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[Article 1.](#)
NYT

America Mustn't Be Naïve About Iran
Vali R. Nasr

October 2, 2013 -- THE international agreement to destroy [Syria's](#) stockpile of chemical weapons has put diplomacy back at center stage of American foreign policy. But enforcing America's "red line" in Syria is only a prelude to dealing with the thicker, redder line around [Iran's nuclear program](#). Last week's charm offensive by [Iran's](#) new president, Hassan Rouhani, and his seeming show of flexibility augurs well for a diplomatic resolution.

But America would be naïve to assume that Iran is negotiating from a position of weakness. To the contrary, Iran has come out of the Arab Spring better positioned than any of its regional rivals, and the turmoil in Syria, its ally, has paradoxically strengthened it further. Witness Mr. Rouhani's statements that distinguished Iran from its Arab neighbors and asserted that it was uniquely positioned to broker a resolution.

Over the past five years America has thought that only an Iran weakened by [economic sanctions](#) would agree to a nuclear deal. Iran's economy is indeed in dire straits, which helps explain the decision by its supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, to put forward Mr. Rouhani, a former nuclear negotiator, as his interlocutor with the West.

It's also true that Iran has been isolated as the sectarian tenor of the civil war in Syria incensed the country's largely Sunni population against Shiite Iran and its clients: the governments in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq.

Iran's diplomatic flexibility is serious, but should not be mistaken for willingness to surrender.

Iran does not see itself as vanquished. Its political system is still the most steadfast and resilient in the region. It is reveling in a newfound stability on the back of a surprisingly smooth presidential election. There were no street protests in Tehran this year, like those that paralyzed Tehran in 2009, Cairo in 2011 and Istanbul earlier this year. Indeed, Mr. Rouhani's government, by freeing political prisoners and potentially relaxing controls on the press and social media, is showing its confidence. Arab anger notwithstanding, there is agreement across the region that Iranian support for Syria's president, Bashar al-Assad, has been effective. That consensus buttresses Iran's claim to regional power and influence. Syria has showed Iran to be the only regional actor capable of successfully running a war in another country — and one with which it does not share a border. Iran has given the Assad regime money and weapons, deployed fighters in Syria

and created a regional alliance with the Shiite government in Iraq and its proxy militia Hezbollah in Lebanon to help Mr. Assad. The West thinks of Russia as Mr. Assad's vital ally, but it is Iran that holds the cards to his survival. Hope that Turkey and America's Arab allies would form an alliance that would isolate Iran has not come to pass. Those allies have been divided over what to do with Egypt, and now Syria. Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey are bickering over whom to support in Syria. Saudi support for Egypt's generals, who ousted the democratically elected Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in July, has alienated Turkey, which supported Mr. Morsi and his Muslim Brotherhood, now outlawed. For decades the Persian Gulf monarchies bought the support of the Muslim Brotherhood. Now the Islamists and the gulf rulers are competing for support of the Sunni Arab world. This gives Iran a strategic opportunity to exploit its role as a regional power broker.

Iran's main nemesis, however, remains the United States. America's withdrawals from Iraq and Afghanistan, and its strategic "pivot" toward Asia, have been welcome news in Tehran. American standing in the region has taken a toll with the Obama administration's decision not to enforce its own red line against Syria's use of chemical weapons. That created an opening for Iran's chief ally, Russia, to play a critical role at the United Nations as a diplomatic broker. Meanwhile, after Mr. Obama's historic (though brief) [phone conversation](#) with Mr. Rouhani, pressure from Israel led Mr. Obama to reiterate, after [meeting](#) with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, that he would not rule out the use of force to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. Mr. Netanyahu went before the United Nations to [call](#) Mr. Rouhani "a wolf in sheep's clothing." In short, as America approaches talks with Iran over its nuclear program, it must not assume that Iran is ready to surrender. America's reduced credibility in the Middle East, because of its waffling over Syria, is an equally important dynamic in the equation. America will be going to the negotiating table without the credible threat of war, facing an Iran basking in newfound domestic stability and benefiting from its pivotal role in Syria. Negotiations between the two, for the first time, cannot be based on threatening Iran into submission, but on persuading it to compromise. That demands of America an approach to match the "heroic flexibility" that Ayatollah Khamenei has called for. Expect no grand bargain with Iran in the short run, but rather,

the lifting of specific sanctions in exchange for concrete steps to slow down Iran's nuclear program and open it to international scrutiny. That would be an important first step, which could build bilateral trust and give diplomacy the impetus it needs to succeed.

[Vali R. Nasr](#), dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, is a contributing opinion writer.

[Article 2.](#)

The Moscow Times

Obama's Doomed Reset

[Sergei Karaganov](#)

3 October 2013 -- When he canceled his scheduled summit in Moscow in early September with President Vladimir Putin, U.S. President Barack Obama effectively terminated his four-year effort to "reset" the bilateral relationship. The meeting of the two presidents at the recent Group of 20 summit in St. Petersburg was civil but did not change the situation.

The exchange of rhetorical barbs has continued, despite Russia's new initiative on Syria's chemical weapons.

The failure of the "reset" should come as no surprise, owing to its deeply flawed foundations. The bilateral relationship had been faltering long before Russia gave former U.S. Intelligence leaker Edward Snowden temporary asylum in early August. In 2011, after the U.S. and its allies convinced then-President Dmitry Medvedev not to block a United Nations resolution to impose a no-fly zone over Libya, they launched a full-scale military bombardment of Libya that helped to bring down the regime, a move that Russian officials called "deceptive."

