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Article 1.

The Economist

## **The Arab spring - A long march**

Feb 18th 2012 -- A FLUSH of green is spreading across the Arab world, but not because its vast deserts are shrinking. Green is the colour of Islam and Islamist movements have reaped the biggest harvest of the Arab spring. Not all stripes of Koran-led politics have flourished equally. In the

Sunni Muslim heartlands stretching from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf, neither violent extremists in the mould of al-Qaeda, nor proponents of Iranian-style theocracy, nor woolly Islamist liberals have fared especially well. Instead, the prize is going to groups linked to the centrist Muslim Brotherhood, committed to evolutionary rather than revolutionary change, and more concerned with questions of Islamic identity and ethics than with imposing rigid God-given rules.

Parties aligned to the Brotherhood now dominate politics in both Egypt and Tunisia, having captured nearly half of parliamentary seats in post-revolutionary elections. Seeking to avoid the fate of those countries' fallen presidents, King Muhammad VI of Morocco has empowered his own country's Brothers by appointing the head of their Justice and Development Party as prime minister. Islamist militias were among the most effective in Libya's revolutionary war. Like-minded armed groups look set to play a similar role in Syria as it slides towards civil war.

The Brothers, known to Arabs as the Ikhwan, are hardly newcomers to the political scene. Their political arm in Jordan, the Islamic Action Front, has been the country's strongest party for decades, playing the role of a loyal opposition. Their wing in Iraq, the Islamic Party, worked with both Saddam Hussein and the American occupiers after 2003. Branches in Algeria, Bahrain, Kuwait and Yemen have maintained substantial parliamentary representation since the 1990s. The National Islamic Front, the Ikhwan's political vehicle in Sudan, backed a military coup in 1989 and was rewarded with a slew of cabinet posts. Palestine's Islamic Resistance Movement, better known by its Arabic acronym Hamas, grew out of a Brotherhood charity in the West Bank and Gaza which sought and obtained recognition from Israel in the 1970s. It beat the main nationalist Palestinian party, Fatah, in 2006's elections and then, when its reconciliation government with Fatah failed to win Western recognition, seized control of the Gaza Strip. Hamas's survival, despite Israeli attacks and global opprobrium for its resort to terrorist tactics, testifies to the Ikhwan's deep roots.

Following the Arab spring, some Western statesmen are keen to talk to the Brotherhood. Recent weeks have seen delegations rush to the gleaming new Cairo headquarters of the group's General Guide, Muhammad Badea. The former professor of veterinary science, whose position as

head of the Egyptian mother organisation carries moral authority across the region, beamed for the cameras recently as he greeted Anne Patterson, the American ambassador to Egypt, with a hearty handshake. This was doubly significant. American officials had long shunned contact with the Ikhwan. Mr Badeea's gesture also underlined the Brothers' lack of puritanical priggishness regarding women.

Does this mean that the secretive society, founded in Egypt in 1928 and a wellspring of Sunni Islamist ideology ever since, is on the verge of fulfilling a long-thwarted dream? Back in 1938 the Brotherhood's founder Hassan al-Banna, an Egyptian schoolteacher with a knack for organisation, took the podium at an Islamic gathering in Cairo and proposed stitching together the nascent states that Europe's colonial powers had carved out of the Ottoman empire. "Islam does not recognise geographical boundaries, nor does it acknowledge racial and blood differences, considering all Muslims as one umma [community]," declared Mr Banna, who enlisted hundreds of thousands of followers in six countries by the time of his assassination in 1949. Congregants, he said, should nominate a global body to elect a new Caliph, replacing the Ottoman ruler whose downfall Europe had engineered.

Ideologues still hanker after the revival of a pan-Islamic empire. "We'll have to get our respective houses in order first," admits Jamal Hourani, a leading member of Jordan's Islamic Action Front.

To judge from a recent scene in Cairo, that may take some time. The Ikhwan is far from smugly comfortable following their sweep of Egypt's elections, even after decades of sporadic but often vicious persecution. During a huge demonstration in Tahrir Square commemorating the revolution's first anniversary last month, hecklers continually surrounded a marquee featuring Brotherhood speakers. "Beeea beea ya Badeea," they chanted, taunting Mr Badeea to "sell, sell out," the revolution.

Despite the legitimacy conferred by success at the ballot box, Egypt's Brothers are on the defensive. Secular critics suspect them of cutting a deal with the army generals who emerged from the shadows following the fall of the old regime. In exchange for a free hand in the legislature, it is rumoured, the Brothers have quietly agreed to extend the long lease of Egypt's military-backed "deep state". Perhaps so, but the generals also seem to distrust the Ikhwan, and show it by trying to blunt their influence

wherever possible. To date, the army has coldly ignored suggestions that, as the largest block in parliament, the Brotherhood should have the right to form a coalition government.

It's hard to rule

Liberal Islamists in Egypt, meanwhile, decry the group's ideological sterility, rigid command structure and penchant for back-room politicking. More puritanical Islamists, such as the Salafists whose Nour Party came a surprisingly close second to the Ikhwan in Egypt's elections, accuse the Brothers of diluting the Islamist agenda so as to soothe Western fears. Salafists also complain of being shunned by their ostensible Islamist cousins in favour of secular potential coalition partners.

