

From: Office of Terje Rod-Larsen <[REDACTED]>
Subject: February 26 update
Date: Wed, 26 Feb 2014 16:38:45 +0000

26 February, 2014

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Article 1. | NYT <u>A Military Budget to Fit the Times</u> Editorial |
| Article 2. | The Washington Post <u>Hagel's budget priority: 'Defend the country'</u> David Ignatius |
| Article 3. | NYT <u>With Syria, Diplomacy Needs Force</u> Michael Ignatieff |
| Article 4. | The Guardian <u>Egypt looks set to lurch from crisis to crisis</u> David Wearing |
| Article 5. | The Daily Star <u>Al-Qaeda and ISIS fight over the jihadist future</u> Brian Michael Jenkins |
| Article 6. | NYT <u>Don't Just Do Something. Sit There.</u> Thomas L. Friedman |
| Article 7. | Today's Zaman <u>Revolutionary patience</u> Javier Solana |
| Article 8. | The Daily Beast <u>Is Ukraine Headed For Civil War?</u> Will Cathcart |

[Article 1.](#)

NYT

A Military Budget to Fit the Times

Editorial

FEB. 25, 2014 -- The Pentagon's [proposals to reduce the Army to pre-World War II levels](#) and modify some benefits for troops and retirees may seem unsettling to a nation that prides itself on having the world's most capable military. But these ideas, [part of Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's 2015 military budget](#), reflect a necessary and more prudent realism as America ends 13 years at war.

Last year's proposed budget was much less practical, ignoring the country's postrecession financial stresses as well as the political pressures from Congressional Republicans determined to slash government spending. This year's \$496 billion budget request, which conforms to revised budget caps set by Congress, begins, at last, to make more of the tough choices required by declining resources, skyrocketing personnel costs and changing threats around the globe.

Even so, tiresome budgetary games are still being played. On top of Mr. Hagel's budget, President Obama is expected to ask Congress to approve a separate \$26 billion appropriation next year so that the Pentagon can increase training and upgrade aircraft and weapons systems. Mr. Hagel has offered a plan that would raise defense spending another \$115 billion over four years, beginning in 2016. And then there is the special off-budget overseas contingency account for which the Pentagon has yet to plug in a number. That account, which was about \$85 billion in 2014, is supposed to cover costs for Afghanistan, but the Pentagon has often used it for shortfalls in operating expenses.

The headlines have focused on Mr. Hagel's plans to [shrink the Army](#) by 2019 to its smallest level since before World War II, which is to say somewhere between 440,000 and 450,000 troops, from a post-9/11 peak of 570,000. (Many experts say the number could go to 420,000.) But this reduction should not alarm anyone.

The truth is that the United States cannot afford the larger force indefinitely, and it doesn't need it. The country is tired of large-scale foreign occupations and, in any case, Pentagon planners do not expect they will be necessary in the foreseeable future. Even with a smaller Army, America's defenses will remain the world's most formidable, especially given Mr. Hagel's proposed increase in investment in special operations, cyberwarfare and rebalancing the American presence in Asia.

One of the biggest problems the Pentagon faces is the issue of pay and benefits, which if left unaddressed could eventually consume most of the military budget, crowding out other vital expenses like weapons modernization. In February, under pressure from veterans groups, Congress rejected the Obama administration's proposal to make a small cut in the growth of some military pensions. This time, Mr. Hagel made a strong case for "fair and responsible adjustments" in compensation. His proposals include slowing the growth of tax-free housing allowances for military personnel and increasing health insurance deductibles and some co-payments for military retirees and some family members of active servicemen. Even more reforms are needed, but these are a reasonable start.

Major cuts in the budget plan would eliminate the fleet of Air Force A-10 attack aircraft and retire the U-2 spy plane in favor of the remotely piloted Global Hawk. But, again, this plan could go further, reducing or delaying the purchase of F-35 fighters, given the plane's serious flaws, and reducing carrier groups from 11 to 10 or fewer. Mr. Hagel also said that the administration "will have to consider every tool at our disposal to further reduce infrastructure" if Congress pushes budget cuts while blocking the closure of unneeded military bases.

Congress, as is often the case, hypocritically pushes for draconian budget cuts while insisting on protecting favored programs under the guise of national security. Pentagon leaders acknowledge that reducing defense spending and reshaping the military involves some risk. But this should be a matter of honest, informed debate, unburdened by the wishes, scare tactics and fears of lobbyists.

