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2 April, 2014

Article 1.	NYT <u>Abbas Takes Defiant Step, and Mideast Talks Falter</u> Jodi Rudoren , Michael R. Gordon and Mark Landler
Article 2.	Washington Post <u>Offering Jonathan Pollard's release in Mideast peace talks is premature</u> Editorial
Article 3.	The Washington Institute <u>Pollard Release Seems Justified</u> Dennis Ross
Article 4.	The American Interest <u>Releasing Pollard: Don't Do It, Mr. Secretary</u> Daniel Kurtzer
Article 5.	Hurriyet <u>Turkey - Lessons from the ballots</u> Mustafa Akyol
Article 6.	The Council on Foreign Relations <u>Split Persists Between Washington and Riyadh</u> An interview with F. Gregory Gause III
Article 7.	NYT <u>Follow the Money</u> Thomas L. Friedman

[Article 1.](#)

NYT

Abbas Takes Defiant Step, and Mideast Talks Falter

[Jodi Rudoren](#), [Michael R. Gordon](#) and [Mark Landler](#)

April 1, 2014 -- The Middle East peace talks verged on a breakdown Tuesday night, after President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority defied the United States and Israel by taking concrete steps to join 15 international agencies — a move to gain the benefits of statehood outside the negotiations process. Mr. Abbas's actions, which appeared to catch American and Israeli officials by surprise, prompted Secretary of State John Kerry to cancel a planned return to the region on Wednesday, in which he had expected to complete an agreement extending negotiations through 2015. In that emerging deal, the United States would release an American convicted of spying for Israel more than 25 years ago, while Israel would free hundreds of Palestinian prisoners and slow down construction of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Mr. Abbas, who had vowed not to seek membership in international bodies until the April 29 expiration of the talks that Mr. Kerry started last summer, said he was taking this course because Israel had failed to release a fourth batch of long-serving Palestinian prisoners by the end of March, as promised. Israeli officials say they are not bound by their pledge because no meaningful negotiations have taken place since November. American officials, while rattled, said the Palestinians appeared to be using leverage against Israel rather than trying to scuttle the negotiations. Mr. Abbas, they noted, did not move toward joining the International Criminal Court, a step Israel fears most because the Palestinians could use the court to contest Israel's presence in the West Bank. Still, a senior American official said Mr. Kerry's decision not to return to the region immediately reflected a growing impatience in the White House, which believes that his mediating efforts have reached their limit and that the two sides need to work their way out of the current impasse. In announcing the moves, Mr. Abbas said, "This is our right." He has been under pressure from other Palestinian leaders and the public to leverage the nonmember observer-state status they won at the United Nations in 2012 to join a total of 63 international bodies. Secretary of State John Kerry leaving Tel Aviv on Tuesday. "We do not want to use this right against anybody or to confront anybody," he said, as he signed the membership applications live on Palestinian television. "We don't want to collide with the U.S. administration. We want a good relationship with Washington because it helped us and exerted huge efforts. But because we did not find ways for a solution, this becomes our right."

The United States voted against the Palestinians' 2012 bid in the United Nations General Assembly, and it blocked a similar effort in 2011 at the Security Council, arguing that negotiations with Israel were the only path to peace and statehood. Washington has also vigorously opposed Palestinian membership in the international agencies, which under a law passed by Congress could prompt a withdrawal of financial aid to the Palestinian Authority and a shutdown of the Palestinian diplomatic mission in Washington.

While the Palestinians' pursuit of the international route is widely viewed as a poison pill for the peace talks, Mr. Abbas and Mr. Kerry held out hope on Tuesday night that they could still be salvaged. The agencies Mr. Abbas moved to join Tuesday included the Geneva and Vienna Conventions and those dealing with women's and children's rights. Israel has released 78 Palestinian prisoners as part of a deal to restart peace talks. The prisoners are welcomed by many Palestinians as heroes, but many Israelis feel their release is an injustice.

"It is completely premature tonight to draw any kind of judgment, certainly any kind of final judgment, about today's events and where things are," [Mr. Kerry told reporters in Brussels](#), where he was meeting with NATO foreign ministers on the Ukrainian crisis.

"I'm not going to get into the who, why, what, when, where, how of why we're where we are today," he added. "The important thing is to keep the process moving and find a way to see whether the parties are prepared to move forward."

"Even tonight," Mr. Kerry said, "both parties say they want to continue to try to find a way forward."