In other words, the Egyptian Brotherhood is finding that proximity to power carries a heavy tax. They are not alone. Nearly everywhere that Ikhwan-related parties have left opposition politics and entered government they have faced similar headwinds. Within a few years of Sudan's 1989 coup, General Omar Bashir, the strongman who remains in power to this day, had shunted aside his Brotherhood partners and jailed their leader. Palestinian pundits sniff that just when the Brotherhood is gaining power elsewhere, Hamas's exiled leader, Khaled Meshal, signed a deal replacing Gaza's government with one led by Fatah's leader, Mahmoud Abbas. In Kuwait and Bahrain, the sole Gulf monarchies with active, albeit highly circumscribed parliaments, the Brothers have failed to corral fellow Islamists into a united front, and have lost out to rivals with either tribal or more strongly religious appeal. For similar reasons Ikhwan-style parties have made few new converts and little electoral progress in the messy politics of Algeria, Iraq and Yemen.

Anxiety over a Brotherhood-run Arab empire should be tempered too by a better understanding of how the organisation works. The Ikhwan have a *tanzim alami*, or global organisation, comprised of at least two representatives from each of many Muslim communities across the world. Its nominal leader is Egypt's Supreme Guide; by tradition lesser representatives kiss his right hand. Some wishfully liken the *tanzim* to America's Congress, hoping that it could yet provide an institutional umbrella for a closer confederation of Arab states.

But the global Brotherhood wields little real authority. Far from applying a unified blueprint, executive offices in each country operate their own

institutions with separate funding mechanisms. “The people of Mecca know their own people,” says Mahmoud Musleh, a Hamas parliamentarian in Ramallah. “Egypt cannot interfere in Palestinian affairs.” The head of Tunisia’s Brotherhood-linked Nahda Party, Rachid Ghannouchi, says he will tolerate both alcohol and bikinis in his country, and his government continues to license prostitution. The Libyan chapter next door vows to continue Colonel Muammar Qaddafi’s bans on all three.

Branches of the Brotherhood have clashed bitterly in the past. Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990 split the global franchise into feuding pro- and anti-Iraq factions for a decade. The Syrian Brotherhood, exiled since suffering gory massacres at the hands of the country’s Baathist rulers in the 1980s, long despised Hamas for maintaining its offshore headquarters in the Syrian capital, Damascus.

The Brotherhood’s preparation for power has only deepened geographical divides. To prod King Abdullah into inviting them to join his government, Jordan’s Brotherhood recently announced it was formally separating from its Palestinian counterpart, proof that it puts Jordan’s, not Palestine’s, interests first. The Hamas prime minister in Gaza, Ismail Haniyeh, has clawed control over finance away from Mr Meshal.

Lingering suspicion of the Ikhwan in Western chanceries, meanwhile, is shared by many of the Arab world’s remaining autocrats. Saudi Arabia’s powerful interior minister, who is next in line to the throne, castigates the Brothers for showing little gratitude for receiving refuge during past waves of persecution. He has been quoted as calling them “the source of all troubles in the Arab world”. The wealthy rulers of the United Arab Emirates maintain a quiet but effective ban on the Ikhwan.

Even now, when seeking to promote a moderate face, the Brothers look awkward or uncomfortable sharing power. Hamas’s leaders in Gaza, who forcefully overthrew a national-unity government in 2007 three months into its rule, might still balk at a reconciliation agreement which would reunite Palestine’s two splintered halves. Nahda, the Brotherhood chapter that won Tunisia’s election, supported the nomination of a non-Islamist president yet kept key ministerial portfolios. Egypt’s Ikhwan are proposing a similar arrangement.

The vaunted Turkish model

Still the Brotherhood stands out as a movement of institutions, not a figleaf for megalomaniacs. Its local chapters run internal elections and rotate their leaders. These men (and a few women) have generally proven pragmatic politicians, skilful at cutting deals when it helps them muster influence. They have sidled up to Egypt's junta and offered to serve in King Abdullah of Jordan's government, with or without elections. Across the Arab world they have professed a commitment to Turkish-style democracy, civic freedoms and free markets. To prove their belief in pluralism, Brotherhood leaders attended the most recent Christmas celebrations in Cairo's Coptic cathedral. Leaders advertise their gender sensitivity by noting that nearly a quarter of Tunisia's new parliamentarians are women, of whom 80% stood on Islamist lists. Mr Meshal recently promised a delegation of Palestinian liberals that he would add a woman for the first time to his nine-man politburo. Besides, for all the Brotherhood's shortcomings, the region could have many worse governments. In spite of Hamas's record of terror tactics in Gaza, it has unquestionably managed the unruly Palestinian coastal strip far better than its secular predecessor Fatah. Its forces are more disciplined, the streets safer and the bureaucrats more efficient and less nepotistic. What corruption there is runs along institutional rather than blood lines. The Brotherhood's members are largely lay professionals, not clergymen, and instinctively shrink from handing clerics too much power. As for imposing sharia law, it is telling that Yousef Qaradawi, the Al Jazeera channel pundit who is the Brotherhood's preferred religious authority, recently opined that the application of God's law in Egypt needed a five year reprieve. Alas five years after taking control of Gaza, Hamas has mostly preserved existing structures and laws, with minor tweaks. Now that Israel's siege has relaxed and Hamas feels less threatened, its social controls have eased too. Though the interior minister has formally banned the mingling of genders and women smoking water-pipes in public, the new beach front resorts he has helped build sport both. Across the region the Brotherhood has worked hard, through years of painstaking social work and uphill political battles, to enter the corridors of power. "It was like a stake tethering a water buffalo," recounts one of the Ikhwan's new parliamentarians in Egypt, who like many of his colleagues suffered jail and exile under the previous regime. "The

