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Article 1.

Bloomberg

Obama and Assad Buy a Precious Commodity: Time

Fouad Ajami

Sep 17, 2013 -- Asli Aydintasbas, a young Turkish columnist with steely nerves and a keen grasp of Middle Eastern politics, sent a note from

Istanbul to a Hoover Institution blog where it will be published later this month. Her title tells the story: "Where Have the Americans Gone? Who Invited the Russians Back?"

It was mission accomplished for John Kerry and Sergei Lavrov. Their diplomacy, so full of twists and surprises and a stunning American reversal, delivered a way out of a tight corner for the two dramatis personae in this Syrian drama, Barack Obama and Bashar al-Assad.

For Obama, this eleventh-hour reprieve came after all his options had led to a blind alley. He had threatened to bomb Syria without having his heart in the thing. He had wanted Congress implicated in the decision to order the strikes, but defeat on Capitol Hill seemed a certainty.

He had cast about for foreign allies, yet he had always been a loner, and he was to meet the usual evasions within the councils of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. A dreadful war had been raging in Syria for 30 long months. Obama finally took his stand, drew his red line, on the violence and cruelty of a single day, Aug. 21, when rockets containing the nerve agent sarin hit the Damascus suburb of Ghouta.

Benign neglect of Syria had not worked: It was either an "unbelievably small" strike on Syria -- Kerry's words -- or abject retreat. It was then that the Russians offered Obama an exit he was more than eager to accept.

Terrible Choreography

He was flexibility itself. The choreography was terrible, but he could live with it. He was more interested in results than style points, he said. Let the naysayers proclaim he was being played by Vladimir Putin; his own spinners would say that the retreat was evidence of his ability to take in new information.

Assad, too, was spared. The Syrian dictator could not be sure of what would befall him and his regime in the face of U.S. strikes. True, there was the Kerry assurance about the "unbelievably small" attack the administration had been readying for him. There were also the countless messages conveyed by U.S. officials that the regime itself would not be the target of a strike, that American diplomacy didn't trust the opposition to his regime -- even saw the more viable of his opponents as jihadists who would impose a reign of darkness were the regime to fall.

All this was in the scales, but Assad knew the fate that had overtaken Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Muammar Qaddafi in Libya. In their domains, these dictators had preened and strutted, and they warned of the hell and the fire that would sweep the Arab world were they to be attacked, of the calamity and reversals that would await U.S. forces. Hussein had been the big neighbor next door and had meekly come out of a spider hole to be sent to the gallows three years later. Qaddafi's end had been particularly gruesome; the bluster and the money and the mercenaries and the secret tunnels had not protected him.

A tyrant who hails from a despised minority sect, the Alawites, who had inflicted death and ruin on his country, Assad wasn't eager to try his luck in the face of the U.S. missiles. Several days of strikes could embolden the Sunni Damascenes, hitherto quiescent in the face of Alawite repression. The crowd could find its nerve and courage and storm his hideout; the edifice of tyranny built by his father could crack. In the world he ruled -- what remains of it -- a reprieve offered by the Russians could be passed off as victory. Thus a regime that (by its pronouncements) neither owned chemical stockpiles, nor used them, was ready to sign off on a U.S.-Russian proposal to inspect, then destroy, these stockpiles.

American Retreat

Assad bought the most precious of commodities: time. He had waited out the early victories of the opposition. Help from Iran, and from the Hezbollah movement, had spared him certain defeat. The retreat of the Americans would serve as a reminder to the rebellion that the powers aren't done with him, that the West won't redeem and arm the rebels.

In a flash, Assad was willing to sign and ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention. A hermetically sealed realm, he declared, would now be open for international inspectors. That pledge needn't worry him: It was a reasonable bet that the crisis would blow over, that the Americans would weary of the matter of Syria. Let the foreign inspectors scour the chicken coops in the country, let them search the remote Alawite hamlets where stockpiles could be stored and hidden. Assad will have lived to fight another day.

Obama brought to this crisis a willingness to live with a good measure of second-guessing and ridicule. His bet was that the country had changed, that the time-honored notions of American "credibility" no longer held sway. He had been elected to end wars, not to start them, he had declared

time and again. The traditions of rescue of nations in distress, he seemed to imply, have died out in American thought and practice.
He is a diminished figure after this debacle. But his devotees never tire. They see wisdom and prudence in the retreat. It is enough for them that Obama isn't George W. Bush, and that Syria isn't about to become an American burden.

Fouad Ajami is a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution and author of "The Syrian Rebellion."

Article 2.

The New York Times

The Man With Pink Hair

Thomas L. Friedman

September 17 - I was at a conference in Bern, Switzerland, last week and struggling with my column. News of Russia's proposal for Syria to surrender its poison gas was just breaking and changing every hour, forcing me to rewrite my column every hour. To clear my head, I went for a walk along the Aare River, on Schifflaube Street. Along the way, I found a small grocery shop and stopped to buy some nectarines. As I went to pay, I was looking down, fishing for my Swiss francs, and when I looked up at the cashier, I was taken aback: He had pink hair. A huge shock of neon pink hair — very Euro-punk from the '90s. While he was ringing me up, a young woman walked by, and he blew her a kiss through the window — not a care in the world. Observing all this joie de vivre, I thought to myself: "Wow, wouldn't it be nice to be a Swiss? Maybe even to sport some pink hair?" Though I can't say for sure, I got the feeling that the man with pink hair was not agonizing over the proper use of force against Bashar al-Assad. Not his fault; his is a tiny country. I guess worrying about Syria is the tax you pay for being an American or an American president — and coming from the world's strongest power that still believes, blessedly in my view, that it has to protect the global commons. Barack Obama once had black hair. But his is gray now, not pink. That's also the tax you pay for thinking about the Middle East too much: It leads to either gray hair or no hair, but not pink hair.

