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Article 1.
NYT

Mapping a Palestinian Strategy
Ali Jarbawi

October 22, 2013 -- Ramallah, West Bank — Last month, hotel conference rooms here and in Gaza were filled with events commemorating the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Oslo Accords, which were meant to pave the way for lasting peace between Palestinians and Israelis.

The rhetoric at these events was bitter and stinging. Many in attendance called for the accords to be annulled. Even among those who helped cut the deal with Israel in the 1990s, the prevailing sentiment was that Oslo had failed to protect even minimal Palestinian national rights. Rather, they argued, it had enabled Israel to deepen the occupation, mutilating and gaining control over most of the land of Palestine. Instead of bringing an end to the occupation, and liberation for Palestinians, the accords allowed Israel to prevent the creation of a Palestinian state based on the pre-1967 borders.

Although this negative assessment of Oslo is correct, all of the angry rhetoric strangely did not extend to the Palestinian Authority, which was born from the accords and is the current embodiment of them.

If those calling for the cancellation of Oslo were serious and not just engaging in political sloganeering, then they should, logically, also be asking for the dismantlement of the Palestinian Authority. But because growing numbers of Palestinians are becoming financially dependent on the Authority for salaries and for services, and because so many people are benefiting from its existence, the Authority is now considered by many to be a "national achievement" that should be preserved.

Attacking Oslo has become a pressure valve that allows Palestinians to release frustrations while avoiding the real problem: the Palestinian Authority itself and its flawed negotiating strategy.

The Authority, which is led by President Mahmoud Abbas, continues to indulge the fantasy that negotiations might truly end the decades-long conflict. They won't. For the past 20 years, Palestinians approached negotiations as the only path to achieving a final-status political settlement that would satisfy their minimal demand: a sovereign and independent Palestine within pre-1967 borders. From one round of talks to another, they kept laboring to achieve this goal, but suffered one failure after another. Most Palestinians, apart from Mr. Abbas and a few of his aides, are opposed to the current talks. The overwhelming sentiment is that negotiating with Israel is of no value at all, and will not produce any benefit. They have reached that conclusion after the bitter experience of watching two decades of negotiations and seeing Israel dig itself deeper into occupied land, cramming Palestinians into ever shrinking enclaves in which they have no real power.

They believe that Israel is not at all serious about negotiations, since it doesn't want to end the occupation or acknowledge Palestinian rights. Rather, Israel is using negotiations for tactical reasons and as a cover to appease the international community while deepening its settlement policy in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank and tightening its grip on, and presence in, Palestinian land.

But this anger toward the negotiations is misplaced. If the majority of Palestinians want the Authority to survive, then they should accept that it will perform the task of negotiating.

After all, negotiations are a major demand of the international community, which uses them to give the impression that a settlement is on its way in order to continue managing the conflict while avoiding political instability. To encourage the process, foreign governments and international organizations dangle several carrots, the most important of which is the continued flow of international aid that is necessary for the Authority's survival. If Palestinians were to abandon negotiations altogether, they would appear to be in the wrong and seen as sabotaging a potential settlement, which would lead to international measures against them. Palestinians, because they are the weaker party in this conflict and face more pressure from the international community, should play along and continue the negotiations. But they should approach the talks from a completely new perspective; a tactical rather than a strategic one.

Palestinian negotiators should leave their wishful thinking behind and abandon any illusions that the current talks, with their imbalance of power in favor of Israel, can or will produce any final settlement in their favor. Instead, they should accept that the struggle against Israel is a long-term one. There is no solution on the horizon and no independent state in sight. So the continuing debate in Palestinian (and even Israeli) society, between one- or two-state solutions, is a fruitless one, since neither state can or will be achieved in the near future.

This does not mean that Palestinians should simply give up and submit to the fate imposed on them. Negotiations should be seen as just one of many tracks. Challenging Israel in international forums should become a priority. Likewise, the Authority must focus on improving basic social services and creating jobs in order to lower the high unemployment rate. Having a job,

good schools, and a functioning health care system is what makes families stay and not emigrate.

Without high hopes and without internal wrangling, Palestinians should continue negotiating in order to satisfy the international community and gain further support abroad for their cause.

The focus of the negotiations should be on how to exploit any future talks to incrementally advance Palestinian objectives on the ground, like transferring control over more land and natural resources to Palestinian Authority, easing the restrictions on movement imposed by Israel, and opening borders for Palestinian exports. Small gains on issues like these should be pursued so long as Palestinian leaders avoid signing any final-status agreement that would require them to renounce Palestinian national rights at this stage — since such a deal would be patently unjust. Anything else that can be achieved without jeopardizing basic Palestinian rights should be seen as a building block on the road to advancing Palestinians' prolonged struggle for statehood and international legitimacy.

Ali Jarbawi, a former minister in the Palestinian Authority government, is a professor of political science at Birzeit University. This essay was translated by Ghenwa Hayek from the Arabic.

Al-Monitor

Tunnel May Signal Shift In Hamas-Israel Conflict

Adnan Abu Amer

October 22 -- Gaza City — There has been a lot of talk in the Gaza Strip about the Israeli army's announcement on Oct. 10 that it had discovered a tunnel dug by Palestinians from east of Abasan, in southern Gaza, to the nearby kibbutz of Ein Hashlosha, in Israel.

During a tour of the area near the tunnel's discovery, Al-Monitor learned from Palestinian military sources that the passageway lies 20 meters underground, is 2.5 kilometers long, and has a ceiling high enough to accommodate a man of average height. The tunnel is also remarkably wide.

Its construction required 800 tons of concrete and cost an estimated $10 million. Some 100 workers toiled on it for more than two years. It was equipped with a communications network and electricity and contained stockpiles of cookies, yoghurt and other foods to allow for stays of several months.

The Palestinian military sources, who asked to remain anonymous, told Al-Monitor that the tunnel was one of the largest military projects in recent years and a long-term endeavor intended for a military operation to be conducted when those who built the tunnel made the decision to launch it. This suggests that the tunnel may have been intended to kidnap Israeli soldiers or for a military attack against the Israeli army, discussed previously in Al-Monitor.