government kept hammering it into the ground but we just kept on digging it out.” Such patient dedication bodes well for the new rulers’ ability to address the deep social and economic maladies afflicting most Arab countries. The Brotherhood’s rise through the ballot box and civil action marks a hope that Islamism’s reform-minded mainstream might yet prevail over the impetuous and increasingly abortive rush to arms that has characterised revolutionary Islamist groups, from the assassination of Egypt’s leader Anwar Sadat in 1981 to al-Qaeda today.

Article 2.

Al-Ahram Weekly

## **US-Egypt relations on the rocks**

James Zogby

16 - 22 February 2011 -- The US-Egypt relationship is on the rocks. If it is to be salvaged, both sides will need to change course and pay attention to the concerns of their respective publics, both of whom now hold negative views of each other.

In the year that has passed since massive and sustained demonstrations forced Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak out of office, Egypt remains quite unsettled with many Egyptians and Americans uncertain about that country's future.

In a poll of Egyptian opinion conducted by Zogby Research Services (ZRS) in late September of 2011, Egyptians were clear about the fact that their political priorities had not changed since the upheavals of January and February 2011. When we had last polled in Egypt, in late 2009, Egyptians said their top concerns, in order, were: improving healthcare, expanding employment, increasing educational opportunities, and ending corruption and nepotism. Far down the list were expanding democracy and political reform.

Two years later, the rank order of this list of political concerns hasn't much changed. Employment, education, healthcare and ending corruption still form the top tier, with democracy-related concerns ranking lower. Amidst the continuing turmoil that is rocking the country and the standoff

between demonstrators, the newly elected parliament and the military authority, what most Egyptians are saying is that they want a government free of corruption that can create jobs and provide for their basic needs. This has not changed and nor has it happened.

Nevertheless, most Egyptians remain hopeful that change will be forthcoming. Two recent polls by ZRS establish that majorities are optimistic and waiting. Eight in 10 express the hope that their lives will improve in the next five years, and more than one-half reserve their criticism, saying "it is too early" to judge the success or failure of the process underway.

What haven't changed are Egyptian views of the US. In mid-summer 2011, only five per cent held a favourable view of the US, pointing to American bias towards Israel and meddling in Arab affairs as the main reasons for their negative views, with 89 per cent saying that US policies do not "contribute to peace and stability in the Arab world".

For the first time in our two decades of polling US attitudes towards the Arab world, we find that Americans now hold a net negative view of Egypt. In the past, Egypt always fared quite well in US opinion. Since the 1990s, Egypt's favourable ratings have been between the mid-50 per cent to mid-60 per cent range, while the country's unfavourable ratings were, on average, around 20 per cent. In the last year of Mubarak's rule, positive US opinions towards Egypt declined, slipping into the high 40 per cent range. But with positive US media coverage of the demonstrations in Tahrir Square, favourable ratings shot up, increasing by 20 points. That was one year ago.

A more recent survey of American opinion, conducted in January of 2012, by JZ Analytic for New York University Abu Dhabi, shows that the continued turmoil in Egypt, the behaviour of the military authority (the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces -- SCAF), and questions about the Muslim Brotherhood's new leadership role have dramatically altered US perceptions of Egypt. Now only 32 per cent of Americans have a favourable attitude towards Egypt, with 34 per cent holding a negative view (and 33 per cent saying they are "not sure").

The poll also shows that some Americans are uneasy with political developments in Egypt. When asked specifically how they felt about the Muslim Brotherhood winning control in the last election, only four per

cent said that this was a "positive development for Egypt". Just 19 per cent agreed that "this was the outcome of a democratic election and we must accept the results," while 26 per cent said that in their view this represented a "setback for Egypt" (a view held by 42 per cent of Republicans). A rather substantial 39 per cent were "not sure".

These numbers are important. The emphasis given by Egyptians to the need for material improvement in their lives, and the (maybe unrealistically) high level of optimism expressed by Egyptians establish markers that neither the military government nor the new parliament can afford to ignore. There is also a cautionary note here that Egypt's young revolutionaries should be aware of. The public may still support the "revolution" that brought down the old regime, but what they want now are jobs and real improvement in the quality of their lives. As valid as the young revolutionaries' critique of the military and security services may be, and as important as their demands are, they must take care not to lose public support or allow SCAF to drive a wedge between them and the broader public.

