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[Article 1.](#)

Tablet Magazine

While West Focuses on Crimea, Russia Continues To Make Trouble in the Middle East
[Josh Cohen](#)

March 17, 2014 -- Until February, when pro-European protesters who spent all winter occupying Independence Square in central Kiev succeeded

in bringing down the Russian-backed government of Ukraine, the biggest standoff between Moscow and the West was in the Middle East—specifically in Syria, where President Bashar al-Assad, with support from Russian President Vladimir Putin, is embroiled in a brutal four-year civil war.

But while Washington's policymakers are focusing on Putin's actions in Eastern Europe, events in the eastern Mediterranean continue to unfold with their own momentum—and it's highly unlikely that the Kremlin, however preoccupied it is with managing the situation in Crimea, will let its other geo-strategic priorities drop. Russian interests in the Middle East are both wide and deep—as deep as, and perhaps deeper than, the West's—and in extremis, it's even possible that Putin may decide to use Russia's influence and relationships in the Middle East to severely damage Western interests there in order to gain leverage in Ukraine.

Historically, Syria was the main venue through which the Soviets projected power in the Middle East, and a number of military, political, and economic factors ensure the Kremlin's continued hand in events there. For starters, Russia maintains a naval base in the coastal Syrian city of Tartus—Russia's only port in the Mediterranean and a crucial sea link given that access to and from the Black Sea is controlled by Turkey, a NATO-member country. Last May, the Russian navy [established](#) what was described as a permanent Mediterranean naval task force, part of Putin's project of reinvigorating the Russian military and projecting power globally. Without access to Tartus, Russian ships and submarines would have nowhere in the eastern Mediterranean to refuel.

Russia also has a deep fear of Islamic—and specifically Sunni—fundamentalism and has engaged in what it perceives as its own long-running battle against Islamic radicalism, first in Afghanistan and for the last 15 years in the Caucasus. In Syria, where a post-Assad regime would likely be dominated by hard-line Sunni Islamists, Putin genuinely fears that loss of Syria to an Islamist government will result in some kind of blowback on Russia's southern fringe. Already Moscow knows there are a considerable number of [Chechens](#) fighting with al-Qaida-linked jihadist groups against the Assad regime, and the Russians are naturally concerned about these individuals returning to Russia if Assad is overthrown.

The Russians also have deep economic interests in Syria. The total [value](#) of Syrian contracts with the Russian defense industry likely exceeds \$4 billion. And the recent discovery of natural-gas fields in the eastern Mediterranean provides a new potential revenue stream for Russia, whose state-owned natural-gas firm Soyuzneftegaz signed a contract with the Assad regime in December to explore offshore drilling opportunities in Syrian waters.

Russia's influence over Assad is substantial—the Syrian regime is virtually a client-state of Moscow's—and without the support of Russia the Assad regime's survival would be in great doubt. The Russians have been both a major arms conduit for the Assad regime and have also supplied Syria with crucial political support at the United Nations, where they have vetoed a number of anti-Assad resolutions. While Russia has so far publicly encouraged both sides in the Syrian conflict to reach some kind of peaceful resolution, Putin is in a position to leverage his relationship with Assad to create headaches for the West—providing him with more advanced weaponry, or even inserting Russian military advisers to support the Assad regime. Such actions would only embolden Assad and could easily result in an even greater increase in chaos and bloodshed in Syria, with potential spillover into Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan.

Meanwhile, Russia maintains a complex relationship with its other longtime ally in the region, Iran. Historically, first under the tsars and then under the Soviets, Tehran feared Russian expansionism. With the break-up of the Soviet Union, however, relations improved greatly, as Russian and Iranian interests began to substantially converge—particularly when it came to limiting American influence and power in the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. Both Russia and Iran remain major backers of the Assad regime, in part because of their shared interest in opposing Sunni fundamentalism.

Unlike with Syria, however, Iran is not a client state of Russia, and there are a number of areas where Russian and Iranian interests are in conflict with each other. Economically, Russia has benefited tremendously from the international boycott against Iran. Tension in the Persian Gulf and Iran's difficulty selling its oil in international markets has supported the high price of this commodity, which is critical for a Russian economy heavily based on its oil and gas resources. Sanctions against Iran also have

prevented Central Asian states such as Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan from constructing export pipelines for their oil and gas through Iran to the Persian Gulf, allowing Russia to continue to exert a substantial influence over these countries by retaining a stranglehold on their oil- and gas-export routes.