The U.S. and Russia need to acknowledge that nuclear weapons cuts should not serve as the basis for bilateral relations.

Since Putin's return to the presidency last year, the relationship has deteriorated further, owing to disagreements over arms control, missile defense and human rights. For example, late last year the U.S. Congress imposed sanctions against Russian officials implicated in human rights

abuses, prompting Russia to institute a ban on adoptions of Russian children by U.S. families.

Moreover, while Obama and Putin may come to terms over the removal of chemical weapons from Syria, U.S. policy still backs Syrian President Bashar Assad's removal, whereas Russia continues to support the regime, owing to the fear that its collapse would usher in a radical Sunni-led government — or chaos. Farther east, the U.S. and Russia are not cooperating as expected on Afghanistan's postwar transition.

But while disagreement on these issues has undoubtedly weakened U.S.-Russian ties, the real reason that the bilateral relationship is crumbling is more fundamental. Instead of acknowledging geopolitical shifts and adjusting their relationship accordingly, U.S. and Russian officials remain committed to an obsolete post-Cold War dynamic.

While Russia and the U.S. remain capable of destroying each other many times over, they have had no intention of doing so for a long time. But admitting that there was no longer any threat of direct attack would have been politically impossible in the aftermath of the Cold War, when the bilateral standoff still seemed to be a cornerstone of international stability.

Today, the prospect of either country launching a nuclear attack against the other seems almost ridiculous. Given this, the legacy of the Cold War should give way to issues like ensuring that China's rise remains peaceful, preventing the current chaos in the Arab world from spreading beyond the region, limiting the scope of nuclear weapons proliferation, and contributing to global efforts to address climate change, water scarcity, food security and cybercrime.

But rather than pursuing joint initiatives aimed at advancing the two countries' shared interests in these areas, the U.S. proposed nuclear weapons reductions as the primary mechanism of the diplomatic reset. Russian diplomats, whose outlook also remains largely shaped by the Cold War, seized on the proposal. And just like that, the old disarmament dynamic was renewed, as if by nostalgic old friends.

The subsequent negotiations produced the much vaunted New START, which, despite doing little to advance disarmament, provided a political boost to both sides and bolstered the bilateral relationship. But progress

soon stalled with Russia rejecting U.S. proposals for further reductions — especially of tactical nuclear weapons, an area in which Russia dominates. Russia, whose nuclear arsenal represents one of the last remaining pillars of its "great power" status, declared that it would agree to further cuts only after the U.S. offered a legally binding agreement that its proposed missile defense shield in Europe would not be aimed at Russia. In Russia's view, which is probably fanciful, such a shield could intercept its intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs, thereby posing a strategic threat.

In the hope of breaking the deadlock, Obama signaled his willingness to compromise. But Putin had little reason to reciprocate, not least because agreement on the issue would have opened the way to further nuclear arms reductions. Moreover, members of Russia's military and political elite hoped to use some of the country's oil revenues to deploy a new generation of ICBMs. And it seems that some Russians began to believe their own propaganda about the danger posed by a European-based missile defense shield.

By focusing on nuclear disarmament and New START, Obama's reset strategy remilitarized the U.S.-Russia relationship while marginalizing issues that could have reoriented bilateral ties toward the future. In this sense, the initiative was doomed from the start, and the whole world has suffered as a result.

Both countries' leaders should acknowledge what should now be obvious: Nuclear weapons reduction can no longer serve as a reliable basis for bilateral relations.

Either the U.S. and Russia resort to undercutting each other whenever or wherever they can, or they can use the current break in their relationship to devise a new, future-oriented agenda for cooperation that focuses on global problems, such as the ongoing chaos in the Middle East. Neither Russia nor the U.S. can resolve global problems alone. But together, and with China, they could lead the world toward a more stable and prosperous future.

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Barack Houdini: Making Syria Disappear

Fouad Ajami

October 01, 2013 -- The online publication, Politico, put it well: Barack Obama tripped over Syria and fell on Iran. That remarkable Obama luck, the luck that saw him through his bid for the United States Senate, the obtuseness of the Hillary Clinton campaign that had her win practically all the primaries that matter only to lose the nomination, to a rival who had gamed the system by prevailing in caucuses in Montana and Idaho, the financial hurricane that erupted in September 2008 and doomed the candidacy of Senator McCain – that luck was there for him in the matter of Syria as well.

President Obama made a mockery of his authority, and of much of America's reputation abroad, when he threatened dire consequences for the Syrian dictatorship over the use of chemical weapons only to pull back and propose a congressional vote on the use of force in Syria. Luck again intruded: Right in the nick of time, when it was clear that he would be rebuffed by the Congress, deliverance materialized in the shape of a Russian proposal put forth by Vladimir Putin that held out the promise of ridding the Syrian regime of its chemical weapons. The Russian proposal was defective. The only guarantee in it was a break for the regime of Bashar al-Assad. The dictator was suddenly off the hook. The war crimes of three years were forgotten, it was the crimes of a single day, August 21, when Bashar al-Assad's forces used chemical weapons in an attack on a Damascus suburb, that became the focus of the Russian-American diplomacy. The Syrian ruler, a monster who had brutalized his own population and laid waste to ancient, proud cities, was turned into a key diplomatic player. He was needed now to account for the chemical stockpiles and to make good on turning them over to international inspectors. The Syrian rebellion had been waiting for mercy and help; its leaders, if only for a moment, believed that the cavalry – the American cavalry – was on its way. These hopes were shattered, Mr. Obama had not changed his ways. He had done his best to ignore the ordeal of Syria, and

his policy had not altered. He was grateful for the exit given him by the master of the Kremlin.