Well, bring on the Grecian Formula, because our leaders will need it. My big take-away from the whole Syria imbroglio is that — with Europe ailing, China AWOL and the Arab world convulsing — for an American president to continue to lead will require more help from Vladimir Putin, because our president will get less help from everyone else, including the American people. Everyone is focusing on Obama's unimpressive leadership in this crisis, but for my money the two main players who shaped the outcome — in ways that would not have been predicted but will have huge long-term implications — were Putin and the American people. Obama got blindsided by both. What does it tell us?

The fact that Americans overwhelmingly told Congress to vote against bombing Syria for its use of poison gas tells how much the divide on this issue in America was not left versus right, but top versus bottom. Intervening in Syria was driven by elites and debated by elites. It was not a base issue. I think many Americans could not understand why it was O.K. for us to let 100,000 Syrians die in a civil war/uprising, but we had to stop everything and bomb the country because 1,400 people were killed with poison gas. I and others made a case why, indeed, we needed to redraw that red line, but many Americans seemed to think that all we were doing is drawing a red line in a pool of blood. Who would even notice?

Many Americans also understood that when it came to our record in the Arab/Muslim world since 9/11, we were 0 for 3. Afghanistan seems headed for failure; whatever happens in Iraq, it was overpaid for; and Libya saw a tyrant replaced by tribal wars. I also think a lot of people look at the rebels in Syria and hear too few people who sound like Nelson Mandela — that is, people fighting for the right to be equal citizens, not just for the triumph of their sect or Shariah. It's why John McCain's soaring interventionist rhetoric was greeted with a "No Sale." I also think the public picked up on Obama's ambivalence — his Churchillian, this-must-not-stand rhetoric, clashed with his "On second thought, [redacted] going to ask Congress's permission before I make a stand, and I won't call lawmakers back from vacation to do so." The bombing was going to be bigger than a "pinprick" but also "unbelievably small." It just did not add up.

Finally, there was an “Are you kidding?” question lurking beneath it all — a sense that with middle-class incomes stagnating, income gaps widening and unemployment still pervasive for both white- and blue-collar workers, a lot of Americans were asking: “This is the emergency you are putting before Congress? Syria? Really? This is the red line you want to draw? [redacted] out of work, but this Syria thing is what shall not stand?”

As for Putin, if he had not intervened with his proposal to get Syria to surrender all its chemical weapons, Obama would have had to either bomb Syria without Congressional approval or slink away. So why did Putin save Obama? In part, no doubt, because he felt the only way he could save his client, the Syrian president, was by also saving the American president. But the bigger factor is that Putin really wants to be seen as a big, relevant global leader. It both feeds his ego and plays well with his base. The question now is: With the American people sidelined and Putin headlined, can we leverage Putin’s intervention to join us in also forging a cease-fire in Syria and maybe even move on to jointly try to end the Iran nuclear crisis.

I agree with Obama on this: no matter how we got here, we’re in a potentially better place. So let’s press it. Let’s really test how far Putin will go with us. [redacted] skeptical, but it’s worth a try. Otherwise, Obama’s hair will not just be turned gray by the Middle East these next three years, he’ll go bald.

Article 3.

Stratfor

Ideology Trumps American Strategy in Syria

George Friedman

September 17, 2013 -- It is said that when famed Austrian diplomat Klemens von Metternich heard of the death of the Turkish ambassador, he said, "I wonder what he meant by that?" True or not, serious or a joke, it points out a problem of diplomacy. In searching for the meaning behind every gesture, diplomats start to regard every action merely as a gesture. In the past month, the president of the United States treated the act of bombing Syria as a gesture intended to convey meaning rather than as a military action intended to achieve some specific end. This is the key to understanding the tale that unfolded over the past month.

When President Barack Obama threatened military action in retaliation for what he claimed was the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government, he intended a limited strike that would not destroy the weapons. Destroying them all from the air would require widespread air attacks over an extensive period of time, and would risk releasing the chemicals into the atmosphere. The action also was not intended to destroy Syrian President Bashar al Assad's regime. That, too, would be difficult to do from the air, and would risk creating a power vacuum that the United States was unwilling to manage. Instead, the intention was to signal to the Syrian government that the United States was displeased.

The threat of war is useful only when the threat is real and significant. This threat, however, was intended to be insignificant. Something would be destroyed, but it would not be the chemical weapons or the regime. As a gesture, therefore, what it signaled was not that it was dangerous to incur American displeasure, but rather that American displeasure did not carry significant consequences. The United States is enormously powerful militarily and its threats to make war ought to be daunting, but instead, the president chose to frame the threat such that it would be safe to disregard it.

Avoiding Military Action

In fairness, it was clear at the beginning that Obama did not wish to take military action against Syria. Two weeks ago I wrote that this was "a comedy in three parts: the reluctant warrior turning into the raging general and finding his followers drifting away, becoming the reluctant warrior again." Last week in Geneva, the reluctant warrior re-appeared, put aside his weapons and promised not to attack Syria.

