

From: Office of Terje Rod-Larsen <[REDACTED]>
Subject: July 24 update
Date: Thu, 24 Jul 2014 14:00:20 +0000

24 July 2014

Article 1.	The Atlantic <u>Obsessing About Gaza, Ignoring Syria (And Most Everything Else)</u> Jeffrey Goldberg
Article 2.	The Economist <u>Egypt and Gaza - No longer a true mediator</u>
Article 3.	Politico <u>Israel Provoked This War - It's up to President Obama to stop it</u> Henry Siegman
Article 4.	NYT <u>Turkey Can Teach Israel How to End Terror</u> Mustafa Akyol
Article 5.	NYT <u>As Much of the World Frowns on Israel, Americans Hold Out Support</u> Helene Cooper and Somini Sengupta
Article 6.	WSJ <u>Obama to World: Drop Dead</u> Daniel Henninger
Article 7.	Brookings Doha Center <u>Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War</u> F. Gregory Gause III

[Article 1.](#)

The Atlantic

Obsessing About Gaza, Ignoring Syria (And Most Everything Else)

Jeffrey Goldberg

July 23 2014 -- The responses to what I write about the Hamas war fall into several categories. My least favorite sort of response is the kind that invokes Hitler in some way. Here is an e-mail that is representative: "I hope Hitler kills you and your family." (Yes, it was written in the present tense.) Then there are the messages from those who seek the elimination of Israel. These run along the lines of, "Jeffrey wants blood, give him more Palestinian blood!" (I'm not sure if this tweet was riffing off the blood libel or not.) Like many people, I am legitimately shocked (not "shocked, shocked" but actually shocked) by the level of grotesque anti-Jewish invective seemingly (though not actually) prompted by the war, particularly in Europe. I've been getting mail like this for a long time, so it is the intensity and volume, rather than the content, that is so surprising. One of my other least-favorite types of responses comes from the opposite end of the spectrum, from people who ask me why the media is so biased against Israel, and then cite the work of this reporter or that reporter—in this war, usually someone currently stationed in Gaza—who appears, to my interlocutor, to have an anti-Israel agenda. It's a question I've seen for years, and it is usually asked by people who believe that Israel only has public relations problems, as opposed to actual problems, in addition to public relations problems.

I can't speak with great knowledge about the reporters from European and other overseas outlets (I do have an understanding of the sympathies of many British reporters), but I tend to think that journalists from American outlets are doing a fine job in dangerous conditions of covering a horrible war. It is true that Hamas makes it difficult to report on matters it would rather not see come to light (this is why you see so few photos, if any, of armed Hamas fighters). It is also true that reporters in the field could do a more thorough job of asking Hamas leaders harder questions (such as, Why are you rejecting ceasefire offers; why did you place your command bunkers under hospitals; and so on), but working conditions are very difficult, and they are trying the best they can. (I've covered various of these mini-Middle East wars in the past, and, believe me, working conditions makes it difficult enough just to write down what you're seeing six inches in front of your face.) In any case, these questions are sometimes best raised by analyzers and editorialists.

There is another question about media coverage that has been bothering me, however, one of proportionality. I was struck, over the weekend, by the lack of coverage of the Syrian civil war, in which the death count recently passed 170,000. By Sunday night, it had become clear that the weekend toll in Syria would stand at roughly 700 dead—a larger number, obviously, than the weekend toll in Gaza (and more than the total number of deaths in this latest iteration of the Gaza war to date.) I tweeted the following in response to this news out of Syria: “I sincerely hope the @nytimes covers the slaughter in Syria – 700 dead in 48 hours – in tomorrow’s paper. Very important story as well.”

This was my sincere hope, and it was to my sincere surprise that Monday’s newspaper contained no information whatsoever about the weekend slaughter in Syria. The front page was devoted mainly to Gaza and Ukraine. But there was nothing inside either, and nothing on the website. As far as I can tell, the Times, as of this writing, has not addressed this most recent round of Syria carnage in an even semi-comprehensive way. It goes without saying that continuing violence in Libya, Egypt, Nigeria, Yemen, and so on, has not received much attention from the Times in recent days. (singling out the Times because it is America’s best, most thorough and most important newspaper. I suppose you could accuse me of having a double standard. So be it.)

There are a couple of very good reasons why coverage of Israel and its troubles is so broad, and even obsessive. The first is a simple, technical one: Journalists can best cover what they can see. Hamas, despite its various restrictions, makes it easy for journalists to observe scenes of destruction in Gaza. It is much harder to operate in Syria (or rural Nigeria), and it is safer to operate in Gaza than it is in parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan. (For those of you who are wondering: In my time in Gaza, Hamas officials often gave me more access, and more respect, than officials of the more moderate Fatah, which at one point had me kidnapped and interrogated.)

