

From: Office of Terje Rod-Larsen <[REDACTED]>
Subject: December 7 update
Date: Sat, 07 Dec 2013 13:08:27 +0000

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Al-Monitor

Iran and the nuclear agreement: Trust but verify

Author Daniel Kurtzer, Seyed Hossein Mousavian and Thomas Pickering

December 6, 2013 -- The Joint Plan of Action signed in Geneva represents a serious step toward defusing the longstanding dispute between Iran and the West over Iran's nuclear program. Both sides negotiated seriously and in good faith, overcoming substantial problems while achieving an important agreement. For the interim agreement to work, however, both sides need to commit unequivocally to fully meeting the obligations on time. There is no room for delays, obfuscation, excuses. This is not simply a matter of building trust or goodwill. Yes, an interim agreement has been reached, but with 30-plus years of deep distrust and enmity between Iran and the West as the backdrop. There is no sugar-coating the distrust or sense of victimization that pervades this agreement, and the feeling on both sides that the other will not fulfill its obligations or, more bluntly, will cheat. For both Iran and the international community, the failure to implement this interim agreement scrupulously will have exceedingly serious consequences. If Iran fails to do exactly what it has committed to do, opponents will say it is a sign that Iran is using the interim agreement to simply buy time to achieve nuclear weapons capability. If Iran fails to come clean about all of its facilities, as required by the IAEA, it will be taken as proof that these negotiations have been a sham. At the same time, if the West does not lift the specified sanctions or, worse, should the US Congress or another country actually impose greater sanctions during this six-month period, it will be a clear sign that the West is not interested in a negotiated deal and that the United States has not distanced itself from a policy of regime change. The most important thing both sides should do now is convince the world that this deal is credible — not perfect for either side, but good enough to meet both sides' minimal requirements.

Otherwise, the voices of the skeptics and opponents of the deal will rise above those wanting it to work. Skeptics and opponents abound — in both Tehran as well as in many other capitals, including Washington. For the United States, internal opposition to the deal and concern about Iranian behavior have been reinforced by the trepidations of two of its closest allies, Israel and Saudi Arabia. The deep uneasiness in Jerusalem and Riyadh is tangible and immediate, for both countries see Iran as a mortal enemy, bent on Israel's destruction and regional hegemony. For Iran, internal opposition to the deal and concern relate to US policies, reinforced

during President Barack Obama's first term and supported by Israel that challenge Iran's right to enrich its nuclear stockpile for energy use. Thus, if either side fails to do exactly what it is required to do under the terms of the agreement the deal will be seen as a failure — and the consequences of such a failure must be understood up front. The first time Iran delays an inspection, hedges on fulfilling a commitment, seeks to buy time before implementing part of the deal or, far more dangerously, is caught cheating by failing to report an activity not permitted by the agreement, the EU3+3 (France, Germany and the United Kingdom, plus China, Russia and the United States) would not only re-impose and strengthen sanctions immediately, but also would go to the UN Security Council immediately and likely adopt the strongest possible resolution authorizing corrective action under Article VII — that is, authorizing military action. Conversely, if the obligations undertaken by the EU3+3 are not implemented scrupulously or on time, Iran would feel it has the right to make unilateral decisions regarding the future of its nuclear program. While it is unlikely that Iran would gain Security Council support to assert this right, it would seek UN General Assembly support and likely begin a confrontational foreign policy against the United States and the West. Even with perfect implementation of this interim agreement, there is no certainty that a permanent agreement can be reached in six months. The gaps between the two sides are still wide and deep. Indeed, if a permanent deal cannot be reached, it is quite likely that the crisis six months from now will be intense and explosive and the opponents of the interim deal will be vindicated. But to have any hope of reaching a permanent agreement, this interim agreement must be followed to the “letter of the law.” Both the EU3+3 and Iran must adopt a firm policy today that they will have zero tolerance regarding delays or failure to implement the interim agreement. Complete, timely implementation will not only build trust and credibility, but will also significantly improve the atmosphere and prospects for a full agreement within the next six months. Such a trend would facilitate further constructive cooperation between Iran and the world powers on other crises in the Middle East such as Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. The interim agreement — and its faithful implementation — is a significant opportunity which should not be missed or it will constitute a failure of unimaginable proportions.

Daniel Kurtzer, a former US ambassador to Egypt and Israel, is a professor at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School. Ambassador Seyed Hossein Mousavian is a research scholar at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. He previously served as Iran's ambassador to Germany, head of the foreign relations committee of Iran's National Security Council and as spokesman for Iran's nuclear negotiators. Thomas Pickering is a former undersecretary of state and former US ambassador to Israel, the United Nations, Russia, India and Jordan.

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American Thinker

The Iranian Agreement and the Strategy of Deterrence

[Abraham H. Miller](#)

December 7, 2013 -- Iran is going to have nuclear weapons. Unless we are willing to launch a strategic bombing campaign against Iran, we cannot completely stop them. And this administration is not going to do that. We know it; the Iranians know it.

Iran wants nuclear weapons for one purpose, and it is not to launch a first strike against Israel. The mullahs are neither stupid nor do they believe in the imminent eschatology they preach. People who believe in the end of times do not open [foreign bank accounts](#) and send their children to live opulent lives abroad.