It was amid this confusion, and this display of American irresolution that Hassan Rouhani descended on the United Nations. The Iranian had been dispatched by the Supreme Leader, and the commanders of the Revolutionary Guard, to strike a deal with an American president in need of a diplomatic breakthrough – or what could be passed off as a foreign policy achievement. The Iranian theocracy was possessed of clarity: It wanted the economic sanctions imposed on it lifted, as it held onto its nuclear quest. Rouhani, and the Supreme Leader who had given the agile politician his mission, believed that they were in a seller's market. The eagerness with which Barack Obama pursued Hassan Rouhani was destined to favor the Iranian theocrats. They had given nothing concrete away. They had helped Bashar al-Assad turn the tide of war in his favor but were now promised a role in the international diplomacy over Syria. They had been steadfast in support of their client in Damascus, while the democracies had abandoned and left defenseless the forces of the opposition. No wonder Hassan Rouhani could speak of Syria as a “civilizational jewel” as the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Hezbollah were raining death and destruction on what remains of that tormented country.

Grant Barack Obama the advantage of his guile. He was sure he could run out the clock on the Syrian rebellion, he had paid no heed to the devastating consequences of the Syrian war on Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey. He had bet that there would be no pressing demand at home for a mission of rescue in Syria. He had presented the American people with a false choice: abdication or boots on the ground. He reminded them, again and again, how weary they were of the exertions of war.

Then came the tsunami: the government shutdown. No one recalled the name of that country by the Mediterranean where a war had been raging for nearly three years. Hail Barack Obama, the Houdini of his time. He had made the accumulated American influence of decades vanish before a distracted audience.

[Article 4.](#)

The National Interest

Saudis Stung by Obama Iran Initiative

[David Andrew Weinberg](#)

October 3, 2013 -- President Obama's Friday telephone call with Iranian president Hassan Rouhani—the first at such a level in over three decades—has exacerbated existing problems between the United States and its Saudi ally. Now we learn that Saudi Arabia cancelled its address at the United Nations, evidently in [protest](#) at recent shifts in U.S. policy. The Saudi royal family has seen Iran as a threat to their survival ever since 1979, when Iranian leaders began encouraging Shi'ite communities in Saudi Arabia's oil-rich Eastern Province to rebel. Subsequently, the Kingdom has been engaged in a regional battle for influence with Iran, and the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq removed a traditional counterweight to Iranian power. Sunni rulers now fear a Shi'ite crescent stretching from Iran to the Mediterranean—and possibly south into the Arab Gulf states. Fearing Iranian advances, the Kingdom spearheaded a 2011 [military intervention](#) by the Gulf Cooperation Council that was designed to rescue the minority Sunni regime in Bahrain from its Shi'ite opposition. But of late, Syria has been the biggest regional source of conflict between Riyadh and Tehran. Saudi officials insist that Syria's Assad regime is guilty of [genocide](#), and they see Iran's efforts to rescue Assad as aiding and abetting this slaughter.

The Saudis were therefore [incensed](#) when the U.S. backed away from launching a military strike against the regime in Damascus. President Obama's telephone diplomacy, part of a broader effort to reach an agreement on Iran's nuclear program, was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. Although Israeli sources said that PM Netanyahu would singlehandedly “spoil the party” on Iran at the United Nations, his concerns are actually shared by America's Arab allies, especially in the Gulf. While Oman [facilitated](#) the recent contact between Washington and Iran, the administration has privately received warnings or complaints on this issue from [Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan and Egypt](#). Like Israel, these countries fear that drawn-out negotiations or even an agreement could allow Iran to achieve a nuclear breakout capacity. Regardless, they oppose sanctions relief so long as Iran continues to

threaten them with terrorism or political subversion. The Saudi reaction—cancelling an opportunity to address the world community—may be the most blunt articulation of those concerns to date, perhaps trumping even Netanyahu’s tough UN speech.

Of course, the U.S. should not predicate its foreign policy on trying to keep the government of Saudi Arabia happy. However, it is important to recognize that the current diplomatic effort to engage Iran may come at the expense of our relations with the Saudis.

There are several ways the Saudis could respond to this latest challenge. One possibility is to grumble but ultimately give in, recognizing at the end of the day that they depend upon us for regime survival. However, cancelling their address to the UNGA is probably a sign Riyadh is not prepared to let the latest dispute blow over.

Another possibility is for Saudi Arabia to decrease its dependence on the U.S. alliance, either in a fit of anger or as a cold-blooded strategic calculation. The Saudis might turn to Europe [or Asia](#) for future military sales or energy transactions. They may also revisit their posture on Syria, arming more extreme rebel groups and sending weapons that the U.S. opposes such as [MANPADS](#).

But paradoxically, a third possibility is for the Kingdom to cut its own limited deal with Tehran. Although the Saudis’ enmity toward Iran runs deep—and involves a prominent sectarian dimension—they have responded this way before when U.S. overtures toward Iran left them feeling exposed. For instance, when the Clinton administration reached out to Iran’s Khatami government in late 1990s, the Saudis signed their own cooperation agreement with the Iranians and obstructed an [FBI investigation](#) into the Khobar bombings because its results would implicate Tehran. During the George W. Bush administration, Condoleezza Rice said the U.S. had trouble engaging Saudi Arabia and other Gulf allies on regional cooperation at two key moments: when the U.S. decided to talk with Iran over the future of Iraq, and after the release of [the controversial 2007 National Intelligence Estimate](#) that let Iran’s nuclear program off the hook. Following the 2007 NIE, Saudi Arabia’s King Abdullah [invited](#) Ahmadinejad to visit the Kingdom for Hajj, even while privately browbeating U.S. officials to bomb Iran’s reactors. However far-fetched such a scenario may currently seem, it is not out of the question. Rouhani