[Article 2.](#)

The Washington Post

Hagel's budget priority: 'Defend the country'

David Ignatius

February 25 -- It's been more than a year since [Chuck Hagel's bruising Senate confirmation hearing](#) to become secretary of defense, but the pain is

still palpable, even as Hagel tries to [craft a defense budget that will pass muster with a skeptical Congress](#).

“I got hit by everything I would get hit by that first day,” Hagel said Tuesday morning, recalling the confirmation hearing in which he sparred with Sen. John McCain and others. “That’s not an excuse,” he said, likening his challenge to that facing [Tom Osborne, the celebrated football coach at the University of Nebraska](#) in Hagel’s home state. Osborne has one of the highest winning percentages of any college coach.

“I see my job as a Tom Osborne football team,” Hagel explained. “You don’t win games unless you play all four quarters.” He conceded that he had gotten roughed up in his “first quarter” in the confirmation hearing, which was widely seen as disastrous, and during the long aftermath.

“I know what ████ doing,” Hagel insisted. “I know how to do this. . . . Now we’re going into the second quarter.” He said he hoped to serve all four years of President Obama’s second administration.

Hagel was meeting with columnists and defense analysts to explain his budget proposal, released Monday, which will cut the numbers of troops, planes and ships to address budget pressures. Some defense commentators praised his attempt to protect the Pentagon’s technological edge and combat readiness, even at a cost of the hardware beloved by members of congress.

Hagel struggled Tuesday with questions that pushed for a broader framework in which to assess the budget choices he made. Asked what “grand strategy” lay behind the budget numbers, Hagel answered: “Defend the country.” Pressed later about what legacy he hoped to leave as defense secretary, Hagel again demurred, saying: “I’ll leave that to the smart people.”

This low-key, plain-vanilla manner has been part of Hagel’s style ever since he joined the Senate in 1997. He’s proud that he served as an enlisted man in the U.S. Army in Vietnam, as opposed to an officer, arguing that this gives him a sense of what the military looks like for the men and women in the ranks.

But Hagel follows three intellectual powerhouses — Donald Rumsfeld, Bob Gates and Leon Panetta — who, for better and sometimes for worse, immersed themselves in the details of Pentagon policy.

Hagel is trying hard to master one of the toughest management jobs in Washington, and he deserves good marks for his first budget. But you could see Tuesday that Hagel is still recovering from the effects of a confirmation hearing that turned into the Washington equivalent of a cage fight.

[Article 3.](#)

NYT

With Syria, Diplomacy Needs Force

Michael Ignatieff

Feb. 25, 2014 -- THE conventional wisdom about [Syria](#) is that nothing can be done. It is said that military action would be either perverse — bringing the jihadists in the opposition to power — or futile, failing to tip the balance against the government of President [Bashar al-Assad](#). Using force, it is argued, would also jeopardize other strategic objectives, like securing a lasting nuclear deal with Syria's supporter Iran.

The trouble is that the conventional wisdom may be fatalism parading as realism and resignation masquerading as prudence.

Any realist needs to face two facts. First, absent the credible application of force against the Syrian regime, a negotiated transition leading to Mr. Assad's departure is not going to happen. Despite the efforts of the United Nations envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, the peace talks in Geneva between the Syrian government and the opposition coalition have become a waste of time. The opposition forces have been weakened by military defeats, and Mr. Assad's strategic advantage gives him no incentive to concede anything.

Second, if Mr. Assad is allowed to prevail in this conflict, he will reimpose his tyranny, and his forces will surely exterminate the remaining Sunni insurgents who make up most of the opposition. Obliterating his enemies, however, will not bring lasting peace. It will only further inflame hatreds. Sooner or later blood will flow again.

Though nominally committed to Mr. Assad's overthrow, the United States, in doing so little to bring it about, is becoming complicit in his survival. Is there a realistic alternative?

Arming the rebels is not the answer. Providing weapons, as nations like Saudi Arabia and Qatar have done with their fundamentalist proxies in Syria, appears to have only increased civilian suffering without shifting the conflict in favor of the insurgents.

Neither is the solution to create humanitarian corridors or safe zones to protect civilians. Doing so will not succeed unless Western governments commit ground forces, and that won't happen.

The only remaining option is to use force to deny Mr. Assad air superiority. Planes, drones and cyber operations could prevent his forces from using barrel bombs, [cluster munitions](#) and phosphorus weapons on civilian targets. An air campaign should not be used to provide support for rebel groups whose goals the West does not share. The aim would be to relieve the unrelenting pressure on the civilian population and force Mr. Assad to return to Geneva to negotiate a cease-fire.