Iran wants nuclear weapons to neutralize Israel's nuclear deterrence -- to being overrun by stronger and larger conventional forces. Iran wants to destroy Israel!

But Iran is not going to launch nuclear weapons against Israel. Iran is going to overrun Israel with massive conventional forces. It will weaken Israel by using its proxies in Lebanon and in a restabilized Syria. With America no longer providing [assistance to the rebels](#) and [Russia](#) and Iran providing increased assistance to the government, President Assad's victory is only a matter of time. Non-Western societies do not need to find

immediate solutions to their political problems. Their [cultural orientation](#) teaches the value of being patient.

Those who perceive a future attack by Iran as impossible should consider that Iran, even in the face of sanctions, has dramatically increased its military budget in 2012 by 127%, causing expenditures to outrun Israel's. Iran's regular army numbers 425,000 with another 120,000 soldiers in the Revolutionary Guard. Israel's army is heavily based on its reserve capacity and possesses 176,000 active troops and 445,000 reservists.

The Revolutionary Guard controls the Basij, an organization of an additional 90,000 active troops and 300,000 reservists. Iran could ultimately mobilize another 11,000,000 men within the Basij structure. Obviously, the number of troops itself does not determine the outcome of any war or Russia would have defeated Germany in the opening months of the Great War, and in terms of firepower delivery Israel outranks Iran, especially in the realm of airpower. But in terms of other military equipment, Iran far outranks Israel. The overall differences are not as great as proponents of Israel's military invincibility would like to think. Israel ranks 13th in the world in terms of overall firepower, while Iran ranks 16th. [The differences are not substantial.](#)

Defeating Israel, however, is a textbook exercise in military strategy because Israel is strategically vulnerable both in the north and at its narrow center. You overwhelm Israel by attacking first, breaking it up geographically, preventing its reserves from being fully mobilized, and crippling its air force. It takes inordinate planning, the willingness to accept incredible casualties, and the ability to acquire large numbers of soldiers and modern weapons. The Iranians do have the resources to accomplish that.

Israel's strategic vulnerability pushed its quest for a nuclear arsenal. Over the years, Israel has also developed a formidable second-strike capability, meaning that it could absorb a first strike and still launch a nuclear attack. The final option of Israeli military strategy is the [Samson option](#), which is to be implemented if certain red lines are crossed by an invading army. Israel would then launch a devastating nuclear strike on the invading country. Whether the option literally means Israel would countenance its own destruction is a matter of speculation.

Iran perceives, correctly or incorrectly, that Israel will not be able to use its nuclear option because Iran will be able to neutralize that option. Israel would have been better off if the Obama administration had done nothing. All the agreement does is give legitimacy to Iran's nuclear enrichment, which will lead to a breakout to weapons capacity, and put another obstacle in the way of Israel taking action.

As Iran now appears on a trajectory to become a stronger power, increased pressure is being put on Israel to roll back its boundaries to the 1948 cease-fire lines, what [Abba Eban](#) appropriately called the "Auschwitz boundaries" because they are strategically indefensible. Israel is a country without strategic depth. It was strategic depth that enabled Russia to defeat both Napoleon and the Nazis. It was South Korean strategic depth that enabled the United Nations to rebuild its military force in the Pusan perimeter. A country that weakens its strategic depth invites its own destruction.

Obama has strengthened Israel's strongest enemy while attempting to weaken Israel. This has been part and parcel of the Obama administration's policy since the first term, when in 2009, it departed from established U.S. policy that affirmed Israel's nuclear ambiguity and exempted it from concerns of non-proliferation. For the first time, an American administration publicly named Israel as [one of four nuclear powers](#) that had not signed on to the non-proliferation treaty.

Iran will not attack Israel next month or even next year. Iran will bring Assad back to power, extend its reach through the creation of a Shiite Crescent to the Mediterranean, and build up its conventional military with Russian assistance. It will eventually build sufficient atomic weapons to neutralize Israel's nuclear arsenal. When Iran attacks Israel, there will be no calls for a ceasefire in the United Nations, not unless Israel is completely destroyed.

The foundations for Israel's destruction have been laid by the Obama administration. All that remains is the completion of Iran's nuclear program. For those who have long touted Israel's invincibility and its need to take risks for peace because of its nuclear arsenal, that invincibility will no longer exist. Israel will either bomb Iran now or await its own destruction later.

Abraham H. Miller, a UC professor of political science, has over the past several years looked at efforts to reorganize the intelligence community in response to the end of the Cold War. Miller has been teaching about terrorism and intelligence for more than 25 years. He worked on political terrorism and hostage negotiation issues while a visiting fellow the National Institute of Justice and was a three-time chair of the Intelligence Studies section of the International Studies Association.

[Article 3.](#)

The Washington Post

With Iran, Obama can end America's long war for the Middle East

Andrew J. Bacevich

December 06, 2013 -- What Jimmy Carter began, Barack Obama is ending. Washington is bringing down the curtain on its 30-plus-year military effort to pull the Islamic world into conformity with American interests and expectations. It's about time.

Back in 1980, when his promulgation of the Carter Doctrine launched that effort, Carter acted with only a vague understanding of what might follow. Yet circumstance — the overthrow of the shah in Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan — compelled him to act. Or more accurately, the domestic political uproar triggered by those events compelled the president, facing a tough reelection campaign, to make a show of doing something. What ensued was the long-term militarization of U.S. policy throughout the region.