played a [personal role](#) in negotiating the 1998 Iranian-Saudi agreement to expand economic cooperation, including in the energy sector. Since coming to power, he has also [described](#) rapprochement with Saudi Arabia as a top priority since coming to power. Although Iranian officials on Tuesday [ruled out](#) the possibility, there had even been speculation that Rouhani would be visiting Mecca for the Hajj this month. In short, the Saudis are deeply unsettled by America's recent policy shifts on Syria and Iran. In the wake of President Obama's historic phone call with Rouhani, White House officials worked over the weekend to [reassure](#) Arab allies that their interests will factor into any potential diplomacy with Iran. Evidently, more reassurance will be needed if we want to keep the Saudis onboard.

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[Article 5.](#)

The Washington Institute

Israeli-Egyptian Peace: Forty Years After The 1973 War And Holding

Ehud Yaari

October 2, 2013 -- As the anniversary of the 1973 Yom Kippur War approaches, recently declassified U.S. documents and archival material released in Israel confirm that the Arab military offensive was intended to serve as a prelude to intensive diplomacy that would transform the political landscape of the Middle East. Known to many Arabs as the October or Ramadan War, the watershed confrontation was conceived by Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat as a necessary breakthrough in the region's longstanding diplomatic deadlock. Indeed, after costing some 15,000 lives, the war inaugurated a procession of agreements between Egypt and Israel leading up to the March 1979 peace treaty. It also proved to be the last war waged by any Arab state against Israel, despite the fact that other players -- particularly Syria, Egypt's main partner in the conflict -- did not share Sadat's postwar peace strategy. As the late president was fond of saying,

there could be "no war without Egypt, and no peace without Egypt." How has this state of relative peace endured for four decades despite numerous regional challenges and Egypt's refusal to fully normalize relations with Israel? As more revelations emerge, it is important to assess the treaty's track record thus far, as well as its future prospects in the chaotic strategic environment that has unfolded following the ouster of two Egyptian presidents.

THE COLD PEACE

Over the past forty years, Egypt has sought to manage its relations with Israel using a restrictive format often referred to as "cold peace." Thus, during the reigns of Sadat and Hosni Mubarak, Egypt's huge public sector initiated a comprehensive boycott, preventing Israeli firms from winning tenders while various syndicates and antinormalization committees imposed strict limits on the development of bilateral ties.

Indeed, Egypt has always stuck to its traditional anti-Zionist stance while maintaining the peace. Efforts to widen various forms of nonmilitary cooperation have invariably met with failure, including the clearly unrealistic idea of bringing Nile water to Israel via canal, the plan to connect the two countries' electrical grids, and the 2005 deal for exporting Egyptian natural gas to Israel. The latter initiative was scrapped in 2011 after years of often-interrupted supply -- the pipeline was sabotaged fourteen times by Sinai Bedouins, and Egypt lacked sufficient gas reserves to maintain a steady flow. The one field that seemed to gather momentum early on -- Israeli assistance with modernizing Egyptian agriculture, sponsored by visionary politician Yousef Wali -- was gradually abandoned in the face of strong anti-Israeli sentiment. Similarly, Israeli tourism to Egypt dramatically declined after the first few years of peace, and terrorism-related travel warnings have since slowed it to a trickle of mainly Arab Israelis vacationing at Red Sea resorts.

On the economic front, Israel's annual volume of trade to Egypt has never exceeded \$150 million of exports, mainly chemicals. The two economies are simply not complementary. The lone success is the Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZ) initiative, which provides Egyptian plants in seven designated locations with duty-free export privileges to the United States as long as their products contain at least 10 percent Israeli-made

components. Several large Israeli textile factories have moved their lines of production to these zones, and their annual income now exceeds \$1.5 billion.

On the people-to-people front, Cairo has implemented only limited portions of the eleven normalization agreements signed in quick succession after the peace treaty, and not as envisaged at the time. For example, cooperation between national radio and television networks came to an end after only one joint program was produced to celebrate the Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai in April 1982. Today, Israeli journalists cannot obtain visas to Egypt, and Egyptian reporters do not come to Israel because of a ban by their union. The Israeli airline El Al has stopped flying to Cairo due to business and security concerns. The Israeli Academic Center in Cairo is still open but mainly serves local students studying Hebrew. And the Egyptian government discourages citizens from seeking the required permit to visit Israel -- most of the 15,000 Egyptians now residing in Israel are job-seekers who took advantage of the arrangement allowing them to enter southern Israel at the Taba border crossing without a visa, in the same way that Israelis can visit the hotel strip along the Red Sea coast without obtaining a visa in advance.

ENDURING STRATEGIC BENEFITS

Although the treaty has failed to produce closer socioeconomic ties between the two nations, it has survived several potent challenges, including two Lebanon wars, two rounds of fighting between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, two Palestinian intifadas, and an endless series of bilateral disagreements, most notably during the Muslim Brotherhood's recent reign in Cairo. The document's impressive resilience no doubt contributed greatly to Israel's 1994 peace treaty with Jordan and its past negotiations with the Palestinians (particularly the first Oslo Accord of 1993, which was assisted behind the scenes by top Egyptian diplomat Taher al-Shash). Cairo has also quietly facilitated informal Israeli ties with Oman, Saudi Arabia, and certain other Persian Gulf states.

