

From: Office of Terje Rod-Larsen <[REDACTED]>
Subject: October 16 update
Date: Wed, 17 Oct 2012 17:36:21 +0000

16 October, 2012

Article 1.	NYT <u>The New Egypt</u> Roger Cohen
Article 2.	Ahram Online <u>Egypt's Salafists: A closer look</u> Ali Bakr
Article 3.	World Policy Institute <u>The Palestinians Want to Negotiate</u> Andrew Wilson
Article 4.	The Washington Post <u>Obama and Romney's empty talk on Syria</u> Richard Cohen
Article 5.	Spiegel <u>Iran's Secret Plan to Contaminate the Strait of Hormuz</u> Erich Follath
Article 6.	The Christian Science Monitor <u>NATO must offer Turkey military support in Syria crisis</u> Jorge Benitez
Article 7.	NYT <u>No More Industrial Revolutions?</u> Thomas B. Edsall

Article 1.

NYT

The New Egypt

[Roger Cohen](#)

October 15, 2012 -- Cairo — The fighting began in mid-afternoon on Talaat Harb Street, close to Tahrir Square. I watched as young men, their

faces bloodied, were rushed away. The crowd eddied back and forth beneath volleys of stones and rocks. Young men heaved sacks of rubble, never in short supply in Cairo, toward the front. Cheers erupted when the protesters advanced only to die away in headlong retreat.

There was no trace of the Egyptian state — not the police, not the military — as liberal and socialist opponents of President Mohamed Morsi and his Muslim Brotherhood backers battled over several hours in the bloodiest clash between the nation's secular and Islamist currents since the revolution that ousted Hosni Mubarak 20 months ago. More than 100 people were injured.

The demonstrators on Talaat Harb, their passage into the iconic square blocked by a phalanx of stone-throwing Brotherhood supporters, were incensed. They had long planned this demonstration in anger at Morsi's first 100 days as president and in protest at what they see as a flawed, over-hasty procedure for drafting a new constitution. Now the dominant Brotherhood had hijacked proceedings.

“We called this protest three weeks ago to dissolve the constitutional assembly, and they decided yesterday to come to the square and confront us,” Karima el Hefnawy, a prominent socialist activist, told me. She was pale and shaking with rage. “The Brotherhood does not work for the people but its own interests. Now the Egyptian people can see their fanaticism.”

George Ishaq, a leading liberal, had a lapidary verdict: “This is a black day in the history of the Muslim Brotherhood.”

I had stood among the jubilant crowd in Tahrir Square in February, 2011, as the very forces hurling rocks at each other last Friday — the Brotherhood and the young more secular Egyptians who ignited the uprising — embraced and celebrated the toppling of Egypt's 30-year dictatorship.

So has that glorious dream of liberty, democracy and the rule of law crumbled, as most things do, into the enveloping Cairo dust?

Revolutions give way to their aftermaths. Unity cedes to disunity as binding adrenalin fades. A shared enemy is supplanted by competing interests. The groceries must still be bought. Egypt is no exception to an old rule. I spoke to several disappointed friends in the liberal camp who now say they favor enlightened despotism.

These liberals are too bitter too soon. They are too dismissive of the road traveled these past 20 months through more than a half-dozen national votes and a bitter confrontation between the military and civilians — events that might have upended Egypt but have seen civilians prevail, U.S.-trained generals salute an Islamic president, and a tenuous stability hold.

But do the enduring troubles in the largest Arab state betoken looming collapse or the inevitable churn of liberty being birthed? And can Morsi, emerging from the conservative Brotherhood wing and elected with 51.7 percent of the vote, convince the 48.3 percent that they, too, have a place in the new Egypt?

These questions in turn pose another to the United States and the West: Should they pour much-needed funds and support into Morsi's historic experiment in reconciling Islam and an open society, or conclude that any such attempt is stillborn and side again with some secular despot, uniformed or not?

The events Friday were troubling. The Brotherhood has a hard time accepting dissent. Its avowed reason for occupying Tahrir — the acquittal last week of Mubarak-era officials accused of involvement in the deadly camel charge on protesters in the square last year — looked like righteous camouflage for suppressing an anti-Morsi demonstration. Islamists cannot rule and form the opposition at once.

Morsi has made mistakes. He fired the chief prosecutor last week over that camel-case acquittal and attempted to dispatch him as Vatican ambassador. Then — yes, Mr. President, the judiciary is independent — he had to reinstate him.

He made ridiculous claims this month in a big speech to a Brotherhood-dominated crowd: “We have achieved 70 percent progress in national security, 60 percent in the traffic, 40 percent in the garbage, 80 percent in bread and 85 percent with gas.”

Many Egyptians, stuck for hours in the 40 percent of traffic officially remaining, mired in the 60 percent of garbage outstanding, and struck by the 30-percent absent police, laughed. (Egyptians have a gift for laughter, one cause for optimism.)

Morsi is given to long perorations heavy on Koranic quotations. But he also has shown a deft hand in outflanking the military, courage in standing

up in Tehran and denouncing Assad's murderous Syrian regime, and — to the Western officials who deal with him — a strong sense of the need for inclusiveness. That instinct faces its most decisive test in the critical debate over a new constitution.

Freedom is not the subordinate clause some Egyptian liberals now turn it into. Democracy is precious precisely because it is fragile and unpredictable. The West — after Algeria and Gaza and decades of the hypocrisy that condoned the likes of Assad — must back Morsi to be better than Friday's violence suggested.

On the constitution he must prove he is — or the Tahrir battle will presage worse.

Article 2.