The second reason is audience interest. Stories about Israel, and about Jews, almost automatically rise to the top of the Times’ “most-emailed” list. Stories about Miramshah or Fallujah, not nearly as much. guessing this is true for other American outlets as well. And then there is a sound political reason why this conflict becomes the focus of so much coverage.

Israel is a close ally of the U.S., and a recipient of American military and non-military help. This may make you very happy, or very unhappy, but the fact of it is incontrovertible. Therefore, the U.S. has a direct relationship with one of the players in this conflict (both, actually, because the Palestinian Authority is the recipient of a great deal of American aid as well). There is also the issue of double standards, which I [wrote about here](#) at length, but in short, Israel is a Western-style democratic state and so reporters are more apt to be interested in its behavior, and judgmental about its behavior, than in the behavior of despotic regimes.

But the Arab Spring (or Awakening, or whatever word you choose) has given lie to the idea—shorthanded as “linkage”—that the key to American success in the broader Middle East is dependent on finding a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This idea, that all roads run through Jerusalem, has traditionally motivated a great deal of journalistic and foreign policy expert interest in this conflict. Finding a solution to this conflict is very important to the future of Israelis and Palestinians, of course, but not nearly so much to Americans. A peaceful resolution to this conflict would do little to bring about good governance in Arab states, or an end to Islamist extremism in the greater Middle East. Which brings me back to Syria. The war in Syria (and Iraq, since it is more or less a single war now) is of greater national security importance to the United States than the war in Gaza, and it should be covered in a way that reflects this reality.

In Damascus, Bashar al-Assad, the closest Arab ally of America’s main Middle East adversary, Iran, wages a brutal war against his country’s Sunni Muslim majority, a war that has prompted, in turn, the explosive growth of Al Qaeda-style Sunni extremist groups that now control broad swaths of both countries. These groups pose a direct national security threat to the United States, as the Obama administration has acknowledged. The Syria conflict is also one of the greatest humanitarian catastrophes of the post-World War II era. So from a moral perspective, and from a national security perspective, what happens in Syria should be of first-order interest to the U.S. media. But it is clearly not.

Why is this so? I can spend all day speculating, but one explanation for this lack of coverage is a relative lack of interest in the Syria/Iraq theater by Arabs and Muslims, or at least relative lack of interest in comparison to the obvious interest in the Gaza crisis. The American media takes at least some

of its cues on Syria from the intensity of coverage in the Arab world. The Washington bureau chief of Al-Hayat, Joyce Karam, was one of the few people to notice the weekend death toll in Syria. She tweeted, in reference to anti-Israel protests in Pakistan, “Syria is essentially Gaza x320 death toll, x30 number of refugees, but no protest in Pakistan...”

I asked her why she thought this is so. Her answer: “Only reason I can think of is Muslim killing Muslim or Arab killing Arab seems more acceptable than Israel killing Arabs.”

Judging by the number and scale of anti-Assad protests (or anti-ISIS protests) in the Muslim world, she is obviously on to something. The Muslim world does seem more interested in Arabs who are killed by Jews than in Arabs killed by Arabs, and ■ guessing that this influences the scope and scale of the Gaza coverage as well. Why this is so—why the horrific levels of violence across the Arab world don’t seem to prompt such intense feelings, either in the Muslim or non-Muslim worlds, is a subject for another time. What is true for now is that Syria should be covered with the same focus and intensity that is applied to the war in Gaza.

[Article 2.](#)

The Economist

Egypt and Gaza - No longer a true mediator

Jul 23rd 2014 -- IT IS no longer so easy. When Egypt brokered a ceasefire to end the last Israeli war with Gaza, in 2012, the then president, Muhammad Morsi, a Muslim Brother, enjoyed good relations with Hamas, an offshoot of the pan-Arab Islamist movement. He talked to Israel as well as to Qatar, which has ties to the Palestinian organisation that rules the Gaza Strip.

Two years later, President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi is struggling in his attempts bring an end to a ghastly repeat conflict that has already outdone 2012 in both length and death toll. A proposal, along the same lines as 2012, put forward by the Egyptians (seemingly with the advice of Tony Blair, the Quartet’s envoy to Palestine who enjoys close relations with Mr Sisi) on July 14th quickly fell apart, as Hamas claimed not to have been involved in negotiations. One Hamas official claimed the group had not even been notified.

