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**26 April, 2014**

<a href="#">Article 1.</a>	The Washington Post <b><u>War returns to Iraq on the eve of elections</u></b> <a href="#">David Ignatius</a>
<a href="#">Article 2.</a>	The Washington Post <b><u>America should work to bring Asia into the club</u></b> <a href="#">Fareed Zakaria</a>
<a href="#">Article 3.</a>	The American Interest <b><u>U.S. Foreign Policy: In Troubling Disarray</u></b> <a href="#">Richard N. Haass</a>
<a href="#">Article 4.</a>	The Guardian <b><u>The Palestinian accord is, at the very least, a clean slate</u></b> <a href="#">Nicholas Blincoe</a>
<a href="#">Article 5.</a>	The Boston Globe <b><u>Time for an Obama peace plan in Mideast</u></b> Geoffrey H. Lewis
<a href="#">Article 6.</a>	WSJ <b><u>Holocaust Denial and the Iranian Regime</u></b> Reuel Marc Gerecht
Article 7.	The Washington Post <b><u>In the long run, wars make us safer and richer</u></b>

[Article 1.](#)

The Washington Post

## **War returns to Iraq on the eve of elections**

[David Ignatius](#)

April 26 -- Amman, Jordan -- Iraq is slipping back into civil war, and Sheik Zaydan Aljabiri, one of the political leaders of the Sunni insurgent group known as the Tribal Revolutionaries, seems confident that his side is winning.

“We are three kilometers from Baghdad airport! We are 20 kilometers from the Green Zone!” Zaydan proclaims in an interview here. Dressed in a princely gold robe and red kaffiyeh, he conveys the tribal authority of one of the leading sheiks of Ramadi, the capital of Iraq’s Anbar province.

With Iraqi parliamentary elections scheduled for Wednesday, war has come back with a vengeance to that shattered nation. But this time, there’s no U.S. military around to broker a truce. The last U.S. troops left three years ago, and war-weary Americans would gag at the thought of returning to such a pitiless battlefield.

But make no mistake: [Brutal sectarian war](#) has come again to Iraq, and many say it’s as bad as in the dark days of 2007. “In some ways, it’s almost scarier today,” says a Pentagon official who follows Iraq closely. The Iraqi military isn’t strong enough to fend off the Sunni insurgents, so Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is relying increasingly on Iranian-trained Shiite militias.

As the Sunni fighters push toward Baghdad, they are turning to extremists for help, some of them linked with the al-Qaeda affiliate often known by its Arabic acronym, pronounced “Daash.” Zaydan insists that his 15,000

fighters don't have extremist support, but other Iraqis say that the jihadists have been on the front lines, especially in Fallujah, at the gates of Baghdad.

"It's only going to get worse," warns Maj. Gen. Ali Shukri, a retired Jordanian commander who was the late King Hussein's special adviser on Iraqi tribes. He notes that many Sunni tribal leaders have never given up the atavistic dream that one expressed to him in 2005, after the United States had toppled Sunni dictator Saddam Hussein and transferred power to a Shiite-led government: "Iraq has always been ruled by Sunnis, and it will be again."

A vivid snapshot of the battle raging in Anbar province comes from Jalal al-Gaood, who's running for parliament in Wednesday's election. I spoke with him by phone Thursday while he was campaigning near Ramadi. He says that in town after town, extremists seize government buildings, triggering bombing reprisals and tank assaults by Iraqi government forces that drive residents away.

Gaood cites the example of a town called Albu Ali Jassim, west of Ramadi along the Euphrates River. "In the last week, violent extremists rampaged the police building and pushed people out," he explains. "The Iraqi military then began bombing and shelling the village, and the whole tribe moved out, 250 families." Because they're refugees now, these Sunnis from Albu Ali Jassim probably won't vote on Wednesday, which Gaood thinks is precisely what Maliki wants.

"Everyone tells me they've never seen what's happening on the ground now," says Gaood sorrowfully. "Hell has come to these villages and towns. It's far worse than before." On Thursday, says Gaood, Iraqi bombs destroyed the residence of Sheik Ali Hatem, the self-styled "emir" of the Tribal Revolutionaries. Gaood argues that Hatem's group should purge the extremists, but he notes they are "fierce fighters who are willing to take leadership against Maliki."

How did such catastrophic violence return to Iraq? That's really the saddest part of the story. The United States helped engineer Maliki's reelection as prime minister in 2010. But once the Americans had left,

Maliki's government foolishly created a vacuum that allowed Sunni extremists to take root again in western Iraq after they had been crushed by the U.S.-backed tribal movement called the Sahwa, or "Awakening."

Zaydan's cousin, Sheik Sattar Abu Risha, was one of the Sahwa's founders. But when Maliki reneged on promises to keep paying the tribesmen, they turned elsewhere for support. Now, with Anbar in revolt, Maliki has tried to revive the Sahwa network, offering fighters as much \$400 a month to back the government. But it's probably too late. "That ship has sailed," says the Pentagon expert.