Ahram Online

Egypt's Salafists: A closer look

Ali Bakr

15 Oct 2012 -- The rise of Salafist parties after the Egyptian Revolution has raised many questions about this particular political current, especially among average Egyptians who do not distinguish between local religious groups. Experts on religious groups know that Salafists are not homogeneous. Salafists in general appeared in Egypt at the onset of the Islamist revival at the beginning of the last century, but the Salafist map over the years has acquired a variety of ideologies and visions. While Salafist influence has gained traction in Arab and Muslim societies in general – and in Egypt especially – the Salafist map has become so complex and intertwined that it is difficult to explore in detail all its components, ideas, symbols and directions.

Map of Egypt's Salafist current

One of the key reasons for the complexity of the Salafist map is that there are two types of Salafist: scholastic (traditional) Salafists and procedural (modern) Salafists. Both share the fundamental approach of Salafist thinking, especially regarding doctrine and monotheism, along with proselytisation and non-violence to achieve goals – namely the application of Islamic Sharia and the eventual establishment of an Islamic caliphate.

Scholastic (traditional) Salafism:

This is the ancient and inherent type of Salafism that focuses on the search for legitimate knowledge – such as interpretation, hadith (sayings of the Prophet), jurisprudence, etc. – more than focusing on other forms of proselytisation. This mostly takes the form of academic schools with their own sheikh who has several disciples who adopt their sheikh's ideology and doctrine and are strict adherents of these ideas. Loyalty to their sheikh and school overrides any other loyalty, while mosques are used to disseminate knowledge since they are viewed as schools and are given names such as the Salafist School in Alexandria, Cairo, Mansoura, etc.

'Traditional' or 'scholastic' Salafism has three forms:

The Salafist Call started in the 1970s through student activism and became organised in 1980 when Salafist youth decided to create a form of preachers' union and called themselves the 'Salafist School.' After a few years of activism on the street, they renamed their organisation the 'Salafist Call.' Their followers swelled to the thousands and became well known in Islamist circles and the media as 'Alexandria Salafists.' This group calls for a return to the application of Islam from its two original sources: the Quran and the Sunna (the Prophet's teachings) from the perspective of the righteous disciple from the companions and devotees. They are focused on monotheism and correcting doctrine, as well as forbidding deviation and myth. They are also interested in books on heritage and the sayings of imams who established doctrines and scholars, and thus they were called 'Scholastic Salafists.' After the Egyptian Revolution, the Salafist Call entered the political fray and created the Nour Party, which quickly became the second largest party in parliament after the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party. The Salafist Call is the more influential sect within the Salafist current, and Alexandria is its bastion, but it also has a strong presence in Delta governorates and in coastal cities. Among its most prominent figures and leaders are Yasser Borhami, Mohamed Ismail El-Moqadem, Saeed Abdel-Azim, Ahmed Farid, Mohamed Abdel-Fatah, Ahmed Hatiba, Ashraf Thabet (the former undersecretary of the People's Assembly), Emad Abdel-Ghafour (the president's adviser) and Nader Bakkar (the Nour Party spokesman).

'Action Salafism'

As the Salafist Call was emerging in Alexandria, young Salafists were forming another Salafist group in Cairo, later known as 'Action Salafism.'

The ideology of both groups is almost identical except that the latter not only excommunicates the ruler who has replaced Sharia, but also labels him a heretic through tangible steps. They publicly called the former president an 'apostate' and promoted this designation in their sermons, while proscribing political participation. After the revolution, they created the Assala Party.

Greater Cairo (Cairo, Giza and Qalyubiya) is the group's epicentre and it also exists in several other governorates, such as Kafr El-Sheikh, Marsa Matrouh and Beni Suef. Its most prominent figures are Mohamed Abdel-Maqsoud, Fawzi El-Saeed, Sayed El-Arabi, Nashaat El-Masri, Ahmed Ashush and Hassan El-Zoheiri (Abu El-Ashbal), who is best known for his infamous religious edict that designated the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) apostate also.

Al-Madkhalia Salafism

Al-Madkhalia was founded in the late 20th century by Saudi Salafist leader Rabi Al-Madkhaly. It is similar to some other Salafist currents that forbid dissent against a Muslim ruler even if he is a malevolent one. But unlike most Salafist currents, this group believes it is forbidden to oppose the ruler under any circumstance, even if only to advise the public. They believe this is a key principle for those who obey Sunna and congregation, and any violation of this rule means dissenting against the Muslim ruler. This group also believes that acknowledging the ruler and submitting to him alone is not enough, but that other state institutions should also be acknowledged, such as the grand mufti or Al-Azhar. Also, no one should violate the religious edicts of the country's official scholars. They are also unique in believing that the Muslim flock includes both state and ruler, and therefore the group strongly condemns Islamist groups and describes them as partisan because their actions contradict the definition of flock in their view so thus they are 'dissidents' against the regime and deviators. Their criticism aims to end divisions in the nation and gather all subjects around their ruler. Al-Madkhalia are mostly concentrated in Greater Cairo, but are also found in some governorates such as Menoufiya, Damietta and Daqahliya. Their most famous sheikhs are Mahmoud Lotfi Amer, Osama El-Qosi, Mohamed Saeed Raslan, Talaat Zahran, Abu Bakr Maher bin Attiya, Gamal Abdel-Rahman, Ali Hasheesh and Abdel-Azim Badawi.

Independent Salafists

These are an extension of proselytising Salafists and do not believe in organised group action and are disinterested in politics, although they broadcast their political opinions in their sermons and media. Their political rhetoric is confined to explaining their positions about the political reality and its problems. They strongly believe in Sunna, combating deviation and focusing on outward signs of religiosity, such as dress codes, beards, haircuts, the veil, etc.

They have a strong presence in the media especially on religious satellite channels, are well known in society, and exercise great influence on many segments of society, especially among the youth and women. They are not concentrated in any one area because they are not linked to a specific group in a specific location, although their influence and fame is well known around the country. The most famous among them includes Mohamed Hassan, Mohamed Hussein Yacoub, Abu Ishaq El-Howaini, Sayed El-Afani, Osama Abdel-Azim and Mohamed Mustafa El-Debesi.