President Obama has given Mr. Kerry broad latitude to try to keep the process alive, even authorizing him to discuss the possible release of Jonathan J. Pollard, a former Navy intelligence officer serving a life sentence in the United States for espionage, whose release Israel has long sought. That would only be as part of a broader package of measures that American officials said would give the negotiations a genuine chance to succeed.

Such a move would antagonize the nation's intelligence agencies, senior officials said, but might be worth the cost to keep the talks from collapsing.

Mr. Pollard is eligible for parole in 2015, they noted, so his value as a bargaining chip is diminishing.

Mr. Obama, officials said, was in frequent contact with Mr. Kerry when both were in Europe last week, and during Mr. Kerry's travels there this week. The president has rejected previous pleas by the Israelis to release Mr. Pollard, but with Mr. Kerry having invested so deeply in the peace process, officials said, Mr. Obama wanted to back him up.

Whether, and how, to use Mr. Pollard has been vigorously debated within the administration. While some officials argue that he should be used only to break the logjam on final-status issues — the borders of a new Palestinian state, for example — Mr. Kerry has argued that these issues will all be decided as a package at the end of the talks. Mr. Kerry has argued that Mr. Pollard could be more useful now in keeping the talks alive, given the possibility of parole, according to officials.

Still, the crisis is the most significant yet for talks that have been troubled from the start, with few beyond Mr. Kerry and his team believing there was much chance of closing the gaps in the two sides' positions. Mr. Kerry has made the peace process a personal mission, with a dozen trips to the region in the past year, including two over the past week, interrupting his efforts to counter Russia's aggression toward Ukraine.

While Middle East analysts widely praised Mr. Kerry's determination, many thought he was on a fool's errand. He long ago abandoned his original goal of achieving a final-status agreement within nine months, and in recent weeks he even de-emphasized his proposed framework of core principles for a deal, focusing instead simply on extending the timetable. "It's a process leading nowhere," Khalil Shikaki, a Palestinian pollster and political scientist, said Tuesday morning. "The basic compromises that this Israeli government is willing to endorse are unacceptable to the majority of the Palestinians." He added, "There is no chance."

Daniel C. Kurtzer, a former American ambassador to Israel, said: "All of the indications are that this is moribund. We're now into Plan B, which has two parts: the blame game, which is well underway, and a last-ditch effort by the United States not to have the collapse lead to violence."

Israeli officials remained silent about Mr. Abbas's move Tuesday night. A spokesman for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declined to discuss it,

or how it might affect the deal that had emerged earlier in the day to continue the talks for at least another nine months.

Mr. Abbas's actions came after a frenzied day of rumors in Israel, where officials said a deal was emerging in which Mr. Pollard would be freed before the Passover holiday, which starts April 14. Israel would free the remaining long-serving prisoners — including 14 Palestinian citizens of Israel, whose release is particularly delicate because it raises questions of sovereignty — as well as 400 others, many of them women and children, who had not committed murder.

In addition, Israel would promise to “show restraint” in settlement construction, according to an official involved in the negotiations, by not starting new government housing projects in the West Bank. Projects underway would be allowed to continue, the official said, and East Jerusalem would not be included.

Instead, Mr. Abbas made a show of signing the documents on live television, saying that Palestine would become a member of most of the 15 bodies “as soon as we apply,” and that he would join the rest of the 63 international agencies “if Israel does not release the prisoners.”

On Tuesday night in Brussels, Mr. Kerry invoked a longstanding axiom of the peace process: that the mediator cannot want it to work more than the parties themselves.

“The president is desirous of trying to see how we can make our best efforts in order to find a way to facilitate,” Mr. Kerry said. “But facilitation is only as good as the willingness of leaders to actually make decisions when they're put in front of them.”

Jodi Rudoren reported from Jerusalem, Michael R. Gordon from Brussels, and Mark Landler from Washington.

[Article 2](#)

Washington Post

Offering Jonathan Pollard's release in Mideast peace talks is premature

Editorial

The Obama administration's Middle East diplomacy has degenerated from a bid to conclude a final Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement this month to an attempt to win agreement on a preliminary "framework" to a desperate race to prevent the talks from collapsing. According to widespread reports Tuesday, that last-ditch effort included [discussion of the possible release of Jonathan Pollard](#), a former Navy civilian intelligence analyst convicted of spying for Israel. His pardon would be bartered for Israel's freeing of Palestinian prisoners.