Major General Shlomo "Sami" Turgeman, head of Israel's Southern Command, asserted that only Hamas could afford to fund such a project. In a speech attended by an Al-Monitor correspondent on Oct. 19, the Hamas government prime minister, Ismail Haniyeh, asserted that thousands of "resisters" are preparing to face the Israeli army "above and below ground," in a reference to the tunnel.

A few hours before Haniyeh's speech, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman Abu Obeida confirmed that Hamas had been responsible for the tunnel and that it had been dug by Hamas gunmen looking for ways to hit Israel and kidnap its soldiers. He promised Israel more horror and concern from surprises being organized by the brigades.

Security information

In the past few days, Israeli intelligence launched an investigation to identify who had dug the tunnel, who had helped them, and who had given Hamas the house from which the tunnel was dug. The investigation involves calling Palestinians by phone and provoking debates about the tunnel on social media in an attempt to collect as much information as possible, no matter how seemingly insignificant.

A Palestinian activist with extensive experience digging tunnels along the border with Egypt told Al-Monitor, "If there was a military confrontation with Israel, it is clear that the outcome would be very different with Hamas having this tunnel. This means that the discovery has prevented attempts to kidnap soldiers or settlers living near Gaza's borders. The tunnel diggers in Gaza know where the security fence sensors are located and know how to

jam them, including the unmanned aircraft that hover above Gaza around-the-clock and take X-ray images of Earth's surface."

Al-Monitor also met with a tunnel digger in Gaza who described how Hamas elements go underground for long periods of time to dig the passageways. He explained, "The drilling is done via a mechanical device, not an electric one, to avoid making noise. It uses a [pedal-powered] chain, similar to a bicycle chain. [The chain] moves metal pieces that dig through the dirt. During the digging, the digger lies on his back and pedals with his feet."

While the tangible purpose of the recently discovered tunnel was for kidnapping one or more Israeli soldiers, Al-Monitor learned from discussions among armed groups in Gaza that the concept behind the tunnel involved something said by Yahya al-Sinwar, a Hamas Political Bureau member released in a prisoner exchange and the founder of its armed wing.

Sinwar observed that Hamas had become powerful and therefore had a lot of options. He said that Israel should know that the military equation had dramatically shifted in favor of the Palestinians and that Hamas should make plans consistent with this change to enshrine the new principle: "Today, we are the ones who invade the Israelis. They do not invade us."

In an attempt to explain this shift in Hamas's military thinking and its connection to the tunnel, military personnel in Gaza told Al-Monitor that one of the tunnel's functions was for conducting an operation behind Israeli lines if the Israelis conducted an operation against Gaza from Israeli territory. This conflicts with previous analysis in Al-

Monitor contending that Hamas had merely sought through tunnel digging to keep its fighters occupied. The military source claimed that Hamas fighters are ready to confront the Israeli army.

Underground war

In preparing this report, Al-Monitor's correspondent toured Gaza's eastern and southern borders and observed the Israeli military, after its discovery of the tunnel, reinforcing its positions there and all along the armistice line at the far eastern edges of the Khan Younis and Rafah districts. Palestinians revealed that the Israeli army had conducted a comprehensive survey using various electronic devices. Three Engineering Unit vehicles had arrived for the first time at the border, carrying detection equipment

and moving slowly, stopping at the areas where they suspected tunnels. They drilled in places and carefully combed the area, especially rugged terrain and areas of dense trees.

Palestinians in the area showed Al-Monitor a document distributed to Palestinian military groups. It read, "The tunnel war is one of the most important and most dangerous military tactics in the face of the Israeli army because it features a qualitative and strategic dimension, because of its human and moral effects, and because of its serious threat and unprecedented challenge to the Israeli military machine, which is heavily armed and follows security doctrines involving protection measures and preemption."

The document continued, "The tunnel tactic is dangerous because it doesn't use traditional conditions and procedures for confrontation. [The tactic is] to surprise the enemy and strike it a deadly blow that doesn't allow a chance for survival or escape or allow him a chance to confront and defend itself. [The tactic] relies on the calm work of digging an underground tunnel by simple means and equipment and working without making noise, according to pre-prepared geographic coordinates, and without appearing on the ground's surface."

The author or authors of the document wrote that the discovered tunnel shows that the underground war will be one of the most important challenges facing Israeli forces. They envision the tunnels playing a major role in battle and cite how US forces in Vietnam failed to address the challenge of the tunnels used by the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War.

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Foreign Policy

Why the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are increasingly at odds

Colum Lynch

October 22, 2013 -- When Saudi Arabia rejected its ███. Security Council seat on Friday, the move caught nearly everyone off-guard. In retrospect, it shouldn't have.

In recent months, the United States has increasingly pursued a foreign policy at odds with its Persian Gulf ally, scaling back assistance to the Saudi-backed Egyptian military, abruptly dropping its plans to attack Syria despite Saudi support, and entering into a new round of nuclear talks with the kingdom's regional rival, Iran. According to ███. diplomats and officials, the Security Council move merely reflected the Saudis' deeper anxiety over the course of American diplomacy in the Middle East, exposing a deepening rift in one of America's most important and longstanding alliances in the region. In short, Saudi Arabia's ███. snub was a sign of the monarchy's mounting panic over the possible demise of its special relationship with Washington.

For decades, Riyadh and Washington have been bound by a basic tradeoff: America guarantees protection from potential predators in the region, while Saudi Arabia supplies the lifeblood --relatively inexpensive oil -- to run the world economy and pumps billions each year into the U.S. arms industry. But America's failure to back Saudi Arabia on matters it considers vital to its security is raising questions in Riyadh about the value of that exchange. "This is not how a protection racket is supposed to work," said Christopher Davidson, a scholar and author of After the Sheikhs: The Coming Collapse of the Gulf Monarchies. "Saudi Arabia is becoming increasingly dissatisfied with a relationship it thought it had in the bag, despite having handed over several percent of their GDP to Western arms companies." As a result, he said, "Saudi Arabia is retreating into its shell of countries that surround it and who rely on its aid and good will."