Last year, the threat of force persuaded Mr. Assad to get rid of his chemical weapons. Applying force now could deny him the chance to bomb his way to victory. Mr. Assad can endure only if he crushes the insurgents. If he is denied victory, his eventual departure into exile becomes a matter of time. A cease-fire in Syria would likely unleash a chaotic struggle for power, but it is better than slaughter. Syria is bound to look like Libya. International peacekeepers will be needed to prevent revenge killing by the opposition and former Assad allies alike.

The conventional wisdom holds that there are no "good guys" in the opposition, no one we actually want to win. There weren't many good guys among the Balkan politicians in the late 1990s, either, but by working with them as a special presidential envoy, Richard C. Holbrooke did help bring a stop to the killing. If force were applied to leverage diplomacy in Syria, as the United States did in Bosnia, the dying could stop, refugees could return and negotiations could eventually lead either to partition or to a constitutional transition.

Given the near certainty that Russia would veto any [United Nations Security Council](#) authorization of air power, and that the United States Congress, if asked to authorize force, would likely turn [President Obama](#) down, stopping the war in Syria will stretch domestic and international legality. But if legality is not stretched, the killing will go on indefinitely.

Every piece of this proposal — using air power, forcing a cease-fire, putting in international peacekeepers — would be a test of presidential nerve and resolve. Military action risks confrontation with the Russians and is unpopular with a recession-weary public in the United States. Above all, using force would make the president “own” the Syrian tragedy. So far he has tried to pretend he doesn’t have to. The fact is he owns it already. American inaction has strengthened Russia, Hezbollah and Iran. It has turned Syria into the next front in the war with Islamic extremism. And it has put in jeopardy the stability of Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey and risks leaving a failed state next door to Israel. If the president already owns the deadly consequences of inaction, it is only prudent now to back diplomacy with force so that the consequences do not become deadlier still.

[Michael Ignatieff](#) is a professor of practice at the Harvard Kennedy School.

[Article 4.](#)

The Guardian

Egypt looks set to lurch from crisis to crisis

[David Wearing](#)

25 February 2014 -- Egypt has produced another of its "what just happened?" moments: the [abrupt resignation of the entire cabinet](#) on Monday, which apparently [took the United States](#) and [even many cabinet members themselves](#) by surprise. What is behind this latest development, and what does it tell us about the state of post-Mubarak Egypt?

The cabinet, led by prime minister Hazem al-Beblawy, was appointed in July 2013 after the military ousted the elected government of Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood, following enormous popular demonstrations. Although the generals have played a leading role in running the country following the uprisings of early 2011, their preference has always been to reside in the background, protecting their significant political and economic privileges while civilians assume the duties of day-to-day governance.

The essentially conservative Brotherhood had offered itself to the generals and their American sponsors as a [safe pair of hands for this task](#), and had they displayed an ounce of managerial competence it is probable that they would still be in charge today. Instead, the military appointed president Adly Mansour and the al-Beblawy administration to handle the transitional period until another round of elections later this year.

There has been much speculation that the [dissolution of the cabinet was a formality](#) designed to free the real head of the government, Field Marshal Abdel Fatah al-Sisi, from his responsibilities as defence minister, thus clearing a constitutional barrier to his widely predicted presidential bid. A sinister cult of personality has built up around al-Sisi since the coup, presenting him as a national saviour during the bloody crackdown against the Brotherhood which has seen [thousands jailed](#) and [hundreds murdered in the streets](#). But such is al-Sisi's popularity, and so [draconian are the ever-tightening restrictions](#) on political dissent in Egypt, that it seems unlikely he would feel the need to exit the defence ministry under cover of a general cabinet resignation.

Reports in the Egyptian media that the [cabinet did not in fact resign but was summarily sacked by the president](#) hint at another explanation. It may well be that al-Sisi did not want the coming formal announcement of his presidential bid to be associated with a civilian administration that has become increasingly unpopular and embattled in recent weeks.

While most analysis of the situation in post-Mubarak Egypt has focused on politics and human rights, the [country's economic problems](#) have received considerably less attention. But they are no less important.