Now, without fanfare, President Obama is effectively revoking Carter's doctrine. The U.S. military presence in the region is receding. When Obama posited in his second inaugural address that "enduring security and lasting peace do not require perpetual war," he was not only recycling a platitude; he was also acknowledging the folly and futility of the enterprise in which U.S. forces had been engaged. Having consumed vast quantities of blood and treasure while giving Americans little to show in return, that enterprise is now ending.

Like Carter in 1980, Obama finds himself with few alternatives. At home, widespread anger, angst and mortification obliged Carter to begin girding

the nation to fight for the greater Middle East. To his successors, Carter bequeathed a Pentagon preoccupied with ramping up its ability to flex its muscles anywhere from Egypt to Pakistan. The bequest proved a mixed blessing, fostering the illusion that military muscle, dexterously employed, might put things right. Today, widespread disenchantment with the resulting wars and quasi-wars prohibits Obama from starting new ones. Successive military disappointments, not all of Obama's making, have curbed his prerogatives as commander in chief. Rather than being the decider, he ratifies decisions effectively made elsewhere. In calling off a threatened U.S. attack on Syria, for example, the president was acknowledging what opinion polls and Congress (not to mention the British Parliament) had already made plain: Support for any further military adventures to liberate or pacify Muslims has evaporated. Americans still profess to love the troops. But they've lost their appetite for war.

Two centuries ago, the Duke of Wellington remarked that "nothing except a battle lost can be half so melancholy as a battle won." In our day, great battles are rare, while wars have become commonplace. Victory, meanwhile, seems a lost art. Nothing is half so melancholy as to compare the expectations informing recent American wars when they began — Enduring Freedom! — with the outcomes actually achieved. So in Obama's Washington, moralism is out, and with good reason. Only nations with a comfortable surfeit of power can permit themselves the luxury of allowing moral considerations to shape basic policy.

Now, for the moment at least, realism has regained favor. In this context, that means aligning aspirations with available assets, and distinguishing between interests that are vital and those that are merely desirable. In Afghanistan, promises of enduring freedom withdrawn, realism offers "Resolute Support" as a consolation prize. When Obama's national security adviser tells the New York Times that the president refuses to "be consumed 24/7 by one region" and intends to reassess U.S. Middle East policy "in a very critical and kind of no-holds-barred way," that's realism seeping through the Washingtonese.

None of this is to suggest that America's War for the Greater Middle East has ended. Drone strikes, the Obama administration's military signature, continue. Yet missile strikes alone, whether targeting Pakistan,

Afghanistan, Yemen or Somalia, serve no larger strategic purpose. Wellington for one would have recognized Obama's drone campaign for what it is: a rear-guard action, designed to allow the main body to withdraw.

This de-escalation is not without risks. For as America's War for the Greater Middle East winds down, it leaves the Islamic world in worse condition — besieged by radicalism, wracked by violence, awash with anti-Americanism — than back in 1980. The list of dictators the United States has toppled or abandoned and of terrorists it has assassinated is impressively long. But any benefits accruing from these putative successes have been few. Ask Afghans. Ask Iraqis. Ask Libyans. Or ask any American who has been paying attention. (Just don't bother asking anyone who works inside the Beltway, where the failure of the local NFL franchise to win games produces more worry than the U.S. military's failure to win wars.)

Back in 1979, the "loss" of Iran provided much of the impetus for launching America's War for the Greater Middle East. The shah's overthrow had cost the United States an unsavory henchman, his place taken by radicals apparently consumed with hatred for the Great Satan. At the time, the magnitude of the policy failure staggered Washington. It was as bad as — maybe worse than — the "loss" of China 30 years before. Of course, what had made that earlier failure so difficult to take was the presumption that China had been ours to lose in the first place. Discard that presumption, and doing business with Red China just might become a possibility. Cue Richard Nixon, a realist if there ever was one. By accepting China's loss, he turned it to America's advantage, at least in the short run.

So too with Iran today. The passage of time, along with more than a few miscalculations by Iran's leadership, has tempered the Islamic republic's ambitions. One imagines Nixon, in whatever precincts of the great beyond he inhabits, itching to offer advice: Accept the "loss" of Iran, which will never return to America's orbit anyway, and turn it to U.S. advantage. In their heyday, neoconservatives boasted that while anyone could go to Baghdad, real men hankered to go to Tehran. But as a venue for displaying American power, Baghdad proved a bust. In Tehran lies the possibility of finding a way out of perpetual war. Although by no means guaranteed, the

basis for a deal exists: We accept the Islamic republic, they accept the regional status quo. They get survival, we get a chance to repair self-inflicted wounds. It's the same bargain that Nixon offered Mao: Keep your revolution at home, and we'll make our peace with it. Negotiations over Iran's nuclear program provide the medium for achieving this larger end. Any such deal would surely annoy Saudi Arabia and Israel, each for its own reasons committed to casting Iran as an existential threat. Obama just might choose to let them fret.