In recent months, Saudi Arabia has sought to take matters into its own hands.

When the U.S. threatened to withhold financial assistance from Egypt's generals following their overthrow of President Mohamed Morsy, the Saudi king held a fundraising campaign -- undercutting U.S. diplomatic efforts to negotiate a political settlement between the generals and Morsy's government. As Secretary of State John Kerry applies pressure on the Syrian National Council to talk with the Bashar al-Assad regime, the

Saudis have sent precisely the opposite messages to the rebels they're funding. The Saudis, have resisted attempts by █. envoy Lakhdar Brahimi to visit and have applied little pressure on its allies within the Syrian opposition, according to █.-based diplomats.

The Saudis have made no secret of their displeasure over U.S. President Barack Obama's decision to call off his cruise missiles and negotiate a deal with Russia to work to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons program. On October 7, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Saud al Faisal abruptly cancelled plans to deliver his government address to the █. General Assembly; the move was widely viewed as a response to the Security Council's endorsement of the Syrian chemical weapons deal. "They saw that as a complete capitulation," said one █.-based diplomat.

In protest, the Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday, Saudi Arabia's intelligence chief announced that Riyadh will dial back cooperation with Washington to train and equip Syrian rebels. "Our interests increasingly don't align," a U.S. official told the paper.

A further sign of pique: the Saudis didn't even inform America's top diplomats in New York that they planned to abandon the Security Council. The Saudi protest at the █., according to Davidson, constituted a kind of cry for attention, an effort to "shock and wake up their erstwhile allies." From Riyadh's perspective, the Syrian civil war represents a pivotal front in an existential political and religious struggle for influence in the region, pitting Iran's Shiite rulers against predominantly Sunni Arab rulers. "There is a realization in Riyadh that it is time for the major Arab powers to prepare a response for maintaining order in the Arab world and to counter Iran's expanding infiltrative policies," Nawaf Obaid, a senior fellow at the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies, wrote in Al-Monitor. "The kingdom and its regional allies will increase their support to the Syrian rebels and prevent a collapse of collateral nations, such as Lebanon and Jordan. The removal of the tyrannical regime in Damascus is simply too important for the future of the Arabs."

Kerry today met with Saudi Arabia's foreign minister for a two-hour lunch, where he assured the Saudi diplomat that Washington remained committed to preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon or continuing to destabilize the region. The two also "discussed the decision by Saudi Arabia to decline the seat on the UNSC," according to a senior

administration official. "Secretary Kerry conveyed that while it is Saudi Arabia's decision to make, the U.S. values Saudi Arabia's leadership in the region and the international community and a seat on the UNSC affords member states the opportunity to engage directly on these issues."

Joshua Landis, a Middle East expert at the University of Oklahoma, said that the Saudis' latest decision to abandon their Security Council ambitions reflects mounting concern in Riyadh that the council seat could be a "trap" that will increases pressure on the ruling family to support diplomatic measures in Syria and Iran that it opposes.

"If the Saudis were to join the ██. Security Council they would have to follow the U.S. and Russia's lead," Landis told Foreign Policy. "There would be heavy pressure on Saudi Arabia to stop subsidizing Salafist militias in Syria and they don't want to do it. Russia and America would say 'Look, you are part of the United Nations and you have to sever your ties with the Syrian rebels and stop sending them arms and money.' But Saudi Arabia doesn't want to rein them in."

Landis said that the Saudi reliance on jihadists to pursues its goal of unseating Assad risks further fracturing the Saudis' relations with the United States, which he added, may eventually view the Saudi-backed jihadists as a greater threat than even Assad. Some regional specialists say that the U.S. and Saudi Arabia relationship is too important for both sides not to find a way to overcome their current differences. Indeed, even as U.S. and Saudi officials differ over the approach to regional security, American arms deal continue apace, including this recent U.S. deal to sell $460 million in cluster bombs to Saudi Arabia.

But others, like Davidson, believe that the relationship has fundamentally changed. The United States is emerging a major global energy supplier in its own right, lessening its dependency on Saudi oil. "America is not locked into the same kind of relationship that we have seen over the past few decades; it has more room to maneuver than it had in the past," Davidson said.

But the question on many ██. diplomats' minds was why the Saudis went to so much trouble to win a Security Council seat if they had no intention of serving out its terms. Over the past three years, Saudi official undertook an intensive lobbying campaign to win support for its bid, enrolled more than a dozen Saudi diplomats in a year-long course on the Security Council

at Columbia University. The erratic way in which the Saudi government managed the issue at the United Nations, according to several █.-based diplomats and outside experts, reflected the personal and emotional way in which the Saudi Royal family sometimes confronts diplomatic problems. Anybody who witnessed the Saudi █. envoy's [reaction](#) to the Security Council vote in the General Assembly could tell he had no idea what his political masters were planning. "It is a defining moment in the Kingdom's history. As one of the founding members of the United Nations our election is much to rejoice over," Saudi Arabia's █. Ambassador Abdallah Al-Mouallimi, who looked ecstatic after the vote, flashing a thumbs up. "We welcome the positive shift as well as challenges of being part of the Security Council body."

But a day later, the Saudi foreign ministry pulled the rug out from underneath his feet, issuing a statement thanking the more than 170 countries that backed its first ever Security Council bid. At the same time, it said it had no intention of filling its seat, denouncing the council's application of "double standards" that promotes the "expansion of the injustices" as well as "violations of rights and the spread of conflicts around the world."

"Allowing the ruling regime in Syria to kill and burn its people by the chemical weapons, while the world stands by idly" constitutes "irrefutable evidence and proof of the inability of the Security Council to carry out its duties and responsibilities," according to the statement. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the statement added, "announces its apology for not accepting membership to the Security Council until the council is reformed and enabled, effectively and practically, to carry out its duties and responsibilities in maintaining international peace and security."