Russia also, it should be emphasized, does not wish for Iran to obtain nuclear weapons. While the Russians remain strongly opposed to a Western or Israeli attack on Iran—believing it would be a “catastrophe” that would inflame sectarian tensions in the Middle East—the Kremlin has no interest in welcoming another nuclear power in its neighborhood, especially one that could compete with Russian influence in the Muslim states of the former Soviet Union. Putin is well aware that if Iran goes nuclear, Saudi Arabia—which in Moscow’s view is responsible for fomenting unrest in the Caucasus—might also choose to go nuclear via its [alliance](#) with Pakistan. Accordingly, while the Russians have resisted all U.N. sanctions against Syria, they have actually voted in favor of U.N. resolutions condemning Iran’s nuclear-enrichment program.

The Russians could easily leverage their relationship with Iran in a number of ways—starting by reactivating the deal to supply Iran with the S-300 missiles. Indeed, Putin may already be signaling Russia’s capabilities to retaliate against Western sanctions with his decision to send a Russian atomic energy official to Tehran to [discuss](#) building a second nuclear plant in Iran.

In a best-case scenario—a diplomatic settlement on Ukraine—Putin could decide to increase his cooperation with the West in the Middle East. In Syria, for example, Putin could reduce or even cut off the flow of weapons to the Syrian regime; push Assad to negotiate more seriously with the moderate opposition; or make a statement of some sort indicating that Russia does not see Assad as an indispensable part of Syria’s future. On Iran, Putin could signal support for the Western position simply by ending discussions on additional nuclear energy cooperation with Tehran, as well as by publicly pushing Iran to reach a settlement freezing its nuclear program.

But now, in the wake of the Crimean referendum, we’re heading into a field of unknowns—and if Putin decides he’s willing to upend his relationship with Europe, there’s no reason to think he wouldn’t exercise

his capacity to significantly damage Western interests in the Middle East if he so chooses.

[Josh Cohen](#) is a former U.S. State Department official who was involved in managing economic reform projects in the former Soviet Union.

[Article 2](#)

NYT

The Unlikely Road to War

[Roger Cohen](#)

March 17, 2014 -- A 19-year-old Ukrainian nationalist from a remote farming village, raised on stories of his family's suffering during Stalin's great engineered famine, embittered by Moscow's long imperialist dominion, enraged by the slaying of a fellow student in Kiev during the uprising of 2014, convinced any price is worth paying to stop the Russian annexation of Crimea, takes the long road to Sevastopol.

He is a simple angular man, a dreamer, who as a young boy had engraved his initials on a retaining wall of rocks at the back of his family's plot. When asked why, he replied, "Because one day people will know my name."

On the farm, he works hard by day and reads voraciously by night. He is consumed with the long suffering of the Ukrainian peasant laboring in near feudal conditions. Neighboring countries have gained their independence and dignity after Soviet occupation. Why, he asks, should Ukraine not do the same?

To this teenager, the issue is simple. The imperial ruler in the Kremlin knows nothing of Ukraine. The 21st-century world is changing, but this high officer of the imperium is determined to wind back the clock to the 20th. A good student, the man travels to Kiev, where an older brother works. He falls into the "Young Ukraine" movement, a radical student circle in which feelings run high over the shotgun referendum that saw the people of Crimea vote with Orwellian unanimity for union with Russia. At night, he fingers the hand-engraved Browning pistol that was once his father's.

A plot is hatched. The Russian defense minister is to visit Sevastopol with his wife to celebrate the wise choice of the Crimean people and speak of the Russia's civilizing influence over this beautiful but backward region. Fanfare follows. "Wide Is My Motherland" booms from loudspeakers as the minister's procession of black limousines snakes along the waterfront. The assassin is waiting at a point where the minister and his wife are to greet local dignitaries.

Two shots ring out. One cuts through the minister's jugular vein. The other penetrates his wife's abdomen. The minister's last words are spoken to her: "Don't die, don't die, live for our children."