Egypt's leaders, both new and old, also need to be attentive to the dramatic drop in US public support. While in the past, Egypt could count on high favourable ratings from Americans; these positive ratings were mostly soft and derivative. Americans didn't really know Egypt (what they did know were pyramids and the Sphinx), and US politicians knew that Egypt could be counted on to support American policy -- hence, they spoke well of Egypt and its leader. Today, this has changed and the polls demonstrate the impact of this change. If Egypt's military and government want to risk a confrontation with Washington, they may find that they have diminished American public support and fewer allies than before. America, too, should take note of these polls. Wanting democracy for Egypt may be noble, but US standing in Egypt and the region, as a whole, is too low for American leaders to be using the bully pulpit. What Egyptians most want to see from the US is a change in America's regional policy and help in building their country's capacity to provide for the people's basic needs.

*The writer is president of the Arab American Institute.*

Chatham House

# **The next fight in Egypt and Tunisia will be among the Islamists**

Jane Kinninmont

February 2012 -- Islamist movements did not start the protests that have so far unseated three Arab dictators. The uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia succeeded precisely because they avoided the divisions – of ideology, class and, in Egypt, religion – that have traditionally fractured and weakened the opposition in the Arab world. Yet Islamist movements were more successful than any other parties in the recent parliamentary elections in Egypt and Tunisia, prompting some observers to accuse them of “stealing the revolutions”.

The protests that drove political changes in 2011 hoisted slogans with universal appeal – calling for freedom, dignity, social justice – more than they proffered specifically Islamic slogans. They were not Islamist, anti-Islamist or non-Islamist protests; Islamists participated alongside secularists, liberals and leftists and there were striking images of Muslims and Christians guarding each other’s prayers in Tahrir Square. Neither Islamist movements nor other existing political parties can claim credit for these youth-led, spontaneously swelling street movements.

## **Expansion of influence**

When it has come to the subsequent electoral campaigning, however, Islamist movements’ history of building grassroots support has paid off. They are generally seen as the best-organised political groups in both Egypt and Tunisia. Their expansion of influence since the 1970s is partly due to the failures and the repression of the secular, Arab nationalist opposition that previously dominated the political scene. The Arab nationalist trend was gradually weakened by the Arab defeat in the 1967 war, the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1970, and the increasing divide between rich oil-exporters and poorer states in the Arab world. Slowly and stealthily, governments around the region also took steps to reinforce religious movements as a counterweight to the Arab nationalists, hoping

these would focus people's minds more on personal piety and political quiescence. Some did.

However, a new generation of Islamist activists, including students, teachers and members of professional associations, moved to fill the vacuum left by the weakening of the secular movements. For many people of the region, Islam presented an appealing alternative to Arabism as a locally rooted, seemingly authentic political identity in an era of decolonisation. In its early days, the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran galvanised a range of both Sunni and Shia groups, although Iran's evolution into a repressive and isolated post-revolution regime has evidently become a far less attractive model for most. When Ayatollah Ali Khamenei appeared on a TV screen in Tahrir Square last year, he was roundly booed. Today, the relative strength of Islamist movements is partly a reflection of the repressive authoritarian structures that have impeded the development of political activities outside the mosques. In Egypt especially, their strength also reflects the gaping holes in the state provision of services; gaps which Islamist activists have filled with charitable activities. But these movements, forged under authoritarianism, will need to evolve and adapt as the environment around them changes and opens. Signs of this are already evident in Egypt and Tunisia. In Egypt, several new political parties have broken away from the Muslim Brotherhood and its officially sanctioned Freedom and Justice Party, including the youth-led Egyptian Current Party (Al-Tayyar Al-Masry), which calls for a civil state with Islamic values rather than an Islamic state; its founders were promptly expelled from the Brotherhood. There are also suggestions that in Tunisia, leftists may seek to form a rival Islamist party to Ennahda, which has taken a broadly centre-right position on matters of economic policy.

The dominant Islamist movements in Egypt and Tunisia are now confronted with what is for them an unprecedented challenge of governing. They have to do so within existing state structures, in parliaments where no single party has an outright majority, and where the ability to compromise and to make alliances will be critical. No Islamist grouping won an outright majority in either of the elections. In Tunisia, Ennahda won 41 per cent of the vote in the October, and has formed a coalition with centrist secularists. The party has already shown its