The Saudi action has left the █. in something of a quandary. On Saturday, the █. Arab Group, which includes all the █.'s Arab governments, issued an appeal to Saudi Arabia to reconsider its decision and take up the seat. "They could simply leave the seat vacant by not showing up. That would allow them to show up at any time in the future during the two year membership on the Security Council," said one senior █.-based official. "Or they could inform the GA president that they are withdrawing, prompting a new election. Who knows what the king (and it must be the king) is thinking." Today, however, Arab governments

appeared to have had a change of heart, expressing support for the Saudi decision.

Others say the Saudis may be overplaying their hand.

"The twin Saudi decisions to give up their speaking slot in the General Debate in the General Assembly and their elected seat on the Security Council suggest a worrisome retreat from global diplomatic engagement," Edward Luck, the dean of the University of San Diego School of Peace Studies. "To the Saudis, the game in the Council may appear rigged, but it is the only game in town."

"It would be a blow for stability in the turbulent Middle East and for the interests that the U.S. and Saudi Arabia share in the region if Riyadh gives up on open multilateral diplomacy," he added. "Regional bodies, weak and increasingly divided along the Shia- Sunni fault line, will not provide an alternative to the UN. More global involvement is needed in the region, not less, especially in the end game in Syria. Many in the West are already worried about alleged Saudi support for more radical elements in the Syrian opposition. They could prove to be the biggest obstacles to attaining both peace and justice in Syria and stability in its neighborhood." Luck said it is only inevitable that the Saudis would "be extremely sensitive to any signs of rapprochement between Washington and Tehran, no matter how modest and tentative. But much of the action on sanctions and curbing Iranian nuclear ambitions will be in the Security Council. If Riyadh wanted a bigger voice on these existential matters, it should have taken its seat. The Saudi refusal to join the Council can only be seen as a victory for its Iranian rivals."

Colum Lynch writes Foreign Policy's [Turtle Bay](#) blog.

Wall Street Journal

Our Former Friends the Saudis

Editorial

Oct. 22, 2013 -- President Obama likes to boast that he has repaired U.S. alliances supposedly frayed and battered by the Bush Administration. He

should try using that line with our former allies in Saudi Arabia.

As the Journal's Ellen Knickmeyer has reported from Riyadh in recent weeks, the Kingdom is no longer making any secret of its disgust with the Administration's policy drift in the Middle East. Last month, Prince Turki al Faisal, the former Saudi ambassador in Washington, offered his view on the deal Washington struck with Moscow over Syria's chemical weapons. "The current charade of international control over Bashar's chemical arsenal," the Prince told a London audience, "would be funny if it were not so blatantly perfidious, and designed not only to give Mr. Obama an opportunity to back down, but also to help Assad butcher his people." It's a rare occasion when a Saudi royal has the moral standing to lecture an American President, but this was one of them.

On Monday, Ms. Knickmeyer reported that Saudi intelligence chief Prince Bandar has decided to downgrade ties with the CIA in training Syrian rebels, preferring instead to work with the French and Jordanians. It's a rare day, too, when those two countries make for better security partners than the U.S. But even French Socialists are made of sterner stuff than this Administration.

Bandar's decision means the Saudis will not be inclined to bow any longer to U.S. demands to limit the arms they provide the rebels, including surface-to-air missiles that could potentially be used by terrorists to bring down civilian planes. The Saudis have also told the U.S. they will no longer favor U.S. defense contractors in future arms deals—no minor matter coming from a country that in 2011 bought $33.4 billion of American weapons.

Riyadh's dismay has been building for some time. In the aborted build-up to a U.S. strike on Syria, the Saudis asked the U.S. to beef up its naval presence in the Persian Gulf against a potential Iranian counter-strike, only to be told the U.S. didn't have the ships. In last year's foreign policy debate with [Mitt Romney](), Mr. Obama was nonchalant about America's shrinking Navy, but this is one of the consequences of our diminishing military footprint: U.S. security guarantees are no longer credible.

Then there is Iran. Even more than Israel, the Saudis have been pressing the Administration to strike Iran's nuclear targets while there's still time. Now Riyadh is realizing that Mr. Obama's diplomacy is a journey with no destination, that there are no real red lines, and that any foreign adversary

can call his bluff. Nobody should be surprised if the Saudis conclude they need nukes of their own—probably purchased from Pakistan—as preemptive deterrence against the inevitability of a nuclear Tehran.

The Saudis are hardly the first U.S. ally to be burned by an American President more eager to court enemies than reassure friends. The Poles and Czechs found that out when Mr. Obama withdrew ballistic-missile defense sites from their country in 2009 as a way of appeasing the Russians.

The Syrian people have learned the hard way that Mr. Obama does not mean what he says about punishing the use of chemical weapons or supplying moderate rebel factions with promised military equipment. And the Israelis are gradually realizing that their self-advertised "best friend" in the White House will jump into any diplomatic foxhole rather than act in time to stop an Iranian bomb.

Now the Saudis have figured it out, too, and at least they're not afraid to say it publicly. "They [the Americans] are going to be upset—and we can live with that," Saudi security analyst Mustafa Alani told Ms. Knickmeyer last month. "We are learning from our enemies now how to treat the United States."

Asharq Al-Awsat

The Post-Islamist Era

Ali Ibrahim

October 22 - Over the past four decades or more, the issue of political Islam, in all its forms—from the Muslim Brotherhood to its extremist offshoots and literature—has been a fertile topic for Arab and Western academics and scholars. Theses specialists—along with entire research centers and think tanks across the globe—have dedicated their academic careers to this issue, analyzing and investigating the phenomenon of political Islam, each from their own specific viewpoint, whether positive or negative.

The general academic trend is of the view that political Islam is on the rise, with researchers exploring ways of securing coexistence and conducting

dialogue, as well as how to refine and tone down extremist ideas, particularly those advocating the use of violence, which is something that many Islamist groups have adopted. These studies also aimed at containing these ideas and concepts both within the local community and as part of the rules of the international game, particularly as this phenomenon has extended across the world as a result of immigration and the presence of large Muslim communities in Western countries. This is not to mention the terrorist acts carried out by some of the violent offshoots of political Islam. The events associated with what has been dubbed the 'Arab Spring' and the subsequent arrival of the main Islamist trend to power in several Arab republics, seems to have prompted some researchers and analysts to reconsider previously-held views. This included views regarding the importance of coexisting with the Islamists and allowing them to operate freely in the political arena. However doctoral theses and treatises about the failure of political Islam and its inability to rule or solve the traditional problems of developing societies have now begun to emerge. Of course, these studies are based on what happened in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya over the past two and a half years and—more significantly—the Islamist experience of rule in both Sudan and Iran.