Although Americans have not yet fully digested the news, the United States no longer must defer to the Saudis. North American reserves of oil and natural gas are vastly greater than they appeared to be just a few years ago. As the prospect of something approximating energy independence beckons, the terms of the U.S.-Saudi alliance — they pump, we protect — are ripe for revision. Not so long ago, it seemed really, really important to keep the Saudi royal family happy. Far less so today.

Much the same applies to Israel. Easily the strongest power in its neighborhood and the only one possessing a nuclear arsenal, the Jewish state privileges its own security over all other considerations. It has every right to do so. What doesn't follow is that Washington should underwrite or turn a blind eye to Israeli actions that run counter to U.S. interests, as is surely the case with continued colonization of the occupied territories. Just as Israel disregards U.S. objections to its expansion of settlements in the West Bank, the United States should refuse to allow Israeli objections to determine its policy toward Iran.

The exit from America's misadventures in the region is through the door marked "Tehran." Calling off the War for the Greater Middle East won't mean that the political, social and economic problems roiling that part of the world will suddenly go away. They just won't be problems that Uncle Sam is expected to solve. In this way, a presidency that began with optimism and hope but has proved such a letdown may yet achieve something notable.

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The Washington Post

A fresh approach to looking at foreign threats

David Ignatius

December 06, 2013 -- The chairs of the House and Senate intelligence committees stated last weekend that the world was getting more unsafe. A few days later, the Pew Research Center reported that 52 percent of Americans think the U.S. should “mind its own business internationally,” the highest such total in the nearly 50-year history of that query. Taken together, these two items symbolize a serious emerging national problem. The crackup ahead lies in the mismatch between the challenges facing America and the public’s willingness to support activist foreign policy to deal with them. Simply put: There is a splintering of the traditional consensus for global engagement at the very time that some big new problems are emerging.

The traditional American response to such puzzles has been to form a bipartisan commission. A model is the pathbreaking 2006 Iraq Study Group, co-chaired by James A. Baker III, a former secretary of state; and Rep. Lee Hamilton, a former Democratic congressman from Indiana. Giants serving with them included Sandra Day O’Connor, a retired Supreme Court justice; and Vernon Jordan, a banker, civil rights leader and counselor to presidents. For advice, they turned to such luminaries as Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft, all brilliant former national security advisers.

All are part of the traditional foreign policy establishment that still commands the high ground intellectually but does not reflect the restless, frustrated mood of the American public. The old consensus is broken and needs to be reinvented and refreshed.

What should a modern-day commission be worrying about? Rep. Mike Rogers and Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the chairs of the House and Senate intelligence committees, respectively, said last Sunday on CNN that the world is not safer today than a few years ago. They were referring to the resurgence of al-Qaeda in Syria, Iraq, Libya and elsewhere. These are not

two-bit al-Qaeda franchises anymore; the State Department received an intelligence report recently that 5,500 foreign fighters are operating with al-Qaeda's affiliate, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. How should the United States combat this threat? Sorry, no consensus on that.

Al-Qaeda is even putting down roots in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, according to Gen. Mohammed Farid el-Tohamy, the head of the Egyptian intelligence service. How can the United States help Egypt, its most important ally in the Arab world, defeat Islamic terrorism at the same time as it moves to restore civilian government and a measure of democracy? No consensus on that one, either.

And there's the huge foreign-policy challenge of Iran's nuclear program. President Obama has made a bold interim deal with Iran. But to complete the agreement, and ensure that Iran's nuclear program is truly peaceful, Obama will need strong support from Congress and the public. Right now, it's hard to imagine that he will get it. The public doesn't want war, but it doesn't seem to like entangling diplomacy much, either.

A modest proposal is that Obama should convene a younger group of American leaders: strategists, technologists, professors. It would be a learning exercise — to understand how the country should deal with the problems of the next 10 years without making the mistakes of the past 10. What has America learned from its struggles with Islamic extremism? What lessons do we take from our painful expeditionary wars? How can Americans too young to remember the Iranian revolution of 1979 engage that country, but also set clear limits on its behavior?

Happily, a new generation of thinkers could form the bipartisan group ■■■ imagining. If you don't know their names yet, you should: Marc Lynch of George Washington University, known to his online fans as "Abu Aardvark"; David Kilcullen, one of the architects of counterinsurgency success in Iraq and author of "Out of the Mountains," an iconoclastic new book on future urban conflicts; Michèle Flournoy, a clear-eyed former undersecretary of defense; and Jared Cohen and Alec Ross, two technological wizards who advised the State Department under Hillary Clinton and are now with Google and Johns Hopkins University, respectively. ■■■ add the administration's own Salman Ahmed , Tony Blinken , Ben Rhodes , Wendy Sherman and Jake Sullivan .

What encourages me is that the same American public that wants the United States to mind its own business internationally also registers a two-thirds majority in favor of greater U.S. involvement in the global economy, according to the Pew poll. Young respondents were even more internationalist on this issue than their elders.

This is a connected generation that can address problems in new ways — but it needs to get started.

[Article 5.](#)

Project Syndicate

Governance in the Information Age

Joseph S. Nye

Dec 5, 2013 -- Abu Dhabi – As the year comes to an end, it is only natural to ask what might lie ahead. But, instead of asking what may lay ahead in 2014, let us jump to mid-century. What will governance look like in 2050? That is what the World Economic Forum (WEF) asked at a recent meeting in Abu Dhabi that focused on the future of governance under three potential scenarios arising from the ongoing information revolution. With that revolution already marginalizing some countries and communities – and creating new opportunities for others – the question could hardly be more timely.