On July 22nd John Kerry, America's secretary of state, and the UN's Ban Ki-moon held meetings in Cairo to add oomph to the efforts and announced that progress had been made. But their diplomatic zeal may be in vain: Egypt nowadays is simply not well placed to broker peace. Since Egypt's army, then headed by Mr Sisi, ousted the Muslim Brotherhood in a coup in July 2013, official policy towards Hamas has hardened. Egyptian officials accused Hamas, without presenting evidence, of opening prisons during the revolution of 2011 that toppled Hosni Mubarak. In August Egypt shut its Rafah border crossing with Gaza indefinitely after clashes. An Egyptian court also banned Hamas from carrying out activities in the country. Egypt has lost influence thanks to its terrible relations with Doha, the Qatari capital, where Hamas's external leadership is based, over the Gulf state's close ties to the Brotherhood. Egypt has long enjoyed links with both Israel—with which it has a peace treaty—and Hamas, but that has become more lopsided under Mr Sisi. He appears to reckon that cosying up to Israel and putting the cosh on Hamas will help stabilise Egypt's Sinai peninsula, where disgruntled Islamists have sought to make mayhem—among other things, by assassinating soldiers—since last year's coup. The Egyptian media, which obsequiously say what they think the regime wants to hear, has been unusually hostile to Hamas, too. Azza Samy, deputy editor of al-Ahram, a state-owned daily, tweeted: “Thanks to you Netanyahu, May God send many of your likes to crush Hamas, agents of the Muslim Brotherhood.”

That does not go down too well at home, where many Egyptians sympathise with the Palestinians and grandly consider themselves the Arab world's “beating heart”. Mr Sisi may even think he benefits from the war in Gaza, if the Israelis smash Hamas. But a president that cannot negotiate peace, unlike his maligned predecessor, does not look too good, either.

[Article 3.](#)

Politico

Israel Provoked This War - It's up to President Obama to stop it

Henry Siegman

July 22, 2014 -- There seems to be near-universal agreement in the United States with President Barack Obama's observation that Israel, like every other country, has the right and obligation to defend its citizens from threats directed at them from beyond its borders.

But this anodyne statement does not begin to address the political and moral issues raised by Israel's bombings and land invasion of Gaza: who violated the cease-fire agreement that was in place since November 2012 and whether Israel's civilian population could have been protected by nonviolent means that would not have placed Gaza's civilian population at risk. As of this writing, the number killed by the Israel Defense Forces has surpassed 600, the overwhelming majority of whom are noncombatants. Israel's assault on Gaza, as [pointed out](#) by analyst Nathan Thrall in the New York Times, was not triggered by Hamas' rockets directed at Israel but by Israel's determination to bring down the Palestinian unity government that was formed in early June, even though that government was committed to honoring all of the conditions imposed by the international community for recognition of its legitimacy.

The notion that it was Israel, not Hamas, that violated a cease-fire agreement will undoubtedly offend a wide swath of Israel supporters. To point out that it is not the first time Israel has done so will offend them even more deeply. But it was [Shmuel Zakai](#), a retired brigadier general and former commander of the IDF's Gaza Division, and not "leftist" critics, who said about the Israel Gaza war of 2009 that during the six-month period of a truce then in place, Israel made a central error "by failing to take advantage of the calm to improve, rather than markedly worsen, the economic plight of the Palestinians in the [Gaza] Strip. ... You cannot just land blows, leave the Palestinians in Gaza in the economic distress they are in and expect Hamas just to sit around and do nothing."

This is true of the latest cease-fire as well. According to Thrall, Hamas is now seeking through violence what it should have obtained through a peaceful handover of responsibilities. "Israel is pursuing a return to the status quo ante, when Gaza had electricity for barely eight hours a day, water was undrinkable, sewage was dumped in the sea, fuel shortages caused sanitation plants to shut down and waste sometimes floated in the streets." It is not only Hamas supporters, but many Gazans, perhaps a

majority, who believe it is worth paying a heavy price to change a disastrous status quo.

The answer to the second question — whether a less lethal course was not available to protect Israel’s civilian population — is (unintentionally?) implicit in the formulation of President Barack Obama’s defense of Israel’s actions: namely, the right and obligation of all governments to protect their civilian populations from assaults from across their borders.

But where, exactly, are Israel’s borders?