These particularly Western studies and analyses perhaps focus most on the Jihadist ideology and jihadist organizations, particularly Al-Qaeda and its offshoots. This is due to the numerous terrorist acts carried out by these groups, with incidents of violence and bombings taking place across the world. However as is the case with terrorism throughout history—which is a phenomenon that preceded Jihadism—this is something that has no political horizon or future because in the end sabotage and murder cannot attract genuine supporters who are able to represent a mainstream trend in any society.

There is no better example for judging the failure or success of political Islam to achieve an awakening or lead a society than the Sudanese 'Salvation' experience and the arrival of the Revolutionary Command Council for National Salvation (RCC) to power. This is a regime that is still in control of the joints of the Sudanese state today. The achievements of this government after more than two decades in power are the best evidence of political Islam's failure:

South Sudan seceded after the failure to reach a formula for coexistence following a war in which religious slogans and jihadist literature was utilized as a justification for the Dababin (suicide bombers) and everything else.

The economy failed to live up to the people's aspirations, and this is evidenced by the recent protests that broke out in the capital Khartoum against price hikes, the widening gap between social classes, and issues pertaining to the distribution of wealth. Even if the recent decision to lift fuel subsidies are economically justified, this decision was not accompanied by any convincing developmental projects or hope for the future that could help the Sudanese people swallow this bitter pill.

As for Iran—which witnessed the first experience of the rule of political Islam—it is easy to notice the public restlessness behind the Green Revolution which followed Ahmadinejad's victory in the penultimate presidential elections. This is something that also can be seen in the attempts being made by current President Hassan Rouhani—who came to power on the back of moderate electoral slogans—to ease restrictions on society and give the impression that his administration is able to shake off Iran's international isolation as a result of the country's previous foreign policy.

There are also no studies or reports indicating that Iran is making any economic achievements under political Islam, instead being a rentier state relying on the country's oil resources.

The Muslim Brotherhood came to power in a number of Arab Spring countries, and it may say that it has yet to be given an adequate opportunity. However, the Brotherhood's performance in Egypt was a catastrophic failure. This led to their ouster just one year after they came to power on a wave of popularity, with the general public being willing to grant them a chance. We also do not see any success for political Islam in Tunisia, which has ground to halt, or in Libya, which has become hostage to chaos, militias, and factionalism.

Foreign Affairs magazine published a review of The Failure of Political Islam by the well-known academic Oliver Roy; this book made an important observation that the current phenomenon of urban "neo-fundamentalism" has nothing to do with the views of Muslims scholars and intellectuals seeking harmony between social traditions and heritage and

modernity. In other words, Roy maintains that neo-fundamentalism does little more than channel the anger of urban youth regarding the lack of opportunities afforded to them into political opposition, using political Islam as a cover. These projects also fail to offer any real economic alternatives.

The problem lies in finding a genuine developmental project—with the requisite political and economic facets—to meet public aspirations that generally revolve around what non-Muslim nations have achieved, in addition to anger over the failure of previous projects. The people have discovered that they were deceived by the Islamists and that Islamist rule has nothing to offer them, while they are also fed up with the violence and societal division that accompanies political Islam.

The question that must be asked now is: What next? This is something that requires us to think outside of the box regarding the post-Islamist era.

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The New York Review of Books

Are We Puppets in a Wired World?

Sue Halpern

To Save Everything, Click Here: The Folly of Technological Solutionism
by Evgeny Morozov
PublicAffairs, 413 pp., $28.99

Hacking the Future: Privacy, Identity and Anonymity on the Web
by Cole Stryker
Overlook, 255 pp., $25.95

From Gutenberg to Zuckerberg: What You Really Need to Know About the Internet
by John Naughton
Quercus, 302 pp., $24.95

Predictive Analytics: The Power to Predict Who Will Click, Buy, Lie, or Die

[Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work, and Think](#)
by Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and Kenneth Cukier
Eamon Dolan/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 242 pp., $27.00

[Status Update: Celebrity, Publicity, and Branding in the Social Media Age](#)
by Alice E. Marwick
Yale University Press, 368 pp., $27.50

[Privacy and Big Data: The Players, Regulators and Stakeholders](#)
by Terence Craig and Mary E. Ludloff
O'Reilly Media, 108 pp., $19.99 (paper)

[November 7, 2013](#) -- Early this year, as part of the $92 million "Data to Decisions" program run by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the Office of Naval Research began evaluating computer programs designed to sift through masses of information stored, traded, and trafficked over the Internet that, when put together, might predict social unrest, terrorist attacks, and other events of interest to the military. Blog posts, e-mail, Twitter feeds, weather reports, agricultural trends, photos, economic data, news reports, demographics—each might be a piece of an emergent portrait if only there existed a suitable, algorithmic way to connect them.

DARPA, of course, is where the Internet was created, back in the late 1960s, back when it was called ARPA and the new technology that allowed packets of information to be sent from one computer to another was called the ARPANET. In 1967, when the ARPANET was first conceived, computers were big, expensive, slow (by today's standards), and resided primarily in universities and research institutions; neither Moore's law— that processing power doubles every two years—nor the microprocessor, which was just being developed, had yet delivered personal computers to home, school, and office desktops.

Two decades later, a young British computer scientist at the European Organization for Nuclear Research named Tim Berners-Lee was looking for a way to enable CERN scientists scattered all over the world to share

and link documents. When he conceived of the World Wide Web in 1988, about 86 million households had personal computers, though only a small percentage were online. Built on the open architecture of the ARPANET, which allowed discrete networks to communicate with one another, the World Wide Web soon became a way for others outside of CERN, and outside of academia altogether, to share information, making the Web bigger and more intricate with an ever-increasing number of nodes and links. By 1994, when the World Wide Web had grown to ten million users, "traffic was equivalent to shipping the entire collected works of Shakespeare every second."