Procedural (modern) Salafism:

These are religious currents that do not originally belong to the Salafist school but have adopted the Salafist doctrine and have their own forms of proselytisation that are not like traditional Salafist schools. Most notably:

Advocates of Mohamed's Sunna

This group was established in Cairo by Sheikh Mohamed Hamed El-Fiqi based on the call to purify monotheism from any trace of polytheism, as well as true Sunna according to the interpretation of the righteous disciples. They also guide people to the texts of the Quran and reject deviation, myths and innovation in religion, as well as the belief that Islam is a religion and a condition of government, worship and governance, and valid at all times and in all places. Thus, there is a need to call to establish a Muslim society governed by God's laws. Members of this sect are found across the country at nearly 100 offices and in 1,000 mosques. Its most famous figures are Gamal El-Mawakbi, Safwat Nour El-Din, Abdel-Razeq Hamza, Abul Wafa Darweesh, Mohamed Khalil Harras, Mohamed Abdel-Wahab El-Banna and Abdel-Zaher Abu El-Samh.

Sharia-based society

The group's full name is 'the Sharia-based society for cooperation among those who adhere to the Book and Mohamed's Sunna.' Its main aim at its inception was preaching and guidance, as well as calling for the application

of Sunna and combating deviation, along with boosting the value of cooperation and solidarity among the citizenry. Its 350 offices are spread across the country and focus on social and economic services. The group's most important figures include Mohamed El-Mokhtar Mohamed (the society's current president), Abdel-Lateef Moshtaheri and Fouad Ali Mekheimer.

Jamaa Islamiya and the Jihad group

Both groups emerged in the 1970s. At the time, Jamaa Islamiya included members of the group as well as Jihad, before they split after members were arrested following the events of 1981 in the Jihad group case. In the past, the two groups represented the jihadist current in Egypt and entered a bloody standoff with the government until they thoroughly revised their ideology. In an unprecedented move in the history of Islamist currents, they evolved from jihadist groups to Salafists after they completely abandoned armed operations and took up preaching. After the revolution, Jamaa Islamiya established the Construction and Development Party and the Jihad created the Safety and Development Party. Jamaa Islamiya is heavily present in Upper Egypt, especially in Minya, Assiut, Sohag, Qena and Aswan. Its key leaders are Nageh Ibrahim, Mohamed Essam Darbala, Assem Abdel-Meguid, Karam Zohdi, Osama Hafez, Abdel-Akher Hammad, Aboud El-Zomor and Tareq El-Zomor. Meanwhile, the former Jihad group is present in Greater Cairo, especially in Shobra and Boulaq Al-Dakrur, as well as the governorates of Sharqiya and Beni Suef. Among its top leaders are Kamal Habib, Abbas Shanan, Nabil Naeem, Saleh Jaheen and Ahmed Youssef Hamdallah.

Jihadist Salafism

This is the name that this current was given by the media, rather than a reflection of reality, since a Salafist cannot actually be a jihadist, because one of the key principles of Salafism is not to take up arms or dissent against the ruler. These are the characteristics of the jihadist current. The term Jihadist Salafism is "the jihadist current that adopts Salafist beliefs, monotheism and adherence to the Book [the Quran] and the Sunna." In fact, this is a characteristic of all Islamist currents in Egypt. Jihadist Salafism is somewhat similar to Action Salafism in terms of ideology, especially in terms of governance – although the latter never takes up arms.

Salafist currents and political participation

Just as the January revolution changed Egypt's politics, it has also impacted Salafist groups. An ideological earthquake occurred within this current as it raced towards political participation. Overall, Salafists entered the political process in every way, whether by joining political parties or establishing their own, such as the Nour, Assala, Construction and Development, and Safety and Development parties. Salafists turned down an alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood and created the 'Islamist bloc' to challenge other political forces, including the Brotherhood. They began political activism after the revolution by mobilising the street to vote 'yes' on a raft of constitutional amendments aimed at offsetting political forces who wanted the majority to vote 'no.' Salafist groups summoned the power of all their members, leaders, sheikhs and preachers of all stripes en masse during this political race.

It was the first time in the Salafists' history for them to participate in political life, and soon after the constitutional referendum some Salafist currents began creating political parties.

The ideological transformation of Salafists regarding political participation was dizzying, since several groups within the current still ban political activism. But after the January revolution, Salafists dove head first into the political fray. This represented a significant shift in ideology in a very short period of time.

Even more unusual is that Salafists began discussing issues they would never have touched or discussed in the past because they conflict with Salafist thought and beliefs, such as citizenship, Coptic rights, the rule of law, a civil state, religious discourse, and other such topics.

Reasons for the post-revolution rise of Salafism

There are two key factors that helped Salafists succeed in the first round of the last parliamentary elections, especially after the Nour Party's list of candidates won 24 per cent of votes. First, the overthrow of the Mubarak regime and its repercussions, which triggered several transformations, including a new freedom for political activism and forming parties without obstruction.

This allowed Salafist groups to establish their own political parties and participate in electoral politics. Also, the fact that there were no real liberal, national or leftist forces with grassroots support that could compete against religious currents in general and Salafists in particular, religious groups

gained the upper hand.

Secondly, we must consider the influence of Salafists on the ground because of good organisation and strength, as well as massive numbers of cadres and youth, not to mention strong financial backing that was out in the open during the electoral process.

What's more, the group boasted a strong capacity to mobilise the street after long years of proselytisation that enabled it to penetrate society and use religion in its campaigning to good effect. This included the use of mosques, where the group's clerics and preachers urged congregants to vote for Islamist candidates in general, and Salafist ones in particular. Salafists had always been very active in providing social work and services to the public, which greatly influenced ordinary folk to follow the Salafist lead and support the movement by all means – most notably by voting for the current's candidates in national elections.