willingness to negotiate during the preparations for the election, in signing up to an agreement, pro-posed by other parties, to ensure that 50 per cent of candidates were female. In Egypt, initial estimates suggest that Islamist parties between them won a strong majority in the parliamentary elections. However, this vote is split between the Brotherhood – a political movement that has previous experience of participating in elections, albeit heavily rigged ones, using nominally “independent” candidates – and the more recently assembled Al-Nour party, a Salafist grouping, born from a movement that has traditionally shied away from politics and taken a far more puritanical approach to Islam. The two are competitors, vying not only for votes but for the claim to represent the best interpretation of Islam. In that regard, the Salafists are more of a threat to the Brotherhood than the secular parties, who do not contest its fundamental claim to legitimacy. Moreover, on many purely political issues, the Brotherhood has more in common with liberal parties than it does with Al-Nour – presenting potential future dilemmas over alliance-building. There are still undoubted tensions between the Brotherhood and some Egyptian liberals, who worry that the Brotherhood’s apparent commitment to democracy may be simply an intolerant majoritarianism that leaves little room for religious or political minorities. In Egypt, the Brotherhood has been at the forefront of demands for a stronger parliament – but then, it anticipated its popularity with voters. Meanwhile, there are anti-democratic tendencies among some liberals, based on fear that Islamist government would threaten their rights and privileges. But the divide is not a simple Islamist-versus-liberal split. Many are trying to find ways to continue working together, as in Tahrir. Perhaps this will be easier for the younger generation whose formative political experience was the unity of Tahrir, not the traditional competition between established political groups, and who are seeking new ways to make aspirations to Islamic legitimacy and to democracy compatible. Ultimately, supporters of democracy in the Arab world should be concerned about any political actors that are intolerant, anti-democratic, violent and sectarian. These worries are neither unique nor specific to Islamist movements. Certainly, recent history provides few promising models of states run by Islamists; the current focus of many Arab Islamists on the so-called “Turkish model” may have less to do with the merits of Turkey itself than with the useful

contrast it presents with Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, or Taliban-era Afghanistan. On the other hand, for Islamists, governments like those of Syria, Iraq and Tunisia have earned secularism a bad name.

The vague, catch-all term Islamist belies the diversity of movements that seek to draw inspiration, values and legitimacy from Islam. There are enormous differences in thinking both between different Islamist groups, and within them. Crucially, this diversity is likely to increase as a result of the new-found political opening in the Arab world.

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Article 4.

The Washington Post

## **Why Iran thinks it needs the bomb**

Ray Takeyh

February 17 -- Bombastic claims of nuclear achievement, threats to [close critical international waterways](#), [alleged terrorist plots](#) and [hints of diplomatic outreach](#) — all are emanating from Tehran right now. This past week, confrontation between Iran and the West reached new heights as Israel accused Iran of a bombing attempt in Bangkok and others [targeting Israeli diplomats in India and Georgia](#). And yet, on Wednesday, an Iranian nuclear negotiator signaled that Tehran wants to get back to the table. What does Iran really want? What, as strategists might ask, are the sources of Iranian conduct?

The key to unraveling the Islamic republic lies in understanding Iran's perception of itself. More than any other Middle Eastern nation, Iran has always imagined itself as the natural hegemon of its neighborhood. As the Persian empire shrank over the centuries and Persian culture faded with the arrival of more alluring Western mores, Iran's exaggerated view of itself remained largely intact. By dint of history, Iranians believe that their nation deserves regional preeminence.

However, Iran's foreign policy is also built on the foundations of the theocratic regime and the 1979 revolution. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini bequeathed to his successors an ideology that divided the world between

oppressors and the oppressed. The Islamic revolution was a battle for emancipation from the cultural and political tentacles of the iniquitous West. However, Iran was not merely seeking independence and autonomy, but wanted to project its Islamist message beyond its borders. Khomeini's ideology and Iran's nationalist aspirations created a revolutionary, populist approach to the region's status quo.

Iran's enduring revolutionary zeal may seem puzzling because, in many ways, China has come to define our impressions of a revolutionary state. At the outset, ideology determined Beijing's foreign policy, even to the detriment of its practical interests, but over time, new generations of leaders discarded such a rigid approach. Today, there is nothing particularly communist about the Chinese Communist Party.

By the 1990s, Iran appeared to be following in the footsteps of states such as China and Vietnam, as pragmatic leaders such as Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and reformers such as Mohammad Khatami struggled to emancipate their republic from Khomeini's onerous ideology. But what makes Iran peculiar is that this evolution was deliberately halted by a younger generation of leaders such as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who rejected the pragmatic approach in favor of reclaiming the legacy of Khomeini. "Returning to the roots of the revolution" became their mantra. Under the auspices of an austere and dogmatic supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, a "war generation" is taking control in Iran — young rightists who were molded by the prolonged war with Iraq in the 1980s. Although committed to the religious pedigree of the state, the callow reactionaries have at times been critical of their elders for their passivity in the imposition of Islamic cultural restrictions and for the rampant corruption that has engulfed the nation. As Iran's revolution matures, and the politicians who were present at its creation gradually fade from the scene, a more doctrinaire generation is taking command. Situated in the security services, the Revolutionary Guard Corps and increasingly the elected institutions, they are becoming more powerful than their moderate elders.

This group's international outlook was shaped by the devastating Iran-Iraq war. In the veterans' self-serving view, Iran's failure to overthrow Saddam Hussein had more to do with superpower intervention and less to do with their poor planning and lack of resources. The Western states and the

United Nations, which failed to register even a perfunctory protest against Iraq's massive use of chemical weapons, are to be treated with suspicion and hostility. Struggle and sacrifice have come to displace dialogue and detente.