The famous call of the revolutionaries in January and February 2011 was for "bread, freedom and social justice", and the first and third of these have been denied to the Egyptian people every bit as thoroughly as the second. In recent months, the economy has been plagued by fuel shortages, routine power cuts and, most recently, a vast wave of strikes as tens of thousands of workers protest the government's [failure to fully implement a minimum wage](#). One constant theme under Mubarak, the generals, the Brotherhood, and now under the generals again, is the Egyptian economy's chronic failure to deliver the basics of life to the population: decent wages, secure jobs and the necessities of life at affordable prices. The al-Beblawy cabinet may have taken the fall for the current wave of economic problems in order

to shield al-Sisi from the blame, which is precisely the role the generals seem to want civilian administrations to play.

Even now, three years into the current period of turmoil, it is difficult to identify any major political force in the country that is offering anything resembling a serious plan for the long-term development of the Egyptian economy. The neoliberal medicine of balancing the books by cutting subsidies (largely those upon which the population relies) while [opening the country up to foreign investment](#) appears superficial and entirely unpromising. What is required, as professor of development studies Gilbert Achcar argues in his recent book [The People Want](#), is a long-term programme of state-led investment to develop the economy on a truly productive basis, and meet the challenge of providing good jobs for young Egyptians on a sustained basis into the future.

Until that happens, it seems likely that the country will continue to lurch from crisis to crisis as cabinets, presidents and even generals take it in turn to fall victim to the deep malaise in which Egypt's political economy is mired.

David Wearing is a PhD candidate at the School of Oriental and African Studies, and a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Westminster.

[Article 5.](#)

The Daily Star

Al-Qaeda and ISIS fight over the jihadist future

Brian Michael Jenkins

February 26, 2014 -- Faced with open defiance from the leader of Al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria and Iraq, Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahri publicly expelled the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS), suspending its franchise and stripping it of its status as part of the Al-Qaeda global enterprise. The split will test the value of Al-Qaeda's brand. Although Al-Qaeda's leaders have quarreled in the past over strategy, tactics and targets, an open break such as this is unprecedented and creates real risks for the leadership of both organizations. So, what's next?

The rebellious ISIS is not likely to dissolve itself, and ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi – who has already rejected Zawahri’s orders, claiming that he obeys only God – seems unlikely to back down. Now that Al-Qaeda has declared ISIS a renegade, however, its leaders cannot allow ISIS to succeed in creating a rival center of power. That sets up a showdown that could turn an internal dispute into a schism that cuts across the jihadist universe.

Al-Qaeda’s leaders place great importance on maintaining unity. In their view, disunity is the cause of Islam’s weakness. It prevented a strong response to “the Crusades,” and allowed external foes to conquer and occupy Muslim territory piecemeal. Al-Qaeda’s recent expansion, combined with a diminishing central role and the ever-present danger of centrifugal forces, could dissipate the unity necessary to sustain its current global effort.

Al-Qaeda’s central leadership has a history of trouble with autonomy-minded jihadists in Iraq. The current troubles began when ISIS asserted its authority over the Nusra Front, Al-Qaeda’s affiliate in Syria. The Nusra Front rejected ISIS’ claim and was backed up by Al-Qaeda’s central leadership, which instructed ISIS to confine its operations to Iraq. ISIS ignored the order.

Around the same time, ISIS signaled its broader ambitions by changing its name from the “Islamic State of Iraq” to the “Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria,” a reference to the Levant, which historically includes Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and, of course, Israel.

A further issue of contention is ISIS’ increasingly ferocious application of unlimited violence, often against Muslim civilians. The scent of blood has attracted a number of fighters to ISIS, many of them foreign volunteers who have come to Syria solely to kill. Al-Qaeda fears that the indiscriminate slaughter of fellow Muslims will alienate supporters. Al-Qaeda’s central leadership quarreled about the same issue with Baghdadi’s predecessor in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who proudly called himself the “prince of slaughter.”

This kind of tension seems built into terrorist groups. Ideologues resort to terrorist tactics to achieve their goals, but their campaigns attract harder men for whom violence seems an end in itself. They reject any self-imposed constraints as fainthearted. If things are not going well, it is

because the violence is insufficient. If things are going well, more violence will accelerate progress.

Al-Qaeda's attempts to mediate the dispute failed. Meanwhile, growing friction between ISIS and other rebel organizations in Syria erupted into open fighting, and ISIS demonstrated its growing power in the region by seizing control of Fallujah and Ramadi in Iraq.

Could this split have happened under Osama bin Laden? Zawahri, his longtime lieutenant, has managed to stay in charge of the disparate Al-Qaeda enterprise, but he did not inherit bin Laden's moral authority, and has been viewed less as Al-Qaeda's commander, and more as its ideological commissar. The expulsion of ISIS will test his supremacy.