Anbar is a battleground: Zaydan reports that when he drove recently from Ramadi to Amman, he saw scores of deserters from the Iraqi army. "We gave them Arab clothing, and they gave us their weapons," he says with a glint in his eye.

The Tribal Revolutionaries are ready to work with the United States to suppress al-Qaeda, Zaydan offers, but he warns: "Iraq is not now a state. It is led by gangs."

[Article 2.](#)

The Washington Post

## **America should work to bring Asia into the club**

[Fareed Zakaria](#)

April 25 -- Foreign policy commands attention when it is crisis management. A street revolt breaks out in Egypt or Libya or Ukraine, and everyone asks how the president of the United States should respond. This is an important element of America's role in the world, but it is essentially reactive and tactical. The broader challenge is to lay down a

longer-term strategy that endures after crises. The Obama administration has tried to do this with its Asia policy — and [the president's trip there this week](#) is part of it — but progress has been halting and incomplete. Still, the real threat to a serious Asia strategy comes not from the administration but rather from Congress and the American public. In fact, the difficulties in the execution of [the pivot](#) raise the larger question: Can the United States have a grand strategy today?

President Obama's basic approach is wise and is, in many ways, a continuation of U.S. foreign policy since Bill Clinton's presidency. On the diplomatic front, it has two elements: deterrence and engagement. All countries in Asia — as well as the United States — seek stronger and deeper economic ties with China but also want to ensure that the country does not become an expansionist, regional bully. Getting the balance between the two elements of this policy is hard to do and easy to criticize. In general, the Obama administration has handled this skillfully, keeping a close relationship with China while still setting out clear markers that should deter territorial expansion.

It's fair to say that Obama has not given enough attention and energy to his own ["pivot" strategy](#). Two trips to the region have been canceled. [He has not been to China since his first year in office](#). His second-term team is conspicuously lacking in Asia experts. This is a mistake. Success in Asia could be the most substantive accomplishment of his remaining time in office.

There is, however, an important constructive aspect to the Asia policy. At the center of this is the [Trans-Pacific Partnership](#). It not only would be the largest trade deal in decades — involving most of Asia's major economies and perhaps eventually even China — but it would also strongly reinforce American-style rules about free and open trade worldwide. Yet the president has not been able to get the "fast-track authority" that would make it possible to negotiate any trade deal.

The Democratic Party, once the greatest champion of free trade, has long turned its back on the TPP — a sad shift in a once open and optimistic party. In recent years, Republican support for trade has also gotten much weaker. The result is that the TPP, a grand, ambitious idea, is on life

support. The U.S. military strategy in Asia will require significant budgets that are under pressure from both sides of the aisle. Public support for any kind of generous or ambitious foreign policy is extremely low.

The most worrying obstacle to a serious American strategy might seem, at first, to be a highly technical issue. The administration has proposed [a reform of the International Monetary Fund](#) that congressional Republicans are blocking. But reforming this agency is crucial to the United States' future global role.

The IMF's governing board has long been dominated by the United States and Europe. As Asian countries have become a larger part of the global pie, the administration has proposed enlarging their votes on the board. This would mostly take power away from Europe, not the United States. And yet, Republicans have held up this plan for three years, and they show no signs of being ready to pass it.

This issue has united Asian countries — China, Indonesia, Singapore — that see this as a sign that the West will never let them share real power in global institutions. They have a point.

After World War II, the United States confronted communism, but it also built a stable world order by creating institutions that set global rules and shared power — including the IMF, United Nations and World Bank. The urgent task is to expand those institutions to include Asia's rising powers.

If Washington does not do this, it will strengthen the voices, especially in China, who say that Asian countries should not try to integrate into a Western framework of international rules — because they will always be second-class citizens — and instead should bide their time, create their own institutions and play by their own rules. At that point, we will all deeply regret that we did not let these countries into the club when we had a chance.

[Article 3.](#)

The American Interest

# **U.S. Foreign Policy: In Troubling Disarray**

[Richard N. Haass](#)

April 20, 2014 -- U.S. foreign policy is in troubling disarray. The result is unwelcome news for the world, which largely depends upon the United States to promote order in the absence of any other country able and willing to do so. And it is bad for the United States, which cannot insulate itself from developments beyond its borders.

If success has many fathers, it turns out that so, too, does disarray. The Administration of George W. Bush overreached in Iraq and (along with the Federal Reserve Board and Congress) under-regulated the financial sector in the run-up to the 2008 financial crisis. Congress should also be held accountable for the sequester (which makes no distinction between investment and spending), the government shutdown, the near-default on the debt, and repeated failures to reform the immigration system, modernize infrastructure, or reform long-term entitlement obligations. All of this has weakened the economic strength of the United States and exacted a serious toll on its reputation for reliability and competence.