The first scenario that participants considered is a world ruled by so-called “megacities,” where governance is administered largely by major urban agglomerations. The second possibility is a world in which strong central governments use big data to fortify their control. And, in the third scenario, central governments are fundamentally weak, with markets – and the enterprises that dominate them – providing almost all services.

Each of these scenarios is an extrapolation of a current trend. While all of them could be beneficial in some respects, they also have features that, if left unchecked, could lead to dystopian outcomes. Policymakers should already be implementing policies aimed at guiding trends like urbanization, the rise of big data, and the grouping of people into narrow communities, often based on their relationship to the market.

The goal should be to take advantage of these trends' potential benefits, while ensuring that they do not undermine other critical aspects of governance. For example, although megacities have the potential to create new opportunities for workers and businesses, they cannot solve universal problems like climate change or manage the production and protection of national and global public goods.

Likewise, while the use of big data has substantial problem-solving potential, important questions remain about who owns, who controls, and who regulates the use of the data. The notion of a "datocracy" incites fear of an Orwellian "e-1984." Indeed, the recent revelations about National Security Agency surveillance programs barely scratch the surface of the issue. After all, the use of big data is not confined to governments and corporations; anonymous criminal groups can easily abuse the information, too. Finally, while individual choice within markets is often the most efficient way to allocate resources, markets do not produce a sufficient supply of public goods. Indeed, there are some goods that the private sector is simply unable to provide. This system may seem acceptable to those within the "gated communities" that benefit from it, but what about all those left outside?

The WEF's Global Agenda Council on the Future of Government, of which I am a part, has considered ways in which information technology can improve governance and reduce feelings of alienation among the governed. The most effective initiatives, the council observed, often arise from partnerships between government and the private sector.

For example, in Kenya, a private company developed a mobile-payments system that allows users to transfer money using cell phones, effectively creating a banking system much more quickly than the government could have done. Once the system was privately created, the government was able to use it to provide additional services.

As a result, a Kenyan farmer in a remote district can now obtain information about crop prices or transfer funds, without having to travel long distances and wait in lines. While such initiatives cannot solve the problem of inequality, they can help to relieve some of its most damaging effects.

At a time of rapid social change and relentless technological advancement, efforts to improve governance – at the local, national, or international level

– will require careful thought and experimentation, in order to determine how to balance inclusive decision-making with the ever-evolving needs of markets. As the American diplomat Harlan Cleveland once asked, “How will we get everybody in on the act, and still get some action?”

Consider international institutions. Today, the world is organized into some 200 countries; in all likelihood, it will be in 2050 as well. But only 16 governmental entities account for two-thirds of the world’s income and two-thirds of its population. Many have advocated the use of “double majorities” – which require a majority of votes according to two separate criteria, population and economic output – to elicit action from a manageable number of states while enhancing weaker states’ influence in decision-making.

But, though the G-20 has moved in this direction, the approach to setting a global agenda remains flawed. Indeed, it seems to be most effective in times of crisis; in more normal times, as we have seen, the G-20 struggles to get things done.

Moreover, even if the double-majority system helps to empower some weaker states, it does not account for the role of the world’s smallest countries in global decision-making processes. Although these countries represent a small share of the global population, they comprise a significant majority of the total number of countries.

One potential solution would be for states to represent each other, as occurs in the International Monetary Fund. But the IMF’s experience exposes significant challenges in implementation.

World leaders have not yet figured out how to reconcile the moral conviction that all people are equal with the simple fact that all countries are not. In a global information age, governance systems capable of addressing fundamental issues like security, welfare, liberty, and identity will require coalitions that are small enough to function efficiently and a decision concerning what to do about those who are underrepresented. Obviously, all of this calls for a lot more investigation. Exploring potential future scenarios, as the WEF has done, is an important step in the right direction.

Joseph S. Nye, a former US assistant secretary of defense and chairman of the US National Intelligence Council, is University Professor at Harvard

University. He is the author of Presidential Leadership and the Creation of the American Era.

[Article 6](#)

The Diplomat

Why Israel Is Not A Model For China

Mu Chunshan

December 06, 2013 -- The verbal battle over the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone is getting more intense, and the discussions on Weibo and other Chinese media are becoming more open and bold. Well-known military commentator Dai Xu recently made a statement on his Weibo microblog “Japan is a man-eating wolfdog China should learn from Israel and set a limit on the Japanese armed forces, so that the latter does not go beyond the range of self-defense.”

Many Chinese have mentioned on numerous occasions that, on issues involving military competition, China can use Israel as a model. Even Chinese military officials have repeatedly expressed similar views. For example, General Liu Yazhou, political commissar of China’s National Defense University, has publicly praised the Israeli Air Force. General Liu has studied much on the history of the Israeli wars. He wrote in the book *God of War over the Sky*: “If we say that the air force is the sword of Israel, then Israel is a consummate and superb fencer.” When General Liu led a delegation to Israel in September 2011, he talked about cooperation with Israelis to learn from Israel’s advanced experience.