Although ISIS reportedly does not depend on Al-Qaeda for its core needs, Baghdadi must worry about his own survival. Now that he is no longer Al-Qaeda's man, his own lieutenants may feel free to challenge his leadership. It is not clear how important Al-Qaeda's imprimatur is to ISIS' estimated 10,000 fighters. The foreign fighters responsible for some of the worst atrocities may not care. That said, the split will undoubtedly cause confusion among Al-Qaeda's supporters worldwide.

Overall, divisions in Al-Qaeda's ranks are good news for the United States. While the split will not end the jihadists' terrorist campaigns, it will preoccupy Al-Qaeda's leaders and create uncertainty in its ranks. It may also open up some opportunities for the United States to facilitate discord, although caution is in order. Obvious attempts to fan the flames could backfire and reunify the movement.

Brian Michael Jenkins is senior adviser to the president of the RAND Corporation, and is the author of "Al-Qaeda in Its Third Decade: Irreversible Decline or Imminent Victory?" and "The Dynamics of Syria's Civil War." This commentary originally appeared at The Mark News (██████████).

[Article 6.](#)

NYT

Don't Just Do Something. Sit There.

Thomas L. Friedman

Feb. 25, 2014 -- With Russia growling over the downfall of its ally running Ukraine and still protecting its murderous ally running Syria, there is much talk that we're returning to the Cold War — and that the Obama team is not up to defending our interests or friends. I beg to differ. I don't think the Cold War is back; today's geopolitics are actually so much more interesting than that. And I also don't think President Obama's caution is entirely misplaced.

The Cold War was a unique event that pitted two global ideologies, two global superpowers, each with globe-spanning nuclear arsenals and broad alliances behind them. Indeed, the world was divided into a chessboard of red and black, and who controlled each square mattered to each side's sense of security, well-being and power. It was also a zero-sum game, in which every gain for the Soviet Union and its allies was a loss for the West and NATO, and vice versa.

That game is over. We won. What we have today is the combination of an older game and a newer game. The biggest geopolitical divide in the world today “is between those countries who want their states to be powerful and those countries who want their people to be prosperous,” argues Michael Mandelbaum, professor of foreign policy at Johns Hopkins.

The first category would be countries like Russia, Iran and North Korea, whose leaders are focused on building their authority, dignity and influence through powerful states. And because the first two have oil and the last has nukes that it can trade for food, their leaders can defy the global system and survive, if not thrive — all while playing an old, traditional game of power politics to dominate their respective regions.

The second category, countries focused on building their dignity and influence through prosperous people, includes all the countries in Nafta, the European Union, and the Mercosur trade bloc in Latin America and Asean in Asia. These countries understand that the biggest trend in the world today is not a new Cold War but the merger of globalization and the information technology revolution. They are focused on putting in place the right schools, infrastructure, bandwidth, trade regimes, investment openings and economic management so more of their people can thrive in a world in which every middle-class job will require more skill and the

ability to constantly innovate will determine their standard of living. (The true source of sustainable power.)

But there is also now a third and growing category of countries, which can't project power or build prosperity. They constitute the world of "disorder." They are actually power and prosperity sinks because they are consumed in internal fights over primal questions like: Who are we? What are our boundaries? Who owns which olive tree? These countries include Syria, Libya, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, Congo and other hot spots. While those nations focused on state power do play in some of these countries — Russia and Iran both play in Syria — the states that are more focused on building prosperity are trying to avoid getting too involved in the world of disorder. Though ready to help mitigate humanitarian tragedies there, they know that when you "win" one of these countries in today's geopolitical game, all you win is a bill.

So what do we do? The world is learning that the bar for U.S. intervention abroad is being set much higher. This is due to a confluence of the end of the Soviet Union's existential threat, the experience of investing too many lives and \$2 trillion in Iraq and Afghanistan to little lasting impact, America's rising energy independence, our intelligence successes in preventing another 9/11 and the realization that to fix what ails the most troubled countries in the world of disorder is often beyond our skill set, resources or patience.

In the Cold War, policy-making was straightforward. We had "containment." It told us what to do and at almost any price. Today, Obama's critics say he must do "something" about Syria. I get it. Chaos there can come around to bite us. If there is a policy that would fix Syria, or even just stop the killing there, in a way that was self-sustaining, at a cost we could tolerate and not detract from all the things we need to do at home to secure our own future, ■■■ for it.