Still, the Obama Administration cannot escape its share of the responsibility for what has gone wrong. As was the case with its predecessor and Congress, the shortcomings are mostly self-inflicted. What is curious about the Obama Administration's troubles is that they are inconsistent with its own professed approach to the world. A concept exists—one developed and promulgated by the Obama Administration in its first term—that provides a useful compass for what the United States should do in the world. What is missing is the commitment and discipline to ensure that implementation of foreign policy is consistent with this compass.

The concept that should inform American foreign policy is the pivot or rebalancing—that is, the notion that the United States should decrease its emphasis on the Middle East and instead focus more on Asia. The change is warranted by the fact that the United States has enormous interests in

the Asia-Pacific region, which is home to many of the countries likely to dominate the current century. It is also an area where the United States can count numerous formal obligations. The worrisome news is that the region's stability is increasingly uncertain; the reassuring news is that the United States possesses the tools (be they diplomatic, economic, or military) to advance and defend its interests there.

The Middle East, for its part, is much less likely to define the world's future, given the absence of a major power presence. What is more, the instruments of American foreign policy tend not to be effective if the goal is to remake local political systems. The United States is much better positioned to shape the policies of governments beyond their borders than it is their behavior within them.

So if the strategy is good, what is the problem? It is this: If, as Woody Allen says, 80 percent of life is showing up, then 80 percent of foreign policy is implementation. No design, no matter how good, is better than what is carried out in its name. The problem is not with the pivot or the rebalance; it is with a foreign policy that pays it little heed.

This judgment may appear odd, as at first glance the Obama Administration seems to be moving away from the Middle East. There are no longer any U.S. combat forces in Iraq, and the number of U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan (now below 40,000) will before long be reduced to 10,000 or fewer. Elsewhere in the region, the Obama Administration confined itself to leading from behind in Libya, avoiding following up the overthrow of Muammar Qaddafi with "boots on the ground." It has largely remained aloof from the war in Syria, declining to provide much in the way of arms to the "moderate" opposition and backing away from a direct use of military force, even though the Assad government defied a U.S. "red line" by using chemical weapons on several occasions.

There is a problem, however. While the Administration is doing less in the region militarily, it continues to articulate ambitious goals politically. The default option for the Obama Administration's foreign policy in the Middle East seems to be regime change, consisting of repeated calls for

authoritarian leaders to leave power. First it was Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, then Muammar Qaddafi in Libya, followed by Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

Yet history shows time and time again that it can be difficult to oust a leader, and even when it is not, it can be extremely difficult to help bring about a stable, alternative authority that is better in terms of American preferences. The result is that the United States often finds itself with an uncomfortable choice: Either it must back off its declared goals, which makes it look feckless and encourages widespread defiance, or it has to make good on its aims, which would require enormous investments in blood, treasure, and time rarely justified by the interests or results.

The Obama Administration, wary of anything that would lead to a long-term, large-scale deployment on the scale of either Iraq or Afghanistan, has largely opted for the former. The most egregious case has been Syria, where the President and others declared that “Assad must go” only to do little to bring about his departure. Military support of those opposition elements judged to be acceptable has been minimal. Worse yet, the President avoided using force in the wake of clear chemical weapons use by the Syrian government, a decision that raised doubts far and wide about American dependability and that damaged what little confidence and potential the non-jihadi opposition possessed. The result is that Assad has not gone and the principal opposition is worse, from an American perspective; it is only a matter of time before the United States will likely have to swallow the bitter pill of tolerating Assad while supporting acceptable opposition elements against the jihadis. Negotiating efforts that ignore realities on the ground will continue to bear little if any fruit.

Meanwhile, large areas within Libya are increasingly out of government control and under the authority of militias and terrorists. In Egypt the United States alienated both supporters of a secular society (by calling for Hosni Mubarak’s departure and pressing for early elections) and those of the Muslim Brotherhood (by refusing to describe the ouster of the government of Mohamed Morsi in late June 2013 as a coup and accepting the result). Today’s Egypt is polarized and characterized by mounting violence. Much the same is true in Iraq, now the second-most turbulent country in the region, where the United States now finds itself with little

influence despite a costly decade of occupation. Terrorists now have more of a foothold in the region than ever before. Jordan risks being overwhelmed by refugees; only Tunisia seems better off, although even this is in some doubt.

Just to be clear, none of this should be read as a call for the United States to do more to oust regimes, much less occupy countries in the name of nation-building. To the contrary, it can be costly to oust regimes (Syria being the prime example) and even costlier (and, at times, impossible) to put something sufficiently better in its place to justify those costs. Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, and Libya all come to mind here. There is as well a good deal of evidence that gradual and peaceful reform of authoritarian systems is not only less expensive by every measure and more likely to result in an open society, but also less likely to result in disruption and death. The push for regime change has brought about “cures” worse than the disease; to extend the medical metaphor, the United States would have been wiser to observe the Hippocratic Oath and, first, do no harm.

