



13 December, 2011

| | |
|------------|---|
| Article 1. | Wall Street Journal <u>Why have liberal Westerners turned their backs on the Jewish state?</u> David Mamet |
| Article 2. | The Washington Post <u>President Obama's too-rosy vision of postwar Iraq</u> Editorial |
| Article 3. | The National Interest <u>Overhauling U.S. Policy on Iran</u> Nader Hashemi |
| Article 4. | The Council on Foreign Relations <u>Saudis' New Mideast Challenges</u> An Interview with F. Gregory Gause |
| Article 5. | The Christian Science Monitor <u>Doomsday war games: Pentagon's 3 nightmare scenarios</u> Anna Mulrine |
| Article 6. | Foreign Policy <u>Next Year, in Review</u> David Rothkopf |

Article 1.

Wall Street Journal

Why have liberal Westerners turned their backs on the Jewish state?

David Mamet

December 13, 2011 -- As Iran races toward the bomb, many observers seem to think the greater threat is the possibility that Israel might act against its nuclear program. Which raises the question: What should it mean if, God forbid, militant Islam through force of arms, and with the supine permission of the West, succeeds in the destruction of the Jewish State?

- 1) That the Jewish People would no longer have their ancestral home;
- 2) That they should have no home.

At the Versailles Peace Conference, Woodrow Wilson stated as an evident moral proposition that each people should have the right to national self-determination. The West, thereafter, fought not for empire, nor national expansion, but in self-defense, or in defense of this proposition. But, for the Jewish State, the Liberal West puts the proposition aside.

Since its foundation Israel has turned the other cheek. Eric Hoffer wrote that Israel is the only country the world expects to act like Christians. Some Jews say that the Arabs have a better public relations apparatus. They do not need one. For the Liberal West does not need convincing. It is thrilled merely to accept an excuse to rescind what it regards as a colossal error.

The Liberal West has, for decades, indulged itself in an orgy of self-flagellation. We have enjoyed comfort and security, but these, in the absence of gratitude and patriotism, cause insecurity. This attempted

cure for insecurity can be seen in protestations of our worthlessness, and the indictment of private property.

But no one in the affluent West and no one among the various protesters of various supposed injustices is prepared to act in accordance with his protestations. The opponent of "The Corporation" is still going to use the iPhone which permits him to mass with his like. The celebrities acting out at Occupy meetings will still invest their surplus capital, and the supposed champion of the dispossessed in the Levant will not only scoff at American Indian claims to land he has come to understand as his—he will lobby the City Council to have the homeless shelter built anywhere but on his block.

The brave preceptors who would like to end Poverty, War, Exploitation, Colonialism, Inequality and so on, stop at the proclamation. How may they synchronize their wise fervor with their inaction?

How may they still the resultant anxiety? The Left's answer is the oldest in the world: by appeal to The Gods. But how may The Gods be appeased? The immemorial answer is: By human sacrifice.

What is the essence of the Torah? It is not the Ten Commandments, these were known, and the practice of most aspired to by every civilization. Rabbi Lawrence Kushner teaches they are merely a Calling Card; to wit: "remember me . . . ?"

The essence of the Torah is the Akedah, the Binding of Isaac. The God of Hosts spoke to Abraham, as the various desert gods had spoken to the nomads for thousands of years: "If you wish me to relieve your anxiety, give me the most precious thing you have." So God's call to Abraham was neither unusual nor, perhaps, unexpected. God had told Abraham to leave his people and his home, and go to the place which God would point out to him. And God told

Abraham to take his son up the mountain and kill him, as humans had done for tens of thousands of years.

Now, however, for the first time in history, the narrative changed. The sacrifice, Isaac, spoke back. He asked his father, "Where is the Goat we are to sacrifice?" This was the voice of conscience, and Abraham's hand, as it descended with the knife, was stayed. This was the Birth of the West, and the birth of the West's burden, which is conscience.