Events now move quickly. Russia annexes Crimea. It declares war on Ukraine, takes Donetsk in short order, and annexes the eastern half of the country. The United States warns Russia not to advance on Kiev. It reminds the Kremlin of America's binding alliance with Baltic states that are NATO members. European nations mobilize.

Desperate diplomacy unravels. A Ukrainian counterattack flounders but inflicts heavy casualties, prompting a Russian advance on the capital. Two NATO F-16s are shot down during a reconnaissance flight close to the Lithuanian-Russian border. Russia declares war on Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Invoking Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty — an attack against one member shall be considered an attack against all — the United States and its European allies come to their defense. China, in what it calls a pre-emptive strike, invades Taiwan, "a potential Crimea." Japan and India declare war on China. World War III has begun.

It could not happen. Of course, it could not happen. The institutions and alliances of a connected world ensure the worst cannot happen again. The price would be too high, no less than nuclear annihilation. Civilization is strong, humanity wise, safeguards secure.

Anyone who believes that should read Tim Butcher's riveting "The Trigger," a soon-to-be-published account of the long road traveled from a remote Bosnian farm to Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip, the 19-year-old Bosnian Serb nationalist whose assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, ignited what Churchill called "the hardest, the cruelest and the least-rewarded" of all wars.

Yes, the Great War, the end of empires and the old order, was triggered by a teenager. And, as Butcher writes, "It was out of this turbulent collapse

that Bolshevism, socialism, fascism and other radical political currents took root.” They would lead to World War II.

Princip acted with a small group of accomplices bent on securing the freedom of the south Slavs from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Luck helped him, diplomatic ineptitude force-multiplied his deed, and by the age of 23 this farmboy whose name would be remembered was dead of tuberculosis in a Habsburg military prison.

Then, too, exactly a century ago, it could not happen. The world had finessed other moments of tension. Yet very quickly Austria-Hungary had declared war on Serbia, prompting Russia to mobilize in defense of Belgrade, prompting the Kaiser’s Germany to attack France pre-emptively and Britain to declare war on Germany. The war haunts us still.

The unthinkable is thinkable. Indeed, it must be thought. Otherwise it may occur — soldiers reduced, in Butcher’s words, to “fodder locked in the same murderous morass, sharing the same attrition of bullet and barrage, disease and deprivation, torment and terror.”

[Article 3.](#)

Al Monitor

Iran, Qatar recast regional 'resistance' alliance

Ali Hashem

March 17, 2014 -- Tehran, Iran — Last week, Palestinian Islamic Jihad leader [Ramadan Abdullah Shalah](#), a close ally of Tehran, visited the Qatari capital of Doha to meet his ally and comrade Khaled Meshaal, the leader of Hamas, according to sources close to Shalah.

It is rare that someone like Shalah visits Doha, given the tight security measures that lead his movements to be well-tracked and detailed. Hence, he went only after receiving his Iranian allies’ blessings.

In Doha, Shalah and Meshaal discussed the latter’s forthcoming trip to Tehran, a long-anticipated visit delayed by the wait for Tehran to extend an invitation. The hurdle in pinpointing a date has been attributed to setting an appointment for a meeting with Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

An Iranian official told Al-Monitor that the visit is expected to take place after the Persian New Year (Nowroz), although the exact timing is still to be confirmed. Another Iranian source explained that all the details have been sorted with Hamas since summer 2013. He added, “Up to this moment, more than eight delegations from Hamas have visited Tehran. Political, military and social delegations were welcomed and always are. The issue of Mr. Meshaal was personal and more complicated. Now it’s almost resolved.”

A senior Hamas official who met with Al-Monitor in Tehran last week confirmed that the visit is indeed on the agenda. He asserted, “Our relationship with Iran is back as it was, and maybe better. Enemies who are betting on the end of the resistance bloc should know that this bloc is getting bigger and stronger, from North Africa to Tehran.”

Osama Hamdan, Hamas’ international relations officer, explained that the “unfortunate” disagreement on Syria is on the road to being resolved and that positive options are on the table with respect to his organization's relations with Damascus. Hamdan added that ties with Hezbollah are good and that he continues to carry out his work from his office in Beirut’s southern suburbs, a Hezbollah stronghold.