The extraordinary commitment being made to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is also difficult to justify. The dispute does not appear ripe for resolution, and even if a framework is established, it is anything but certain that it would be translated into an actual agreement. And even if this assessment proves wrong, it needs to be acknowledged that the Israel-Palestinian dispute no longer occupies center stage in the Middle East. The emergence of a separate Palestinian state would not affect the dynamics of what is taking place in Syria or Egypt or Iraq. It would be important and desirable for both Israelis and Palestinians, but it has become more a local than a regional dispute.

The one vital undertaking in the Middle East that the Obama Administration has pursued energetically is the effort to negotiate a pact with Iran that would place a ceiling on its nuclear capacity and potential. The Obama Administration deserves praise for all it did to ratchet up sanctions against Iran. Iran’s interest in a nuclear deal has gone up as a result; the challenge will be to come up with a package that is enough for Iran and not too much for us and for Israel. It is a difficult but worthwhile

pursuit, as a diplomatic settlement is far preferable to an Iran possessing nuclear weapons or to mounting an attack to prevent such an outcome.

All these diplomatic endeavors take time, however. A Secretary of State can only do so much; time spent in Jerusalem and Geneva is time not spent in Tokyo and Beijing. A Secretary of State can only do so much; time spent in Jerusalem and Geneva is time not spent in Tokyo and Beijing. And there is much that could be done in Asia. Regular consultations are warranted with the principal powers of the region, including China, Japan, and South Korea. Both crisis prevention and crisis management need to figure prominently in a region characterized by growing nationalism and rivalry and few diplomatic channels or institutions; so, too, does planning for a transition to a unified Korean Peninsula. Long-promised increases in U.S. air and naval presence in the region need to become a reality.

Unfortunately, no senior official in the Administration has yet made this set of issues a sufficient second term priority. The one official who has done so is U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman. The progress on negotiating a regional trade pact is welcome on economic and strategic grounds alike; still, an energetic trade policy is no substitute for a broader strategic undertaking.

The United States also will want to increase its involvement in and with Europe. American inattention, combined with Ukraine's own political dysfunction and the European Union's bungling, set the stage for Russian expansion into Crimea. Shaping Russian behavior henceforth will require sustained diplomacy across the Atlantic, greater allocation of economic resources to Ukraine, a willingness to export meaningful amounts of oil and natural gas, and a renewed commitment to NATO's military readiness.

The Administration also needs to focus on the home front and the strength and resilience of the economy and society. This is not an alternative to national security, but rather a central part of it. The energy boom is a major positive development, but also needed is comprehensive immigration reform, infrastructure modernization, and a willingness to tackle entitlements. Absent such efforts, economic growth, while it will

proceed, will not be as great as it could be or needs to be; just as important, the opportunity will be lost to do something about the debt before it explodes owing to surging Medicare and Social Security costs and higher interest rates.

But it is not just a matter of ensuring American strength and continued internationalism in the face of growing isolationist sentiment. It is also a case of sending the right message to others. Foreign and domestic policy developments over the past decade have raised questions about American competence and reliability. Revelations about NSA activities that signaled to many friends and allies that they are not treated all that differently from adversaries exacerbated such problems. The result is accelerated movement in the direction of a post-American world in which a growing number of decisions are made and actions taken with reduced regard for U.S. preferences and interests. Such a world promises to be messier and less supportive of American interests.

*Richard N. Haass is president of the Council on Foreign Relations. His most recent book is *Foreign Policy Begins at Home*.*

[Article 4.](#)

The Guardian

## **The Palestinian accord is, at the very least, a clean slate**

[Nicholas Blincoe](#)

25 April 2014 -- Will the new [Palestinian accord](#) lead to a unity government, after the seven-year cold war between Fatah and Hamas? There is an aura of scepticism around a deal that differs in no respect

from previous, failed agreements. However, the pact was signed in the presence of Mustafa Barghouti, the leader of a small independent party who has resisted joining more obviously doomed governments. Maybe his confidence will be infectious. Yet the pact dodges any mention of control of the armed forces, the issue that led to the Hamas takeover of Gaza in June 2007. If the parties continue to ignore the issue, the unity government cannot last long.

Will a new government prepare the way for elections, slated to take place six months down the line? This is even less likely. Hamas won the January 2006 elections but recent opinion polls have not been kind to it. Hamas would doubtless block parliamentary elections rather than risk losing. However, this is no obstacle to a presidential election. By tradition, Hamas is uninterested in the presidency, and its position has hardened after the debacle of Mohamed Morsi's presidency in Egypt. A new Palestinian president could easily survive a short-lived government. After all, [Mahmoud Abbas](#) has remained president for 10 years, while the last elected government lasted barely more than a year.