It is precisely Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s refusal to identify those borders that placed Israel’s population at risk. And the reason he has refused to do that is because he did not want the world to know that he had no intention of honoring the pledge he made in [2009](#) to reach a two-state agreement with the Palestinians. The [Road Map](#) for Middle East peace that was signed by Israel, the PLO and the United States explicitly ruled out any unilateral alterations in the pre-1967 armistice lines that served as a border between the parties. This provision was consistently and blatantly violated by successive Israeli governments with their illegal settlement project. And Netanyahu refused to recognize that border as the starting point for territorial negotiations in the terms of reference proposed by Secretary of State John Kerry.

But on July 12, as noted in The Times of Israel by its editor, [David Horovitz](#), Netanyahu made clear that he has no interest in a genuine two-state solution. As Horovitz puts it, “the uncertainties were swept aside ... And nobody will ever be able to claim in the future that [Netanyahu] didn’t tell us what he really thinks. He made it explicitly clear that he could never, ever, countenance a fully sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank.” The IDF, Netanyahu said, would remain permanently in the West Bank. During the Kerry-sponsored negotiations, he rejected out of hand the American proposal that U.S. and international forces be stationed on the Israeli-Palestinian border, which he insisted would remain permanently under the IDF’s control. Various enclaves will comprise a new Palestinian entity, which Palestinians will be free to call a state. But sovereignty, the one element that defines self-determination and statehood, will never be allowed by Israel, he said.

Why will he not allow it? Why did he undermine Kerry’s round of peace talks? Why is he inciting against the Palestinian unity government? Why

does he continue to expand illegal settlements in the West Bank, and why did he use the tragic kidnapping and killing of three Israelis as a pretext to destroy what institutional political (as opposed to military) presence of Hamas remained in the West Bank?

He's doing all of these things because, as suggested by [Yitzhak Laor](#) in Haaretz, he and his government are engaged in a frenzied effort to eliminate Palestinians as a political entity. Israel's government is "intent on inheriting it all" by turning the Palestinian people into "a fragmented, marginalized people," Laor writes. It is what the Israeli scholar Baruch Kimmerling described as "politicide" in a book by that name he wrote in 2006.

So exactly who is putting Israel's population at risk? And what is Obama prepared to do about it?

■ sure the president's political advisers are telling him that a congressional election year is not the time to take on the Israel lobby. They are wrong, not only because it is always election time in the United States, but because successive polls have established that American Jews vote constantly and overwhelmingly Democratic for a wide variety of domestic and international reasons, but support for Netanyahu's policies is not one of them.

And if the president wishes to convince Israelis and Palestinians that Israeli-Palestinian peace is a cause worth taking risks for, should he not be willing to take some domestic political risks as well?

Henry Siegman is president of the U.S./Middle East Project. He served as senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and non-resident research professor at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, and is a former national director of the American Jewish Congress.

[Article 4.](#)

NYT

Turkey Can Teach Israel How to End Terror

Mustafa Akyol

July 23, 2014 -- Istanbul — As I write, the latest war in the [Gaza Strip](#) and southern [Israel](#) rages on. Both sides have suffered — though in unequal proportions. Israel has now lost nearly 30 soldiers and two civilians. Meanwhile, over 600 [Palestinians](#) have been killed in Israeli airstrikes, including almost 100 children.

Every time these macabre death tolls arise, we are always reminded by Western politicians that Israel has a “right to defend itself.” One is left wondering why the Palestinians don’t have a right to defend themselves, too. If the answer is that Israel is a state while Palestine is not, then one would wonder who has deprived Palestine of statehood?

Of course, many Israelis — the liberals, moderates and peaceniks — support a two-state solution and view it as an urgent matter that must be resolved. The Israeli right, however, sees such moderation as naïveté, and argues that Palestinian militancy must be crushed by force before there can be any chance for peace.

These debates in Israel remind me of a similar debate at home during [Turkey](#)’s decades-long struggle against the terrorism of Kurdish insurgents. The conflict between guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (or [PKK](#).) and Turkey’s security forces began in 1984, and has claimed more than 40,000 lives. The violence stopped less than two years ago, thanks to a peace process agreed upon by Turkey’s prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and the jailed leader of the [PKK](#)., Abdullah Ocalan. (Mr. Erdogan, despite his growing authoritarianism, deserves to be congratulated for this achievement.)

Reaching this tenuous peace wasn’t easy. First, Turkey had to overcome its own nationalist establishment, which had always dismissed liberals’ calls for a political solution. Their preferred method was a “military solution,” which meant, in the words of a prominent general, “killing all terrorists one by one.”