Another Palestinian resistance official, who spoke with Al-Monitor on condition of anonymity, said that efforts to reorganize the region’s two blocs are taking place on both sides. “The Saudis are restructuring their post-Arab Spring alliances, reviving the 'moderate bloc' of Jordan, Morocco, Egypt, Bahrain, UAE [United Arab Emirates] and others, and the Iranians are rebuilding their 'resistance and resilience bloc' that was brought together before 2011 — Syria, Qatar, Turkey, and the resistances in Lebanon and Palestine,” he said. “The new blocs on both sides will shape the new post-Arab Spring era in the Middle East. On both sides there are [internal] differences on certain issues, but still there is one issue that brings each bloc together.”

According to this source, the Qatari emir, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, is at a moment of decision. He has to think of Qatar’s national security before thinking of Syria’s. The source contended, “Doha is working on getting things [back] on the old track, and they’re ending all their commitments to groups in Syria. The differences on President [Bashar al-] Assad’s future will probably be left for the Syrian people to decide.”

The latest [developments in the Gulf](#) have led many to rethink their strategies but not their tactics, he said. “The Saudis are doing what Iran couldn’t do. They continued to pressure Qatar until it’s now on very good terms with Tehran. The same applies to Turkey, which is already today a very strong ally of Iran,” he added. “Putting Palestine at the head of the list of priorities can help in bridging the gaps. That’s why today [Hamas and Islamic Jihad](#) are playing an important role in political reconciliation within the bloc — today in Tehran and tomorrow maybe in Damascus.” Getting back to Shalah’s visit to Qatar, Al-Monitor learned that the Islamic Jihad leader met Emir Tamim and his influential adviser and former Israeli Knesset member, Azmi Bishara, who is working on launching a new media network that includes a London-based TV operation, newspaper and a Beirut-based website under the name Al-Arabi al-Jadeed (The New Arab). The network, according to sources in Doha, has a big budget and is expected to promote the new, post-Arab Spring image of Qatar. It will be different from the one that Al Jazeera once projected as being light on Islam and more liberal, with a leftist touch. The new network, expected to start gradually, is not meant to replace Al Jazeera but to present a new voice representing the emir's vision.

Ali Hashem is a columnist for Al-Monitor. He is an Arab journalist serving as Al Mayadeen news network's chief correspondent. Until March 2012, he was Al Jazeera's war correspondent, and prior to that he was a senior journalist at the BBC. He has written for several Arab newspapers, including the Lebanese daily As Safir, the Egyptian dailies Al-Masry al-Youm and Aldostor, and the Jordanian daily Alghad.

[Article 4.](#)

RAND

Libya after Qaddafi –

Lessons and Implications for the Future

Christopher S. Chivvis, Jeffrey Martini

{Summary}

March 17, 2014 -- Since the 2011 overthrow of the Qaddafi regime, Libya's path has been tumultuous. Despite a number of advantages compared with other post-conflict societies, progress on political, economic, and security fronts has fallen far behind, generating frustration and threatening the recovery altogether. Libya has teetered on the brink of a relapse into civil war on more than one occasion in the past year. In the absence of a functioning state, jihadist groups have made inroads. The broader Sahel and Maghreb regions, meanwhile, are becoming more and more fragile and southern Libya verges on becoming a safe haven for al Qaeda-linked groups recently chased from Mali by French military forces. The right international approach to Libya could nevertheless still help avert a more serious breakdown and real damage to U.S. and European regional and global interests—above all counterterrorism and the stability of world energy markets.

This study examines what has been accomplished in Libya to date, draws lessons from the experience, and identifies some possible ways forward.

Lack of Security

Libya's most serious problem since 2011 has been the lack of security. Insecurity has had negative repercussions across the spectrum. It has undermined efforts to build functioning political and administrative institutions, further constricted an already minimal international footprint, and facilitated the expansion of criminal and jihadist groups within Libya and the wider region. Libyan political leaders have been under constant threat of attack, as displayed most dramatically in the October 2013 kidnapping of Prime Minister Ali Zeidan.