Yet the treaty's most salient benefit is the mostly unpublicized military and intelligence cooperation between the two countries, which reached unprecedented levels this year. Today, Israeli and Egyptian officers hold almost daily meetings and have established an efficient system of communications. This cooperation stems from a mutual interest in curbing

the terrorist factions that have emerged in Sinai over the past decade, threatening both the Israeli border and Egyptian control over the peninsula. And now that Muhammad Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood have been ousted, both governments view the Hamas administration in Gaza as an adversary to be contained.

In light of these threats, Egypt has requested and received Israeli consent to temporarily deploy its forces into portions of the eastern Sinai normally prohibited by the treaty's military annex. This change was achieved through the Agreed Activities Mechanism coordinated by the Multinational Force of Observers (MFO), which allows for ad hoc temporary troop movements in restricted areas. Egypt now has the equivalent of two mechanized brigades in Zones B and C of the peninsula, including tanks and Apache helicopters. In addition to uprooting terrorist safe havens in the Sinai, these forces have sought to block infiltration and smuggling from Gaza by shutting down some 800 tunnels running under the border, establishing a half-kilometer-wide barren strip along the fourteen-kilometer frontier.

This close security cooperation has also spurred Cairo to delegate responsibility for maintaining relations with Israel to the General Intelligence Directorate (GID) and, to a lesser extent, the military. The Foreign Ministry is much less involved. For example, the go-to official at the Egyptian embassy in Tel Aviv is the GID representative, who is usually granted the modest title of consul. Meanwhile, the Israeli embassy in Cairo lost its premises after a 2011 attack by angry demonstrators, and no new offices have been leased. The Israeli ambassador now operates out of a hotel room, spending only a few days a week in his post and meeting with very few Egyptian officials.

THE FUTURE OF ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN PEACE

In the wake of Morsi's removal, Egypt and Israel share a fairly similar interpretation of their strategic environment, regardless of their differences over the Palestinian issue. Both governments are uneasy with the direction of U.S. policy in the region; both are interested in cementing closer Israeli cooperation with Sunni Arab states in order to counterbalance Iran; both perceive the Muslim Brotherhood as a major threat and view Hamas as the Palestinian extension of this movement; and both are concerned about the potential ascendancy of extreme Islamists in Syria, despite their mutual

delight at the prospect of Bashar al-Assad's ouster. Thus, even as Cairo carefully restricts the scope of its contacts with Israel, it has a growing interest in enhancing cooperation on Sinai, Gaza, and wider regional issues.

If the Obama administration and the U.S. Congress encourage this trend, they could help buttress perhaps the only solid cornerstone of stability in a highly volatile area. Whoever is elected president in Egypt next year -- perhaps commander-in-chief Gen. Abdul Fattah al-Sisi himself -- may be willing to go beyond the cold peace formulated by the 1973 war heroes Sadat and Mubarak, especially in view of the strong anti-Hamas sentiment that is now widespread in Egypt. Maintaining current levels of U.S. aid could facilitate such a shift, helping the new president sidestep public calls to pursue a neo-Nasserite approach that would result in anti-American and anti-Israeli policies.

Finally, the unprecedented deployment of Egyptian troops in central and eastern Sinai has shown that the two countries do not need to resort to the highly risky exercise of revising the peace treaty or the military annex. As Egyptian presidential candidate Amr Mousa has noted on several occasions, removing one "brick" in those agreements would cause the whole wall to collapse. Instead, the two governments have been able to work out a new semipermanent arrangement in the peninsula that enhances security efforts while allowing Egyptian officials to reassure their people that past "restrictions on sovereignty" in the Sinai are no longer in place. As a result, the peace treaty brought about by the 1973 war has a good chance of surviving the upheaval still playing out on the Nile.

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[Article 6.](#)

The Washington Institute

Time To End Palestinian Incitement

David Pollock

Autumn 2013 -- Even as Israeli-Palestinian peace talks begin again, official

Palestinian Authority (PA) media are still broadcasting girls singing about Jews as 'the sons of apes and pigs,' and still paying effusive tribute to Palestinian terrorists convicted for murdering Israeli civilians. To get these negotiations started, Israel agreed to release over one hundred such prisoners; but the Palestinian government continues to glorify them as heroes, offering them as role models for the next generation. If this kind of incitement keeps up, how can Israel reasonably take risks for peace -- and how could any peace agreement endure?

The start of peace talks makes it all the more urgent to examine incitement and related inflammatory rhetoric -- what would be referred to in the United States or Britain as hate speech -- in the official public record of the PA. In recent years that record reveals relatively few high-level expressions of religious hatred, but numerous official messages that nonetheless run counter to the goal of peace. Addressing the problem of incitement now, at the start of this current peace effort, will help promote an atmosphere of good will and improve the chances of success in the negotiations.

On the whole, the PA messaging trend over the past year has been negative, and the tone has been reflected by the rhetoric of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas himself. A comparison of the UN General Assembly speeches by Abbas in September 2011 and September 2012 shows a much more accusatory and less conciliatory tone toward Israel in 2012, with just a passing mention of peace.

When examining day to day cases, the most common form of recent incitement, with nearly one hundred documented cases between March 2011 and December 2012 according to Palestine Media Watch, is that of glorifying terrorists, often manifested in statements by PA officials. The list of honourees includes occasional mention of earlier assassinated Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leaders like Abu Iyad (Salah Khalaf) and Abu Jihad (Khalil al-Wazir). Most frequently mentioned, however, are individuals convicted of terrorism since the PLO officially renounced it at the start of the Oslo process in September 1993, and including those recently released from or currently serving time in Israeli jails.