The prospect of clemency for Mr. Pollard generates strong feelings from both those who believe his crimes were too serious to justify early release and those who say that his 28 years of imprisonment is enough. Whichever your view, what's striking about this scenario is that President Obama would act not on the merits of the case but rather as a quid pro quo in a diplomatic deal involving Israelis and Palestinians.

Should the U.S barter a spy's release for peace in the Middle East?

The obvious question is why the United States is in the position of offering its own concessions rather than brokering compromise between the two parties that are supposed to be negotiating. The simple answer is that, despite lavishing his [time and attention](#) on [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu](#) and [Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas](#) over the past year, Secretary of State John F. Kerry has failed to persuade either to budge from widely divergent positions on the terms of Palestinian statehood. Mr. Pollard's possible release looks like a way to buy time — and avoid admitting defeat.

Mr. Kerry embarked on his Mideast initiative in spite of the Obama administration's previous failure to mediate talks between Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Abbas and the abundant evidence that the two men lack the will or trust in each other to forge a deal. He wagered that he could persuade Mr. Abbas to accept Mr. Netanyahu's key demands — including [recognition of Israel as a Jewish state](#) — in exchange for a commitment to a Palestinian state based on Israel's 1967 borders.

Yet the 79-year-old Palestinian leader has proved recalcitrant — just as in two previous rounds of U.S.-sponsored peace talks. Mr. Abbas publicly rejected Mr. Kerry's terms and refused to commit to an extension of the talks, [prompting Mr. Netanyahu to delay a scheduled release of two dozen Palestinian prisoners](#) last weekend. Mr. Kerry then tried to forge a deal

under which Israel would release the prisoners and another 400 detainees and restrict Jewish settlement construction in the West Bank, the United States would free Mr. Pollard and Palestinians would continue the negotiations until the end of the year while refraining from unilateral initiatives at the United Nations.

That proposal appeared to crumble Tuesday after [Mr. Abbas announced](#) that he was advancing the [Palestinians' bid for membership in 15 international agencies and conventions](#). Mr. Kerry insisted that it was “completely premature” to declare the peace process dead and that “a lot of possibilities” could still be explored. For the moment, however, those possibilities don't seem to include a genuine willingness by Israelis and Palestinians to compromise. Until one appears, the United States should refrain from its own extraordinary gestures, including the release of Mr. Pollard.

[Article 3.](#)

The Washington Institute

Pollard Release Seems Justified

Dennis Ross

April 1, 2014 -- It is no surprise that Jonathan Pollard has become part of the discussions in the current Israeli-Palestinian peace discussions. In every administration I was a part of -- and every negotiation in which I participated -- he was raised by Israeli prime ministers. From Rabin through Netanyahu, one thing could be counted on: Pollard would be raised. We may view him as a spy; Israelis view him differently. He has taken on the aura of being a soldier who was left in the field, and the ethos in Israel is that soldiers are never left behind.

As someone who is Jewish and who also worked in the Pentagon in the 1980's, I had no sympathy for Pollard. He stole top-secret documents; he betrayed his country and the trust put in him; he was caught and it was appropriate that he pay a price for what he had done. I felt strongly about that.

To be sure, I had more personal reasons for feeling an additional sense of betrayal. At the time, I was contending with a prejudice that lingered in the

national security bureaucracy that in not so subtle ways suggested that anyone who was Jewish could not work on Middle Eastern issues because they would serve Israeli as opposed to American interests -- a view typically held by those who also defined U.S. and Israeli interests as being at odds.

So I had good reasons for believing that Pollard should be punished. And, I still believe that. But what constitutes sufficient punishment?

As Israeli prime ministers would raise his case and explain how if they were going to take difficult steps toward peace, his release could make those steps more politically sustainable -- and Presidents starting with Clinton would consider these requests -- I heard the intelligence community make arguments for holding him that made little sense: If we released him to Israel, he would still be able to compromise our security. If he was released, it would signal we were soft on spies. If we released him, there would be no deterrent for spying. If we released him, it would damage the morale of the intelligence services.