1994 was a seminal year in the life of the Internet. In a sense, it's the year the Internet came alive, animated by the widespread adoption of the first graphical browser, Mosaic. Before the advent of Mosaic—and later Internet Explorer, Safari, Firefox, and Chrome, to name a few—information shared on the Internet was delivered in lines of visually dull, undistinguished, essentially static text. Mosaic made all those lines of text more accessible, adding integrated graphics and clickable links, opening up the Internet to the average, non-geeky user, not simply as an observer but as an active, creative participant. "Mosaic's charming appearance encourages users to load their own documents onto the Net, including color photos, sound bites, video clips, and hypertext 'links' to other documents," Gary Wolfe wrote in Wired that year.

By following the links—click, and the linked document appears—you can travel through the online world along paths of whim and intuition…. In the 18 months since it was released, Mosaic has incited a rush of excitement and commercial energy unprecedented in the history of the Net.

In 1994, when Wolfe extolled the commercial energy of the Internet, it was still largely devoid of commerce. To be sure, the big Internet service providers like America Online (AOL) and CompuServe were able to capitalize on what was quickly becoming a voracious desire to get connected, but for the most part, that is where business began and ended. Because few companies had yet figured out how to make money online—Amazon, which got in early, in 1995, didn't make a profit for six years—the Internet was often seen as a playground suitable for youthful cavorting, not a place for serious grownups, especially not serious grownups with business aspirations. "The growth of the Internet will slow drastically [as

it] becomes apparent [that] most people have nothing to say to each other," the economist Paul Krugman wrote in 1998. "By 2005 or so, it will become clear that the Internet's impact on the economy has been no greater than the fax machine's…. Ten years from now the phrase information economy will sound silly."

Here Krugman was dead wrong. In the first five years of the new millennium, Internet use grew 160 percent; by 2005 there were nearly a billion people on the Internet. By 2005, too, the Internet auction site eBay was up and running, Amazon was in the black, business-to-business e-commerce accounted for $1.5 trillion, while online consumer purchases were estimated to be between $142 and $772 billion and the average Internet shopper was looking more and more like the average shopper. Meanwhile, entire libraries were digitized and made available to all comers; music was shared, not always legally; videos were made, many by amateurs, and uploaded to an upstart site (launched in 2005) called YouTube; the online, open-source encyclopedia Wikipedia had already begun to harness collective knowledge; medical researchers had used the Internet for randomized, controlled clinical trials; and people did seem to have a lot to say to each other—or at least had a lot to say. There were 14.5 million blogs in July 2005 with 1.3 billion links, double the number from March of that year. The social networking site Facebook, which came online in 2004 for Ivy Leaguers, was opened to anyone over thirteen in 2006. It now has 850 million members and is worth approximately $80 billion.

The odd thing about writing even a cursory reprise of the events attendant to the birth of the Internet is that those events are so recent that most of us have lived through and with them. While familiar—who doesn't remember their first PC? who can forget the fuzzy hiss and chime of the dial-up modem?—they are also new enough that we can remember a time before global online connectivity was ubiquitous, a time before the stunning flurry of creativity and ingenuity the Internet unleashed. Though we know better, we seem to think that the Internet arrived, quite literally, deus ex machina, and that it is, from here on out, both a permanent feature of civilization and a defining feature of human advancement.

By now, the presence and reach of the Internet is felt in ways unimaginable twenty-five or ten or even five years ago: in education with "massive open

online courses," in publishing with electronic books, in journalism with the migration from print to digital, in medicine with electronic record-keeping, in political organizing and political protest, in transportation, in music, in real estate, in the dissemination of ideas, in pornography, in romance, in friendship, in criticism, in much else as well, with consequences beyond calculation. When, in 2006, Merriam-Webster declared "google" to be a verb, it was a clear declaration of the penetration of the Internet into everyday life.

Nine years before, in the brief history of the Internet written by Vint Cerf and other Internet pioneers, the authors explained that the Internet "started as the creation of a small band of dedicated researchers, and has grown to be a commercial success with billions of dollars of annual investment." Google—where Cerf is now "Chief Internet Evangelist"—did not yet exist. Its search engine, launched in 1998, changed everything that has to do with the collecting and propagating of information, and a lot more as well. Perhaps most radically, it changed what was valuable about information. No longer was the answer to a query solely what was prized; value was now inherent in the search itself, no matter the answer. Google searches, however benign, allowed advertisers and marketers to tailor their efforts: if you sought information on Hawaiian atolls, for example, ███ likely see ads for Hawaiian vacations. (If you search today for backpacks and pressure cookers, you might see an agent from the FBI at your front door.) Though it was not obvious in those early years, the line from commerce to surveillance turned out to be short and straight.

Also not obvious was how the Web would evolve, though its open architecture virtually assured that it would. The original Web, the Web of static homepages, documents laden with "hot links," and electronic storefronts, segued into Web 2.0, which, by providing the means for people without technical knowledge to easily share information, recast the Internet as a global social forum with sites like Facebook, Twitter, FourSquare, and Instagram.

Once that happened, people began to make aspects of their private lives public, letting others know, for example, when they were shopping at H+M and dining at Olive Garden, letting others know what they thought of the selection at that particular branch of H+M and the waitstaff at that Olive Garden, then modeling their new jeans for all to see and sharing pictures of

their antipasti and lobster ravioli—to say nothing of sharing pictures of their girlfriends, babies, and drunken classmates, or chronicling life as a high-paid escort, or worrying about skin lesions or seeking a cure for insomnia or rating professors, and on and on.

The social Web celebrated, rewarded, routinized, and normalized this kind of living out loud, all the while anesthetizing many of its participants. Although they likely knew that these disclosures were funding the new information economy, they didn't especially care. As John Naughton points out in his sleek history From Gutenberg to Zuckerberg: What You Really Need to Know About the Internet:

Everything you do in cyberspace leaves a trail, including the "clickstream" that represents the list of websites you have visited, and anyone who has access to that trail will get to know an awful lot about you. They'll have a pretty good idea, for example, of who your friends are, what your interests are (including your political views if you express them through online activity), what you like doing online, what you download, read, buy and sell.