But we should have learned some lessons from our recent experience in the Middle East: First, how little we understand about the social and political complexities of the countries there; second, that we can — at considerable cost — stop bad things from happening in these countries but cannot, by ourselves, make good things happen; and third, that when we try to make good things happen we run the risk of assuming the responsibility for solving their problems, a responsibility that truly belongs to them.

Revolutionary patience

Javier Solana

25 February 2014 -- On Dec. 17, 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi set himself alight in Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia. Within weeks, the popular revolt triggered by Bouazizi's act had spread far beyond Tunisia, engulfing much of the Arab world.

In Europe, Ukraine and other troubled countries, such as Bosnia, began their long and still incomplete transitions to democracy a quarter-century ago. The Arab world, by contrast, has logged a mere three years of transition -- the blink of an eye in historical terms. Still, there have already been significant changes, and the region is advancing -- though the destination remains unknown. As in other parts of the world, Arab countries need time to attain the democracy and pluralism their peoples seek. They will achieve their goals -- but not in a mere three years.

In fact, events in today's Middle East continue to be shaped by the radical changes brought about after World War I. Previously, most Arabs had been grouped together under various caliphates. After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in 1923, two nation-states (Iran and Turkey) emerged, while the Arabs were distributed among 22 new countries, generally under British or French colonial domination.

Once the colonies had achieved independence -- Saudi Arabia, today a Sunni regional power, was created in 1932 -- a new attempt was made to unite the Arab nation by means of the political Islam that emerged in the 1920's in response to the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate. The phenomenon took many forms, including the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928. At the same time, efforts at nation-building along secular lines were reflected in Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's pan-Arabism and the Syrian Baath Party, resulting in the establishment of the United Arab Republic, a union between Egypt and Syria that lasted from 1958 to 1961.

A half-century later, the simultaneous revolts in the Arab world were the result of neither political tendency, instead reflecting broad popular

rejection of dysfunctional and corrupt authoritarian governments. But, with Syria immersed in a brutal civil war that has claimed more than 130,000 lives already, Libya on the verge of collapse and Egypt returning power to the army and proscribing the Muslim Brotherhood, Tunisia has been the only success.

Tunisia adopted its new constitution on Jan. 27, thus clearing the way for what will be the most secular and fairest elections in any of the region's countries. The new constitution is the most modern in the Arab world, the fruit of a non-violent transition. With a small, well-educated population, Tunisia has become the exception.

Egypt's government, by banning the Muslim Brotherhood, has taken the country backward since the military coup that overthrew President Mohammed Morsi last July. The Egyptian process, however, should not be considered merely a return to the pre-2011 status quo; rather, developments constitute what could be characterized as an ascending spiral that, while turning back on itself, nevertheless advances.

The generational split within Egypt is evident: Social mobilization has given young Egyptians valuable political experience, and this represents a key difference from the three decades of former President Hosni Mubarak's rule. The same could be said of Syria, though the spiral there has been an unremittingly downward one, and any reversal remains blocked, particularly since the failure of the second round of peace negotiations in Geneva.

More generally, lack of pluralism and the inability to share power are holding back the transitions. With the exception of Tunisia, this can be seen to varying degrees in all of the affected countries. In Egypt, both the army - - whether under Mubarak or Field Marshal Abdul Fattah el-Sisi -- and the Islamists have demonstrated that they want all power for themselves. Political pluralism cannot be imposed. Societies must demand it and build the lasting institutions needed to preserve it. This process can take many years, making it crucial not to lose historical perspective. The situation in each country was different when the revolts began. Countries with homogenous societies, such as Tunisia, have suffered only minimal violence, unlike socially heterogenous countries, such as Syria. Nor are there any consolidated regional structures to which the transition countries

can adhere, and there are few local models -- with the exception of Turkey, for example -- that can be used to help democracy and pluralism take root. Indeed, the context in which these transitions were set in motion was -- and remains -- unfavorable compared to those taking place in Europe. Unlike the Arab countries, Eastern Europe and the Balkans benefited from a common starting point and a common path forward: all are part of a continent that has taken historic steps toward integration since World War II. That has given them a common destination as well, both politically (accession to the European Union) and in terms of their security (through NATO).

But the situations in Bosnia and Ukraine are still very fluid. Twenty-five years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and 23 years after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the post-communist transition is still incomplete.