Ali Bakr is an expert on Islamic movements.

Article 3.

World Policy Institute

The Palestinians Want to Negotiate

Andrew Wilson

October 15, 2012 -- In a remarkable diplomatic development, the Palestinian leadership has signaled new flexibility in negotiating with Israel. At an October 9th, meeting with European diplomats in Ramallah, according to the Associated Press, President Mahmoud Abbas indicated his willingness to drop the longstanding demand that Israel freeze settlement construction as a precondition to peace talks after the General Assembly passes, as he anticipates they will, a resolution granting Palestine observer state status at the UN. As it is currently being framed, the resolution will include a clear definition of borders for the Palestinian state that includes the West Bank and Gaza. The UN resolution will provide Abbas with the diplomatic platform he needs to enter into negotiations with Israel, and give him room to drop the demand for a settlement freeze. Thus, a major sticking point that for the last four years has stood in the way of peace talks will be removed.

Mahmoud Abbas and his leadership team are to be commended for their new realism. Last year's futile gesture to bring a resolution on statehood to the Security Council only angered the Americans and pushed them to use their veto. This year for the resolution at the General Assembly, the Palestinians are seeking to engage in sober discussions with the Europeans and other potential partners with the aim of gaining broad-based international [support](#). Viewing the resolution in the context of the Palestinians' new strategy for resuming peace talks should encourage many in the international community to be favorably disposed.

Signs that the Palestinians are looking for a way to bypass their demand for a settlement freeze were first seen on September 25th, when Abbas met with a group of Jewish leaders in New York, including Harvard Law professor Alan Dershowitz, and indicated that he would accept the formula [Dershowitz first proposed in June](#): that the Palestinians agree to begin negotiations as long as Israel freezes settlements once the talks have begun. This formula would take a freeze as a precondition for talks off the table—something Israel has long insisted upon—while testing Israel's good faith to halt settlement construction during the talks. It would address Israel's complaint that when it last froze settlement construction for ten months in 2009 at the behest of President Barack Obama, the Palestinians took advantage of the situation by dithering and then claiming they wanted to negotiate just as the freeze was about to expire. Dershowitz said he came away from his discussion with Abbas convinced that "if Abbas and Bibi Netanyahu sit down and have serious talks, they will find their positions much closer than is widely [believed](#)."

In Abbas's September 27th speech before the UN General Assembly, after reciting the usual litany of Israeli violations, he announced his intent to be conciliatory: "We do not seek to delegitimize an existing state—that is, Israel—but to assert the state that must be realized—that is, Palestine." This language was another indication that the Palestinians are seeking a way forward to begin talks with Israel.

Then, on October 9th, at a meeting with European diplomats in Ramallah, Abbas signaled that if the UN resolution is passed, he will back away from his longstanding demand for Israel to halt West Bank settlement construction before peace talks resume. The UN resolution will include definitions of the boundaries and the right to East Jerusalem as the capital

city, according to PA executive committee member Hanan Ashrawi. Those specifications will give the Palestinians sufficient international support to push for a Palestinian state with acceptable borders in bilateral talks with Israel. Thus, if the UN passes that resolution in a vote slated for November 29th, Abbas will have a stronger hand to negotiate with Israel, regardless of the settlements.

What the Palestinians will not do in any negotiation is to permit Israel to dictate terms, which, with its military muscle, strong economy, and ability to establish “facts on the ground,” it would be in a position to do. In the past, their demand for a settlement freeze was a way to assert that they, too, could establish facts on the ground, and thus create some degree of parity. Unfortunately, they overplayed that hand in 2009 and Israel is not willing to let them do it again. Now, with the upcoming UN resolution granting Palestine observer state status and specifying its border at the Green Line, the Palestinians believe they will have gained enough parity with Israel that they can afford to give up their demand for a freeze. They are taking down their roadblock to talks, having found in the UN an alternative path to the same purpose.

The Palestinians are behaving pragmatically and constructively. They are opening the door to negotiations that could begin as soon as December. This development is leading the Quartet (the U.S., EU, Russia, and the UN) to think beyond their plans from last year, when they could not manage to bring the parties together, according to a time-line that had envisioned reaching a settlement by year’s end. Thus UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry expressed the Secretary General’s hope that the Quartet partners, in consultation with the parties, would chart a “new, credible political way ahead” in the coming months.

It remains to be seen how Israel will respond. Prime Minister Netanyahu has immersed himself in politicking for the just-announced elections slated to take place early next year, on January 22nd. If he plays to his settler base, he will not want to negotiate. Yet elections are a time of great fluidity in Israeli politics, and he might calculate that he would do better to move to the center. Entering into negotiations with the Palestinians would rejigger the Israeli political map, creating opportunities for another center–right alliance, as was attempted with Shaul Mofaz last spring. Domestic political

considerations will weigh heavily on Netanyahu's thinking, and in that regard there are more reasons than just the Palestinian situation why a center-right alliance may be attractive.

We will also be watching how the United States handles these developments. By late November, President Obama will either be a lame duck or a second term president. Either way, he will have great flexibility to craft a constructive American response without the worry of domestic politics. The current American stance at the UN, where, behind the scenes, its officials are reportedly attempting to scuttle the UN resolution, is not helpful. Let us hope the United States quickly realizes that the UN observer state resolution on Palestine is not just another unilateral move in the tit-for-tat diplomatic game; rather, the Palestinians intend it to be a constructive avenue forward to peace talks.

Peace talks between Israel and Palestine that lead to a two-state solution are in America's best interest. It will not do for the United States to continue to parrot the timeworn Israeli line that makes concern for Israel's security a cipher for discounting the Palestinians' national aspirations. This time, the Palestinian UN initiative is a strategic move that will serve the cause of peace and our national interests at the same time.