Israel and China have common interests, and military cooperation between the two countries is steadily advancing. Israel and China continue to learn from each other in the military sphere, as we have seen in the past two years. For example, on August 13, 2012, Chinese naval vessels visited Israel for the first time and participated in joint military exercises. Earlier, the two countries cooperated on anti-terrorism missions, as border police from Israel conducted a large-scale exercise in Beijing, training 53 members of Chinese paramilitary forces. Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak paid a visit to China in the summer of 2011, and Israeli Chief of Staff Benny Gantz visited China in 2012, part of an exchange of visits with

General Chen Bingde, Chief of General Staff of the People's Liberation Army.

In my opinion, on the macro-level, the Chinese military can indeed learn from Israel's realizations about and methods for homeland defense. But when it comes to specific issues, Israel's experience may not actually be able to contribute much in terms of thawing China's peripheral security environment.

To start, Israel's national defense is offensive, and uses "preemptive strikes" as an important factor in its military strategy. This does not mesh with China's long-standing education on military conflict and contradicts the concept of peaceful diplomacy repeatedly stressed by the Chinese leaders.

Israel's total land area is only a bit larger than Beijing. Further, Israel has had wars with all its neighbors, and its relations with these neighbors have been tense due to territorial disputes. Israel not only lacks strategic depth, but also faces a real sense of geopolitical insecurity. This is an important reason for the country to push its defensive front beyond its borders, including offshore and into foreign territory.

China's peripheral security situation has some similarities to Israel, in that China has had fought wars with a number of neighboring countries and currently has territorial disputes with neighbors. As a result, the Chinese military established the ADIZ to push China's defensive front offshore and extend a strategic buffer space, which is consistent with Israeli defense concepts. However, when looking at specific and practical operations, China's defense policy varies greatly from that of Israel. China adheres to the defense policy of "making preparations for military conflict" and thus lacks Israel's "pre-emptive strike" power. Besides, taking into account the complex political relationships in the region as well as the current environment for China's development, China would find it very difficult to "restrain" Japan as Dai Xu suggested.

Israel and its opponents in the Middle East rarely interact. Many of these countries don't even have diplomatic relations with Israel. In a practical sense, this gives Israel more freedom to act. In contrast, China and its neighbors have diplomatic relationships, so China's political and military actions are undoubtedly restricted by various treaties and agreements.

Israel only has diplomatic relations with two neighbors, Jordan and Egypt. Israel hasn't established diplomatic relations with Syria, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Iraq or the other major Arabian powers, much less Iran. These relationships are marked by long-standing hostility. For example, Israel often threatens air strikes on Iran, which is an obvious expression of Israel's attention to security. In retaining the freedom to make these threats, Israel "benefits" from a lack of diplomatic relations between Iran.

China, meanwhile, has diplomatic relations with Japan and the United States. Not only that, but these two countries are keys to China's development of regional and international diplomatic relations. The basic policy of China's diplomacy is that "major powers are key; neighboring countries are primary." The United States and Japan are both major powers and neighboring countries. Whether in government or the military, Chinese leaders first have to consider this overall foreign policy trend before making other logical judgments and developing policy aims. This situation is fundamentally different from Israel's security dilemma.

Additionally, many of Israel's military behaviors derived from long-term military conflict. The country has the world's most sophisticated weaponry. Israel has definite psychological and strategic advantages over its neighbors and rivals. China has been in a peaceful environment for a long time, and has no advantage over the United States and Japan, in either military experience or weaponry.

Many people believe that Israel is backed by the United States. In fact, the Israelis and the Americans also have a competitive relationship, but the common interests of both sides are much greater than their differences. As a result, the United States provides Israel with its latest weaponry, while Israel also applies its capacity for innovation in science and technology to transform or manufacture new weapons. These two trends, one domestic, one foreign policy-related, provide explanations for the powerful Israeli military.

In the 65 years since its establishment, Israel has waged five wars with countries in the Middle East. Israel also has experience fighting terrorists with live ammunition. In addition, Israel's requirement that all citizens serve in the military provides a national level of combat awareness. Given this, it's difficult to find a real rival for Israel in the Middle East.

China, on the other hand, has had almost no wars in the 30 years since beginning its “reform and opening up” policy. China has rapidly developed military weaponry in the past dozen years. However, compared to the military equipment of the United States and Japan, there is still room for improvement. One reason that China cannot declare war easily is simply that it has little or no strategic advantage over the United States and Japan. Dai Xu said that China should set a limit for the Japanese armed forces, to make sure Japan’s military remains a self-defense force. Although correct in theory, it would be difficult for China to put this idea into practice. In spite of numerous Israeli victories in war, the security environment of the country is still grim. This shows that having a strong deterrent force is a double-edged sword. Besides learning from Israel’s tough military attitudes, perhaps China should think more about deft political moves and potential economic costs. The ultimate lesson for China comes from Sun Tzu — “the highest form of generalship is to balk the enemy’s plans.” In other words, the best generals are those that never have to fight.

Mu Chunshan is a Beijing-based journalist. Previously, Mu was part of an Education Ministry-backed research project investigating the influence of foreign media in shaping China’s image. He has previously reported from the Middle East, Africa, Russia and from around Asia.