That was the strategy of the Turkish top brass throughout the 1990s, when military-dominated governments led a brutal counterterror campaign that included extrajudicial killings by death squads and the destruction of more than 3,000 Kurdish villages.

Supporters of this military solution claimed that the [PKK](#). survived only because foreign governments supported the insurgent group to serve their

own interests, and because of the ██████'s violent fanaticism. But where did that fanaticism come from?

Their answer was that the Kurds were a people prone to violence by nature. They had a crude, harsh and militant culture. Why, otherwise, were some Kurdish mothers raising their sons to be guerrillas, and not doctors or lawyers? The state had no choice but to speak to them with the only language they understood — force. It is a very similar refrain to what one hears when Hamas is discussed in Israel.

Yet, in Turkey then, as in Israel today, there was a gaping hole in this argument: It did not take into account Turkey's oppression of the Kurds, which was of course the primary cause of the ██████'s militancy. The Turkish state for years denied this oppression, insisting that Kurds were Turkish citizens with equal access to government services. However, Turkey had still banned their language, denigrated their culture, and responded to their political grievances by authoritarian diktat.

[Continue reading the main story](#) [Continue reading the main story](#)

The Kurds were not angry at Turkey because they were innately prone to violence. They were angry because Turkey had done something grievously wrong to them. And a peace agreement became possible only when the Turkish public and the state acknowledged this fact.

If Israel is ever going to achieve peace, Israelis will have to overcome their own self-righteous hawkishness as well — and abandon the intellectually lazy reflex that explains Palestinian militancy as the natural product of Arab and Islamic culture's supposedly violent nature.

It's true that Hamas is a violent group and that it must stop firing rockets into Israel and calling for the destruction of the Jewish state. The ugliness of anti-Semitism in Palestine and the Arab world (and even in Turkey) must also be confronted. But these phenomena didn't occur in a vacuum. They were created — and are kept alive — in part by Israel's continued oppression of Palestinians.

Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is no fan of Mr. Erdogan. But he would do a service to his nation if he takes a lesson from Turkey, which has, for the moment, achieved peace with a militant group that terrorized the country for decades. If Mr. Netanyahu sought to emulate the Turkish example, there might be hope for achieving genuine peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Thanks to the relentless efforts of the liberals, Turkish society began to realize that ██████ militants were not inherently evil, but human beings who suffered traumas under the iron fist of the state. Instead of just demonizing “terrorists,” Mr. Erdogan began to proclaim, “let the mothers cry no more” — on both sides.

He then initiated secret talks with the ██████ leadership, and refused to give up on the peace process when hawks on both sides opposed, or even sabotaged it. The issue is still far from resolved, but Turkey’s long struggle with the Kurds, at home and beyond, is moving toward reconciliation and even cooperation.

If Israeli policymakers fail to take such historic, game-changing steps, and simply stick to the tired logic of “kill all terrorists” they will remain mired in the vicious cycle that plagued Turkey during the 1990s. Every dead terrorist — not to mention the deaths of innocent women and children — will soon be replaced by a brother or nephew who wants to take revenge. And so long as that cycle of violence continues, neither Israelis nor Palestinians will find the peace and dignity that they deserve.

Mustafa Akyol is a columnist and the author of “Islam Without Extremes: A Muslim Case for Liberty.”

[Article 5.](#)

NYT

As Much of the World Frowns on Israel, Americans Hold Out Support

Helene Cooper and Somini Sengupta

July 23, 2014 -- As [Israel](#)’s incursion into [Gaza](#) enters its third week and [Palestinian](#) civilian deaths mount, reaction in the United States has been muted, with polls through last weekend showing most Americans still supportive — in part, analysts say, because of the failures of the Arab Spring to spread democracy in the Middle East. But in a situation long familiar, Israel is losing the public relations war outside the United States. On Wednesday, the United Nations Human Rights Council voted to authorize a commission of inquiry into alleged war crimes in Gaza. (The

United States was the sole “no” vote.) The United Nations’ top human rights official raised what she called the “strong possibility” that Israel and [Hamas](#) have committed war crimes with indiscriminate attacks on civilians, and the drumbeat from world leaders and demonstrators pointed to the lopsided number of Palestinian casualties — more than 650, most of them civilians — versus 32 Israeli casualties, most of them soldiers. The daily tally of rocket attacks, airstrikes and deaths in the conflict between Israel and Hamas.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey donned Palestinian garb and denounced Israel as “cruel” for its attacks on Gaza. Pro-Palestinian demonstrations are continuing in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Amsterdam and other European cities, some of them assuming an anti-Semitic tinge. An anonymous cartoon of President Obama shielding Israel from world criticism as it stomped on Gaza was making the rounds on social media networks.