Will the unity government further the peace process? Israeli officials have maintained that the split between Hamas and the Palestinian National Authority (PA) makes a negotiated peace impossible, so it looked like hypocrisy when [Binyamin Netanyahu's cabinet broke off contact with the Palestinians](#) on Wednesday. [Jeffrey Goldberg used his Bloomberg column](#) to comment on Netanyahu's two-faced position: "Maybe both of Netanyahu's superficially contradictory beliefs are true. Maybe he can't make peace with a divided Palestinian entity. And maybe he can't make peace with a unified Palestinian entity. Maybe he can't make peace with any Palestinian entity because members of his own political coalition are uninterested in taking the steps necessary for compromise." Every commentator from John Kerry down has blamed Israel for the failure of negotiations. The Palestinians knew the talks were over before signing the new unity agreement.

If the agreement cannot deliver a new government, nor help with peace negotiations, what is it for? In my view, it represents a calculated break with the past. Though it has been forced on to the Palestinians by failure,

it is part of a new national strategy that also includes a more proactive attitude towards the United Nations, and a willingness to consider the dismantling of the PA, thereby placing the cost of the occupation back on Israel. For Palestinians, however, unity is the great issue, above any strategic considerations, as opinion polls show. The longer the main parties remained in conflict, the more the schism was felt an affront to the Palestinian sense of self and dignity.

[Some commentators](#), such as Hisham Melhem and David Pollock, have seen the confluence of the unity deal, the threat to dismantle the PA, and the pursuit of new UN positions as bargaining chips intended to put pressure on Israel to negotiate. Of course, it would be great if the strategy jolted the Israeli government into sense, but this is unlikely. This is why the new three-pronged approach should be seen as a radical new direction rather than a provisional tactic.

One might say that we are seeing the exit strategy of President Abbas. He is the politician most closely associated with negotiations, and if he resigned tomorrow, then he would be judged a failure. Yet he is now sketching a path that will provide him with a new legacy, even though he will play no further part if the presidential elections take place as planned.

We can only speculate where this path will lead. Within six months we could well see a new Palestinian president. If the jailed Barghouti stands, the president may well be an imprisoned international figurehead, and the PA may no longer exist. It is a strategy with grave risks for everyone, but perhaps greatest for Israel, squeezed between the expense of occupation, and renewed international sanctions.

*Nicholas Blincoe is an author, critic and screenwriter. He is a former advisor to Nick Clegg MP and divides his time between the UK and Palestine*

The Boston Globe

## **Time for an Obama peace plan in Mideast**

Geoffrey H. Lewis

April 26, 2014 -- It is time for a bold new strategy for addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: President Obama should set forth a plan of his own for resolving the conflict. He should do so immediately and forcefully, before there is further deterioration on the ground.

Sadly, the effort to get the parties to negotiate a resolution themselves seems to be going nowhere. Indeed, this round of talks appears to be over. This week, the Israeli security cabinet voted to end negotiations, citing Fatah's reconciliation with Hamas, which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu calls a terrorist organization.

But even before that, there were challenges. Israel hadn't released a fourth group of Palestinian prisoners. The Palestinians, meanwhile, had moved toward further engagement with the United Nations, something that Israel considers provocative.

Peace talks have collapsed before, of course. But this failure would carry a note of finality. Anyone who has followed the various attempts to achieve a two-state solution has heard concerns that a peace agreement must be reached before the facts on the ground and increased enmity between the two sides make such a resolution impossible. This time, that lament seems real. Should the Obama/Kerry initiative fail, the United States and the global community will likely shelve attempts to broker an agreement for the foreseeable future.

In formulating his own plan, Obama wouldn't have to start from scratch. There is wide agreement on what a fair resolution would look like. The Clinton Parameters, the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002, and the Geneva Initiative of 2003 all set forth similar contours. The president need only put his mark on a plan incorporating those parameters and then seek the

support of the global community to see it through. He is in a unique position to do so, given the nine months he and Kerry have spent listening to the desires, concerns, anger, and hope of both sides.

Obama himself has said several times that tough decisions must be made, and political risks taken, by each side if peace is to be achieved. Yet by all accounts, the parties remain far apart on the core issues of the conflict, including boundaries, the status of Jerusalem, the refugees, and post-treaty security arrangements. Thus, the imperative for an Obama/Kerry plan. In short, the president should follow the advice he has given the Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

Once his plan is formulated, Obama should dispatch Secretary Kerry to the region to brief Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Perhaps Bill Clinton could accompany Kerry, given his popularity there. Meanwhile, Obama could enlist former secretary of state James Baker to help bring Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states aboard. That move would lend the initiative both a bipartisan and regional imprimatur. He should send a third emissary to brief EU leaders.