When he took office, Obama did not want to engage in any war. His goal was to raise the threshold for military action much higher than it had been since the end of the Cold War, when Desert Storm, Somalia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq and other lesser interventions formed an ongoing pattern in U.S. foreign policy. Whatever the justifications for any of these, Obama saw the United States as being overextended by the tempo of war. He intended to disengage from war and to play a lesser role in general in

managing the international system. At most, he intended to be part of the coalition of nations, not the leader and certainly not the lone actor.
He clearly regarded Syria as not meeting the newly raised standard. It was embroiled in a civil war, and the United States had not been successful in imposing its will in such internal conflicts. Moreover, the United States did not have a favorite in the war. Washington has a long history of hostility toward the al Assad regime. But it is also hostile to the rebels, who -- while they might have some constitutional democrats among their ranks -- have been increasingly falling under the influence of radical jihadists. The creation of a nation-state governed by such factions would re-create the threat posed by Afghanistan and leading to Sept. 11, and do so in a country that borders Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Israel and Lebanon. Unless the United States was prepared to try its hand again once again at occupation and nation-building, the choice for Washington had to be "none of the above."
Strategy and the specifics of Syria both argued for American distance, and Obama followed this logic. Once chemical weapons were used, however, the reasoning shifted. Two reasons explain this shift.
WMD and Humanitarian Intervention
One was U.S. concerns over weapons of mass destruction. From the beginning of the Cold War until the present, the fear of nuclear weapons has haunted the American psyche. Some would say that this is odd given that the United States is the only nation that has used atomic bombs. I would argue that it is precisely because of this. Between Hiroshima and mutual assured destruction there was a reasonable dread of the consequences of nuclear war. Pearl Harbor had created the fear that war might come unexpectedly at any moment, and intimate awareness of Hiroshima and Nagasaki generated fear of sudden annihilation in the United States.
Other weapons capable of massive annihilation of populations joined nuclear weapons, primarily biological and chemical weapons. Robert Oppenheimer, who oversaw the scientific work of the Manhattan Project, employed the term "weapon of mass destruction" to denote a class of weapons able to cause destruction on the scale of Hiroshima and beyond, a category that could include biological and chemical weapons.
The concept of weapons of mass destruction eventually shifted from "mass destruction" to the weapon itself. The use and even possession of such

weapons by actors who previously had not possessed them came to be seen as a threat to the United States. The threshold of mass destruction ceased to be the significant measure, and instead the cause of death in a given attack took center stage. Tens of thousands have died in the Syrian civil war. The only difference in the deaths that prompted Obama's threats was that chemical weapons had caused them. That distinction alone caused the U.S. foreign policy apparatus to change its strategy.

The second cause of the U.S. shift is more important. All American administrations have a tendency to think ideologically, and there is an ideological bent heavily represented in the Obama administration that feels that U.S. military power ought to be used to prevent genocide. This feeling dates back to World War II and the Holocaust, and became particularly intense over Rwanda and Bosnia, where many believe the United States could have averted mass murder. Many advocates of American intervention in humanitarian operations would oppose the use of military force in other circumstances, but regard its use as a moral imperative to stop mass murder.

The combined fear of weapons of mass destruction and the ideology of humanitarian intervention became an irresistible force for Obama. The key to this process was that the definition of genocide and the definition of mass destruction had both shifted such that the deaths of less than 1,000 people in a war that has claimed tens of thousands of lives resulted in demands for intervention on both grounds.

The pressure on Obama grew inside his administration from those who were concerned with the use of weapons of mass destruction and those who saw another Rwanda brewing. The threshold for morally obligatory intervention was low, and it eventually canceled out the much higher strategic threshold Obama had set. It was this tension that set off the strange oscillations in Obama's handling of the affair. Strategically, he wanted nothing to do with Syria. But the ideology of weapons of mass destruction and the ideology of humanitarian intervention forced him to shift course.

An Impossible Balance

Obama tried to find a balance where there was none between his strategy that dictated non-intervention and his ideology that demanded something be done. His solution was to loudly threaten military action that he and his secretary of state both indicated would be minimal. The threatened action aroused little concern from the Syrian regime, which has fought a bloody two-year war. Meanwhile, the Russians, who were seeking to gain standing by resisting the United States, could paint Washington as reckless and unilateral.

Obama wanted all of this to simply go away, but he needed some guarantee that chemical weapons in Syria would be brought under control. For that, he needed al Assad's allies the Russians to promise to do something. Without that, he would have been forced to take ineffective military action despite not wanting to. Therefore, the final phase of the comedy played out in Geneva, the site of grave Cold War meetings (it is odd that Obama accepted this site given its symbolism), where the Russians agreed in some unspecified way on an uncertain time frame to do something about Syria's chemical weapons. Obama promised not to take action that would have been ineffective anyway, and that was the end of it.

In the end, this agreement will be meaningful only if it is implemented. Taking control of 50 chemical weapons sites in the middle of a civil war obviously raises some technical questions on implementation. The core of the deal is, of course, completely vague. At the heart of it, the United States agreed not to ask the [redacted]. Security Council for permission to attack in the event the Syrians renege. It also does not clarify the means for evaluating and securing the Syrian weapons. The details of the plan will likely end up ripping it apart in the end. But the point of the agreement was not dealing with chemical weapons, it was to buy time and release the United States from its commitment to bomb something in Syria.

There were undoubtedly other matters discussed, including the future of Syria. The United States and Russia both want the al Assad regime in place to block the Sunnis. They both want the civil war to end, the Americans to reduce the pressure on themselves to aid the Sunnis, the Russians to reduce the chances of the al Assad regime collapsing. Allowing Syria to become another Lebanon (historically, they are one country) with multiple warlords -- or more precisely, acknowledging that this has already happened -- is the logical outcome of all of this.