The uproar abroad is in sharp contrast to the far more subdued reaction in the United States. A CNN/ORC International poll found that a majority of Americans — 57 percent — believe that Israel’s military actions in Gaza are justified, with only four in 10 saying that Israel has used too much force. The poll, conducted Friday through Sunday, echoed a similar one conducted earlier during the latest conflict — July 8 to 14 — in which the [Pew Research Center](#) found that 51 percent of Americans sympathized with Israel, compared with 14 percent who sympathized with the Palestinians.

The polls do not fully take into account the news that became clear in the United States on Monday, when the news media reported that Sunday was the deadliest day of the war, with 122 Palestinians and 15 Israelis killed. The divergent reactions echo generations of support for Israel in the United States and harsh criticism abroad. In particular, Europeans “don’t have the same tradition of supporting Israel that we do,” said Andrew Kohut, founding director of the Pew Research Center. “That area of the world is closer to them, and they get more exposure to Arabs and Muslims, and are more open to the Palestinian point of view.”

For many outside the United States, Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territory in the West Bank is considered illegal. On Wednesday, Iceland’s

ambassador to the United Nations, Greta Gunnarsdottir, cited what she called “the core problem” underlying the current violence.

“It is the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, that affects all aspects of the daily life of Palestinians, that violates their human rights,” she said.

In Jerusalem on Wednesday, Ban Ki-moon, the United Nations secretary general, pointedly called for “an end to the occupation and the daily humiliation and anger that comes with it.” On Sunday, Mr. Ban, who has repeatedly criticized Hamas’s rocket attacks, condemned as “atrocious” the Israeli strikes on the Shejaiyah neighborhood in Gaza — which prompted a rebuttal from Abraham H. Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League.

“We hope that the secretary general will use his good office to help find a meaningful path to the permanent end of Hamas’s murderous violence,” Mr. Foxman said in a statement.

A 2013 Pew poll found vastly more unfavorable feelings toward Israel outside than within the United States, which registered a 27 percent unfavorable view of Israel and a 57 percent favorable view. In contrast, 44 percent of people in [Britain](#) had an unfavorable view of Israel. Unfavorable views of Israel were held by 62 percent in [Germany](#), 65 percent in France, 66 percent in [China](#) and in the 80 percent to 90 percent range in Arab and Muslim countries.

Things are different in the United States because of a strong pro-Israel community and because Americans perceive Israelis “more or less the way they perceive themselves, as a democratic entity,” said Aaron David Miller, a former American Middle East adviser in Republican and Democratic administrations.

Mr. Miller, now a vice president at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, said that reinforcing that bond has been the failure, so far, of the Arab Spring democracy movement. “The region is so broken, angry, and dysfunctional that they serve as effective talking points for Israel” in comparison, Mr. Miller said.

Israel did garner initial global empathy at the beginning of the latest conflict, after three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank were killed, but that changed quickly as the Israel Defense Forces moved into densely

populated Gaza in an effort to stop rocket fire from Hamas onto Israeli cities and settlements.

“When Israel operates in Gaza against Gazans, it operates in an incredibly crowded environment,” said Daniel Levy, a former Israeli peace negotiator who is now at the European Council on Foreign Relations and who is often a critic of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel. “Gazans have nowhere to go, and therefore you know that your action will entail very significant civilian casualties.”

The result, Mr. Levy said, is that “clearly the initial sympathy which Western leaders were willing to display begins to dissipate.”

Some foreign policy experts, and some Israeli officials, said they were not sure that loss of sympathy, particularly in Europe, actually mattered.

“The Europeans are anti-Israelis anyway,” said Gen. Amos Yadlin, the director of Israel’s Institution for National Security Studies and former chief of military intelligence. He pointed to the targeting of Jewish businesses recently in European cities by demonstrators angry over the Gaza conflict. “France, Turkey, London — you have a huge Muslim population in some of these places, and these people will demonstrate against us even if the missiles hit Tel Aviv,” he said.

[Article 6.](#)

WSJ

Obama to World: Drop Dead

Daniel Henninger

July 23, 2014 -- Asked on "Meet the Press" Sunday whether this was the lowest moment in U.S.-Russia relations since the Cold War, America's robo-Secretary of State [John Kerry](#) replied: "We live in an extremely complicated world right now, where everybody is working on 10 different things simultaneously." Well, not everyone.