Perhaps, five or even 10 years after his imprisonment he might still know things about our intelligence that could have some value, but nearly 30 years afterwards, what could still be of relevance? During one discussion I had in the Clinton administration when this came up, I said even then -- at a point when Pollard had been in prison for 13 years -- that if he could still compromise our intelligence, those responsible on our side should be fired. They had a responsibility to change the way we did business. Clearly, we altered our techniques and means when our security was compromised and we had suffered other security breaches and had to imprison other spies. Whether one accepts the argument that Pollard's sentence seems more severe than that handed out to other spies, it surely makes little sense to say that someone who has spent nearly 30 years in jail has not paid a severe price. Thirty years in jail does not signal being soft on spies; it constitutes a potent deterrent against spying. And, at this point, when looking at the demographic make-up of those in the intelligence community, a significant percentage either were not born or were very young when Pollard was incarcerated. It seems unlikely that morale is going to be affected by his release.

If traditional arguments in the intelligence community bear little weight at this point, there is still the question of whether we should link the peace

issue to Pollard. Some may say that if he is so politically important, we should get something of value for his release. Perhaps, but at a time when the Middle East is characterized by upheaval and U.S. foreign policy needs to demonstrate effectiveness, we can ill afford a collapse of the current efforts to negotiate between Israelis and Palestinians.

If the release is part of a package of steps that not only manages this process but can give it a necessary boost -- and also affect the climate between Israelis and Palestinians -- then President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry certainly seem justified in acting on it.

Dennis Ross is the William Davidson Distinguished Fellow and counselor at The Washington Institute. Previously, he served as the State Department's director of policy planning under President George H. W. Bush, special Middle East coordinator under President Clinton, and special assistant to President Obama from 2009 to 2011.

[Article 4.](#)

The American Interest

Releasing Pollard: Don't Do It, Mr. Secretary

[Daniel Kurtzer](#)

April 1, 2014 -- Reporting from Secretary of State John Kerry's latest foray into Israeli-Palestinian peace making indicates that the United States may release convicted spy Jonathan Pollard as a "sweetener" for Israel to continue the process beyond Kerry's April deadline. If this is the case, it would be a decision driven by American diplomatic desperation—a decision very far removed from Kerry's brilliantly-crafted diplomacy thus far. Perhaps this "hail Mary" maneuver is the only thing left before the talks collapse, or perhaps it is driven by domestic political calculations related to midterm elections. Whatever the real motivations, the Secretary of State should just say 'no'.

Proponents of releasing Pollard marshal arguments that on the surface appear appealing. He has served 29 years thus far of a life sentence—more than others convicted of seemingly-similar offenses. He is eligible for parole in 2015, so, the argument goes, why not get some diplomatic "value"—however small—for him now?

Furthermore, it is argued that Pollard is highly unlikely to have any information that would put American interests at risk. Pollard's sentence was harsh because then-Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger reportedly wrote a detailed memo to the judge in the trial detailing the dangers of allowing Pollard to be set free early given what he knew. But that was in the mid-1980's; such information today would probably be worthless.

Some also argue that Pollard is ill, and thus release should be considered on humanitarian grounds. Others who are less favorably-disposed to him argue that he should be released because only when he is out of prison will Pollard reveal himself as the venal, small-minded, money-hungry, treasonous person who sold out his country.

The arguments against releasing Pollard now, or ever, are at least as compelling. First, Israelis are likely to fête him as a returning hero, which will be terribly annoying to Americans and will exacerbate a rift that is already widening between American and Israeli leaders. Two recent examples of the divide: Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon's [unacceptable comments](#) about America, and the fact that Israel did not vote in the United Nations in favor of an American resolution condemning Russia's annexation of Crimea.

More substantively, Pollard did indeed sell out his country. Although he claimed he provided intelligence to Israel that was being withheld by the United States, the fact is he provided such information in return for money. And, according to reports at the time, he also sold American secrets to other countries. According to the reports of Weinberger's intervention in the sentencing portion of Pollard's trial, the information provided actually put American agents in the field in jeopardy and may have cost some their lives.

Less well-known is the hurt that Pollard inflicted on loyal American Jews working in public service and in security-sensitive positions in the private sector. Some Jews were immediately taken off of sensitive projects or activities involving Israel, and for many, Pollard's arrest cast a pall of suspicion over them. Even today, some American Jews with relatives in Israel or who have spent time there as students or tourists do not receive security clearances for which they otherwise would be eligible.