As with Khomeini, a central tenet of the young conservatives' foreign policy perspective is that Iran's revolution was a remarkable historical achievement that the United States can neither accept nor accommodate. The Western powers will always conspire against an Islamic state that they cannot control. The only way Iran can be independent and achieve its national objectives is through confrontation. The viability of the Islamic republic cannot be negotiated with the West; it has to be claimed through steadfastness and defiance.

Iran's nuclear program did not begin with the rise of this war generation. The nation has long invested in its atomic infrastructure. However, more so than any of their predecessors, Iran's current rulers see nuclear arms as central to their national ambitions. While the Rafsanjani and Khatami administrations looked at nuclear weapons as tools of deterrence, for the conservatives they are a critical means of solidifying Iran's preeminence in the region. A hegemonic Iran requires a robust and extensive nuclear apparatus.

The maturing of the nuclear program has generated its share of nationalistic fervor, and the regime has certainly done its share to promote the importance of the atomic industry as a pathway to scientific achievement and national greatness. From issuing stamps commemorating the program to celebrating the enrichment of uranium, the clerical regime believes that a national commitment to nuclear self-sufficiency can revive its political fortunes.

The problem with this approach is that, once such a nationalistic narrative is created, it becomes difficult for the government to offer any concessions without risking a popular backlash. After years of proclaiming that constructing an indigenous nuclear industry is the most important issue confronting Iran since the nationalization of the oil industry in 1951, the government will find it difficult to justify compromises. The Islamic republic's strategy of marrying its identity to nuclear aggrandizement makes the task of diplomacy even more daunting.

Yet, Iran's determination to advance its nuclear program has come at a considerable cost. Today, the country stands politically and economically isolated. The intense international pressure on Iran has seemingly invited an interest in diplomacy.

From Tehran's perspective, protracted diplomacy has the advantage of potentially dividing the international community, shielding Iran's facilities from military retribution and easing economic sanctions. Iran may have to be patient in its quest to get the bomb; it may have to offer confidence-building measures and placate its allies in Beijing and Moscow. Any concessions it makes will probably be reversible and symbolic so as not to derail the overall trajectory of the nuclear program.

Can Tehran be pressed into conceding to a viable arms-control treaty? On the surface, it is hard to see how Iran's leaders could easily reconsider their national interest. The international community is confronting an Islamic republic in which moderate voices have been excised from power. However, it may still be possible to disarm Iran without using force. The key figure remains Khamenei, who maintains the authority and stature to impose a decision on his reluctant disciples. A coercive strategy that exploits not just Khamenei's economic distress but his political vulnerabilities may cause him to reach beyond his narrow circle, broaden his coalition and inject a measure of pragmatism into his state's deliberations. As with most ideologues, Iran's supreme leader worries more about political dissent than economic privation. Such a strategy requires not additional sanctions but considerable imagination.

*Ray Takeyh is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and the author of ["Guardians of the Revolution: Iran and the World in the Age of the Ayatollahs."](#)*

# How the U.S.-Iran Standoff Looks From Iran

Seyed Hossein Mousavian

Feb 16, 2012 -- The past six U.S. presidents have employed a policy of sanctions, containment and deterrence against [Iran](#). Earlier in his tenure, President [Barack Obama](#) tried to change course by offering instead to engage, stressing “diplomacy without preconditions.” Two years later, however, the talk in [Washington](#) is of an inevitable coming war.

This is entirely the wrong direction for the U.S. to be taking. The consequences of a military strike on Iran would be catastrophic for the U.S., Iran and [Israel](#).

Whether Iran should be able to build its nuclear program cannot be dealt with separately from the larger issue of the confrontational relationship that Iran and the U.S. have had since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. In his recent memoir, former International Atomic Energy Agency Director General [Mohamed ElBaradei](#) said he doubted policy makers in Washington were ever truly interested in resolving the Iranian nuclear issue, but that they sought instead to achieve isolation and regime change in Iran.

Regardless of whether ElBaradei was right about that -- and having sat at the other side of the table as an Iranian nuclear negotiator, it seemed that he was -- it's safe to say there won't be a solution to the Iranian nuclear dispute as long as officials in Tehran and Washington continue to base their relationship on escalating hostility, threats and mistrust, particularly if the ultimate U.S. goal is regime change.

Both Miscalculated

Both sides have made miscalculations, worsening an already strained relationship. From 2003 to 2005, Iran's team in nuclear negotiations with the so-called EU3 (the U.K., [France](#) and Germany) and the IAEA stressed repeatedly that Iran's right to enrich nuclear fuel was non-negotiable. The team, of which I was part, argued that the EU3 should not be able to deprive Iran of its legitimate right under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to acquire nuclear technology, including uranium enrichment. We made it clear that actions such as prolonging the negotiations or

suspending the enrichment program would not stop Iran. Rather, Iran would restart the enrichment program, even at the cost of sanctions that could cripple the country's economy, or of a military strike. The EU3 ignored these warnings.