The lack of security stems primarily from the failure of the effort to disarm and demobilize rebel militias after the war. Both international advisors and Libya's political leadership recognized the importance of rebel disarmament from the outset, but neither has been able to implement it. As a result, various types of armed groups control much of the country and the elected government is at their mercy. Until the security situation is brought under control, progress on all other fronts will be very slow and always at risk.

Stalled Statebuilding Process

The lack of security has greatly undermined an already difficult statebuilding process in Libya, where the post-Qaddafi state was very weak

politically and administratively. To begin with, Libya's constitutional process has not kept pace with the schedule originally set out during the war. That schedule aimed to provide Libya with a constitution within a year of liberation. More than two years after Qaddafi's death, however, the constitutional drafting committee has yet to begin its work.

Meanwhile, groups in the eastern province of Cyrenaica have seized control of oil facilities there and threatened to create an autonomous state-within-a-state. Islamist and revolutionary groups have forced the passage of a political isolation law that excludes many Libyans from participation in government, thus exacerbating existing rifts in society and reducing the available pool of talent for government positions. The General National Congress, which was elected in July 2012, has been deeply divided over many issues.

In general, Libyan public administration is in very poor shape and capacity building is sorely needed to strengthen the state. Public confidence in the democratic political process has declined as frustration has mounted. In the absence of a national state, regional and tribal substate actors have strengthened and will likely seek to hold onto their entrenched power.

Economic Challenges

Oil production restarted quickly in the aftermath of the war and has allowed Libya to avoid some of the most serious choices that post-conflict societies face because it could fund reconstruction and pay salaries to many groups, including militias. With the armed takeover of many of Libya's oil facilities in the summer of 2013, however, the stability of Libya's economy—including the ability of the government to continue to pay salaries indefinitely—was drawn into question. Libya also eventually needs economic reforms that will create a more business-friendly environment. The postwar Libyan government has taken a few steps in the right direction, but it has also been forced to increase government salaries and subsidies, both of which distort the economy and work against sustainable, broad-based economic growth.

Upping the International Role

Despite a significant investment of military and political capital in helping the Libyan rebels overthrow Qaddafi, international actors have done very little to support Libya's post-conflict recovery to date. In contrast with all other cases of NATO military intervention, a very small United Nations

(UN) mission with no executive authority has led the international effort to help stabilize the country. The United States and its NATO allies have played a very limited role.

International actors have recently started increasing their efforts in Libya somewhat. More should have been done and still needs to be done, however. The United States and its allies have both moral and strategic interests in ensuring that Libya does not collapse back into civil war or become a safe haven for al Qaeda or other jihadist groups within striking distance of Europe. Terrorist violence is already a problem in Libya, and any increase could have a devastating impact on the fragile and failing Sahel region. Needless to say, if Libya were to become a terrorist safe haven, it would be a very serious problem for the West and a tragic end to the West's well-intentioned and initially very effective effort to topple Qaddafi. It would be tragic if that initial victory were allowed to turn into strategic defeat.

In contrast, if Libya sees gradual political stabilization under representative government and constitutional rule, the United States and its allies would benefit from Libya's energy and other resources. The region as a whole would also be much stronger.

Improvements will take time, but despite its current challenges, Libya still has many advantages when compared with other post-conflict societies. Notably, it can foot much of the bill for its post-conflict needs—even if it currently lacks the administrative capacity to manage complex payments to foreign entities.

The Way Forward

Improving Libya's future prospects will take several years, given the limited international role. There are four areas that international actors should focus on while looking ahead:

Support a National Reconciliation Process

The most serious problem in Libya today is continued insecurity, which impedes political and other advances and could wipe them out altogether. Absent an international peacekeeping force, which should be considered but would be difficult under current circumstances, the best way to improve security is to engage Libyans in a national reconciliation dialogue. Such a process could facilitate disarmament, complement constitution making, and increase international actors' access to information about the

capabilities and intentions of key Libyan groups. Although the process would need strong support from the Libyan government itself, outside actors, such as the UN or European Union (EU), could play crucial facilitating and mediating roles. Objectives of such a process could include creating a vehicle for broader discussions of disarmament, establishing rules of the road, and generally building trust and increasing the flow of information between different Libyan groups. Ideally, the process would be led by a high-level European, such as Paddy Ashdown, or another figure of international stature from a Muslim country. The newly created position of U.S. Special Coordinator for Libya could also play a role.