Consequences

The most important outcome globally is that the Russians sat with the Americans as equals for the first time since the collapse of the Soviet

Union. In fact, the Russians sat as mentors, positioning themselves as appearing to instruct the immature Americans in crisis management. To that end, Putin's op-ed in The New York Times was brilliant.

This should not be seen merely as imagery: The image of the Russians forcing the Americans to back down resonates all along the Russian periphery. In the former Soviet satellites, the complete disarray in Europe on this and most other issues, the vacillation of the United States, and the symbolism of Kerry and Lavrov negotiating as equals will shape behavior for quite awhile.

This will also be the case in countries like Azerbaijan, a key alternative to Russian energy that borders Russia and Iran. Azerbaijan faces a second consequence of the administration's ideology, one we have seen during the Arab Spring. The Obama administration has demonstrated a tendency to judge regimes that are potential allies on the basis of human rights without careful consideration of whether the alternative might be far worse. Coupled with an image of weakness, this could cause countries like Azerbaijan to reconsider their positions vis-a-vis the Russians.

The alignment of moral principles with national strategy is not easy under the best of circumstances. Ideologies tend to be more seductive in generalized terms, but not so coherent in specific cases. This is true throughout the political spectrum. But it is particularly intense in the Obama administration, where the ideas of humanitarian intervention, absolutism in human rights, and opposition to weapons of mass destruction collide with a strategy of limiting U.S. involvement -- particularly military involvement -- in the world. The ideologies wind up demanding judgments and actions that the strategy rejects.

The result is what we have seen over the past month with regard to Syria: A constant tension between ideology and strategy that caused the Obama administration to search for ways to do contradictory things. This is not a new phenomenon in the United States, and this case will not reduces its objective power. But it does create a sense of uncertainty about what precisely the United States intends. When that happens in a minor country, this is not problematic. In the leading power, it can be dangerous.

George Friedman is chairman of Stratfor.

Article 4.

Project Syndicate

Muzzling the Dogs of War

Anne-Marie Slaughter

17 September 2013 -- Sitting in Paris as the United States's first ambassador to France, Thomas Jefferson reflected on how the new US government could avoid the errors of European "despots" who kept their people subjugated through war and debt. Writing to James Madison, he observed that the US Constitution had at least checked "the Dog of war," by transferring "the power of letting him loose from the Executive to the Legislative body, from those who are to spend to those who are to pay."

At the same time, however, the Constitution designates the executive as the "Commander in Chief," a power that American presidents have invoked to use military force without Congressional authorization on more than 200 occasions. President Barack Obama relied on that power when he told both Congress and the American people that he had the authority to order limited strikes on Syria without going to Congress.

By simultaneously claiming that authority and seeking Congressional authorization to use it, Obama enters a small class of leaders who actively seek to constrain their own power. That is because he sees his historical legacy as that of a president who ended wars and made them harder to start, instead reinvesting America's resources in its own people. He opposed the Iraq war in 2003 and promised in 2008 that he would end the unlimited "war on terror," which had become a potential blank check for US presidents to use force anywhere in the world.

But, beyond the system of political "checks and balances" created by the US Constitution, does it make sense for leaders to take decisions regarding the use of force to the people? It certainly makes the leaders' lives harder. British Prime Minister David Cameron came up short when he turned to Parliament to authorize British participation in US strikes against Syria. French President François Hollande faced intense criticism from right-wing parties in the National Assembly for his agreement to participate in the strikes. And Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who volunteered to participate in a military coalition, is facing strong domestic opposition to his Syria policy.

There are several arguments for not allowing the people's representatives to intervene in the complicated foreign-policy dance between force and diplomacy. For starters, there is the traditional idea that politics end at the water's edge, where messy domestic disagreements are supposed to give way to the abstraction of one state with a unified national interest.

A related argument is that domestic political processes can hamstring a government in the great game of poker or chess that international politics is supposed to be. As Obama has just discovered, having a legislature that clearly does not want to go to war weakens the executive's hand in international negotiations.

Timing is another problem. Legislative processes are slow and often tortuous, while international diplomacy can change overnight, owing to shifting coalitions, unexpected opportunities, and well-hidden traps.

Moreover, diplomacy thrives on back-room deals of the kind that US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov have just struck over Syria's chemical weapons. In high-stakes negotiations, the last thing the players need is public debate about the cards that each of them holds. A threat to turn from talks to tanks must be credible, which it will not be if an opposing player can simply count votes to see if the necessary legislative majority exists.

Still, Jefferson had it right. Though turning to the legislature may prove to be inconvenient, frustrating, and even counter-productive, it is the right thing to do, for three reasons. First, the use of force is costly in terms of lives, money, and leaders' energy and attention. The people pay these costs, so their representatives should decide whether to incur them.

Second, it is never more important for a democracy to follow its procedures and uphold its principles than in an armed conflict involving non-democracies. The Syrian people, oppressed and brutalized by their own government, should see that the American people have a different relationship with their leaders.

Finally, a core component of democracy is a set of rules and procedures designed to require public officials to justify their policies with reasons that can be accepted or countered in public debate. When contemplating foreign military intervention, leaders must explain their actions in ways that make clear how their country's strategic and moral interests are at stake – for example, how unbridled aggression and hideous suffering can fester and spread.

Leaders would prefer to speak in the language of readily calculable interests. Talk of care and moral scruples is uncomfortable and unstable terrain. As the Turkish political analyst Mustafa Akyol has put it, for most of the Turkish population, "care for Syria does not translate into, 'Let's go liberate it.'" Yet leaders who need their people's support to address complex, interdependent problems beyond their borders must socialize them into a twenty-first-century world in which caring without acting imperils us all.