As the world burns, the president spent this week fiddling at fundraisers in the living rooms of five Democratic Party fat cats in Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles. As White House communications director Jennifer Palmieri famously explained, changing the president's fundraising schedule

"can have the unintended consequence of unduly alarming the American people or creating a false sense of crisis."

Alarmed? Who's alarmed? What false sense of crisis? [Vladimir Putin's](#) masked men in eastern Ukraine shot [Malaysia Airlines](#) Flight 17's 298 people out of the air just about the time Israel and Hamas commenced their death struggle, not long after the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham occupied a third of Iraq within seven days. Now ISIS is cleansing Mosul of its Christians.

If news coverage defined reality, you'd think the civil war in Syria was over. There just isn't space to fit it all in. The homicidal Islamic fanatics of Boko Haram may soon establish statelike control of northern Nigeria, as ISIS has in Iraq. Last week the April kidnappers of the world's now-forgotten "our girls" gunned down another 44 Nigerians, then days later killed 100 more in villages abandoned by the Nigerian army. After Boko Haram grabbed a German citizen in Gombi, Germany's foreign ministry said it was "aware of the case."

On Monday, [Barack Obama](#) showed up on the White House lawn to make clear that he, too, is aware of what's going on. Addressing the war in Gaza for about three minutes, Mr. Obama urged "the international community to bring about a cease-fire that ends the fighting." He said, "I have asked John,"—that would be our squirrel-on-a-wheel secretary of state—to "help facilitate" that. That is a foreign policy whose arc begins and ends with the phrase, "stop the killing."

More revealing, though, was what Mr. Obama said on the airliner shoot-down and Russia's role. "If Russia continues to violate Ukraine's sovereignty," he said, and if it still backs the separatists who are becoming "more and more dangerous" not just to Ukrainians "but the broader international community," then "the costs for Russia" will increase. What does this mean? Mr. Putin will really be in hot water with the U.S. president if one of his proxies does something worse than shoot a passenger jet out of the sky?

Here's what it means. It means that "the situation," as the White House routinely euphemizes all the world's chaos, is going to get worse. It means in the next two years many more people are going to die, and not necessarily in the places where they are dying now. Why should it stop?

The president and his team need not worry about injecting a false sense of crisis. This being the 100th anniversary of 1914, more than a few people are wandering in and out of commemorative World War I events, their head swimming with Yeats's lamentation that "mere anarchy is loosed upon the world."

On Sunday, another telling event slipped in. Bosnian Muslims buried 284 bodies recently found in a mass grave from the Balkans war in the 1990s. That war was a genocide taking place on post-World War II European soil, which didn't stop until the U.S. acted to end it. Now with Dutch bodies strewn across Ukraine, president-in-waiting Hillary Clinton ludicrously says, "Europeans have to be the ones to take the lead on this."

As a White House veteran of the Milosevic slaughters in Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo, Mrs. Clinton knows Europe won't act until the U.S. leads. Europe today mainly wages war on [Google](#), Microsoft [MSFT](#) in Your Value Your Change Short position and Intel. Its leaders won't do much more than hope nothing like a Flight 17 happens one morning in the subways or on the streets of their capitals. Hope alone won't protect them or us.

This week the original 9/11 Commission put out an update on global terrorism. The report says the "complacency" that led to 9/11 "is happening again."

How, then, to explain someone who claims he can run the country and a troubled world out of his back pocket while he flies from fundraiser to fundraiser? Barack Obama is the most provincial U.S. president in at least a century. The progressive Democrats who displaced the Clinton machine in 2008 and came to power with Mr. Obama have no interest beyond consolidating political and electoral power inside the U.S. Not even the White House of Lyndon Johnson, the ultimate pol, was so purely politicized.

The fundraising is a frantic effort to protect this new Democratic voter machine. The world doesn't vote, so the world doesn't matter. Unless, of course, the American people in November decide that a world defined by events like Flight 17 does matter.

Daniel Henninger is Deputy Editorial Page Director of the Wall Street Journal and a Fox News contributor.

Brookings Doha Center

Beyond Sectarianism: **The New Middle East Cold War**

F. Gregory Gause III

{Executive Summary}

July 2014 -- The best framework for understanding the regional politics of the Middle East is as a cold war in which Iran and Saudi Arabia play the leading roles. These two main actors are not confronting each other militarily; rather, their contest for influence plays out in the domestic political systems of the region's weak states. It is a struggle over the direction of the Middle East's domestic politics more than it is a purely military contest. The military and political strength of the parties to civil conflicts, and the contributions that outsiders can make to that strength, is more important than the military balance of power between Riyadh and Tehran.