Previously the anxiety and fear attendant upon all human life was understood as Fear of the Gods, and dealt with by propitiation, which is to say by sacrifice. Now, however, the human burden was not to give The Gods what one imagined, in one's fear, that they might want, but do, in conscience, those things one understood God to require.

In abandonment of the state of Israel, the West reverts to pagan sacrifice, once again, making a burnt offering not of that which one possesses, but of that which is another's. As Realpolitik, the Liberal West's anti-Semitism can be understood as like Chamberlain's offering of Czechoslovakia to Hitler, a sop thrown to terrorism. On the level of conscience, it is a renewal of the debate on human sacrifice.

Mr. Mamet is a playwright and screenwriter.

Article 2.

The Washington Post

President Obama's too-rosy vision of postwar Iraq

Editorial

December 13 -- IN THE opening statement of his press conference Monday with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, President Obama managed to assert no fewer than five times that the war in Iraq is ending. No doubt the president's reelection campaign hopes that Americans will absorb that message; but we wonder about the thoughts of Iraqis who were listening. The conflict in their country, after all, is greatly reduced but not over: Al-Qaeda continues to carry out terrorist attacks, Iranian-sponsored militias still operate, and a power struggle between Kurdish-ruled northern Iraq and Mr. Maliki's government goes on. Many Iraqis worry that, after the last U.S. troops depart this month, the sectarian bloodletting that ravaged the country between 2004 and 2007 will resume.

Those concerns, as well as the hope of checking Iran's influence, prompted U.S. commanders to recommend that a follow-on force in the tens of thousands remain in Iraq next year. Iraqi politics, and the agreement struck by the Bush administration mandating a full withdrawal at the end of 2011, made that tricky — but a conflicted Obama administration never tried very hard to strike a deal with Mr. Maliki. Now, having promised in 2008 to end the war “responsibly,” Mr. Obama seems to feel obliged to prematurely declare the war over — and to oversell the regime that U.S. soldiers are leaving behind. On Monday, the president portrayed Iraq as a democracy and model for the Middle East whose economy is set to grow more rapidly than those of India or China. He described Mr. Maliki, a Shiite who spent

years in exile in Iran, as a nationalist whose stated “interest is maintaining Iraqi sovereignty and preventing meddling by anyone inside of Iraq,” adding, “I believe him.” Leaving to historians the question of whether the war was a mistake, Mr. Obama said, “What we have now achieved is an Iraq that is self-governing, that is inclusive, and that has enormous potential.”

As supporters of the war, we wish all that were true. But Mr. Maliki’s government increasingly appears headed in a troubling direction. Rather than remaining “inclusive,” Mr. Maliki has been concentrating power, especially over the security forces, in his own hands and excluding minority Sunnis, with whom he promised to share authority. He recently ordered the arrest of hundreds of people he accused of being tied to Saddam Hussein’s former Baath Party. Though he may have, as Mr. Obama said, domestic reasons for doing so, he has set himself apart from the rest of the Arab League by refusing to break with the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad, a key Iranian ally.

Mr. Obama’s virtually unqualified support for Mr. Maliki consequently was unsettling. The president said that the U.S. “goal is simply to make sure that Iraq succeeds, because we think a successful, democratic Iraq can be a model for the entire region.” That is true. But success will require continued and concerted U.S. engagement, not rosy declarations about a mission accomplished.

Article 3.

The National Interest

Overhauling U.S. Policy on Iran

Nader Hashemi

December 12, 2011 -- It is time to acknowledge a painful truth about U.S.-Iran relations—Iran will eventually become a nuclear power, and there is nothing the West can do to stop it. No credible military option exists, notwithstanding the bravado from Republican Party presidential candidates, nor will economic sanctions or political ostracism force the Iranian regime to change course. Given this reality, a new U.S. policy towards Iran is desperately needed, and the democratic revolutions in other parts of the Middle East suggest a way forward.