These arguments do not mean that leaders will not use force from time to time without turning to their people first. Obama does have constitutional authority to conduct limited military strikes to deter and degrade Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's ability to use chemical weapons. All leaders can order their forces into battle in cases of national emergency or self-defense. They must preserve their legal and operational ability to act swiftly and decisively when necessary.

But, two centuries after Jefferson, states are no longer merely colored shapes on a map; increasingly, they are transparent and open territories that we view as home to millions of fellow human beings. It is thus ever more important that the people of one country participate in the decision to attack the people of another.

Anne-Marie Slaughter, a former director of policy planning in the US State Department (2009-2011) and a former dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, is President and CEO of the New America Foundation and Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University. She is the author of The Idea That Is America: Keeping Faith with Our Values in a Dangerous World.

Article 5.

CNN

Obama has lost control over Syria policy

Robert Hutchings

September 17 - Clausewitz famously wrote about the fog of war – the confusion and chaos that undermine even the best laid battle plans. The same could be said of diplomacy, particularly the last two weeks of American diplomacy toward Syria. In an earlier commentary, I praised the Obama administration for handling an intractable challenge reasonably well, but warned of the danger of escalation once military action commenced. That was before the decision to delay action while consulting Congress. Since then, the administration's cautious approach has unraveled, and the president has wholly lost control over U.S. policy. There was no need to go to the full Congress – and many reasons not to do so. The limited strikes the administration was considering did not rise to a level that required Congressional endorsement. Consultations with senior Congressional leadership, even without gaining their full support, would have been sufficient. The policy would then have been judged by its effectiveness, and had the objectives been limited to punishment for the al-Assad regime's use of chemical weapons, there were good prospects of success. Taking such limited but important action without Congressional authorization could easily have been defended on grounds of urgency. Diplomacy is hard enough when top political leaders limit the scope for surprise and "wild card" events. When they open up the floodgates, as President Obama did by announcing a controversial action but delaying implementation and exposing the issue to Congressional and public debate, political leaders should not be surprised when they lose control. dministration officials can be excused for not foreseeing how quickly and thoroughly this happened – it surprised everyone – but they should have been aware that this hedging tactic would open up an unpredictable and uncontrollable dynamic that risked undermining the policy before it was even tried. Such is the fog of war – and of diplomacy. The wild card event was the Russian gambit of offering to broker a chemical weapons deal with Damascus. But while this precise event may have been unpredictable, it was easy to anticipate that the Russians would try an eleventh hour ploy to delay American action and sow confusion, just as they did in sending Yevgeny Primakov to Baghdad before the first Gulf War. The gambit didn't work back then, but the latest Russian move has worked all too well this

time, leaving the Russians in the role of global peacemakers. (Why does this not make us feel more secure?)
Moreover, in the diplomatic haze of the last two weeks, the administration evidently forgot that its objective was to punish the Syrian regime for actions it had already taken, not to embark on a protracted negotiation aimed at ridding that country of its chemical weapons stockpiles. It is like letting a convicted murderer go free if he agrees to turn in his gun. It was Syria's use of chemical weapons that concerns us, not mere possession of the capacity, which can be quickly regenerated anyway. Secretary of State John Kerry now asserts that the president is "deeply committed to a negotiated solution." How did we come to this point, when not so many days ago the administration was committed to an entirely different course of action? U.S. policy is clearly in shambles. It cannot be retrieved. There is no point in trying to revert to the punitive strategy that was originally intended. But neither should a chastened Administration, seeking to recover lost credibility, undertake more extreme actions that would involve us more directly in Syria's civil war. This course of action was a bad idea before. It remains a bad idea. But arming the Free Syrian Army, a superficially attractive, low-risk option, runs the danger of gradual escalation as the initial "light" intervention proves insufficient. And what then? Escalation to heavier weapons and the use of covert advisers to provide training on how to use them? Policy failure can induce even a risk-averse administration to become risk-prone by doubling down its bets. For the near term the administration has little choice but to follow the "diplomatic" route that it has been led to embrace, set short deadlines for action, steer the process away from Russia and into the [redacted]. Security Council, and work to restore some semblance of domestic and international consensus. Within the [redacted]. Security Council, the administration should set firm requirements for securing Syrian compliance with the alleged "deal" on chemical weapons via a highly intrusive inspection, verification, and monitoring regime under [redacted]. auspices but with substantial U.S. participation. And the administration must stick to its guns this time, not simply engage in tough talk for a while, but ultimately accept whatever arrangement the Russians and Syrians devise. Otherwise, as we experienced with Iraq for more than a decade following the first Gulf War, the opportunities for delay and obfuscation are endless, and we will wind

up having allowed the al-Assad regime to escape any retribution or indeed any consequences at all for its use of chemical weapons. Disheartening as this episode in American diplomacy has been, we will be dealing with a volatile Middle East for a long time to come. There is an urgent need for a wholesale stocktaking and reassessment at the highest levels of the administration, with a view to the longer term. The stakes are too high to allow one policy failure to paralyze us.

Robert Hutchings is dean of the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas and co-director of its "Reinventing Diplomacy" initiative.

Article 6.

Foreign Policy

Why Is Turkey Sheltering a Hamas Operative?