Strengthen Libya's National Security Forces

Insecurity in Libya is partially attributable to a lack of reliable national security forces. International actors are well placed to help remedy this lacuna, and Libya is prepared to foot the bill. Recent U.S. and European efforts to train a so-called “general-purpose force” of approximately 15,000 over the next several years will help. The effort should proceed in parallel with reconciliation and strike a balanced representation of Libyan society, lest individual groups perceive the training as being directed against them and revolt. Police training is also much needed.

These efforts need to be fully funded. The Libyans should pay for as much as possible, but other countries should also contribute as needed, especially while Libya’s institutional capacity for payments is still weak.

Help Libya Strengthen Border Security

Border security remains a major challenge. The porousness of Libya’s borders and their susceptibility to smuggling and the circulation of criminals and jihadists will continue to undermine Libyan and broader regional security. Improvements will take time and require building institutional capacity within the Libyan state as well as investments in monitoring capabilities, such as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms. Establishing an effective, modern border-management system, with all its legal and administrative requirements, will be far more difficult given the sorry state of Libya’s legal and administrative structures. International efforts in this area exist but need to be greatly expanded if they are to have any impact.

Help Libya Build Its Public Administration

The personalistic nature of the Qaddafi regime left Libya with a severe lack of public administrative and bureaucratic structures. International actors are well positioned to help Libya improve its public administration, especially if the security situation improves. The EU and its member states are in a particularly good position for this task, due to their proximity to Libya. They should significantly increase their level of effort as soon as the security situation improves. As a temporary alternative, training in Europe should be encouraged. This training should include local as well as national-level institutions.

[Article 5.](#)

NYT

Jordan's Urban Refugees

Marisa L. Porges

March 17, 2014 -- This past weekend marked the third anniversary of the Syrian uprising against President Bashar al-Assad — and the outlook is increasingly grim.

Peace talks last month in Geneva have left future negotiations uncertain. Syria has failed to meet benchmarks for eliminating chemical weapons and will likely miss a June 30 deadline to destroy its entire arsenal. Violence is intensifying between the regime and the rebels.

Through all this, Washington has been intensely focused on Syria's internal fault lines. But with hundreds of thousands of refugees flooding into Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq, the crisis has swelled far beyond Syria's borders. It is imperative, then, to start tackling the Syrian spillover now before the situation becomes even worse — and Jordan is the best place to start.

The movement of nearly 600,000 Syrians into Jordan is straining that country's economy, infrastructure and social services. While international press attention has focused mainly on Jordan's Zaatari refugee camp, home to approximately 100,000 Syrians, the vast majority of refugees have settled in Jordan's urban areas, particularly those close to its northern border, like the cities of Mafraq and Ramtha.

The increased demand for housing and the influx of subsidies from international NGOs have nearly tripled the cost of rent in these cities, driving many Jordanians from their homes and pushing Syrians further into debt. Jordan's crowded public schools are being crippled as administrators try to accommodate at least 85,000 refugee students — still only half of the school-age Syrians now in the country. Local hospitals, sanitation and water systems are being similarly strained. As one young Syrian told me in January, "We're making a hard life harder for Jordanians."

In a country long considered one of the region's most stable, these socioeconomic problems are worrying enough. But perhaps more alarming, particularly for American interests, is that Jordanians are starting to believe that their government (and the international community) is helping Syrian refugees at their expense. While these tensions have not yet led to riots or widespread violence, local observers fear that this might not last. As one Jordanian security official told me, the refugees may bring Jordan "a new Arab Spring." Such turmoil would not only be devastating for Jordan, but would deprive the United States of a crucial partner in efforts to resolve the Syrian crisis, repair Iraq and advance an Israeli-Palestinian agreement.

To avoid further destabilizing Jordan, Washington and Amman must act now to contain the Syrian spillover. First, both countries must seek out medium- and long-term solutions, shifting their focus from a stopgap emphasis on humanitarian aid to a combination of aid and development assistance. This means, in part, supporting Jordan's recent request for \$4.1 billion from the international community to improve health, education and other public services used by Syrian refugees in urban areas.