The Palestinian offer to drop its precondition of a settlement freeze in tandem with achievement of UN observer state status indicates that they are making preparations on the world stage to enter into negotiations with Israel—if Israel is willing. A crucial opportunity for peace is in the offering, and it will be a shame to see it wasted for lack of resolute American leadership. America needs to step up to its historic role as an honest broker for peace by pressing Israel to take this Palestinian initiative with utmost seriousness.

Andrew Wilson is co-author of the Citizens Proposal for a Border between Israel and Palestine (www.israel-palestine-border.org), an independent initiative to draw a map based on the principles of fairness, contiguity, access, minimizing dislocation of the population, and enhancing conditions for economic development.

The Washington Post

Obama and Romney's empty talk on Syria

[Richard Cohen](#)

October 15, 2012 -- In the frantic search for bipartisan agreement in Washington, I can report something of a breakthrough. Although they will not admit it, both Mitt Romney and Barack Obama agree on what to do about the Syrian civil war: Let the killing continue. So far, it's working. The number of dead is [around 30,000](#), with hundreds added daily. A fair number of these are women and children. There's a good deal of suffering and incredible physical damage, the usual ruins of war. All of this, by bipartisan agreement, can continue until the dictator Bashar al-Assad realizes that life can be so much better on the French Riviera. This, though, will take some time.

In his [major foreign policy address](#), a tour de force of non-specifics, Romney hit Obama hard on Syria. "The president has also failed to lead in Syria," he said this month. "Violent extremists are flowing into the fight. Our ally [Turkey has been attacked](#). And the conflict threatens stability in the region." Oh, so true, so true.

And what does Romney suggest the United States do? Does he recommend the imposition of a no-fly zone that would deprive Assad of the use of helicopter gunships and fighter aircraft to bomb neighborhoods of Aleppo and other cities? I asked his campaign and was told no — not a no-fly zone.

So did Romney mean providing the Syrian rebels with anti-tank or anti-aircraft weapons? No, I was told. Not that either. A Romney administration would basically facilitate the flow of heavy weapons, but from others — not a big help but more than the Obama administration is doing.

All predictions that the war would end quickly have been proved wrong. Assad has used the army, air force and domestic intelligence services on his own people — not, mind you, that he considers non-Alawite Muslims his own people. And all the predictions of what would happen if the West intervened have, in a paradoxical way, come true. They did so, however, without any intervention.

The war has spread. Turkey has become [more and more belligerent](#) toward Syria and even seems spoiling for a fight. Related fighting may have erupted [in Lebanon](#) — it's hard to tell the cause — but ultimately Assad will start trouble there. (That's Page 2 of the Syrian playbook.) Jordan is worried sick about what's happening. It has had to take in [countless refugees](#) — one camp alone contains 9,000 Syrian women, of whom 720 are pregnant — and lacks the wherewithal on its own to cope. (The United Nations is helping.) Jordan, a monarchy imposed by the British, somehow endures, but I would not push its luck.

At the same time, the Syrian middle-class professionals who spearheaded the demonstrations that led to revolt are being [shoved aside by jihadists](#) who are more adept not only at killing but at securing weapons as well. No one, certainly not the United States, has control of the arms flow to rebels to ensure that the extremists don't get what's intended for others. If this continues to happen, these weapons — much like in Afghanistan after the Soviets withdrew — will ultimately be used by America's enemies. Much of this could have been avoided, had the United States come in early and decisively on the side of the Syrian rebels. Instead, Obama vainly looked to both [Kofi Annan](#) and Vladimir Putin to help end the war when he should have also been organizing an air campaign. That's what did the job in Bosnia, Kosovo and even Libya, where the objective was to oust Moammar Gaddafi and head off a bloodbath. It worked. Just keeping Assad's airplanes on the ground would have shown the Syrian military that it was saluting the wrong guy. Defections would have followed. Instead, Obama let the situation drift and it has worsened. He had a chance to rid the region of a bad actor and have a Sunni — and anti-Iran — regime take its place on Israel's northern border. That border now bristles with more than 33,000 Hezbollah rockets targeted at Israel. Romney had strong words about Syria in his foreign policy address but tepid proposals. There is no substitute for American leadership. If weapons are to be provided, then America ought to organize their distribution. If a no-fly zone is needed, only America can do it. If someone has to create an anti-Assad coalition in the region, then America, not Turkey — the former colonial power, after all — is the one to do it. It was good of Romney to point out Obama's lack of leadership on Syria. It would have been better if he had provided some himself.

Spiegel

Iran's Secret Plan to Contaminate the Strait of Hormuz

Erich Follath

10/15/2012 01 -- Iran could be planning to create a vast oil spill in the Strait of Hormuz, according to a top secret report obtained by Western intelligence officials. The aim of the operation is to both temporarily block the vital shipping channel and to force a suspension of Western sanctions. If there is a man who brings together all the fears of the West, it is General Mohammed Ali Jafari, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. Hardened by torture in the prisons of the former Shah, Jafari was among the students who stormed the US Embassy in Tehran on Nov. 4, 1979. He later fought in the Iran-Iraq War, and in 2007 Jafari, who has a degree in architecture, assumed command of the Revolutionary Guards, also known as the Pasdaran. The group, founded by revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khamenei to defend the Islamic regime, has since developed into a state within the state.

Today the Pasdaran control several companies and are likely a more effective military force than the regular army. Of the 21 ministers in the Iranian cabinet, 13 have completed Pasdaran training. Within this group of hardliners, Jafari, 55, is seen being particularly unyielding. In 2009, for example, he declared that Iran would fire missiles at Israel's nuclear research center in Dimona if the Israelis attacked Iran's nuclear facilities -- knowing full well that such an attack would result in several thousand deaths on both sides.