In other words, you are not only what you eat, you are what you are thinking about eating, and where you've eaten, and what you think about what you ate, and who you ate it with, and what you did after dinner and before dinner and if you'll go back to that restaurant or use that recipe again and if you are dieting and considering buying a Wi-Fi bathroom scale or getting bariatric surgery—and you are all these things not only to yourself but to any number of other people, including neighbors, colleagues, friends, marketers, and National Security Agency contractors, to name just a few. According to the Oxford professor Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and Kenneth Cukier, the "data editor" of The Economist, in their recent book Big Data:

Google processes more than 24 petabytes of data per day, a volume that is thousands of times the quantity of all printed material in the US library of Congress…. Facebook members click a "like" button or leave a comment nearly three billion times per day, creating a digital trail that the company can mine to learn about users' preferences.

How all this sharing adds up, in dollars, is incalculable because the social Web is very much alive, and we keep supplying more and more personal information and each bit compounds the others. Eric Siegel in his book

Predictive Analytics notes that "a user's data can be purchased for about half a cent, but the average user's value to the Internet advertising ecosystem is estimated at $1,200 per year." Just how this translates to the bottom line is in many cases unclear, though the networking company Cisco recently projected that the Internet will be worth $14.1 trillion by 2022.

For the moment, however, the crucial monetary driver is not what the Internet will be worth, it's the spread between what it costs to buy personal information (not much) and how much can be made from it. When Wall Street puts a value on Facebook or Google and other masters of the online universe, it is not for the services they provide, but for the data they collect and its worth to advertisers, among others. For these Internet companies, the convenience of sending e-mail, or posting high school reunion pictures, or finding an out-of-the-way tamale stand near Reno is merely bait to lure users into offering up the intimacies of their lives, often without realizing how or where or that those intimacies travel.

An investigation by The Wall Street Journal found that "50 of the most popular websites (representing 40 percent of all web pages viewed by Americans) placed a total of 3,180 tracking devices on the Journal's test computer…. Most of these devices were unknown to the user." Facebook's proposed new privacy policy gives it "permission to use your name, profile picture, content, and information in connection with commercial, sponsored or related content…served or enhanced by [the company]." In other words, Facebook can use a picture of you or your friends to shill for one of its clients without asking you. (While those rules were pending, Facebook was forced to apologize to the parents of a teenager who had killed herself after being bullied online when the dead young woman's image showed up in a Facebook ad for a dating service.)

It is ironic, of course, and deeply cynical of Facebook to call signing away the right to control one's own image a matter of a "privacy policy," but privacy in the Internet Age is challenged not only by the publicness encouraged by Internet services but by the cultures that have adopted them. As Alice Marwick, a keen ethnographer of Silicon Valley, points out in her new book Status Update, "social media has brought the attention economy into the everyday lives and relationships of millions of people worldwide,

and popularized attention-getting techniques like self-branding and lifestreaming."

People choose to use a service like Facebook despite its invasive policies, or Google, knowing that Google's e-mail service, Gmail, scans private communications for certain keywords that are then parlayed into ads. People choose to make themselves into "micro-celebrities" by broadcasting over Twitter. People choose to carry mobile phones, even though the phones' geolocation feature makes them prime tracking devices. How prime was recently made clear when it was reported in Der Spiegel that "it is possible for the NSA to tap most sensitive data held on these smart phones, including contact lists, SMS traffic, notes and location information about where a user has been." But forget about the NSA—the GAP knows we're in the neighborhood and it's offering 20 percent off on cashmere sweaters!

Even if we did not know the extent of the NSA's reach into our digital lives until recently, the Patriot Act has been in place since 2001 and it is no secret that it allows the government access to essentially all online activity, while online activity has grown exponentially since 2001. Privacy controls exist, to be sure, but they require users to "opt-in," which relatively few are willing to do, and may offer limited security at best. According to researchers at Stanford, half of all Internet advertising companies continued tracking even when tracking controls had been activated. Anonymity offers little or no shield, either. Recently, Latanya Sweeney and her colleagues at Harvard showed how simple it was to "reidentify" anonymous participants in the Human Genome Project: using information about medicines, medical procedures, date of birth, gender, and zip code, she writes, and "linking demographics to public records such as voter lists, and mining for names hidden in attached documents, we correctly identified 84 to 97 percent of the profiles for which we provided names." Anonymity, of course, is not necessarily a virtue; on the Internet it is often the refuge for "trolls" and bullies. But transparency brings its own set of problems to the Internet as well. When a group of clever programmers launched a website called Eightmaps that showed the names and addresses of anyone who had donated over $100 to the campaign to prohibit same-sex marriage in California, the donors (and their employers, most famously the University of California) began getting harassing e-mails and phone

calls. To those who support same-sex marriage this may seem just desserts, but the precedent has been set, whatever one's political preferences, and next time the targets may be those who support marriage equality or gun control or abortion.

It's not that donor information has not been public before, it's that the broad reach and accessibility allowed by the Internet can have an amplifying effect. (On the other hand, it's this amplifying effect that campaigners count on when seeking signatures for online petitions and organizing demonstrations.) Evgeny Morozov, the author of The Net Delusion and the new To Save Everything, Click Here, is no fan of transparency, and points out another pitfall. Everyone else's prodigious sharing may shine an uncomfortably bright light on those who choose not to share: What might an insurer infer if, say, many others are posting personal health data about weight and blood pressure and exercise routines and you aren't? This kind of transparency, he observes, favors the well and well-off "because self-monitoring will only make things better for you. If you are none of those things, the personal prospectus could make your life much more difficult, with higher insurance premiums, fewer discounts, and limited employment prospects."