Jonathan Schanzer

September 18, 2013 -- Turkey is a member of NATO and an aspiring member of the European Union -- but it has one alliance that sets it apart from its Western counterparts: It's an important base of operations for at least one high-ranking member of the Palestinian militant group Hamas. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has made no secret of his desire to transform Hamas into an accepted member of the international community. In 2011, he told a U.S. audience that the Palestinian party was not a terrorist group, and he has repeatedly vowed to visit the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. Ankara has also provided Hamas with significant financial support -- as much as $300 million, according to some estimates. In his attempts to strengthen Hamas, Erdogan has also allowed his country's ties with Israel to suffer. The Turkish leader famously stormed offstage during a contentious 2009 panel with Israeli President Shimon Peres, in protest of Israel's isolation of Gaza. Relations between Ankara and Jerusalem plummeted further the following year, after Turkey's largest NGO dispatched a flotilla that tried to break Israel's blockade of Gaza,

leading to clashes between Israeli commandos and activists that left nine Turks dead.
More recently, however, the two countries have take steps to bury the hatchet. This year, U.S. President Barack Obama facilitated a phone call between Erdogan and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which began a process that resulted in Israel issuing an apology for the incident and agreeing to pay reparations to the victims' families. Mutual interests in Turkey -- namely the ouster of Syria's Bashar al-Assad -- have provided additional hope for rapprochement.
However, Erdogan's support for Hamas could become a serious stumbling block for a further warming of ties with Israel. The Turkish premier's ties with Hamas remain as strong as ever -- in fact, they appear to have deepened.
Turkey currently serves as the home for Hamas operative Saleh al-Arouri, whom the Palestinian movement's website identifies as the founder of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's armed wing, in the West Bank. One senior Israeli intelligence official described him to me as "one of the most important leaders of Hamas ... involved in a lot of things including finance and logistics."
Arouri's presence in Turkey raises the stakes in what the official calls a "dirty game" that Ankara is playing with the militant group. Just this year, Hamas's military wing in the West Bank attempted to kidnap soldiers and civilians and even planned to bomb an outdoor shopping mall. As the head of the West Bank's Qassam Brigades, Arouri may well have directed those attacks from Turkey.
Arouri was originally recruited by Hamas while studying at Hebron University, and he has served as a high-ranking military leader for the movement since the early 1990s, according to U.S. court documents. After serving several stretches of jail time, Israel released him in March 2010, possibly as part of an effort to secure the release of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. After Arouri's release, he served as a political official in Hamas's headquarters in Damascus, where he reportedly played a role in negotiating the Shalit deal, which brokered the soldier's freedom for more than 1,000 Palestinians in Israeli custody.
When Hamas parted ways with Syria over the Assad regime's massacres in the country's ongoing civil war, Arouri left Damascus and is believed to

have started operating out of Turkey last year. He has not been shy about his presence there: In March 2012, for example, he was part of a Hamas delegation that took part in talks with Turkish officials, including Erdogan. In October 2012, he traveled from Turkey to Gaza to attend the visit of Qatar's emir to the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.

But diplomacy appears to be only one part of Arouri's job. He is also allegedly involved in Hamas's illicit financial networks. In April 2013, Israeli security services announced the arrest of two Palestinians for smuggling money from Jordan to Hamas operatives in the West Bank. During the interrogation, according to the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security service, one smuggler admitted that he was moving the money upon the orders of Arouri.

Presumably, those orders were issued from Turkey. The veteran Israeli analyst of Palestinian affairs, Ehud Yaari, recently noted that Turkey is allowing Arouri to direct efforts to rebuild Hamas's terrorism infrastructure in the West Bank. If Arouri really has, as Yaari writes, "taken sole control of the movement's activities in the West Bank," Turkey appears to have in effect taken over from Damascus and become Hamas's West Bank headquarters.

On a recent trip to Turkey, two parliamentarians from the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) told me they had no knowledge of Arouri's presence or activities. Similarly, two senior officials from the Turkish IHH charity -- which sponsored the 2010 pro-Hamas flotilla to Gaza and which the United States believes has provided Hamas with material assistance -- said they did not know Arouri's name. Even Western diplomats claimed ignorance of his whereabouts.

Given the strategic importance of Turkey to the United States, particularly in light of Turkey's role in helping to support the Syrian opposition, officials in Washington have demurred on confronting Ankara. Obama, who has maintained cordial ties with Erdogan, has given no indication that Turkey's relationship with Hamas is a problem for Washington. The only notable exception was a bipartisan congressional letter in May that expressed "concerns about Turkey's relationship with Hamas."

But a recent uptick in Hamas terrorism out of the West Bank may change Washington's calculus. Israel's Shin Bet recently foiled a Hamas plot to establish a terrorist cell in the West Bank city of Hebron. Meanwhile, there

have been seven attempted attacks out of the West Bank so far this year, compared with six all last year.
If Arouri is behind the funding, recruiting, or planning of any of these Hamas operations in the West Bank, it will have grave consequences for Turkey. To the letter of the law, Turkey could meet criteria as a state sponsor of terrorism. Strange friends for a nation that views itself part of the Western alliance.

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Article 7.