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Spiegel

French Philosopher Finkelkraut: 'There Is a Clash of Civilizations'

Interview Conducted by Mathieu von Rohr and Romain Leick

12/06/2013 -- French society is under threat, argues philosopher Alain Finkelkraut in a controversial new book. The conservative spoke to SPIEGEL about what he sees as the failure of multiculturalism and the need for better integration of Muslim immigrants. Alain Finkelkraut is one of France's most controversial essayists. His new book, "L'Identité Malheureuse" ("The Unhappy Identity," Éditions Stock), has been the

subject of heated debate. It comes at a time when France finds itself in the midst of an identity crisis. But rather than framing things from a social or political perspective, Finkielkraut explores what he sees as a hostile confrontation between indigenous French people and immigrants. He was interviewed in his Parisian apartment on the Left Bank.

SPIEGEL: Mr. Finkielkraut, are you unhappy with today's France?

Finkielkraut: I am pained to see that the French mode of European civilization is threatened. France is in the process of transforming into a post-national and multicultural society. It seems to me that this enormous transformation does not bring anything good.

SPIEGEL: Why is that? Post-national and multicultural sounds rather promising.

Finkielkraut: It is presented to us as the model for the future. But multiculturalism does not mean that cultures blend. Mistrust prevails, communitarianism is rampant -- parallel societies are forming that continuously distance themselves from each other.

SPIEGEL: Aren't you giving in here to the right-wingers' fears of demise?

Finkielkraut: The lower middle classes -- the French that one no longer dares to call *Français de souche* (ethnic French) -- are already moving out of the Parisian suburbs and farther into the countryside. They have experienced that in some neighborhoods they are the minority in their own country. They are not afraid of the others, but rather of becoming the others themselves.

SPIEGEL: But France has always been a country of immigrants.

Finkielkraut: We are constantly told that immigration is a constitutive element of the French identity. But that's not true. Labor migration began in the 19th century. It was not until after the bloodletting of World War I that the borders were largely opened.

SPIEGEL: Immigration has had more of a formative influence on France than on Germany.

Finkielkraut: Immigration used to go hand-in-hand with integration into French culture. That was the rule of the game. Many of the new arrivals no longer want to play by that rule. If the immigrants are in the majority in their neighborhoods, how can we integrate them? There used to be mixed marriages, which is crucial to miscegenation. But their numbers are

declining. Many Muslims in Europe are re-Islamizing themselves. A woman who wears the veil effectively announces that a relationship with a non-Muslim is out of the question for her.

SPIEGEL: Aren't many immigrants excluded from mainstream society primarily for economic reasons?

Finkielkraut: The left wanted to resolve the problem of immigration as a social issue, and proclaimed that the riots in the suburbs were a kind of class struggle. We were told that these youths were protesting against unemployment, inequality and the impossibility of social advancement. In reality we saw an eruption of hostility toward French society. Social inequality does not explain the anti-Semitism, nor the misogyny in the suburbs, nor the insult "filthy French." The left does not want to accept that there is a clash of civilizations.

SPIEGEL: The anger of these young people is also stirred up by high unemployment. They are turning their backs on society because they feel excluded.

Finkielkraut: If unemployment is so high, then immigration has to be more effectively controlled. Apparently there is not enough work for everyone. But just ask the teachers in these troubled neighborhoods -- they have major difficulties teaching anything at all. Compared to the rappers and the dealers, the teachers earn so ridiculously little that they are viewed with contempt. Why should the students make an effort to follow in their footsteps? There are a large number of young people who don't want to learn anything about French culture. This refusal makes it harder for them to find work.

SPIEGEL: These neighborhoods that you speak of, have you even seen them firsthand?

Finkielkraut: I watch the news; I read books and studies. I have never relied on my intuition.

SPIEGEL: In the US the coexistence of communities works better. The Americans don't have this European adherence to a national uniform culture.

Finkielkraut: The US sees itself as a country of immigration, and what is impressive about this truly multicultural society is the strength of its patriotism. This was particularly evident after the attacks of September 11, 2001. In France, however, the opposite could be seen after the attacks on

French soldiers and Jewish children in Toulouse and Montauban last year: Some schoolchildren saw Mohamed Merah, the assailant, as a hero. Something like that would be unthinkable in the US. American society is a homeland for everyone. I don't think that many children of immigrants here see it that way.

SPIEGEL: America makes it easy for new arrivals to feel like Americans. Does France place the hurdles too high?

Finkielkraut: France prohibits students from wearing headscarves at school. This is also for the benefit of all Muslims who don't want a religious cage for themselves, for their daughters and wives. France is a civilization, and the question is what it means to participate in it. Does this mean the natives have to make themselves extremely small so the others can easily spread themselves out? Or does it mean passing on the culture that one possesses?

SPIEGEL: But this has worked for a long time. The Italians, Spaniards, Poles and European Jews had no difficulties becoming French patriots. Why is this no longer working?

Finkielkraut: Why is there today such aggression toward the West in the Islamic world? Some say that France was a colonial power, which is why those who were colonized could not be happy. But why has Europe been subjected to this massive immigration from former colonies over the past half a century? France still has to pay for the sins of colonialism and settle its debt to those who vilify it today.

SPIEGEL: You yourself are the child of immigrants, the progeny of a persecuted family. Does your personal will to integrate explain your radical commitment to the values of the Republic?