The plan could also be considered, and hopefully endorsed, by the United Nations and other relevant groups, such as the Quartet and the Arab League. Obama could then invite the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to the White House, not to force them to accept the plan but rather to negotiate based upon it. The United States and the world community could also provide incentives to both sides to make the signing of a peace treaty more attractive and to help ensure that agreement would work.

Yes, this bold display of presidential leadership could well fail. And yet, it's worth trying. It would demonstrate to the world this country's commitment to resolving the enduring conflict. It would help restore the United States to its role as honest broker.

And it could provide our last chance of reaching an agreement, something that the two sides seemingly cannot do on their own, but which many in the region believe is eminently achievable.

*Geoffrey H. Lewis, a lawyer in Wellesley, has been active in a number of Jewish community organizations and is currently affiliated with the Geneva Initiative, an Israeli-Palestinian effort to end the conflict.*

[Article 6.](#)

WSJ

## **Holocaust Denial and the Iranian Regime**

Reuel Marc Gerecht

April 25, 2014 -- Well, we know that there's at least one person who won't be marking Holocaust Remembrance Day on Monday. "Observe that no one in Europe dares to speak about the Holocaust even though it's not clear what the reality is about it, whether it even has a reality, or how it happened," said Iran's ruling cleric, Ali Khamenei, in a March 21 speech. "Expressing an opinion or doubts about the Holocaust is considered to be one of the greatest of sins [in Europe] where someone can get stopped, arrested, sued or imprisoned for this offense."

The ayatollah's recent comments on the Holocaust were part of a longer speech that was a scorching stemwinder against the West and Iranians who embrace Western ways. Holocaust revisionism is part of Mr. Khamenei's resistance to a world organized around Western norms and history. Other strategies include developing Iran's nuclear program, making its economy more sanctions-proof, and maintaining a religious culture capable of closing the "cracks" opened by the allure of a deviant Occident.

Many observers, including some within the Obama administration, have sought to play down the matter of Iranian Holocaust denial. So have many Iranians and Westerners who sincerely want to get past the nuclear issue and see Iran reintegrated into the world—Holocaust denial is just too awkward and painful to examine. It's an aberration, many insist, nasty

insecure rhetoric without roots in Persian culture. In truth it is a symptom of a worldview utterly at odds with our own. It strongly suggests that Mr. Khamenei's republic will endure great economic hardship to realize its dream of becoming a nuclear power.

Holocaust revisionism permeates and defines the Iranian regime. Former President [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](#) famously supported a research mission to Poland in 2005 to investigate whether millions of Jews could have died at Auschwitz. (Poland's foreign ministry turned down the request.) Today, in addition to Supreme Leader Khamenei, commanders of the Revolutionary Guard Corps—who oversee Iran's nuclear program and terrorist operations—embrace Holocaust-denial with gusto.

Even the "moderate" president elected last year, Hasan Rouhani, danced around the subject of the Holocaust in his interview last September with CNN's Christiane Amanpour, saying it was up to historians to decide—as if they hadn't already—the true "dimensions" of Nazi slaughter. Mr. Rouhani didn't deny that the Germans killed Jews, but he grouped them with other victims of Nazi barbarism.

The Tehran regime's Holocaust reflections spring in great part from two sources. First, a passionate belief in the awesome conspiratorial power of Jews, whom the Iranians allege have long malignly pulled the strings in the U.S. Former Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, once the "moderate" mentor of Mr. Rouhani, can wax on, as he once did in a Friday sermon, about how "Jewish capitalism" controls America and, via America, the West. For Mr. Rafsanjani, Judaism as a religion and Zionism as a movement are both "immersed" in imperialism, against which the "most fundamental danger . . . is the Islamic world."

Many Iranian revolutionaries appear to be a bit flummoxed by the contradiction of the all-powerful Jews losing more than half their number to the Nazis. The common refrain that one hears among pan-Arab nationalists and Muslim Brotherhood types—that Hitler didn't go far enough—isn't widespread among Iran's Islamic militants. For them, Holocaust denial restores some logic to history: If they can assert that Hitler did not kill six million Jews, the Holocaust can be labeled a narrative spun by Jews to engender guilt and special advantages over

Muslims and others. In that light, Holocaust denial is both moral and politically essential.

The second main reason for denying the Holocaust: Doing so implicitly negates the need for Israel's existence. None of this means that Tehran is likely to unleash a nuclear Armageddon against Israel. Mr. Khamenei and his guards are wary of American military power and have generally preferred to use cutouts like Hezbollah in their lethal actions against Israelis and Jews. The Iranian ruling elite is well aware of Jerusalem's nuclear and conventional capabilities.

It is not credible, though, to think that the Jew-obsessed revolutionary Iranian imagination would cease its three-decade-old effort to obtain nuclear arms just because Mr. Khamenei now wants greater access to hard currency—which is the essence of our sanctions policy and the primary Western leverage in the nuclear talks. The supreme leader's March 21 speech, like most of his discourses, is ultimately about creating an Islamic bloc, led by Iran, that is capable of turning back Judeo-Western imperialism.