In a particularly striking case, at the end of 2012, the Fatah Facebook page posted an image of Dalal Mughrabi, a female terrorist who participated in the deadliest attack in Israel's history -- the killing of 37 civilians in the

1978 Coastal Road Massacre. The image was posted with the declaration: 'On this day in 1959 Martyr (Shahida) Dalal Mughrabi was born, hero of the 'Martyr Kamal Adwan' mission, bride of Jaffa and the gentle energizing force of Fatah.'

Another theme of recent official Palestinian incitement is the demonisation of Israelis and Jews, often as animals. For example, on 9 January 2012 PA television broadcast a speech by a Palestinian Imam, in the presence of the PA Minister of Religious Affairs, referring to the Jews as 'apes and pigs' and repeating the gharqad hadith, a traditional Muslim text about Muslims killing Jews hiding behind trees and rocks, because 'Judgment Day will not come before you fight the Jews.'

Denying Israel's existence or rejecting the possibility of coexistence with it is another form of incitement. This may be either explicit or implicit.

Fatah's own websites in Arabic continue to feature the original PLO and Fatah covenants and other founding documents, all of which explicitly rule out recognition or peace with Israel and assert a claim to all of historic Palestine.

Direct statements by PA officials often deny Israel's historical legitimacy and accuse it of inherent injustice, even if they do not deny its existence or explicitly threaten to destroy it. For example, PA Deputy Minister of Information Al-Mutawakkil Taha told official PA daily newspaper Al Hayat Al Jadida in early 2012 that, 'Israel has gone beyond all forms of oppression practiced by fascism throughout history' and that it 'does more than racist discrimination and ethnic cleansing.'

But what are the motives behind such incidents? Many Palestinian officials, academic specialists, and other experts argue that this is simply an expression of anger at Israeli occupation, and the absence of any sign of it ending. Some Israeli analysts see this situation in precisely the opposite terms. Incitement, they maintain, is actually a form of political 'insurance,' keeping the fires of popular hostility and irredentist grievances smouldering, and therefore keeping open the option of reverting to 'armed struggle' even after signing an accord with Israel, as Arafat did in the Oslo era. A final, even more discouraging possibility is that senior PA officials actually believe some of the anti-Israeli and even antisemitic screeds that their media propagate.

Some argue that the trading of accusations over incitement is a secondary

matter and a distraction from the substantive issues to be negotiated between the sides; a problem that will go away on its own once a peace accord is signed. However, the lesson from other conflicts is that waiting for a conflict to end before addressing the incitement which fuels it can be a prescription for disaster.

The international tribunals held following the end of armed conflict in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda set new precedents for the prosecution of incitement, at least of incitement to genocide. Perpetrators of the most serious forms of incitement were judged as international criminals deserving severe punishment. Sadly, these measures were taken only after the most deadly and destructive phase of conflict was over. Better late than never, some might say, but too late to avert the damage wrought by incitement while the conflict still raged. Furthermore, incitement that does not reach the level of instigating mass murder has not been prosecuted in international tribunals -- leaving a vast playing field free for lesser yet still noxious forms.

It is difficult to make direct links from incitement of the kinds seen in Palestinian media to violent episodes. However, strong circumstantial evidence suggests a possible connection between particular messages and specific terrorist or other violent episodes. The Itamar massacre of March 2011 for example, in which five members of the Fogel family were murdered in their beds, followed a month of commemorations on PA media of other Palestinian terrorists -- beginning with a DFLP (Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine) militant who murdered two Israelis at the same West Bank settlement in 2002. A 2011 Pew poll shows that 68 per cent of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza say suicide bombing is justified at least 'sometimes', compared with much lower percentages in other predominantly Muslim societies.

Finding ways to ensure the PA stop, or at least reduce, official incitement against Israel would have other positive effects, aside from potentially reducing the motivation for future would be terrorists. It would indicate that the PA was willing and able to take the kind of unpopular steps required to keep an agreement with Israel. Most important in the long run, it might gradually accustom or encourage more Palestinians to accept permanent peace with Israel, making a compromise agreement less risky and more durable.

So, tackling incitement matters; but how should international third parties address it? Beginning in the Bush Administration, the US paid particular attention to the issue of incitement in Palestinian and Israeli textbooks. In part, as one policymaker from that period privately explained, the decision to focus on textbooks reflected a feeling that teaching prejudice and training a new generation for endless conflict was tantamount to 'child abuse.' In tandem with the pressure on Arafat to empower Abbas as prime minister in 2003, and in particular following Arafat's passing in late 2004, this counter-incitement initiative actually did produce results.

Similarly during the Obama Administration, public reproaches from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and other relatively high-ranking officials in early 2010, along with their push for a halt in Israeli settlement-building to jump-start peace negotiations, helped produce a decline in PA anti-Israel media messages. This time, however, the improvement proved only temporary. Once the short-lived peace talks and Israeli settlement moratorium ended in September 2010, PA incitement picked up again, without eliciting a prompt high-level US or international protest. The lesson appears to be that unlike with textbooks, which are less susceptible to change, an improvement in media can easily retrench without persistent pressure. A counter-incitement effort should be serious, sustained, and comprehensive if it is to have any success at all.

It should also be focused on the worst cases: any support on either side for violence or violent offenders coming from government officials or institutions with governmental authority or funding. The less extreme forms of incitement such as historical denials or distortions should be relegated to the background for now, however important those might be in the longer term. Neither side should be allowed to use allegations against the other to deflect or excuse its own failings. Leaders must set the right tone, and stick to it without exception or equivocation.