This "new" Middle East cold war shares important structural similarities with the 1950s and 1960s conflicts that Malcolm Kerr famously dubbed "the Arab cold war." The power of the major protagonists in the Arab cold war was measured in their ability to affect domestic political struggles in neighboring states where weak regimes had trouble controlling their own societies and local players sought regional allies against their own domestic opponents. Non-state actors played major roles. The contending camps themselves were not always united, with tactical alliances crossing what appeared to be the lines of conflict. The great powers were important participants but not the drivers of events. The "struggle for Syria" was a key element of the Arab cold war. The new Middle East cold war shares every one of these characteristics.

The current confrontation has an important sectarian element, but it cannot be accurately understood simply as a "Sunni versus Shia" fight. Applying such a framework can distort analytical focus, oversimplify regional dynamics, and cause Iran and Saudi Arabia's motives to be misunderstood. Riyadh and Tehran are playing a balance of power game. They are using

sectarianism in that game, but both have crossed the sectarian fault line in seeking regional allies. The regional cold war can only be understood by appreciating the links between domestic conflicts, transnational affinities, and regional state ambitions. It is the weakening of Arab states, more than sectarianism or the rise of Islamist ideologies, that has created the battlefields of the new Middle East cold war. Indeed, it is the arc of state weakness and state failure running from Lebanon through Syria to Iraq that explains the current salience of sectarianism. Given how difficult it will be to reconstruct stable political orders in these and other weak states, the likelihood is that the new cold war will be as protracted as the Arab cold war was.

When the Arab Spring began, Iran had been on a winning streak in the Middle East cold war. The Saudis were on the defensive, and the Arab Spring, especially with the fall of the Mubarak regime, seemed to be yet another setback in their efforts to confront Iranian influence. This is why Syria became so central to Saudi Arabia. By the start of 2012, Riyadh was "all in" for the rebellion. How the Syrian crisis ends will largely determine Middle Eastern perceptions of who "won" this round of the contest for regional influence.

Axes of conflict in cold wars are never simply bilateral, and the same is true of the new Middle East cold war. The Saudis, the Muslim Brotherhood and its regional allies, al-Qaeda and its affiliates, the emergent Islamic State, and other Sunni groups are locked in a conflict over what the proper political role of Islam should be in the Sunni world. The Arab upheavals of 2011 were fundamentally about the basis of legitimate rule in the Arab world. The combination of democracy and Islamist politics represented by the electoral success of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and Tunisia's Ennahda was unsettling to the Saudi leadership. Saudi tensions with the Muslim Brotherhood did not start with the Arab Spring, but the aftermath brought that hostility to the surface. The inability of Turkey and Saudi Arabia to form a powerful axis can also be attributed, in part, to an intra-Sunni Islamist dispute over political order. Even within the Salafi camp there are serious divisions.

A final aspect of the new Middle East cold war is the paradox of power. A state's own military power is not a particularly useful tool. Instead, the key is to be able to support non-state actors effectively in their domestic

political battles within the weak states of the Arab world. Effective patronage of regional allies requires transnational ideological and political connections that make potential clients open to a relationship with the patron. That is why Israel and Turkey have not been able to play very effectively in the cold war, while Qatar has had an outsized influence. The United States can do little to address the weakness of governing institutions in many Arab states that has caused the new Middle East cold war's complex of conflicts. It therefore needs to take a modest approach and recall that this is not America's war. The conflicts have not seriously impaired America's core regional interests. The guiding principle of the American response should be to prefer order over chaos, and thereby support the states that provide effective governance, even when that governance does not achieve preferred levels of democracy and human rights. That means, among other things: 1) exploring every avenue to a new relationship with the Rouhani government in Iran, 2) ensuring that the Islamic State's momentum is reversed before pressuring Nouri al-Maliki to be more inclusive, 3) continuing to engage with the emerging military government in Egypt, and 4) supporting traditional allies like Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states. These policies are certainly "inconsistent" when viewed through the lens of the new Middle East cold war, but the United States needs to focus on its core regional interests as it defines them, not as regional powers see them. Concentrating American policy on the states that actually govern, acting multilaterally, and remembering that U.S. interests are not as directly engaged as those of the local parties are the keys to riding out the new Middle East cold war.

*F. Gregory Gause, III is a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Doha Center. He specializes in the domestic politics and international relations of the Gulf countries, with a particular focus on Saudi Arabia. He is the author of *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf* (Cambridge University Press, 2010). He is currently professor of political science at the University of Vermont.*