But most to the point in the current round of diplomacy, it is wrongheaded for the United States to be asked to pay any price, let alone this price, for the peace process to continue. Israel agreed to release Palestinian prisoners as part of an understanding last summer, and thus Israel should be expected to live up to those commitments without further sweeteners and concessions. Naturally, Palestinians should be expected to fulfill their part of the understandings as well. If these commitments are fulfilled, and if Kerry is still unable to persuade the two sides to continue engaging until the terms of reference for serious negotiations can be arranged, then so be it—even the release of a convicted spy will not induce Israel to yield territory or allow a Palestinian capital in Jerusalem, nor will it induce Palestinians to yield on their demand for a ‘right of return’ of refugees. A serious peace process is all about agency, that is, decisions that can and must be made by the leaders of Israel and Palestine. The United States can only do so much to assist, and John Kerry has gone way beyond the call of duty in trying to help. He should not be tempted to demean American diplomacy and tarnish his hard work by throwing a convicted spy into a half-baked deal only to buy time for a peace process that appears to be floundering anyway.

Daniel Kurtzer is the S. Daniel Abraham Professor of Middle East Policy Studies at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. During a 29-year career in the U.S. Foreign Service, he served as the U.S. Ambassador to Israel and to Egypt.

[Article 5.](#)

Hurriyet

Turkey - Lessons from the ballots

Mustafa Akyol

March 30 -- last Sunday's elections, without any doubt, went into history as yet another election victory for Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan and his ruling AKP (Justice and Development Party) with a solid 43 percent of the votes. Why this was the case needs to be studied well by all parties involved.

First, let me note why the results constitute a victory for the ruling party. The reason is not that these were local elections that deserve to be compared to the previous local elections of 2009, in which the AKP had received only some 39 percent of the votes. The real reason is the AKP, in fact, experienced a significant decline in its popularity when compared to the 50 percent of votes it received in the general elections of 2011. Yet this was a small decline compared to what many commentators, and wishful thinkers, expected.

Yes, the local elections of last weekend need to be measured according to the general elections of 2011, because the whole psychology and the arguments of the election were on a national, if not nationalistic, basis. Erdoğan defined the whole campaign, which he led in person, as Turkey's "war of liberation" against enemies within and without. And polls suggested that most voters voted either for or against him, rather than the local candidates within their municipalities.

Why, then, the almost 7 percent decline the AKP has experienced (from 50 percent in 2011 to 43 percent now) is a success? Well, the reason is the decline could have been much larger. Many things that happened in the past three years, such as the Gezi Park protests, Erdoğan's growing authoritarianism, and, most importantly, the corruption scandals of the past few months, could have hurt the ruling party more considerably.

In fact, many in the West are probably wondering why the corruption scandal and other scandalous wiretaps of the past three months have not been more influential in these elections. The first answer is, for the average Turkish voter, corruption is not a surprise, but a fact of life, and they rather focus on the overall performance of the economy and the government's services, assuming there will always be corruption within every government.

The second answer is that while some focused on the content of the wiretaps, others, especially Erdoğan's own base, focused on who has been using them against the government. They, in other words, became convinced that there is indeed a "parallel state" attacking the ruling party with under-the-belt tactics, and therefore consolidated around the prime minister. The wiretaps, in that sense, seem to have backfired. The lesson from this is those who wish to see a post-Erdoğan Turkey should work within the conventional rules of democracy, such as ballots, rather than

unconventional methods such as eavesdropping and espionage. For the main opposition, the [CHP](#) (People's Republican Party), which lost the elections as usual with a modest 26 percent of the votes, there is a key lesson as well: If they really want to defeat the AKP, they should come toward the center, further moving away from their hardcore secularist ideological roots. The fact that they had their most significant increase in Ankara, under Mansur Yavaş, a new export from the center-right, is a case they should ponder well.

And what will happen next? Probably more tension and competition soon, since there is a new race coming, the presidential election in August that Erdoğan might well run for.

[Article 6.](#)

The Council on Foreign Relations

Split Persists Between Washington and Riyadh

An interview with F. Gregory Gause III

April 1, 2014 -- *Last week's meeting between President Obama and King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia was meant to quell speculation that relations between the two long-standing allies had collapsed, says Brookings fellow F. Gregory Gause. But despite the assurances proffered by the Obama administration, serious differences over policy regarding Iran, Syria, and Egypt remain between the two countries, says Gause. On Iran, although Saudis voice support for the international negotiations to limit the country's nuclear program, they worry that Washington is not doing enough to limit Iran's growing influence in the region. They also believe that Washington should be doing more to buttress the anti-Assad forces in Syria and the military government in Egypt. "The United States and Saudis have some serious differences, and this meeting didn't solve them," he says.*

President Obama's meeting with King Abdullah was overshadowed by news that Russian president Vladimir Putin called Obama in his Riyadh hotel to discuss the Ukraine crisis. What do we know about the two-hour meeting that was held at the king's palace outside of Riyadh?