On the other side, those in Tehran with a great deal of sway over nuclear policy ignored warnings that if Iran restarted enrichment unilaterally, that would result in Iran's nuclear file being referred to the [United Nations Security Council](#), citing [Iran's nuclear program](#) as a threat to international peace and security. Once referred, the way would be paved for imposing further sanctions on Iran and further escalation. Unfortunately, these Iranian policy makers saw the threat of referral as a Western bluff aimed simply at intimidating them.

Hopefully, both parties have learned their lessons: Iran will not forgo its rights under the non-proliferation treaty, and the West will follow through with its threat of sanctions and referral.

From 2003 to 2009, Iran exchanged many proposals with the EU3, and later the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the UN [Security Council](#), plus Germany). Again unfortunately, none were realistic, largely because they did not provide face-saving mechanisms for either party. Going forward, any viable solution needs to meet the bottom lines of both sides. For Iran, this means the ability to produce reliable civilian nuclear energy, as it is entitled to do under the non-proliferation treaty. For the U.S. and [Europe](#), it means never having Iran develop nuclear weapons or a short-notice breakout capability.

#### Maximum Transparency

Specifically, the West should recognize the legitimate right of Iran to produce nuclear technology, including [uranium enrichment](#); remove sanctions; and normalize Iran's nuclear file at the UN Security Council and the IAEA. To meet the P5+1 conditions, Iran should accept the maximum level of transparency by implementing the IAEA's [Subsidiary Arrangement Code 3.1](#) and the non-proliferation treaty's [Additional Protocol](#), which broadly enable intrusive monitoring and inspections of nuclear facilities.

To eliminate Western concerns about a possible nuclear weapons breakout using low-enriched uranium, any deal should place a limit on Iran's enrichment activities to less than 5 percent. Low-enriched uranium covers

enrichment by as much as 20 percent, a level that is more conducive for further enrichment to weapons grade. A deal should also cap the amount of low-enriched uranium hexafluoride that Iran can stockpile; limit its enrichment sites during a period of confidence building; establish an international consortium on enrichment in Iran; and commit not to reprocess low-enriched uranium during the confidence-building period. President [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](#)'s offer to stop 20 percent enrichment in exchange for a P5+1 commitment to provide fuel rods for the Tehran Research Reactor -- a proposal he made in comments to reporters last September after a [speech](#) to the UN General Assembly -- and [Russia](#)'s "Step-by-Step Plan" represent the most conducive path to reaching such a deal. The Russian plan includes full supervision by the IAEA; implementation of the non-proliferation treaty's Additional Protocol and Subsidiary Arrangement; readiness to stop production of low-enriched uranium and limiting enrichment to 5 percent; halting the production and installation of new centrifuges; limiting enrichment sites to one; addressing the IAEA's "possible military dimension" concerns and other technical ambiguities; and temporary suspension of enrichment. In return, Iran would expect the P5+1 to remove sanctions and normalize Iran's nuclear file in the IAEA and Security Council. Iran has already welcomed both initiatives. The U.S. and Europeans have declined. Instead, they have chosen to try coercion. The result was evidenced in recent days, as Iranian officials announced the insertion of their first domestically produced 20 percent fuel rod, and an increase in the number of enrichment [centrifuges](#) to 9,000 from 6,000.

#### Non-Interference Key

Finally, the U.S. should seek a broad relationship with Iran based on mutual respect, non-interference, equality, justice and common interests. No significant progress can be made toward achieving the U.S. security objectives without first convincing Iran that the U.S. is prepared to discuss all agenda items in U.S.-Iran relations.

Both the U.S. and Iran have become prisoners of the past. They need to have a realistic assessment of potential areas where they could have common interests, such as [Afghanistan](#), [Iraq](#), security in the [Persian Gulf](#), curbing drug trafficking, opposing al-Qaeda, and limiting the role of the Taliban. Unfortunately, the pursuit of these potential common interests has

so far been hampered by a preoccupation with the nuclear file and the domestic political climate in both countries.

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Article 6.

The Diplomat

## **[Why China Succeeds in Africa](#)**

Richard Aidoo

February 18, 2012 -- About four decades ago, the Chinese braved the natural elements to help construct what has come to represent one of the great symbols of Sino-Africa cooperation – the nearly 2,000 kilometer Tazara railway stretching from land-locked Zambia through Tanzania to the coast. Delivered in the midst of the Cultural Revolution, this gift represents China's agenda to reach out even during turbulent times in its history. This expensive project also exemplified a major step towards enhancing South-South cooperation, which had been initiated in 1955 at Bandung, Indonesia.

Last month, China once again delivered a symbolic [structure in the form of a \\$200 million headquarters to house the African Union](#). Indeed, this superstructure has transformed the skyline of Addis Ababa, but more importantly, has added a crucial layer to the Sino-African discourse – helping connect Africa's present to its past.