Foreign Affairs

The United States and the Remaking of the Global Energy Economy

Amy Myers Jaffe and Edward L. Morse

September 16, 2013 -- As the production of unconventional oil and gas in the United States rises -- and as the United States increasingly exports that energy -- the world's economic map will be forever changed. The power of today's petro states, such as Iran and Russia, will continue to wane. More and more, the United States will be the stable, competitive source of choice for gasoline, diesel, natural gas liquids, and, soon, liquefied natural gas (LNG).
In the past two years, the United States has licensed four terminals for exporting LNG, mostly to countries with which it has no free trade agreement, such as Japan and various Latin American and European countries. By 2020, the United States could export as much as 61.7 million tons per year of LNG. That would make the United States the second-largest LNG exporter in the world, next to Qatar. Other deals in the licensing queue are likely to push the total closer to 80 million tons per year, compared to Qatar's current total of 77.
Not everyone is pleased with the coming export boom: domestic petrochemical manufacturers believe that the United States is in danger of

exposing itself to global energy price volatility. But nothing could be further from the truth. Although there is some potential for that, the United States and the world have much more to gain -- in economic and geopolitical terms -- from expanding U.S. energy exports. The United States should thus embrace the role of energy exporter and think carefully about how to maximize the potential rewards, including by heading off attempts by coalitions of other energy producers to create artificial rises in oil and gas prices or to tack political restrictions onto importers, either of which could cause financial and economic harm to the United States and the global economy.

THE NEW ENERGY MAP

Much has been written about the shale revolution in North America, which has taken U.S. oil production from barely five million barrels per day prior to the 2007–8 financial crisis to almost 7.7 million barrels per day by the end of August this year. The increased production in the last few years alone amounts to three times the total oil production that has been lost to world supply as a direct result of Arab Spring violence in Syria, Yemen, and Bahrain. Add to that other hydrocarbons (U.S. natural gas production increased from 55 to 65 billion cubic feet per day), and Saudi Arabia's own increase in output by two million barrels per day, and lost oil production in Iran no longer matters that much.

In theory, the extra production could have dampened the Arab Spring–related rise in world energy prices. But for most of the last decade, North America has not sent much of its unconventional energy outside the region. Over the next half decade, that will change. Commercial motives are the main reason, but demand from U.S. allies such as Japan and South Korea, who want to trade in oil as part of their security relationship with the United States, is also driving the charge. By 2020 or shortly thereafter, barring political barriers, the United States will likely be a net exporter of energy. North America as a whole surely will be.

The volume of exports, although impressive, is not even the most important aspect of the United States' race to the top of the energy economy. Rather, it is the impact on the global rules of the game of oil and natural gas. The more LNG that flows over U.S. borders, the harder it will be for one of the world's other major exporters -- Russia -- to use natural gas as an instrument of foreign policy, tying delivery to political objectives, as it has in Ukraine and, by implication, in all of Europe. Increased U.S. LNG exports combined with shrinking oil imports will also limit OPEC's ability to control prices, as it has for the past half century.

So far, long-standing antipathy between Russia and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the close U.S.-Saudi security relationship have weighed against a major Arab-Russian coalition on energy. But changing circumstances could push them together. Reportedly, Saudi Arabia has already made overtures to Russia about building an energy coalition. Media reports vary on the content of Riyadh's proposal to Moscow, which was meant to push Russia to end its support of Syria and Iran. But the important thing is that the gambit will not be the last.

The prospect of coordination between Russia and the Arab world makes U.S. energy export policy all the more important. In theory, the United States could behave like Russia and OPEC and restrict hydrocarbon exports to certain partners for political reasons. (Recently, it has favored non–free trade agreement partners because only one free trade agreement partner -- Korea -- imports LNG in any large quantity.) But the United States will need to avoid that temptation. The best way to nip a Russian-Arab coalition in the bud is to promote open energy export. U.S. oil and gas should go where there is a profit incentive and where it can take advantage of U.S. antitrust restrictions. Even if Japan is willing to pay a security premium, for example, U.S. sellers should base their prices on the competition's; they must charge what the market can bear, but not, unlike OPEC, set political target prices and then cut export sales to realize those prices. Luckily, there is no reason to believe that U.S. oil companies won't operate in this way -- since they already are driven by private shareholders and U.S. antitrust enforcement. In turn, China and other new buyers without free economies will likely find that North American export terms are significantly more favorable and secure than those of other suppliers. And the United States will enjoy diplomatic and economic benefits that would have otherwise been hard to come by.

The result of a free energy trade policy could be an extraordinary uplift in U.S. power and influence well into the twenty-first century. Its long-standing vision of free trade, open global investment, and capital flows, which were somewhat battered by the 2007-8 financial crisis, will recover. After 40 years of politicized oil and gas markets following the OPEC oil embargo of 1973, the U.S. vision of a depoliticized free trade world is suddenly possible again -- at least for the energy sector, which is by far the largest sector of the global economy in terms of volume and value.

SAYING NO TO THE NAYSAYERS

Somewhat astoundingly, debates about whether it is a good idea for the United States and Canada to sell their LNG continue. (Debates about crude oil exports have barely begun, but they surely will.) Those who argue against exports tend to misrepresent the way markets operate.

First, there is the issue of the impact on domestic prices. The concern that LNG exports would lead to higher prices dominated many of the comments offered to the U.S. Department of Energy's initial reviews of LNG exports. That is bound to happen again as the volume of export permits increases. Surprisingly, some of the most global U.S. companies have raised concerns about the way seasonally driven demand from abroad could create swings in natural gas prices at home, reinforcing the fears of consumer groups.