Closely monitoring and publicly sharing one's health information is part of a growing trend of "the quantified self" movement, whose motto is "self-knowledge through numbers." While not itself created by the Internet, it is a consequence of Internet culture, augmented by wireless technology, Web and mobile apps, and a belief that the examined life is one that's sliced, diced, and made from data points. If recording blood pressure, heart rate, food consumption, and hours of sleep does not yield sufficient self-knowledge, advocates of "the quantified self" can also download the Poop Diary app "to easily record your every bowel movement—including time, color, amount, and shape information." While this may seem extreme now, it is unlikely to seem so for long. We are living, we are told, in the age of Big Data and it will, according to Mayer-Schönberger and Cukier (and Wall Street and DARPA and many others), "transform how we live, work, and think."

Internet activities like online banking, social media, web browsing, shopping, e-mailing, and music and movie streaming generate tremendous amounts of data, while the Internet itself, through digitization and cloud

computing, enables the storage and manipulation of complex and extensive data sets. Data—especially personal data of the kind shared on Facebook and the kind sold by the state of Florida, harvested from its Department of Motor Vehicles records, and the kind generated by online retailers and credit card companies—is sometimes referred to as "the new oil," not because its value derives from extraction, which it does, but because it promises to be both lucrative and economically transformative.

In a report issued in 2011, the World Economic Forum called for personal data to be considered "a new asset class," declaring that it is "a new type of raw material that's on par with capital and labour." Morozov quotes an executive from Bain and Company, which coauthored the Davos study, explaining that "we are trying to shift the focus from purely privacy to what we call property rights." It's not much of a stretch to imagine who stands to gain from such "rights."

Individually, data points are typically small and inconsequential, which is why, day to day, most people are content to give them up without much thought. They only come alive in aggregate and in combination and in ways that might never occur to their "owner." For instance, records of music downloads and magazine subscriptions might allow financial institutions to infer race and deny a mortgage. Or search terms plus book and pharmacy purchases can be used to infer a pregnancy, as the big-box store Target has done in the past.

As Steve Lohr has written in The New York Times about the MIT economist Erik Brynjolfsson, "data measurement is the modern equivalent of the microscope." Sean Gourley, cofounder of a company called Quid, calls this new kind of data analysis a "macroscope." (Quid "collect[s] open source intelligence through thousands of different information channels [and takes] this data and structure[s] it to extract entities and events that we can then use to build models that help humans understand the complexity of the world around us.") The very accurate Google Flu Trends, which sorts and aggregates Internet search terms related to influenza to track the spread of flu across the globe, is an example of finding a significant pattern in disparate and enormous amounts of data—data that did not exist before the Internet.

Computers are often compared to the human brain, but in the case of data collection and data mining, the human brain is woefully underpowered.

Watson, the IBM computer used by Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center to diagnose cancer—which it did more precisely than any doctor—was fed about 600,000 pieces of medical evidence, more than two million pages from medical journals, and had access to about 1.5 million patient records, which was its crucial advantage.

This brings us back to DARPA and its quest for an algorithm that will sift through all manner of seemingly disconnected Internet data to smoke out future political unrest and acts of terror. Diagnosis is one thing, correlation something else, prediction yet another order of magnitude, and for better and worse, this is where we are taking the Internet. Police departments around the United States are using Google maps, together with crime statistics and social media, to determine where to patrol, and half of all states use some kind of predictive data analysis when making parole decisions. More than that, gush the authors of Big Data:

In the future—and sooner than we may think—many aspects of our world will be augmented or replaced by computer systems that today are the sole purview of human judgment…perhaps even identifying "criminals" before one actually commits a crime.

The assumption that decisions made by machines that have assessed reams of real-world information are more accurate than those made by people, with their foibles and prejudices, may be correct generally and wrong in the particular; and for those unfortunate souls who might never commit another crime even if the algorithm says they will, there is little recourse. In any case, computers are not "neutral"; algorithms reflect the biases of their creators, which is to say that prediction cedes an awful lot of power to the algorithm creators, who are human after all. Some of the time, too, proprietary algorithms, like the ones used by Google and Twitter and Facebook, are intentionally biased to produce results that benefit the company, not the user, and some of the time algorithms can be gamed. (There is an entire industry devoted to "optimizing" Google searches, for example.)

But the real bias inherent in algorithms is that they are, by nature, reductive. They are intended to sift through complicated, seemingly discrete information and make some sort of sense of it, which is the definition of reductive. But it goes further: the infiltration of algorithms into everyday life has brought us to a place where metrics tend to rule. This

is true for education, medicine, finance, retailing, employment, and the creative arts. There are websites that will analyze new songs to determine if they have the right stuff to be hits, the right stuff being the kinds of riffs and bridges found in previous hit songs.

Amazon, which collects information on what readers do with the electronic books they buy—what they highlight and bookmark, if they finish the book, and if not, where they bail out—not only knows what readers like, but what they don't, at a nearly cellular level. This is likely to matter as the company expands its business as a publisher. (Amazon already found that its book recommendation algorithm was more likely than the company's human editors to convert a suggestion into a sale, so it eliminated the humans.)

Meanwhile, a company called Narrative Science has an algorithm that produces articles for newspapers and websites by wrapping current events into established journalistic tropes—with no pesky unions, benefits, or sick days required. Call me old-fashioned, but in each case, idiosyncrasy, experimentation, innovation, and thoughtfulness—the very stuff that makes us human—is lost. A culture that values only what has succeeded before, where the first rule of success is that there must be something to be "measured" and counted, is not a culture that will sustain alternatives to market-driven "creativity."

There is no doubt that the Internet—that undistinguished complex of wires and switches—has changed how we think and what we value and how we relate to one another, as it has made the world simultaneously smaller and wider. Online connectivity has spread throughout the world, bringing that world closer together, and with it the promise, if not to level the playing field between rich and poor, corporations and individuals, then to make it less uneven. There is so much that has been good—which is to say useful, entertaining, inspiring, informative, lucrative, fun—about the evolution of the World Wide Web that questions about equity and inequality may seem to be beside the point.

But while we were having fun, we happily and willingly helped to create the greatest surveillance system ever imagined, a web whose strings give governments and businesses countless threads to pull, which makes us… puppets. The free flow of information over the Internet (except in places where that flow is blocked), which serves us well, may serve others better.

Whether this distinction turns out to matter may be the one piece of information the Internet cannot deliver.

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