The meeting was important in the sense that there had been quite a bit of talk in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East in general about the coming collapse of U.S.-Saudi relations. In that sense, it was a reassurance

meeting, but the official read-out was pretty modest. What the United States did was basically reassure the Saudis that some of the more wild interpretations of American policy that were floating around in the Middle East about the United States—leaving the Middle East, throwing over the Saudis, and allying with Iran—were just exaggerations.

Syria seems to be a sticking point. Do you think the United States will step up aid to the Syrian opposition?

The big rumor going around was that the United States was going to agree to give shoulder-launch missiles (i.e., MANPADS) to the Syrian opposition. But the official U.S. response coming out of the meeting was, "No, we don't approve of that, and we don't want to see those kinds of weapons introduced because who knows what's going to happen to them after that." The United States and Saudis have some serious differences, and this meeting didn't solve them.

Qualify some of the differences that are complicating the U.S.-Saudi relationship.

They revolve first and foremost around Iran. The Saudis have basically signed onto the idea that there's nothing they can do to stop the United States and Iran from negotiating on the nuclear question. Officially they say that they hope the negotiations will achieve their goals. But it's clear that the Saudis are extremely suspicious of the Iranians, and they're as worried about the spread of Iranian power in the region as they are about the nuclear issue. They fear, I think rightly, that the United States puts a much higher stake on the nuclear issue than on rolling back Iranian power in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and other places that the Saudis are concerned about. So that's a major difference. The United States wants Syrian president Bashar al-Assad gone, but we put a much lower priority on it than the Saudis do. The other big issue on which there are differences is Egypt. While the United States has publically condemned the 600-plus death sentences that were issued last week against members and sympathizers of the Muslim Brotherhood, our position on Egypt remains somewhat muddled. On one hand, we keep talking about a democratic transition, but on the other hand, we also refuse to call the military coup a "coup" because we don't want to be required by law to cut off our aid to the Egyptian military. Right now, we seem to be moving toward a position where we accept as fait accompli that [Abdel Fattah] al-Sisi will be the

next president. As long as he maintains the peace treaty with Israel and continues to cooperate with Washington on military, intelligence, and political matters, we'll probably have a decent relationship with him. Every once in a while, a human rights report or some comment from an American official urging greater democracy will spur some tensions.

The Saudis like Sisi, that's clear. But why do they hate the Muslim Brotherhood so much?

The Saudis had a pretty good relationship with the Brotherhood back when they had a common enemy in Arab nationalism and socialism under President Nasser in Egypt. Lots of the Egyptian Brothers came, lived, and worked in Saudi Arabia [during that time]. But this changed during the first Gulf War, when most of the Brotherhood factions in the Arab world stood against Saudi Arabia and with Saddam Hussein against the U.S. military intervention. The Saudis have been suspicious of the Brothers since then, and with the upsurge in political activity in Saudi Arabia after the first Gulf War, lots of Saudi leaders blamed the Brotherhood as being the root cause of the politicization of Islam in Saudi Arabia. And with the Arab Spring and the victories of the Muslim Brotherhood in Tunisia and, of course, in Egypt, the Saudis started thinking that this notion of an electoral Islamism is something that is a threat to them in the long term. Certainly it has the possibility of putting Egypt forward as a competitor to Saudi Arabia as the leading Sunni-Muslim country.

Now, talk about the domestic politics in Saudi Arabia. The king is quite old and he has recently shuffled subordinate roles. Whom did he recently elevate?

There's Crown Prince Salman, minister of defense and the former governor of Riyadh, who is a major figure. A couple of years ago, the king also appointed the youngest son of his half-brother, Prince Muqrin, as second deputy prime minister, which, for years, has been the crown-prince-in-waiting job—the number three guy. But then just last week, the king took the unprecedented step of naming Muqrin deputy crown prince. And in a very directly worded pronouncement, the king decreed that when Salman becomes king, Muqrin will immediately become crown prince. That removed some amount of discretion from Salman, which is interesting. There are all sorts of stories circulating about why he wants to limit Salman's authority, but they're just stories and rumors.

How have these decisions been received in Saudi Arabia?