For more than thirty years, Iran has been sanctioned by the United States and its allies in one form or another. Yet there is little evidence that sanctions have actually changed the behavior of the Iranian regime. For nearly ten years, the focus of international sanctions has been Iran's controversial nuclear program. Yet economic sanctions have done little to compel Iran to re-examine its nuclear policy. As the recent IAEA report has revealed, Iran has accelerated its nuclear ambitions rather than curtailing them. This should come as no surprise: the Iranian regime views an advanced nuclear program as key to regime survival and as a frontline defense against external attack. This point was specifically mentioned by Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei in March 2011, when he chided Qaddafi for giving concessions to the West over Libya's nuclear program. According to Khamenei, Qaddafi's fall served to vindicate Iran's uncompromising position on that issue.

Furthermore, after a recent visit to Iran Fareed Zakaria confirmed what Iran experts have known for a long time: Western sanctions

have strengthened the clerical regime and weakened the middle class and civil society. What is desperately needed today is a long-term strategy toward Iran and a new U.S. policy that focuses on the one area where the regime is at its most vulnerable—its internal legitimacy, purportedly derived from a democratic mandate. A new U.S. policy that is anchored on the cornerstone of democracy is important for several reasons. First, after a democratic transition Iranian nuclear policy will substantially shift under new leadership. This remains the only way to ensure that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon. It is likely that a democratically elected government in Iran will move quickly to reduce regional tensions and alleviate the concerns of the international community.

Secondly, the Arab Spring has significantly altered the political and moral landscape of the Middle East. A new global spotlight has been focused on the region that exposes dictatorships while simultaneously giving voice to opposition movements. Iran's ruling clerics are deeply worried about this development. They are in the awkward position of paying lip service to democratic revolts in the Arab world while cracking down on identical protests at home (while clandestinely supporting the crushing of protests in Syria).

After the ouster of Mubarak in February, the contagion of the Arab Spring was quick to reach Iran. Tens of thousands responded to a call by Iran's opposition Green Movement for a solidarity rally with Tunisia and Egypt. While the rally was brutally crushed and the leaders of the opposition placed under house arrest, deep discontent and hunger for democracy remain widespread.

At the moment, Iran ranks near the top of the world in the number of imprisoned journalists and intellectuals. Censorship is pervasive, and the regime spends considerable resources to block the free flow of information. What Iran's ruling oligarchy fears most is a free exchange of ideas and an open public debate about Iran's domestic

and foreign policy—specifically, the role of religion in politics and the state of human rights in the country. The regime fears such a debate because it knows it will lose. That is why it is forced to manufacture lies such as the one Ahmadinejad recently told Fareed Zakaria: “There are no political prisoners in Iran.”

Furthermore, the fraudulent 2009 presidential elections considerably narrowed the support base of the ruling regime. This partly explains why large segments of the economy have been turned over to the Revolutionary Guards, who increasingly are dominating political life as well. Currently, Iran is engulfed in an embezzlement scandal involving several leading banks. Two of the key figures at the heart of this story have fled to Canada, and Ahmadinejad’s government has been implicated.

Elite factional rivalries between supporters of the president and the supreme leader continue to shake public confidence in the ruling elites, specifically among conservative segments of society that previously were devoutly loyal.

Last month, Ali Khamenei dropped a bombshell. He suggested that Iran might move from a presidential to a parliamentary system of government. While this was presented as an innocent choice between different forms of democratic rule, it reveals the continuous de-democratization of Iranian politics and the regime’s fear of its own population, thereby necessitating the need to tightly limit and control national elections.

In short, the prospects for democracy in Iran look good over the long term. The key social-science indicators suggest as much. But as we have learned from the Arab Spring, there is no exact formula to predict when an authoritarian regime may crumble. One size does not fit all when it comes to the strength and durability of authoritarian regimes versus democratic opposition groups. What has been missing from this equation is a suitable international context that enhances the

prospect of democracy in Iran. A qualitative shift in U.S. policy can help facilitate this.

What would this new policy look like? First, it must be democracy-centered. The objective should be to create the conditions that are conducive to an internal democratic transition in Iran while strictly avoiding any direct interference in Iranian domestic affairs. At every step these questions must be asked: What are the consequences for democracy and authoritarianism? Will a forthcoming public statement, policy initiative or round of sanctions strengthen the Iranian regime or the opposition?