But such aid should come with demands to better integrate Syrian refugees into the local economy. Jordan must harness the talents of its new, albeit temporary, residents: changing work permits to allow more Syrians to find legal employment, encouraging Syrian refugees to start businesses that hire locals, and allowing international agencies to put Syrians to work on refugee-related projects.

These measures may provoke opposition from some Jordanians who are concerned that their country has frequently been a haven for the region's refugees, including large numbers of Palestinians since Israeli independence in 1948, and Iraqis during the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 American invasion. But Jordan derives significant benefits from the

Syrians' presence, including billions in aid earmarked for solutions to domestic issues that predate the refugee crisis. Integrating Syrians into the local market could help energize the moribund economy, and help shore up the refugees' self-sufficiency and sense of purpose, preparing them for their return home when the conflict is over.

When I visited Jordan earlier this year, every Syrian I spoke with stressed that they had no desire to remain in the country for the long term.

Empowering, employing and educating Syrians in the interim ensures that endless Jordanian support won't be necessary.

Of course, the refugee crisis is not Jordan's responsibility alone. Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq are also part of the equation, and their efforts to provide food, shelter and social services to millions of Syrian refugees remain vital. International support for the millions of displaced persons within Syria must likewise be a focus moving forward, including a redoubling of efforts to establish protected buffer zones, and allocating humanitarian aid to those in de facto refugee camps near the borders.

Also critical is the expansion of Syrians' options for resettlement outside of the Middle East. The United States and its European allies must accept Syrian refugees in much greater numbers. Germany and Sweden have welcomed 18,000 and 14,000 Syrians, respectively; the United Nations has begun pushing to have an additional 30,000 of the country's most vulnerable refugees — women and children — resettled in America and Western Europe. Last month the Obama administration amended immigration rules that had prevented Syrian refugees from resettling in the United States, potentially opening the door to 1,300 Syrian asylum applicants.

These steps are commendable but not enough. The United States must open its doors wider and push Canada, Britain and others to follow suit. Jordan's Syrian refugees are a potent symbol of the Syrian conflict's debilitating effects throughout the region. Ultimately, a long-term solution will require a negotiated settlement that paves the way for millions of displaced Syrians to return home and rebuild their country. In the meantime, Jordan, the United States and key partner nations must do what's right for the refugees. If they don't, it will be impossible to prevent the Syrian war from spilling over and destabilizing the entire Middle East.

Marisa L. Porges, a former policy adviser in the United States Defense and Treasury Departments, is a research fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

[Article 6.](#)

Salon

Why I must speak out on Israel, Palestine and BDS

[Roger Waters](#)

March 17, 2014 -- Seventy years ago, my father – 2nd Lt. Eric Fletcher Waters – died in Italy fighting the Nazis. He was a committed pacifist, and a conscientious objector at the start of the war, but as Hitler's crimes spread across Europe, he swapped the ambulance he had driven through the London blitz for a tin hat and a commission in the Royal Fusiliers and he joined the fight against fascism. He was killed near Aprilia in the battle for the Anzio Bridgehead on Feb. 18, 1944. My mother – Mary Duncan Waters – spent the rest of her life politically active, striving always to ensure that her children, and everyone else's children, had no Sword of Damocles in the form of the despised Nazi Creed or any other despicable creed hanging over their heads. Last month, thanks to the good people of Aprilia and Anzio, I was able to pay tribute to the father I never knew by unveiling a memorial in the town where he died and laying a wreath to honor him, and all the other fallen. Losing my father before I ever knew him and being brought up by a single, working mother who fought tirelessly for equality and justice colored my life in far-reaching ways and has driven all my work. And, at this point in my journey, I like to think that I pay tribute to both my parents each time I speak out in support of any beleaguered people denied the freedom and justice that I believe all of us deserve.

After visiting Israel in 2005 and the West Bank the following year, I was deeply moved and concerned by what I saw, and determined to add my voice to those searching for an equitable and lawful solution to the problem – for both Palestinians and Jews. Given my upbringing, I really had no choice. In 2005, Palestinian civil society appealed to people of conscience

all over the world to act where governments had failed. They asked us to join their nonviolent movement – for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) – which aims to end Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian territories, to secure equal rights for Palestinian citizens of Israel, and to uphold the right of Palestinian refugees to return to the cities and villages they were violently forced out of in 1948 and 1967.