We cannot expect results in the Middle East in three years that have not been achieved in Europe in a quarter-century. Despite the backsliding in Egypt and the intolerable violence in Syria, the region is evolving at its own pace in a complex, changing, and unstable geopolitical context. A patient strategy and an unwavering dedication to pluralism are fundamental, whether in Kiev or Cairo.

Javier Solana was the EU high representative for foreign and security policy, secretary-general of NATO and foreign minister of Spain. He is currently president of the ESADE Center for Global Economy and Geopolitics and distinguished fellow at the Brookings Institution. © Project Syndicate 2014.

[Article 8.](#)

The Daily Beast

Is Ukraine Headed For Civil War?

Will Cathcart

25 Feb. 2014 -- KIEV—Sunday night, the subway stations within Maidan were cleared. Hours before, what was an intricate security system of multiple checkpoints has now changed. There are still checkpoints on the perimeter, but inside this city within a city a cathartic feeling of victory has replaced the frantic terror that permeated in Euromaidan after police

snipers under former President Viktor Yanukovich's command began shooting protestors in a final desperate attempt to gain control of Kiev. Now the most prevailing scene in the city center is not the barricades of debris and stacked tires, but the makeshift memorials—the candles, flowers, photos and helmets placed throughout the square to honor those who were killed. These are the lost heroes of the Euromaidan movement—which recently ousted Ukraine's fugitive president—or as some call them, "Heaven's Hundred."

Yet the fight is not over. The Russian government fresh out of the Sochi Winter Olympics is already developing a way to maintain some kind of strategic control of its gas-line gateway to Europe: All eyes are on Crimea where the former president has fled as an outlaw within his own country wanted for mass murder. He is being hunted by forces who were under his control (at least officially) only days before. On Monday, Russian parliamentarians flew to Crimea to deliver a message on behalf of the Russian government that Crimeans can claim Russian citizenship. The Russian government has a huge strategic interest in protecting its naval base in Sevastopol, where the Russian Black Sea fleet is located. And last night, reports of Russian amphibious warfare ships carrying Special Forces Troops to the naval base drew an eerie parallel to the buildup before the August 2008 invasion of Georgia.

Crimea is a historic Russian stronghold in Ukraine and peacefully maintaining control of that region and a united Ukraine will not be easy. Media reports, especially by pundits inclined to take "a position" on U.S. television networks about the possibility of civil war are disingenuous. Still the Crimea situation will not be easy. The Russian government has financial leverage, which the EU does not, though the EU is quickly trying to find a way to bring IMF aid to the Ukraine economy, which has been paralyzed for a very long time.

Ukraine is not at the brink of a civil war. It may have been on Thursday night, when even the Euromaidan medical team, recognizable by their red uniforms and reflective white crosses, were being targeted by police snipers. But after this weekend Ukraine is more united than it has been in a very long time. Or as Anastasia Boichuk—a student representative who is part of a group of students peacefully occupying the Ministry of Education in Kiev until a new education minister is appointed—put it: "The situation

is much different than in 2004. The country has changed. Students have changed. Ukraine today is not as divided now as it was nine years ago, not even as much as it was three months ago. Many eastern cities have their own Euromaidan as well. But in the East many people are afraid and we need to show them by example that they don't need to be afraid—that they must not be passive and careless.”

Boichuk believes that the law passed Monday by the new government to eliminate Russian as an official language is a “senseless political law” and such moves send a dangerous and divisive nationalist message to the (predominantly Russian-speaking) east of Ukraine. Instead she and her fellow students believe that they must rebuild Ukraine's civil society. “This [Euromaidan movement] is more than just a matter of changing the faces of those in power, we need to change the attitude between the people and their political representatives. We expect real work from these politicians. Maidan is just the beginning.”

The Ministry of Education is surprisingly clean for a building that has been occupied by college students since February 21st. Boichuk points out that the entire Euromaidan movement began with a few student protests when Yanukovich first rejected the EU Associated Agreement in late November. The movement, which began with students, remarkably may also end with them. So far these student groups seem to be most effectively engaging the population in Crimea. They are reaching out to students particularly in eastern Ukraine. While the dramatic hunt for Yanukovich throughout Crimea by the new Interior Minister seems only to be galvanizing pro-Russian or anti-Maidan sentiment, the students occupying the Ministry of Education have development communication channels with student groups in Crimea and are actively engaging and including them in the process of defining the criteria which they are demanding of a new candidate for ministry of education. The new government would do well to follow the student's lead and engage the people of Crimea in a similar manner.