Finkielkraut: I defend these values because I probably owe more to my schooling than do the *Français de souche*, the hereditary French. French traditions and history were not laid in my cradle. Anyone who does not bring along this heritage can acquire it in *l'école républicaine*, the French school system. It has expanded my horizons and allowed me to immerse myself in French civilization.

SPIEGEL: And made you into its apologist?

Finkielkraut: I can speak and write more openly than others precisely because I am not a hereditary Frenchman. The natives easily allow

themselves to be unnerved by the prevailing discourse. I don't have such complexes.

SPIEGEL: How do you define this French civilization that you speak of?

Finkielkraut: I recently reread a book by the admirable Russian writer Isaac Babel. The story takes place in Paris. The narrator is in a hotel and at night he hears the lovemaking sounds of the couples next door. Babel writes: This has nothing to do with what one hears in Russia -- it's much more fiery. Then his French friend responds: We French created women, literature and cuisine. No one can take that from us.

SPIEGEL: Those are idealized clichés that nations create for themselves.

Finkielkraut: But it is true, or at least it was in the past. France can't allow itself to bask in its own glory. But it has evidence of its civilization, just like Germany -- it has its sights, its squares, its cafés, its wealth of literature and its artists. We can be proud of these ancestors, and we have to prove that we are worthy of them. I regret that Germany -- for reasons that are understandable -- has broken with this pride in its past. But I believe that German politicians who speak of *Leitkultur* -- the guiding national culture -- are right. The *Leitkultur* does not create an insurmountable barrier to newcomers.

'This Has Nothing to Do With Aggression.'

SPIEGEL: Is the modern French identity still shaped by the Revolution of 1789?

Finkielkraut: Back in 1989, on the 200th anniversary of the revolution, I signed a petition against the Islamic headscarf. For me it had to do with the notion of secularism, which is running into criticism around the world these days. France believed at the time that this was a model for the world, and is today reminded of its distinctiveness. It is no longer a question of exporting our model. We have to remain modest, yet steadfast.

SPIEGEL: But doesn't French secularism today also serve to justify the aggressive rejection of Islam?

Finkielkraut: How is that? We have prohibited the veil; we have not banned the individual. Previously schoolgirls were urged to place under their blouses or sweaters the crosses or medallions of the Virgin Mary that they wore on their necklaces. That is not asking too much, merely a bit of restraint on everyone's part. This has nothing to do with aggression against Muslims.

SPIEGEL: Hasn't Islam long since become a part of Europe, a part of France and Germany, as former German President Christian Wulff once put it?

Finkielkraut: Former French President Jacques Chirac made a similar statement. Islam may one day belong to Europe, but only after it has Europeanized itself. It is not an insult to the others to point out their otherness.

SPIEGEL: Well, the Muslims are here now. So don't they also belong?

Finkielkraut: The question is: How are they here? Immigrants lose nothing when they recognize their difference from the established population. Today the Muslims in France like to shout in an act of self-assertion: We are just as French as you! It would have never occurred to my parents to say something like that. I would also never say that I am just as French as Charles de Gaulle was.

SPIEGEL: In France immigrants are covered by the *jus soli*, or "right of the soil," meaning that every child born there has a right to French citizenship. Do you want to abolish this?

Finkielkraut: No. But all equality of rights aside, such a child has become a French national in a manner that differs from descent. The automatic right to French citizenship by being born on French territory makes many French people feel uncomfortable these days, because the act of wanting to be French gets lost in this process. Like most other Europeans, the French have the feeling that immigration has become an uncontrolled process -- something that happens, not something that is willed into being. The countries are not directing this process; at most, they are escorting it.

SPIEGEL: Isn't it extremely easy to attribute all problems to poverty immigration from the developing world?

Finkielkraut: A public political debate on the issue is the least that one could expect. Instead, this field is ceded to the extreme right.

SPIEGEL: How do you view the political rise of Marine Le Pen and her far-right National Front party?

Finkielkraut: This disturbs me, of course. But the National Front would not be continuously on the rise if it had not discarded the old issues of the extreme right. Nowadays the National Front focuses on secularism and the republic.

SPIEGEL: That sounds as if you could imagine voting for the party.

Finkielkraut: No, I would never do that because this party appeals to people's base instincts and hatred. And these are easy to kindle among its supporters. We can't leave these issues to the National Front. It would also be up to the left, the party of the people, to take seriously the suffering and anxiety of ordinary people.

SPIEGEL: What do you say to people who call you a reactionary?

Finkielkraut: It has become impossible to see history as constant progress. I reserve the possibility to compare yesterday and today and ask the question: What do we retain, what do we abandon?

SPIEGEL: Is that really any more than nostalgia for a lost world?

Finkielkraut: Like Albert Camus, I am of the opinion that our generation's task is not to recreate the world, but to prevent its decline. We not only have to conserve nature, but also culture. There you have the reactionary.

SPIEGEL: When you see all these problems in France -- the debts, unemployment, educational crisis, identity crisis -- do you fear for the future?

Finkielkraut: I become sad and feel a growing sense of anxiety. Optimism would seem a bit ridiculous these days. I wish the politicians were able to speak the truth and look reality in the face. Then, I believe, France would be capable of a true awakening -- of contemplating a policy of civilization.

SPIEGEL: Mr. Finkielkraut, thank you for this interview.