After more than two decades of negotiations, the vulnerable Palestinian population still lives under occupation, while more land is taken, more illegal settlements built, and more Palestinians are imprisoned, injured or killed struggling for the right to live in dignity and peace, to raise their families, to till their land, to aspire to each and every human goal, just like the rest of us. The Palestinians’ prolonged statelessness has made them among the most vulnerable of all peoples, particularly in their diaspora where, as now in Syria, they are subject, as stateless, powerless refugees, to targeted violence, from all sides in that bloody conflict, subject to unimaginable hardship and deprivation and, in many cases, particularly for the vulnerable young, to starvation. What can we all do to advance the rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories, Israel and the diaspora? Well, BDS is a nonviolent, citizen-led movement that is grounded in universal principles of human rights for all people. All people! In consequence, I have determined that the BDS approach is one I can fully support. I feel honored to stand in solidarity alongside my father and my mother, and alongside my Palestinian brothers and sisters, and so many others of all colors, faiths and circumstances from all over the world – including an ever-increasing number of courageous Jewish Americans and Israelis – who have also answered the call. In the furor that exists in the U.S. today about BDS and the right and wrong of a cultural boycott of Israel, a quote from one of my heroes, Mahatma Gandhi, has been on my mind. He prophetically said, “First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.” The BDS movement is fulfilling its promise and fits Gandhi’s description. Once dismissed by many as a futile strategy that would “never work,” BDS has gained much ground in recent weeks, bringing with it the expected backlash. Divestment votes at major U.S. universities, European pension funds divesting from Israeli banks that do business with illegal Israeli settlements, and the recent high-profile parting of the ways between actor Scarlett Johansson and the global anti-

poverty group Oxfam are symptoms of a growing resistance to the Israeli subjugation of the indigenous people of Palestine, and also, to the decades of occupation of land designated by the U.N. as a future state for the Palestinian people.

And with each new BDS headline, the ferocious reaction from the movement's critics, with Netanyahu and his AIPAC fulminations in the vanguard, has risen exponentially. I think it's safe to say BDS is in the "then they fight you" stage. Some wrongly portray the boycott movement, which is modeled on the boycotts employed against Apartheid South Africa and used in the U.S. civil rights movement, to be an attack on the Israeli people or even on the Jewish people, as a whole. Nothing could be further from the truth. The movement recognizes universal human rights under the law for all people, regardless of their ethnicity, religion or color. I do not claim to speak on behalf of the BDS movement, yet, as a vocal supporter, and because of my visibility in the music industry, I have become a natural target for those who wish to attack BDS, not by addressing the merits of its claims but, instead, by assigning hateful and racist motivations to BDS supporters like me. It has even been said, cruelly and wrongly, that I am a Nazi and an anti-Semite. When I remarked in a recent interview on historical parallels, stating that I would not have played Vichy France or Berlin in World War II, it was not my intention to compare the Israelis to Nazis or the Holocaust to the decades-long oppression of the Palestinians.

There is no comparison to the Holocaust. Nor did I intend or ever wish to compare the suffering of Jews then with the suffering of Palestinians now.

Comparing suffering is a painful, grotesque and diminishing exercise that dishonors the specific memory of all our fallen loved ones.

I believe that the root of all injustice and oppression has always been the same – the dehumanization of the other. It is the obsession with Us and Them that can lead us, regardless of racial or religious identity, into the abyss.

Let us never forget that oppression begets more oppression, and the tree of fear and bigotry bears only bitter fruit. The end of the occupation of Palestine, should we all manage to secure it, will mean freedom for the occupied and the occupiers and freedom from the bitter taste of all those wasted years and lives. And that will be a great gift to the world.

“Ashes and diamonds

Foe and friend
We were all equal
In the end.”

George Roger Waters is an English musician, singer, songwriter and composer. In 1965, he co-founded the progressive rock band Pink Floyd with drummer Nick Mason, keyboardist Richard Wright and guitarist, singer and songwriter Syd Barrett.