Anastasia Boichuk and her fellow student representatives believe that the pervasive corruption during the Yanukovich regime occurred because of passiveness and apathy by citizens from both the west and east of Ukraine. As for those who were killed in recent events she declares “We have no moral right to waste their lives for us to live in a better country. These guys who died, they saved us. We must not let that go to waste.”

In central Kiev, as Euromaiden now seems to be shedding layers of improvised security checkpoints by the hour, the Euromaidan security force seems to be growing more and more organized if not ominous as it performs its marching drills throughout the Maidan territory in groups of 25 men in helmets, body armor and armed with wooden clubs. It would be easy to write off these groups as far-right extremists, but as Boichuk points out, these are the guys who were on the front lines of every Maidan battle. They took sniper fire, tear gas and shock grenades for days on end. Had it not been for these groups, Euromaidan surely would have fallen. No one is more aware of this than the main (former opposition) leaders of the new government. Though the majority of Euromaidan and the people of Ukraine are far more moderate than this small group of ultra-nationalists, the leaders of Euromaidan relied on this group when they needed them most. Yet it is precisely these small extremist fringe groups that give the Russian media and critics of Euromaidan the ammunition they need to try and paint the opposition as a fascist movement.

To be clear, Euromaidan is not a fascist movement, it's not even so much a nationalist movement as it is a movement for a new kind of Ukraine. Yet within this movement there is a group of several hundred individuals whose brand of far-right extremism made them terrifyingly effective fighters and vice versa. Indeed they are an intimidating bunch. It will be very tempting for moderate leaders like Vitaly Klitchko and Yulia Tymoshenko to attempt to disband and disenfranchise these groups, but this would be a grave mistake. The new government would have no more success in dispersing the Euromaidan "Security Patrol" than the Yanukovich government did. Instead these individuals should be brought into the political process. They must be represented by the government and held accountable for their actions by that representation. Ideally they will be respectfully honored, trained and incorporated into to the ranks of the police and army where they can be ordered and absorbed by a chain of command.

Ukraine faces a much larger problem than that of mere unification. The country's economic situation is not currently sustainable and Russia hasn't even raised gas prices yet. As one correspondent here in Kiev put it, the irony is that most of the \$40 billion needed to resuscitate its economy, which will now come from the EU, U.S. and IMF, will actually be paid

back to Russia. This will be in exchange for the large amounts of natural gas needed to fuel the industrial steel and fertilizer plants in eastern Ukraine. There is a vast discrepancy between the actual price of natural gas and the price that Ukrainians are currently paying for it. The difference has been compensated in the form of Ukraine's ever-snowballing debt.

The only way out of this scenario is to reform and modernize the industry in the east of the country. Most of the steel plants use outdated Soviet technologies, which consume gas at extremely inefficient rates. Yet to do this, the new government will have to work with the oligarchs who control these plants. In the long run, improving and modernizing the industry which supports the eastern part of the country will benefit everyone, but it will be a hard pill to swallow. Both sides will have to make concessions. Many throughout the country are grieving the deaths of those who perished in the struggle to overcome the Yanukovich regime. Yet if they truly want to honor those sacrifices, the new government must not dwell on revenge, punishment and prosecution of all those associated with Yanukovich government—however tempting and cathartic it may be. Instead they must use this fleeting opportunity to build a new Ukraine, the kind of Ukraine for which many were willing to die. This will not be easy. It will require drastic modernization techniques and it will require anti-corruption measures all across the board.

The Ukraine people must be prepared to stomach higher taxes, higher gas prices and possibly even cuts in their pensions. These will not be popular steps but in combination with considerable western aid from the IMF, this is the only way out of the country's current cycle of debt, corruption and political unrest. Strong leadership and swift action is needed from the new government. As Moscow begins to use its financial leverage on the country, while fomenting breakaway-sentiment in Crimea, the new Ukraine government must be a source of unity, compassion and wisdom—and it must remind the country of what a united Ukraine can become and not what each region or faction has to lose.

This will be no easy task. It is time for Europe and the U.S. to be the partners and allies that those fighting in Euromaidan believed they were. They must help Ukraine become the kind of country for which many were willing to die. All parties have daunting expectations to live up to, but one must only look at the hope that the events of the last several days has given

to those opposing dictatorships throughout the region. For that reason alone the promises made to and made by the Euromaidan must be kept. Far more than just Ukraine's autonomy is at stake. Dictators everywhere should fear what the people of Ukraine have proved is possible.

Will Cathcart is the managing editor of the Charleston Mercury newspaper in Charleston, South Carolina.