It is futile to debate whether Israeli settlements or Palestinian hate speech are more or less to blame for the conflict's persistence. The major lesson of past successes, failures, and false starts are that incitement is a serious problem, but also a fixable one. It is at least as much an obstacle to peace as any other more tangible issue, so steps to end it should be integrated into any attempt to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. All interested parties -- Israelis, Palestinians, Americans, Europeans, and others -- should now

pay at least as much attention to hate speech as to housing starts.

David Pollock is the Kaufman Fellow at The Washington Institute, director of Fikra Forum, and author of the new study "Beyond Words: Causes, Consequences, and Cures for Palestinian Authority Hate Speech" (<http://washin.st/1brcOqO>). This article originally appeared in the Autumn 2013 issue of Fathom (<http://www.fathomjournal.org>).

[Article 7.](#)

Bloomberg

Shutdown Gives U.S. Allies One More Reason for Anxiety

Jeffrey Goldberg

Oct 2, 2013 -- This is just an assumption here, but I'm guessing that even those Republican members of Congress who forced the government to shut down believe in the importance of exporting American goods overseas. No congressional district is completely cut off from the global economy. ■ also guessing that congressional Republicans think that Asia is an important continent, or at least in the top six.

So it stands to reason that even the hardest of the hard core would think that it's necessary, from time to time, for the U.S. president to visit Asia to solidify relationships with the people with whom we do business.

This is why it's so embarrassing that the shutdown has forced President Barack Obama to postpone trips to the Philippines and Malaysia. Imagine you're the president of the Philippines, and you receive a call from Obama (as Benigno Aquino just did) telling you that, because a handful of Republicans in Congress are holding the government hostage because of their displeasure with aspects of a new health-care law, he can no longer visit. You might be tempted to think that the U.S. is not a very serious place anymore. Or you might be tempted to think that Obama is actually facing a coup but is too embarrassed to admit it -- because, in years past, one good reason for presidents of the Philippines to cancel trips was to prevent coups from taking place in their absence.

I've been trying to report how the government shutdown is playing overseas. One Arab official I spoke to said the impasse feeds a growing narrative across the Arab world that the sun is setting on American power. He said that when the shutdown is combined with growing isolationist sentiment across the U.S., Obama's wavering and hesitant performance in the Syria crisis, and a sense that the White House is a bit too eager to make a deal with Iran simply to extract itself from an intractable problem, it all suggests that the U.S. has lost a bit of its confidence and its sense of national purpose.

It isn't a healthy situation when your allies don't think they can rely on you, and when countries in Asia -- the continent to which Obama would like to "pivot" his foreign policy -- think they can't count on you to visit when you said you would.

Most analysis of the overseas fallout from the shutdown has focused on issues of trade and alliances. But there's another issue here that might flummox foreign leaders, and that is the proximate cause of the shutdown: Republican opposition to the Affordable Care Act.

Late last year, I visited Australia's then-prime minister, Julia Gillard, in her office in Canberra, and [we spoke](#) mainly about issues of defense and foreign policy. At one point, though, the conversation shifted to the differences between Australian and American social policy.

"Australians look just with wonderment at the American debate about health care," she said. "In the 1970s, the single biggest reason people were ending up in bankruptcy courts here was unpaid medical bills. Our medical system today, in which this wouldn't happen to anyone, is now settled bipartisan policy. If you said to people that Medicare" -- the Australian universal health-care system -- "should be abolished, that there would not be free public health care, and that we are going to replace it with what the Americans have in health care, people would look at you like you are nuts."

She described what she saw as the fundamental difference between the way Australians approach issues of governance and the way Americans do.

"When you look at attitudes toward government -- this is going to be a kind of overgeneralization -- I think in the United States, the starting point of an American is that government can't really work, and to the extent that it does work, you need to keep your eye on it because of an instinctive

distrust of its powers and capabilities," she said. "In Australia, people start with the belief that government can work and should work, and to the extent that it doesn't, it just means that we need some better politicians, but government malfunction doesn't result in a loss of faith in the institution." There are many good reasons for wonderment in this strange moment, but for the leaders and citizens of American allies, one of the biggest curiosities must be this: How can it be that the entire government has been shut down simply because the president tried to figure out a way to provide health insurance for all the country's citizens?

Because, after all, what sort of country is it that wouldn't want its citizens to have access to health care?

Jeffrey Goldberg is a Bloomberg View columnist.

[Article 8.](#)

The Council on Foreign Relations

How the Shutdown Weakens U.S. Foreign Policy

Interview with [Richard N. Haass](#)

October 2, 2013 -- The circumstances that have brought a government shutdown raise concerns that U.S. political dysfunction now poses the biggest threat to national security, says CFR President Richard N. Haass. The shutdown, combined with other recent events, also stirs questions about "American predictability and reliability, which are qualities that are vital to an effective great power," says Haass. The U.S. Congress, vital for advancing policy initiatives from trade to sanctions, is now an unreliable partner, he argues. "This sends a message to allies that they're somewhat on their own," Haass says. "It sends a message to adversaries, or would-be adversaries, that you've got a more unpredictable America."

With the U.S. government in a shutdown phase right now, what does that tell the rest of the world about how this country is run?

It sends the message that the country is divided. It certainly dilutes any appeal of the American political model, and it raises anew questions of

American predictability and reliability, which are qualities that are vital to an effective great power.

And does it have any particular meaning for any particular part of the world?

