to launch conventional projectiles. A naval EM rail gun system has been in development since 2005 by the U.S. Office of Naval Research. The current phase of the project, initiated in 2012, seeks to demonstrate sustained fire, or "rep-rate" capability. The U.S. Navy hopes to eventually extend the range of EM rail guns to 200 nautical miles using 64 megajoules, but as a single shot would require a stunning 6 million amps (bigger than the currents that cause the auroras), it'll be years before scientists find a way to develop capacitors that can generate such energy, or gun materials that will not be shredded to pieces at every shot. Not to be bested, the U.S.

Army has been developing its own version of the EM rail gun. China is also rumored to be working on its own version, with satellite imagery emerging in late 2010 suggesting ongoing tests at an armor and artillery range near Baotou, in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

3. Space Weapons

Despite international pressure against the weaponization of space, major countries continue to explore technologies that would turn the sky above us into the next battleground. The possibilities are as limitless as they are outlandish, from moon-based missile launchers to systems that would capture and redirect asteroids towards a target on the surface of the Earth. Evidently, not all scenarios are technically feasible and will forever remain the stuff of science-fiction novels. But some breakthroughs are within the grasp of current science and would have a deep impact on the nature of warfare as we know it.

One possibility is the arming of space orbiters with nuclear or non-nuclear electromagnetic pulse (EMP) weapons. By detonating a satellite-launched EMP weapon at a high altitude, a belligerent could initiate a decapitation attack against an enemy's electrical grids, satellites, as well as the command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) architecture that are necessary to conduct military operations. Depending on the size of the EMP weapon utilized, the attack could blanket an entire country, or be more surgical, targeting an area of operations. An "assassin's mace" weapon of this type could theoretically end war before a single shot is fired—at least against a heavily information-reliant adversary such as the U.S. (much less so against, say, the Taliban or Hamas).

EMP weapons fired from lower-altitude platforms or via land-based missile systems (e.g., ICBMs) are vulnerable to intercepts or preemptive strikes. Satellite-mounted EMP weapons, on the other hand, would be beyond the reach of most countries, except those with ground- or air-to-space-based antisatellite capability or space-based weaponized orbiters. Furthermore, the reaction time to a space-based blackout attack would be much shorter, which diminishes the ability of a targeted country to intercept the EMP weapon.

Another technology, interest in which has waxed and waned over the decades, is the use of high-energy space-based lasers (SBL) to target

ballistic missiles fired by an enemy during the boost phase (known as “boost-phase intercept,” or BPI). The advantage of BPI is that the attempt to deactivate a ballistic missile occurs during its slowest phase, thus making a successful intercept likelier.

Unlike the theater defense systems currently used for BPI (e.g. Aegis), which must be deployed close to enemy territory, space-based laser platforms can operate at altitudes that, as discussed above, are well beyond the ability of the targeted country to shoot down or deactivate prior to a launch. As more countries and “rogue states” acquire the means to deliver long-range—and possibly nuclear—ballistic missiles, interest in SBL interceptors, and the willingness to fund such costly programs, will likely grow. However, challenges remain in developing chemical megawatt-laser systems for orbiters.

2. Hypersonic Cruise Missiles and ‘Prompt Global Strike’

Had hypersonic cruise missiles existed in the mid-1990s, the U.S. might have rid itself of Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden much earlier than it did, and would have accomplished the feat in Afghanistan rather than in Pakistan.

With their ability to accurately deliver warheads over long distances, cruise missiles have had an extraordinary impact on modern warfare. But in an age where minutes can make a difference between defeat and victory, they tend to be too slow. It took eighty minutes for land-attack cruise missiles (LACM) launched from U.S. ships in the Arabian Sea to reach Al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan in 1998 following the terrorist attacks against U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Using hypersonic missiles cruising at speeds of Mach 5+, the same targets would have been reached within as little as 12 minutes, short enough to act on intelligence which had placed the terrorist mastermind at the location.

The desire to be able to strike anywhere, and to do so quickly, has led to the creation of a program known as “prompt global strike,” which the U.S. military initiated in 2001. Efforts have centered on the X-51A hypersonic cruise vehicle (HCV) under a consortium involving the U.S. Air Force, Boeing, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the National Aeronautic and Space Administration, Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne, and the USAF Research Laboratory’s Propulsion Directorate. Russia, China and India have made strides in developing the technology to

achieve similar feats using conventional warheads, leading some defense analysts to warn of a looming global strike arms race.

The U.S. Navy is now reportedly exploring [the possibility of developing submarine-launched hypersonic missiles](#) [4].

As the 1998 example shows, global strike can serve multiple purposes, from decapitation attacks against heads of state, command-and-control systems and other high-value targets to surgical attacks against mobile terrorist groups under short timeframes offered by on-the-ground actionable intelligence. The extraordinary speeds achieved by hypersonic cruise missiles and the terrain-hugging nature of cruise missiles, meanwhile, will pose additional challenges in efforts to intercept them using existing air-defense systems, thus giving them an extra advantage in conventional-warfare scenarios.

1. 'Sentient' Unmanned Vehicles

Perhaps the single-most important development in the defense industry in the past decade is the emergence of unmanned vehicles. As the technology evolves, drones, as they are often called, are quickly taking over duties that have traditionally been the remit of human beings. Such has been their rise that some commentators have argued that unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) could one day render human pilots obsolete.

But today's drones, from bomb-removal buggies to undersea mini-sub, from ship-based surveillance helicopters to high-altitude assassination platforms, remain dumb and for the most part require a modicum of human intervention. Not only are most platforms piloted remotely by human beings (though with increasing automation), but key mission elements, such as target acquisition and the decision to fire a Hellfire missile at a target, continue to necessitate human supervision.

This could soon change as scientists push the boundaries of artificial intelligence, which could one day open the door to drones that make independent "decisions" that have life and death implications. Of course, unmanned vehicles, or robots in general, are not intelligent in the human sense of the word, nor can they be said to be sentient. But advances in computing power are giving machines greater situational awareness and adaptability. As those capabilities continue to improve, drones could one day become "fire-and-forget" weapons, with much greater attention spans and durability than human beings, capable of lingering over a target for

several hours and making split-second decisions to strike when an opportunity occurs. Moreover, the incentives for giving combat roles to machines and endowing them with life-and-death decisions will continue to increase as the costs associated with training and retaining soldiers continue to rise (another disadvantage of using soldiers: they have grieving families and loved ones).

Giving robots license to kill is only the logical next step in the increasingly videogame-like nature of warfare. Their deployment adds yet another layer of distance between the perpetrator of violence and the victim, which lowers the psychological threshold for using force. Once the decision is made to give drones combat duty, the incentive will be to make them as “free” as possible, as the side that acts the quickest, with the least decision chokepoints and human input, will likely prevail in a confrontation.

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