Secondly, diplomacy should be given a chance not because Tehran will necessarily reciprocate but because it most likely will not. Any U.S. outreach to Iran, as we saw in the early part of the Obama administration, immediately causes an internal crisis within the Iranian regime. This is because a U.S.-Iran dialogue leading to diplomatic relations is widely popular in Iranian society, including among factions of the ruling regime.

In a remarkably insightful essay on the topic, Alex Fattal [3] (brother of the recently released U.S. hiker and a graduate student at Harvard) correctly observed that even if diplomacy does not “precipitate a breakthrough (which it almost certainly will not) and Iran continues to lean on the rhetorical crutch of anti-Americanism (which it almost certainly will), the redoubled outreach will entrench the political fissures in the Iranian establishment. Those on the neoconservative end of the spectrum in the Beltway would do well to consider this simple truth: Engagement is more controversial in Tehran than in Washington.”

While the precise details of a new U.S. policy towards Iran will take time to develop, the goal should be a democratic transition. It must be crafted with care and with a deep appreciation for the troubled history of U.S.-Iran relations since 1953. Specifically, it should be designed

in a manner that does not violate the preferences of Iran's courageous democratic opposition.

A transition to democracy in Iran is the only way of bringing about a qualitative change in Iranian behavior. Shifting to a new policy toward Iran will not be easy, but it is an essential substitute for our existing failed strategy.

The reality is that Iran will eventually develop the technology to produce a nuclear weapon. While Washington may be able to stall this process, it cannot prevent it. Therefore, the question facing the United States is this: Do we want a nuclear Iran that is controlled by clerical oligarchs or one ruled by liberal democrats? If the latter is our preference, it is time for a U.S. policy that can expedite this outcome.

*Nader Hashemi is an assistant professor of Middle East and Islamic politics and the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver. He is the coeditor of *The People Reloaded: The Green Movement and the Struggle for Iran's Future* (Melville House, 2011).*

Article 4.

The Council on Foreign Relations

Saudis' New Mideast Challenges

An Interview with F. Gregory Gause

December 9, 2011 -- *Though Saudi Arabia has avoided the political upheaval seen in the region in the past year, the country must still deal with the changing political landscape. F. Gregory Gause, a long-time Saudi expert, says the choice by Egyptian Salafis to participate in elections this month might lead prominent Salafis in Saudi Arabia to call for an elected legislature. Though the United States and Saudi Arabia have disagreed over events in Bahrain and Egypt, Gause says, "they are pretty much together on a number of other issues in the region right now," including Iran. He notes that "almost every place that the Saudis have contested with the Iranians for influence in the past five or six years, they've lost." Thus a regime change in Damascus, he says, "would be a real blow to Iranian power and influence in the Arab world."*

You've just done a report on Saudi Arabia in the new Middle East, that is, Saudi Arabia in the time of the Arab Spring. During this time, of course, there have been a lot of questions about the future Saudi leadership. The current ruler, King Abdullah, is eighty-seven. What do we know about Crown Prince Nayef, possibly his successor?

It's hard to say. The crown prince, Prince Sultan, died very recently, and Prince Nayef (*WSJ*), who's the long-serving interior minister, was elevated in October and became crown prince. The reputations for the Saudi princes tend to be based on the jobs that they've held before they become king. Nayef has been, in essence, the head policeman

since 1975, so his reputation is of a tough guy, very conservative, close to the religious establishment. But we have to remember that King Abdullah's reputation before he became king was also conservative, close to the tribes. When these princes become king, it's possible that they can get rid of their past reputation.

At the time of the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, there was press speculation (Fox) that the Saudis were furious at Washington for not sticking by Mubarak. The Saudis, of course, had offered him political exile, as they had given to President Ben Ali of Tunisia, which Mubarak did not accept. Is that a real tension between the two countries or is that overblown?