Now Jafari and his supporters are allegedly preparing new potential horrors. Western intelligence agencies have acquired a plan marked "top secret" and code-named "Murky Water." Together with Ali Fadawi, an admiral in the Pasdaran, Jafari is thought to have proposed a senseless act

of sabotage: to intentionally cause an environmental catastrophe in the Strait of Hormuz.

Expression of Growing Frustration

The goal of the plan seems to be that of contaminating the strait so as to temporarily close the important shipping route for international oil tankers, thereby "punishing" the Arab countries that are hostile to Iran and forcing the West to join Iran in a large-scale cleanup operation -- one that might require the temporary suspension of sanctions against Tehran.

Western intelligence experts speculate that Jafari's planned operation is an expression of growing frustration. Contrary to claims made by Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi in an interview with SPIEGEL last week, the embargo imposed on Tehran is causing far more than "discomfort." Iran derives more than 50 percent of its government revenue from oil exports, which declined from about 2.4 million barrels a day in July 2011 to about 1 million barrels in July 2012. But Iran has only cut back production by less than a quarter, because of the technical complexity and expense involved in temporarily capping wells.

Iran can hardly sell its oil because of the embargo. Even countries that don't feel bound to uphold the sanctions are shying away from deals, because no one wants to insure the oil shipments. The storage tanks on the Iranian mainland have been full for some time, and there are no neighboring countries to which Tehran's leaders would entrust their treasure. For weeks now, tankers have been carrying 40 million barrels of oil through the Gulf around the clock.

Most of the giant 15 VLCC supertankers and five smaller Suezmax ships, sailing under the Iranian flag, have switched off their automatic identification system. This makes it more difficult for foreign spies to detect them, but it also increases the risk of accidents. Countries bordering the Gulf have apparently complained to Tehran about the risky practice several times.

The Final Decisions

Jafari's plan allegedly describes in detail how a massive environmental catastrophe could be created if, for example, the Iranians were to steer one of these supertankers onto a rock. During the 1991 Gulf War, then Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein had millions of barrels of oil dumped into the Gulf. The fishing industry in Gulf countries was shut down for months, and

the ecological damage was felt for years to come. In 1994 and 1998, accidental oil spills threatened desalination plants in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, thereby imperiling fresh water supplies for the two countries.

According to the Pasdaran leadership, if there were a tanker disaster today, the International Compensation Fund for Oil Pollution Damage would have to step in financially. But a decontamination effort would only be possible with the technical assistance of Iranian authorities, which would require lifting the embargo, at least temporarily. Iranian oil companies, some owned by members of the Pasdaran, could even benefit from the cleanup program. Jafari's plan also foresees the Iranian people rallying around the government in such a situation, pushing Tehran's failing economic policy into the background.

The "Murky Water" sabotage plan is currently thought to be in the hands of religious leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. He makes the final decisions.

Article 6.

The Christian Science Monitor

NATO must offer Turkey military support in Syria crisis

[Jorge Benitez](#)

October 15, 2012 -- For the second time in five months, [Turkey](#) has turned to [NATO](#) for support in the face of Syrian attacks that have killed Turkish citizens. Unfortunately, the transatlantic alliance has responded both times with words rather than deeds. When [Syria](#) shot down a jet plane of the Turkish Air Force in June, Turkey requested a meeting of NATO members. According to diplomatic sources, it asked the alliance to prepare contingency plans to enforce a no-fly zone in Syria. The alliance voted against this request and responded instead with a statement condemning the Syrian attack "in the strongest terms." After numerous mortar attacks from Syria into Turkey's territory, Syrian shelling Oct. 3 killed five Turkish civilians. Turkey again asked NATO to meet to discuss the situation. NATO ambassadors hastily convened and issued a new statement in which

the allies “strongly condemned” that attack. NATO needs to offer Turkey more than repeated promises to follow the crisis “closely and with great concern.” As my colleague and former US Ambassador to Turkey [Ross Wilson](#) suggests, “NATO needs to pick up its game.”

The alliance’s response to Turkey during this escalating crisis is being closely scrutinized in Turkey and the region, and will have powerful repercussions. If NATO persists in offering only paper promises to Turkey, the perception that the alliance lacks the political will to back up allies even if they are attacked will be a major blow to NATO’s credibility. It is also not in NATO’s interests to disappoint the country with the second largest army within the alliance. Perceived failure to live up to its alliance obligations will further weaken public support for NATO within Turkey. [Europe](#) and the [United States](#) can’t afford a rift with what some describe as the only functioning Muslim democracy in the greater [Middle East](#) – a country with unmatched geostrategic, economic, and cultural value in the region.

What can NATO do for Turkey?

Too much attention has been focused on the question of invoking Article 5, the alliance’s mutual defense clause. Even during the many crises of the cold war, Article 5 was never invoked. In fact, the only time it has been exercised was after the 9/11 attacks against the United States. As tangible evidence of alliance solidarity, NATO sent seven radar aircraft (Airborne Warning and Control System, or AWACS) with crews from 13 NATO countries to help patrol American skies. Apart from this isolated case, the transatlantic alliance has successfully overcome crises without invoking Article 5. This is because NATO members have many options to support and reinforce one another without having to turn to the mutual defense clause. These options should be considered now. For example, before the US-led coalition invaded [Saddam Hussein](#)’s [Iraq](#) in 2003, Turkey requested a meeting with its allies, under Article 4 of the NATO treaty, to discuss how the alliance could help Turkey deter an attack from Iraq. Article 4 allows any member to request consultation when, in the opinion of any of them, their territorial integrity, political independence, or security is threatened. After what NATO politely described as an “intense debate,” the alliance approved Operation Display Deterrence which deployed “precautionary defensive measures to ensure Turkey’s security.” These

measures included sending four AWACS radar aircraft and five Patriot air defense batteries, as well as equipment for chemical and biological defense. Over all, NATO members deployed more than 1,000 “technically advanced and highly capable forces” to support Turkey during the Iraq conflict. NATO made the right call at that time by responding to Turkey’s plea for help by sending tangible aid instead of only diplomatic statements. These actions had a direct and positive impact on Turkey. [Ankara](#)’s then-ambassador to NATO, Ahmet Üzümcü, thanked the alliance for its solidarity: “We are convinced that, through such an active and collective display of deterrence, NATO has not only extended a much-appreciated helping hand to one of its members in her hour of need, but also proven, once again, its credibility and relevance as the cornerstone of collective security in the Euro-Atlantic area.”