From stadiums in southern Africa through government offices and cultural buildings in western Africa to hydroelectric projects in the north of the continent, both apologists and critics of China's engagements in Africa have found pillars for their arguments in these structures. Mostly, these passionate arguments concern issues around the ratio of Chinese to African labor at the sites of these projects, the nature of funding involved in a particular project, the quality of these structures and the motives behind Beijing's seeming embrace of all things African. These are pertinent discussions to have, but should be well placed in the thicket of

poignant messages that these strategically placed contributions (including the AU headquarters) by China send to stakeholders of the African continent. These gestures hold subtle insights and implications for understanding Sino-Africa relations, particularly for the West.

First, the versatility of China's approach in engaging African countries is partly responsible for its surge as one of the major economic influences on the continent. From its earlier encounters with the continent at the 1955 Bandung Conference to present, China has played different roles in its relationship with African countries. Beijing has emerged from its largely ideologically driven encounters with African countries to become an economically driven pragmatist, which is largely manifested in its resource and market deals as well as its vivid role as "constructor-in-chief."

In spite of the challenges that lurk in the margins of China's resource deals and access to markets, which veritably range from language barriers to organized anti-Chinese protests and kidnapping of Chinese workers, Sino-Africa engagements have progressed well along these contours. In September 2011, the world expectantly watched as [Zambian oppositionist Michael Sata won that country's presidential elections](#) riding on the wave of an anti-Chinese campaign. After the political dust settled, it became clear that the Chinese haven't been spooked by Sata's pre-election anti-Chinese rhetoric as Beijing's interest in the copper industry even further deepened with companies such as Jinchuan Group and Non-Ferrous China Africa (NFCA) bolstering their investments in copper in Zambia. Interestingly, Sata's harsh anti-Chinese stance has given way to a more cooperative posture as he emphasizes the importance of foreign investments and [cautioned all foreign investors](#) (including the Chinese) to adhere to the labor laws, during his inaugural address. There's certainly growing opposition to China's increasing presence in Zambia and other African countries, but China and its investors find some solace in the support from the African elites and large portions of the population who are either content to have a committed partner-in-development or intrigued by the dedication of the Chinese in completing projects on schedule.

Second, with the construction of the African Union headquarters, Beijing is explicitly sending a clear signal of their intention to engage the whole of

Africa – all countries irrespective of politics, history, and geographical size and location. Again, at the Bandung Conference in 1955, China warmed up to six African countries – Egypt, Ethiopia, Gold Coast (now Ghana), Liberia, Libya, and Sudan. Today, China has some ties with almost all countries in Africa except for Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Swaziland, and Sao Tome and Principe, all of which recognize Taiwan. One of the critiques of Sino-Africa relations has been the reference to China’s association with rogue states, enabled by its principle of non-conditionality. But this is an oversimplification of the issue. In a bid to effectively advance its causes in Africa, Beijing has drawn a fine balance between hushing its minimum pre-conditions, which include the acceptance of the one-China policy, and engaging African states perceived as rogue states like Zimbabwe and Sudan. Also, without the colonial baggage of some Western states, the Chinese have been fortunate in fostering their economic partnerships with African countries with no need for compunction. Beijing’s interests thus extend from the almost “unknown” [platinum deposits](#) in Zimbabwe to the known quantities of oil in Angola and Nigeria. Accessing these resources across Africa may for instance require technology in the arid region of Sudan or transportation from landlocked Zambia to the coast of Mozambique. This links us to China’s other well-known effort – helping to construct and reconstruct the infrastructure of many African countries. This effort is in essence a win-win for both parties in the Sino-African sphere. So whether it’s different politics or geography, it’s obvious that Beijing’s attempt to access resources, build markets, and enliven south-south solidarity in Africa is clearly uninhibited by factors that others might see as insurmountable. Finally, China’s major trump card in competition with other emerging economic stalwarts from Asia and Latin America as well as the traditional European and American powers in Africa is its seemingly untiring capacity to change Africa’s infrastructural landscape. In a recent interview, an Angolan state minister compared the responses of China and the West to helping repair the country’s post-war infrastructure. Whereas the West came with a conditional offer, China offered immediate help with the needed infrastructure. This seems to be a recurring storyline around the African continent. There might be a whole debate about the ratio of African to Chinese workers at these construction sites as well as

the “real or hidden costs” of these infrastructures, but there is at least one undeniable fact about Africa’s need for infrastructure, and that is its immediacy.

If there’s any plan for meaningful and sustainable economic development in African countries, infrastructure development must be a crucial part of it, and in this regard, Beijing is already at work. From post-conflict countries like Angola, Sierra Leone and Liberia to transitional economies like Ghana and Uganda, China is assiduously laying kilometers of roads, fixing rail lines, and constructing hydroelectric dams. These may well come at some cost, but at least ones that will hopefully bring some marginal returns to the African people.

In effect, as we attempt to understand the recent surge of China in Africa, a look between the statistics and the anecdotes provides us with some basic glimpses of the path that Beijing is taking to embrace an Africa that is searching for new directions to economic development. For Western nations, China’s grand contributions like the recent African Union headquarters should be perceived as emblematic of a more nuanced and dynamic relationship between China and African countries that needs credible consideration rather than alarmism.

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