For Mr. Khamenei, this is a cultural, religious, economic and military mission. Nuclear weapons, or at least a nuclear-weapons capability that could produce a bomb quickly, is an essential component of the mission, worth the tens of billions of dollars that the regime has lavished on the project since its inception.

The regime's Holocaust rhetoric ought to signal to us that Iran's clerical overlord lives in an alternate reality, where good and evil are reinterpreted if not reversed. Ayatollah Khamenei emphatically does not want what President Obama keeps offering him, "a new relationship between our two countries . . . [where] Iran could begin to return to its rightful place among the community of nations." Modern Westerners, for whom religion has been secularized and tamed, have a hard time dealing with a "clash of civilizations" based on faith. Mr. Khamenei and his men have no such problem.

For Americans and Europeans, the current nuclear negotiations are at heart a technical challenge, one where we try to find the right verifiable

limitations on uranium enrichment, heavy-water plutonium production and ballistic-missile development to ensure that Tehran can't develop a nuke. For Iranians, the nuclear talks are a subset of a much larger religious conflict. The six million murdered Jews aren't just an outrageous fiction for the supreme leader, they're a devious way to bind him to an ethical universe where, as Mr. Khamenei said in his speech, "cultural vandals" inject "doubt and atheism . . . hedonism and decadence" into the faithful Iranian people.

The Iranian regime is unlikely now to be humbled by Western officials—those diplomats who are so well-briefed in their nuclear dossiers, so hopeful that economics is the universal religion, so discomfited when their negotiating partners start railing about Jews and the Holocaust.

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[Article 7.](#)

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## **In the long run, wars make us safer and richer**

Ian Morris

April 25 -- Norman Angell, the Paris editor of Britain's Daily Mail, was a man who expected to be listened to. Yet even he was astonished by the success of his book "The Great Illusion," in which he announced that war had put itself out of business. "The day for progress by force has passed," he explained. From now on, "it will be progress by ideas or not at all."

He wrote these words in 1910. One politician after another lined up to praise the book. Four years later, the same men started World War I. By 1918, they had killed 15 million people; by 1945, the death toll from two world wars had passed 100 million and a nuclear arms race had begun. In 1983, U.S. war games suggested that an all-out battle with the Soviet Union would kill a billion people — at the time, one human in five — in the first few weeks. And today, a century after the beginning of the Great War, civil war is [raging](#) in Syria, tanks are massing on [Ukraine's borders](#) and a fight against terrorism seems to have no end.

So yes, war is hell — but have you considered the alternatives? When looking upon the long run of history, it becomes clear that through 10,000 years of conflict, humanity has created larger, more organized societies that have greatly reduced the risk that their members will die violently. These better organized societies also have created the conditions for higher living standards and economic growth. War has not only made us safer, but richer, too.

Thinkers have long grappled with the relationships among peace, war and strength. Thomas Hobbes wrote his case for strong government, “Leviathan,” as the English Civil War raged around him in the 1640s. German sociologist Norbert Elias’s two-volume treatise, “The Civilizing Process,” published on the eve of World War II, argued that Europe had become a more peaceful place in the five centuries leading to his own day. The difference is that now we have the evidence to prove their case.

Take the long view. The world of the Stone Age, for instance, was a rough place; 10,000 years ago, if someone used force to settle an argument, he or she faced few constraints. Killing was normally on a small scale, in homicides, vendettas and raids, but because populations were tiny, the steady drip of low-level killing took an appalling toll. By many estimates, 10 to 20 percent of all Stone Age humans died at the hands of other people.

This puts the past 100 years in perspective. Since 1914, we have endured world wars, genocides and government-sponsored famines, not to mention civil strife, riots and murders. Altogether, we have killed a staggering 100 million to 200 million of our own kind. But over the

century, about 10 billion lives were lived — which means that just 1 to 2 percent of the world's population died violently. Those lucky enough to be born in the 20th century were on average 10 times less likely to come to a grisly end than those born in the Stone Age. And since 2000, the United Nations tells us, the risk of violent death has fallen even further, to 0.7 percent.

As this process unfolded, humanity prospered. Ten thousand years ago, when the planet's population was 6 million or so, people lived about 30 years on average and supported themselves on the equivalent income of about \$2 per day. Now, more than 7 billion people are on Earth, living more than twice as long (an average of 67 years), and with an average income of \$25 per day.

This happened because about 10,000 years ago, the winners of wars began incorporating the losers into larger societies. The victors found that the only way to make these larger societies work was by developing stronger governments; and one of the first things these governments had to do, if they wanted to stay in power, was suppress violence among their subjects.

The men who ran these governments were no saints. They cracked down on killing not out of the goodness of their hearts but because well-behaved subjects were easier to govern and tax than angry, murderous ones. The unintended consequence, though, was that they kick-started the process through which rates of violent death plummeted between the Stone Age and the 20th century.