Turkey has suffered multiple attacks and loss of life from Syria. [Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan](#) has responded to this crisis with great patience and moderation, but diplomatic sources have made it clear that Turkey is tired of bearing so much of this burden all alone.

It is time for NATO to send proportional support to Turkey during its hour of need. Reinforcing this embattled ally with a small number of AWACS radar aircraft and/or units from the NATO rapid reaction force will strengthen Ankara militarily and politically.

It will also send a powerful message to the Assad regime in Syria and its allies to prevent any further attacks against Turkey. By acting now, NATO can help de-escalate the confrontation along the Turkish-Syrian border and decrease the possibility of Turkey intervening unilaterally in Syria.

Any member of NATO deserves such minimal support from its allies after its military and people have been attacked. The time is now for NATO to offer Turkey more than words of support.

Jorge Benitez is director of the blog [NATOSource](#) and a senior fellow at the [Atlantic Council](#).

Article 7.
NYT

No More Industrial Revolutions?

[Thomas B. Edsall](#)

October 15, 2012 -- The American economy is running on empty. That's the hypothesis put forward by [Robert J. Gordon](#), an economist at Northwestern University. Let's assume for a moment that he's right. The political consequences would be enormous.

In his [widely discussed](#) National Bureau of Economic Research paper, "[Is U.S. Economic Growth Over?](#)" Gordon predicts a dark future of "epochal decline in growth from the U.S. record of the last 150 years." The greatest innovations, Gordon argues, are behind us, with little prospect for transformative change along the lines of the three previous industrial revolutions:

IR #1 (steam, railroads) from 1750 to 1830; IR #2 (electricity, internal combustion engine, running water, indoor toilets, communications, entertainment, chemicals, petroleum) from 1870 to 1900; and IR #3 (computers, the web, mobile phones) from 1960 to present.

Gordon argues that each of these revolutions was followed by a period of economic expansion, particularly industrial revolution number two, which saw "80 years of relatively rapid productivity growth between 1890 and 1972." According to Gordon, once "the spin-off inventions from IR #2 (airplanes, air conditioning, interstate highways) had run their course, productivity growth during 1972-96 was much slower than before."

Industrial revolution number 3, he writes

created only a short-lived growth revival between 1996 and 2004. Many of the original and spin-off inventions of IR #2 could happen only once - urbanization, transportation speed, the freedom of females from the drudgery of carrying tons of water per year, and the role of central heating and air conditioning in achieving a year-round constant temperature.

Over most of human history, in ██████████ view, the world had minimal economic growth, if it had any at all - and "there is no guarantee that growth will continue indefinitely." ██████████ paper suggests instead that "the rapid progress made over the past 250 years could well turn out to be a unique episode in human history."

The United States faces "headwinds" that could cut annual growth in Gross Domestic Product to as little as 0.2 percent annually, which is one tenth the rate of growth from 1860 to 2007.

The headwinds Gordon cites include:

*The reversal of the "demographic dividend." The huge one-time-only surge of women into the workforce between 1965 and 1990 raised hours per capita and "allowed real per capita real [REDACTED] to grow faster than output per hour." Now the number of workers who are retiring is growing, reducing the average number of hours worked for the entire population. "By definition, whenever hours per capita decline, then output per capita must grow more slowly than productivity."

*Rising inequality means that the majority of the population will get a smaller fraction of the benefits of economic growth.

*America is losing the competitive advantage it long enjoyed based on the educational achievement of its workforce. Gordon cites [REDACTED] data showing that out of 37 countries surveyed, the United States recently ranked 21st in reading, 31st in math, and 34th in science. Higher education cost inflation, Gordon adds, "leads to mounting student debt, which is increasingly distorting career choices and deterring low-income people from going to college at all."

*Globalization and rapid advances in information technology encourage outsourcing and automation, which inevitably have "a damaging effect on the nations with the highest wage level, i.e., the United States."

Taken in full, [REDACTED] controversial [REDACTED] paper challenges our belief that innovation and invention will continue to drive sustained expansion in the United States.

[Daron Acemoglu](#), an economist at [REDACTED] and co-author of the book "[Why Nations Fail: Origins of Power, Poverty and Prosperity](#)," wrote in response to an email I sent him asking about [REDACTED] hypothesis:

Bob has been a good corrective to people who think that the innovations of today are transforming the world in a way that those of yesteryear never did. This is a very important corrective. But I think he misses the major engine of innovation: the market tends to find whatever is profitable, even if we cannot see what that is today.

[Lawrence Katz](#), an economist at Harvard, wrote to me that the Gordon essay "is a wise and thoughtful piece but a very, very speculative one. The historical evidence presented is quite reasonable." Katz noted that projections of "what new ideas will be discovered and their potential impacts on economic growth" are "highly uncertain." In the end, he said, "I am probably a bit more optimistic on the potential for innovation but I

share ██████ worries about inequality and education and environmental issues."