There's growing uncertainty in the country about how this all going to shake out. The king might be trying to inject some certainty [into the succession process] with this appointment of Muqrin, but Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy. So when he goes and Salman comes in, there's nothing to stop Salman from doing what he wants to do.

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[Article 7.](#)

NYT

Follow the Money

[Thomas L. Friedman](#)

April 1, 2014 -- If you follow the debates about Ukraine, you can see three trends: those who use the crisis for humor, those who use it to reinforce preconceived views and those trying to figure out if it's telling us something new about today's world.

For humor, I like Seth Meyers's line: "Despite the fact that the Ukraine has been all over the news for the past few weeks, a survey found that 64 percent of U.S. students still couldn't find Ukraine on a map. Said Vladimir Putin, 'Soon nobody will.'"

For self-reinforcement, the op-ed pages are full of the argument that Putin's seizure of Crimea signals a return of either traditional 19th-century power politics or the Cold War — and anyone who thought globalization had trumped such geopolitics is naïve.

For new thinking, I'm intrigued by an argument made by Masha Gessen, a Russian-American journalist, and Nader Mousavizadeh, a geopolitical consultant and Reuters columnist, in different ways: That Putin represents a new hybrid — leaders who are using the tools, and profits, from globalization to promote, as Mousavizadeh put it, "strategic choices in direct opposition" to Western "values and interests." Or as Gessen said in *The Washington Post*: "Russia is remaking itself as the leader of the anti-Western world. ... This is exactly how Russians see the events in Ukraine: The West is literally taking over, and only Russian troops can stand

between the Slavic country's unsuspecting citizens and the homosexuals marching in from Brussels."

My own view is that today's global economic and technological interdependence can't, of course, make war obsolete — human beings will always surprise you — but globalization does impose real restraints that shape geopolitics today more than you think. The Associated Press reported from Moscow last week that "recent figures suggest that Russia suffered roughly \$70 billion of capital outflow in the first three months of the year, which is more than in all of 2013." Putin didn't miss that.

For reinforcement, I'd point to the very original take on this story offered by Michael Mandelbaum, the Johns Hopkins foreign policy expert whose new book, "The Road to Global Prosperity," argues that while global economics does not eliminate geopolitics, it does indeed trump global geopolitics today. It's the key to trumping Putin, too.

As Mandelbaum (my co-author on a previous work) explains in his book, it is not either-or. Geopolitics never went away, even as globalization has become more important. For globalization to thrive, it needs a marketplace stabilized by power. Britain provided that in the 19th century. America does so today and will have to continue to do so even if Putin becomes a vegetarian pacifist.

But get a grip, Mandelbaum said in an interview: "Putin is not some strange creature from the past. He is as much a product of globalization as Davos Man."

Putin runs a petro state. If it were not for the growth in the global market that globalization created and the energy revenues that it produces for Russia, Putin and the oligarchs who form his power base would be living off exports of vodka and caviar. Putin can't survive without the revenues globalization provides him to buy off his people and former Soviet republics.

And that tells us how to "end Putinism," says Mandelbaum, "which would be good not only for the world, but also, and especially, for Russia. The tools are primarily economic: denying Russian oligarchs access to the Western financial system and reducing the energy revenues flowing into Putin's coffers."

It is a new kind of containment. When containment was primarily military in the Cold War, America bore a disproportionate share of the Western

burden. Now that it's economic, "the Europeans will have to contribute much more," argues Mandelbaum. "The Germans will have to be willing to forgo their sales of machine tools and cars to Russia, the French will have to cut back or give up arms sales to the Putin regime, and the British will have to stop the Russian oligarchs from using London as a playground and money-laundering site. Most importantly, the Europeans will have to wean themselves from Russian gas."

As for Americans, we'll need to pay higher energy taxes to promote conservation, and safely expand natural gas and renewable energy, which together will lower the demand for oil worldwide and reduce the money Putin has to play with. We can deflate this guy tomorrow without firing a shot if we're all ready to do something rather than asking the 1 percent in the military to do everything. That is what Putin thinks we don't have the guts to do.

"In the age of globalization, when the tools of geopolitics are more economic, everyone needs to sacrifice a little — rather than just a few of us giving up a lot — to sustain a global order where our values predominate," said Mandelbaum. Crimea is not a test of whether globalization is still enormously powerful in shaping today's world, he added, "that is already clear. It is a test of the West and whether we will use this system to shape events our way."