This process was brutal. Whether it was the Romans in Britain or the British in India, pacification could be just as bloody as the savagery it stamped out. Yet despite the Hitlers, Stalins and Maos, over 10,000 years, war made states, and states made peace.

War may well be the worst way imaginable to create larger, more peaceful societies, but the depressing fact is that it is pretty much the only way. If only the Roman Empire could have been created without killing millions of Gauls and Greeks, if the United States could have been built without killing millions of Native Americans, if these and countless

conflicts could have been resolved by discussion instead of force. But this did not happen. People almost never give up their freedoms — including, at times, the right to kill and impoverish one another — unless forced to do so; and virtually the only force strong enough to bring this about has been defeat in war or fear that such a defeat is imminent.

The civilizing process also was uneven. Violence spiked up and down. For 1,000 years — beginning before Attila the Hun in the AD 400s and ending after Genghis Khan in the 1200s — mounted invaders from the steppes actually threw the process of pacification into reverse everywhere from China to Europe, with war breaking down larger, safer societies into smaller, more dangerous ones. Only in the 1600s did big, settled states find an answer to the nomads, in the shape of guns that delivered enough firepower to stop horsemen in their tracks. Combining these guns with new, oceangoing ships, Europeans exported unprecedented amounts of violence around the world. The consequences were terrible; and yet they created the largest societies yet seen, driving rates of violent death lower than ever before.

By the 18th century, vast European empires straddled the oceans, and Scottish philosopher Adam Smith saw that something new was happening. For millennia, conquest, plunder and taxes had made rulers rich, but now, Smith realized, markets were so big that a new path to the wealth of nations was opening. Taking it, however, was complicated. Markets would work best if governments got out of them, leaving people to truck and barter; but markets would only work at all if governments got into them, enforcing their rules and keeping trade free. The solution, Smith implied, was not a Leviathan but a kind of super-Leviathan that would police global trade.

After Napoleon's defeat in 1815, this was precisely what the world got. Britain was the only industrialized economy on Earth, and it projected power as far away as India and China. Because its wealth came from exporting goods and services, it used its financial and naval muscle to deter rivals from threatening the international order. Wars did not end — the United States and China endured civil strife, European armies

marched deep into Africa and India — but overall, for 99 years, the planet grew more peaceful and prosperous under Britain’s eye.

However, the Pax Britannica rested on a paradox. To sell its goods and services, Britain needed other countries to be rich enough to buy them. That meant that, like it or not, Britain had to encourage other nations to industrialize and accumulate wealth. The economic triumph of the 19th-century British world system, however, was simultaneously a strategic disaster. Thanks in significant part to British capital and expertise, the United States and Germany had turned into industrial giants by the 1870s, and doubts began growing about Britain’s ability to police the global order. The more successful the globocop was at doing its job, the more difficult that job became.

By the 1910s, some of the politicians who had so admired Angell’s “Great Illusion” had concluded that war was no longer the worst of their options. The violence they unleashed bankrupted Britain and threw the world into chaos. Not until 1989 did the wars and almost wars finally end, when the Soviet collapse left the United States as a much more powerful policeman than Britain had ever been.

Like its predecessor, the United States oversaw a huge expansion of trade, intimidated other countries into not making wars that would disturb the world order, and drove rates of violent death even lower. But again like Britain, America made its money by helping trading partners become richer, above all China, which, since 2000, has looked increasingly like a potential rival. The cycle that Britain experienced may be in store for the United States as well, unless Washington embraces its role as the only possible globocop in an increasingly unstable world — a world with far deadlier weapons than Britain could have imagined a century ago.

American attitudes toward government are therefore not just some Beltway debate; they matter to everyone on Earth. “Government,” Ronald Reagan assured Americans in his first inaugural address, “is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem.” Reagan’s great fear — that bloated government would stifle individual freedom — shows just how far the continuing debates over the merits of big and small government have taken us from the horrors that worried Hobbes. “The 10

most dangerous words in the English language,” [Reagan said](#) on another occasion, “are ‘Hi, I’m from the government, and I’m here to help.’ ” As Hobbes could have told him, in reality the 10 scariest words are, “There is no government and I’m here to kill you.”

To people in virtually any age before our own, the only argument that mattered was between extremely small government and no government at all. Extremely small government meant there was at least some law and order; no government meant that there was not.

I suspect even Reagan would have agreed. “One legislator accused me of having a 19th-century attitude on law and order,” Reagan said when he was governor of California. “That is a totally false charge. I have an 18th-century attitude. That is when the Founding Fathers made it clear that the safety of law-abiding citizens should be one of the government’s primary concerns.”

*Ian Morris, a professor of classics at Stanford University, is the author of “War! What is it Good For? Conflict and the Progress of Civilization from Primates to Robots.”*

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