This is not coming in a vacuum. This is coming against the backdrop of many things. One is the sequester. So, it raises questions about the adequacy of U.S. resources. Now you can't get a continuing resolution passed; the government is shutting down. So, for those parts of the world that are dependent upon U.S. aid, that are dependent upon U.S. military presence, it naturally raises questions. More acute, be it in the Middle East in particular, but possibly beyond, coming on the heels of what happened and didn't happen around Syria, it reinforces the sense of American unpredictability. It was never clear that Congress would authorize the use of military force against Syria. This reinforces the sense that this institution called Congress, which happens to be central to American governance, can't be counted on with any degree of confidence to be a consistent partner for the president when it comes to American foreign policy. This sends a message to allies that they're somewhat on their own. It sends a message to adversaries, or would-be adversaries, that again, that you've got a more unpredictable America.

It was interesting that in the president's UN General Assembly speech, in a time when we're trying to be focusing our attention on Asia, he hardly mentioned Asia. I think China was mentioned once.

I thought that was one of the weaknesses of the speech. There's already been tremendous concern in Asia about whether the so-called "pivot," or rebalancing, is more rhetoric than reality. And this concern has grown considerably over the last nine months, basically in parallel to President Obama's second term, when so much of the administration's focus has been on Egypt, Syria—and now on Iran. And virtually every Asian leader who I have contact with is trying to make sense of this, but the bottom line is two things: one is that the United States is less dependable, and this comes both out of the shutdown and out of the president's eleventh-hour decision to seek authorization for the use of military force in Syria; and, secondly, the continued U.S. strategic focus on the Middle East brings with it not just cost, but opportunity cost, and it's left a lot of people in Asia shaking their heads. And this, by the way, would be reinforced if, as is possible, the

president were to postpone his trip to Asia next week for the annual ASEAN meeting on account of what is going on—or not going on—here in Washington. [On Wednesday morning, the White House cancelled trips to the Philippines and Malaysia set for after the trip to Indonesia and Brunei, where the U.S.-ASEAN summit is being held.]

Right now he seems to be really caught up in Iran and the possibility of negotiations. These negotiations won't happen tomorrow, but he seems to be really caught up on a breakthrough.

The emphasis in the Iran talks is at least more understandable, given the stakes. And 2014 becomes a fundamentally different year if there's a war involving Iran, or if not. There's more understanding for the U.S. interest, given the stakes, as opposed to something like trying to remake the character of a society, be it in Iraq or Afghanistan or Egypt or Syria. My own view is that a focus on Iran is more warranted, though, again, it seems to be coming somewhat at the expense of a greater focus on Asia.

But how do you just walk away from all of these Middle East issues? You can't, can you?

Well, again, it's not a switch. I am not talking about walking away. What I am talking about is restraint. And I am talking about restraint and ends in terms of what it is we seek to do when remaking other societies, and I would suggest we ought to be somewhat modest there, and we're obviously talking restraint and means. We don't want to replicate the sort of experiences we had in Iraq or Afghanistan. The problem for the administration is often a disconnect between extraordinarily ambitious rhetoric, "Assad must go," or, in a place like Libya, where we did quite a bit to oust the government, but we've done very little to see that something better comes into place. There's been a lack of follow-through, if you will, between the articulation of goals and then the implementation of policy.

So you think in Syria we've done better by just going along with the Russians on this negotiation on ridding Syria of chemical weapons?

What the agreement has done is made highly unlikely any additional use of chemical weapons by the Syrians. It's also reinforced the low probability of any American use of military force. So, what it has done is essentially remove chemicals and American military force from the equation. The agreement from what I can see has had little or no effect on the trajectory of the civil and regional war that is Syria.

Congress seems to be paying no attention whatsoever to foreign policy right now.

Very little, and it's part of a larger trend in the United States where you're seeing shades of neo-isolationism across party lines. This is not simply a Democratic or Republican phenomenon. It goes beyond intervention fatigue. There's a real focus on things domestic. There is, I believe, a lack of appreciation of the potential of the United States to do good in the world at a reasonable cost. There's also an underappreciation of the potential for things happening out there to come here at considerable cost to ourselves. I also worry that we're not building support at home for what you might call "responsible internationalism." For example, if the U.S. trade representative is successful—as I hope he will be—in negotiating either a transpacific or transatlantic trade deal, it's not obvious to me that the president could secure congressional approval for such an agreement. If the president is able to, say, negotiate a nuclear deal with Iran, it's not obvious to me that he's in a position to secure Congressional approval of sanctions relaxation. So what's worrying to me about the shutdown beyond the immediacy is what it tells you about the breakdown of relations between this president and the Congress. What it's done now is add this large additional dimension of uncertainty and predictability. What makes this so worrisome is: predictability is central to a great power's ability to be a great power.

What about the debt ceiling?

At the risk of being even more pessimistic, what worries me is we may not have bottomed out. In two weeks, we come up against the debt ceiling. Right now we're dealing with the shutdown of the government. With the debt ceiling, we're dealing with the fundamentals of this country's relationship with the rest of the world financially. It's not self-evident that we will avoid hurting ourselves badly over the debt ceiling. So, what's happened with the shutdown is a real warning sign that what is going on inside the Beltway is being fought with a kind of partisan myopia, and I simply don't see very many people standing up and saying, "Hey, wait a minute, what is going on inside the Beltway is threatening America's national security." I don't see people making that connection, but that connection is there, and simply because politicians don't see the connection doesn't mean it doesn't exist. We've reached the point now where the

greatest threat to our national security, for the immediate and the foreseeable future, is not some other country or organization; it's increasingly our own political dysfunction.

Richard N. Haass, President of the Council on Foreign Relations is the author of [Foreign Policy Begins at Home](#).