It is true in principle that higher demand tightens markets. And, all other things being equal, it puts upward pressure on prices. But the U.S. market does not operate that way. First, U.S. production could almost certainly rise at least another 25 percent, keeping prices close to today's rather reasonable levels. Beyond that, the U.S. market is not isolated from the integrated North American market. The fact is, booming production in Pennsylvania has already resulted in lost market share for natural gas producers in the U.S. southwest, who have, in turn, pushed Canadian oil and gas out of the U.S. mid-continent -- all with no significant impact on overall North American prices. As the United States begins to sell LNG abroad, it will open its own markets back up to Canadian supplies, allowing a shift in sales to the most efficient geographical buyer. That will significantly mitigate any higher prices at home that would follow more exports, bringing a higher optimum revenue stream for both Canadian and U.S. producers, with positive results for employment and consumer spending in both countries.

The North American market is so tightly integrated because all three North American countries are committed to free trade. As long as the United States is connected with Canadian and Mexican gas markets -- and it will continue to be, because exiting NAFTA would be so deadly -- U.S. prices will be inescapably linked to global markets by virtue of Canadian or

Mexican exports. Simply put, there is no way to fully wall off the U.S. energy market from the world's, so the United States might as well reap the benefits of trade by exporting energy itself.

The other positive artifact of the integration of the North American energy market is that, even though it links the U.S. energy market to the world's, it provides some insulation from what occurs elsewhere. In recent years, even as European demand for energy has fallen off, Mexico has become a major market for U.S. pipeline exports, which now hover just below two billion cubic feet of gas a day. Pipelines under construction from the United States to Mexico will boost U.S. export capacity to eight billion cubic feet per day by 2016. Meanwhile, U.S. pipeline exports to Canada's eastern provinces are also growing. So far this has come at a loss to Canadian producers, but they have the capacity to fill any gaps in the lower 48 if needed. And the moment that flow restarts, price moderation should result.

Regardless of the insulating effects of North American energy market integration, there are those (namely, the companies that filed statements at the U.S. Department of Energy) who have argued that, because seasonal demand for global LNG fluctuates wildly -- by as much as 25 percent of demand -- exporting more energy will bring increased seasonal volatility to U.S. markets. But this argument ignores the fact that world demand will be met not only by U.S. LNG exports but by exports from a wide variety of suppliers, including from Africa, Australia, countries in the Middle East, and, perhaps, Russia. Market competition between those countries is expected to be intense. The more competition there is, the more supplies there are, and the more liquid those supplies are, the more the global market will mirror the competitive U.S. market, which stores energy when there is low demand and releases it when the time is right.

The United States might even benefit from global seasonality because its storage capacity is so much greater (and cheaper) than anywhere else in the world. The United States could well become the global swing hub for natural gas. Indeed, every year, U.S. energy firms build more LNG storage, which will surely be put to good use.

As the United States optimizes its natural gas supplies for export and storage, energy will be more easily delivered everywhere. Supply bottlenecks are what cause price volatility to begin with, as any Boston consumer can attest. There, the historical lack of local storage and limited pipeline deliverability produces sudden price climbs in cold winters. What has been proved by both the building of large pipelines such as the Rex Express, which connects Colorado and Ohio, and by the exploding production in Pennsylvania, from virtually nothing three years ago to almost 20 percent of total U.S. supply, is that new supplies tied to integrated markets reduces rather than raises price volatility. Winter price swings in the U.S. northeast, particularly Pennsylvania, have recently been cut in half.

OIL WITHOUT POLITICS

Barriers to open trade and investment in energy have long dogged the United States and the global economy. For example, there is no doubt that at least some of the rapid increase in world energy prices between 2005 and 2008 was the result of insufficient investment in oil and gas production in the Middle East, Russia, and, to some extent, in China. In most cases, underinvestment was intentional, to slow production growth in order to influence global energy prices. But now, India, China, Norway, and Mexico have started encouraging their national oil companies to invest in shale plays in the United States, and others from the Middle East and Russia are taking a hard look. They are looking to bring U.S. supplies and technology home to make themselves better able to tap into their own unconventional resources.

The United States should look favorably on national oil companies engaged in such capitalist adventurism. Over the past 30 years, the United States, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank have promoted privatization of state-owned energy firms in many developing countries. Privatization, they maintain, ensures a freer flow of energy in the local and global economy and helps countries better align their national balance of payments and foreign debt. The policy, where successful, has transformed many state firms, such as Petrobras and China's CNOOC, into more aggressive, commercially oriented global competitors. The more the United States opens itself to those players, the more market-oriented they will likely become.

The United States should keep its borders to foreign investment in the energy sector open for another reason: foreign investment in U.S. domestic resources has already contributed to rising U.S. domestic production.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, 20 percent of the $133.7 billion in investment in U.S. shale plays between 2008 and 2012 included joint ventures by foreign companies. Reciprocity abroad for U.S. oil firms would be equally beneficial. As a large consuming nation, the United States should insist that cross-investment be part of an overall framework that keeps all markets open to global trade and investment, including access to U.S. markets for non-oil commodities such as financial services and other goods.

U.S. LNG exports are just the first step in removing the politics from global hydrocarbon trade, since what is unfolding in global gas markets could also unfold for global oil markets. And with light sweet crude becoming superabundant on the U.S. Gulf Coast, exports of oil are bound to become a hot topic a year from now. With that in mind, the United States should think carefully about the kind of exporter it wants to be, promoting free trade and investment wherever possible, with no political strings attached. Undoubtedly, as shale gas and shale oil bring down energy prices for the world as a whole, countries that depend on hydrocarbon revenue will need to adjust. Although difficult, that adjustment will ultimately leave them better off as they free themselves from the natural resource curse of corruption and violence. As protests across the Middle East have so dramatically shown, the current energy economy has not produced successful and politically sustainable societies in the oil-rich developing world. One hopes that the United States–led energy economy will do better.

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