[David Autor](#), who is also an economist at ██████, has written extensively about [problems with employment and job growth](#), but he holds a more optimistic view than Gordon:

My guess is that the big gains in the next couple of decades are likely to come from the medical arena - prolonging life, tackling disease, correcting genetic deficiencies, regrowing limbs, reversing the course of Alzheimer's. Autor had another thought:

It's my hope - but here ██████ less confident - that advances in energy generation (solar, wind power, efficiency itself) will contribute to stemming global warming by reducing carbon emissions. That would be a major improvement to the expected trajectory of ██████

Martin Wolf, an economic columnist for the Financial Times, has opened up a discussion of the political implications of ██████ bleak assessment of the American future, [writing](#):

For almost two centuries, today's high-income countries enjoyed waves of innovation that made them both far more prosperous than before and far more powerful than everybody else. This was the world of the American dream and American exceptionalism. Now innovation is slow and economic catch-up fast. The elites of the high-income countries quite like this new world. The rest of their population like it vastly less. Get used to this. It will not change.

If Gordon is even modestly on target, the current presidential campaign begins to ring hollow. Listen to the rhetoric. "Mitt Romney's plan for a stronger middle class is a five-part proposal for turning around the economy and delivering more jobs and more take-home pay for American families," the Romney campaign [declares](#) on its web site. "His plan will end the middle class squeeze of declining incomes and rising prices, bring back prosperity, and create 12 million jobs during his first term."

Over at the Obama web site, [you find](#): "President Obama is fighting to grow the economy from the middle class out, not the top down. This election presents a choice between two fundamentally different visions of how to grow our economy and create good middle-class jobs."

Juxtapose these campaign claims with ██████ chart describing the growth of ██████ per capita over the last 810 years. The blue line

represents █████ growth in England, which benefitted from the industrial revolution first. The point on the chart where the line shifts to the color red (the early 20th century) is the moment when the United States replaced England as the global leader in productivity growth.

█████ chart demonstrates that there was a sustained lack of productivity growth from 1300 to 1700, which supports his argument that economic expansion is a relatively recent phenomenon and by no means inevitable. The chart also illustrates the decidedly downward turn that American growth rates have taken since the mid-1970s.

Gordon goes on to raise the stakes, extending his projections into the future. The green line in the second Gordon graph charts his view of the hypothetical path of real █████ per capita growth over the next 88 years. It is a grim image. Gordon describes a steadily diminishing rate of growth in the United States:

Doubling the standard of living took five centuries between 1300 and 1800. Doubling accelerated to one century between 1800 and 1900.

Doubling peaked at a mere 28 years between 1929 and 1957 and 31 years between 1957 and 1988. But then doubling is predicted to slow back to a century again between 2007 and 2100. Of course the latter is a forecast.

In essence, Gordon is saying that there won't be a fourth industrial revolution:

Why is this related to inequality? Because the burden of this decline will fall on the bulk of the population. The continuing prosperity of the wealthiest, on the other hand, will be magnified.

Using detailed income data compiled by Emmanuel Saez, a Berkeley economist, Gordon calculated that from

1993 to 2008, the average growth in real household income was 1.3 percent per year. But for the bottom 99 percent, growth was only 0.75, a gap of 0.55 percent per year. The top one percent of the income distribution captured fully 52% of the income gains during that 15-year period.

In supplementary material emailed to The Times, Gordon acknowledged that

Globalization will add to U. S. growth in the same sense that economists have always argued that free trade creates more winners than losers. But the losers from globalization are those not only whose jobs are lost to imports and outsourcing, but those whose incomes are beaten down as

foreign investment flecks to southern states with lower wages, and as corporations like Caterpillar are successful in extracting concessions on wages and benefits from their employees. And the winners are C.E.O.s of multinational companies like Caterpillar who see their profits and stock prices rise as they build factories abroad, whether or not any jobs are created at home.

Intellectually, both the Obama and Romney campaigns are undoubtedly aware of the general line of thinking that lies behind ██████████ analysis, and of related findings in books like "The Great Stagnation" by [Tyler Cowen](#) of George Mason University. Cowen argues that innovation has reached a "technological plateau" that rules out a return to the growth of the 20th century.

For Obama, the argument that the America has run out of string is politically untouchable. In the case of Romney and the Republican Party, something very different appears to be taking place.

There are two parallel realizations driving policy thinking on the right. The first is the growing consciousness of the threat to the conservative coalition as its core constituency - white voters, and particularly married white Protestants - decreases as a share of the electorate. Similarly, the conservative political class recognizes that the halcyon days of shared growth, with the United States leading the world economy, may be over. While Gordon projects a future of exacerbating inequality - as an ever-increasing share of declining productivity growth goes to the top, the wealthy are acutely aware that the political threat to their status and comfort would come from rising popular demand for policies of income redistribution.

It is for this reason that the Republican Party is determined to protect the Bush tax cuts; to prevent tax hikes; to further cut domestic social spending; and, more broadly, to take a machete to the welfare state.

Insofar as Republicans prevail in their twin aims of cutting - or even eliminating - social spending, and maintaining or lowering tax rates, they will have succeeded in obstructing the restoration of social insurance programs in the future.

Affluent Republicans - the donor and policy base of the conservative movement - are on red alert. They want to protect and enhance their position in a future of diminished resources. What really lies underneath

the ferocity with which the right currently fights for regressive tax and spending policies is a deeply pessimistic vision premised on a future of hard times. This vision has prompted the Republican Party to adopt a preemptive strategy that anticipates the end of growth and the onset of sustained austerity - a strategy to make sure that the size of their slice of the pie doesn't get smaller as the pie shrinks.

This is the underlying and inadequately explored theme of the 2012 election.

Thomas B. Edsall, a professor of journalism at Columbia University, is the author of the book "The Age of Austerity: How Scarcity Will Remake American Politics," which was published earlier this year.