It's a real tension but not a crisis. At roughly the same time, you also had another serious division between the United States and Saudi Arabia over Bahrain. The Saudis sent in troops at a time when the United States was trying to broker a deal between the crown prince of Bahrain and the leading opposition group. So the Saudis and the United States were definitely not on the same page on Egypt or Bahrain, but that the severity of the differences has receded. The Saudis definitely have a different view of democratization in the Middle East than the Obama administration does, but it seems that both sides have come to an understanding. The United States really isn't talking that much about Bahrain these days, and the Saudis are, as realists, coming to accommodate themselves with the changes in Egypt. The United States and the Saudis are pretty much together on a number of other issues in the region right now, like Syria and Yemen.

How do the Saudis feel about the success of the Islamist parties in the first round of Egypt's parliamentary elections?

If you've got major Salafi groups coming around to wanting to participate in democracy, that's something that in the longer term might be very troubling to the Saudis.

It's a really interesting dynamic here. On the one hand, you would assume that the Saudis would be happy that Islamist groups, both Salafi and Muslim Brotherhood, did so well in the first round. In Egypt, it's almost an article of faith that the Salafis get a lot of money from the Gulf, although I haven't seen any hard evidence of that, but I think it's more complicated. The Muslim Brotherhood and the Saudis have a long history, and it's been not completely cooperative. In fact, Crown Prince Nayef has publically and on more than one occasion criticized the Brotherhood, basically saying that it's the Brotherhood that brought all these bad ideas--that is to say al-Qaeda ideas--into Saudi Arabia. So he has no love for the Brotherhood, at least publically.

Al-Qaeda did come from Egypt.

At least part of it. The Salafi question is even more interesting. On the one hand, the Saudis are happy to see their brand of Islam doing so well in other places. They've spent decades and lots of money to promote their brand of Islam. But here's the rub. The Salafis in Egypt have decided to participate in a democratic process--to run for elections and go into parliament. For years, the Salafi movement in general was very anti-democratic. They said, "We don't need elections, we don't need parliaments. We've got the law from God and we don't need this human innovation of democracy." If you've got major Salafi groups coming around to wanting to participate in democracy, that's something that in the longer term might be very troubling to the Saudis. There might be some signs that this year, with all the upheaval and the activism, some prominent Salafis in

Saudi Arabia itself might have signed petitions calling for an elected legislature in Saudi Arabia. So if you get the Salafis--basically, much like the Muslim Brotherhood has in recent years--coming around to saying, "Well yes, democracy, elections, these are good things," it will make it harder and harder down the line for the Saudis to resist that.

In Saudi Arabia, there were reported tensions in the Eastern Province with the Shiite population in the spring. Are things any better now? On YouTube, young Saudi dissidents have tried to publicize the fact that there's a lot of unemployment and people living in poverty. Is there a lot of discontent in Saudi Arabia?

We have to separate out the Shiite issue in the Eastern Province from more general issues of discontent. In the Eastern Province, those were the biggest demonstrations in Saudi Arabia, back in the spring. There have been other demonstrations. There were incidents with the death of some protesters, even in the last few weeks. The situation in Bahrain increases tensions in the Eastern Province because there's a lot of family connections there, and the whole sectarian issue of Sunni and Shiite is most prominent in the Eastern Province, where so many of the Saudi Shiites live. But so far, and I think this will hold, the protests in the eastern part of Saudi Arabia haven't had any effect in other parts of Saudi Arabia, because of the sectarian differences.

[A]lmost every place that the Saudis have contested with the Iranians for influence in the past five or six years, they've lost. Lebanon, Iraq, even in Palestine.

Now there is a larger issue of discontent here. You mentioned the YouTube videos, and this discontent is as much economic as it is anything else. This is what the Saudi government tried to address

with its promises back in February and March of a massive spending campaign. One of the big issues is housing. The government has promised to try to produce five hundred thousand new housing units, because the vast majority of Saudis rent. That's considered a burden, obviously, especially in a country that has a relatively high per capita income and has enormous wealth in general. There is economic discontent that revolves around this issue. Housing revolves around inflation, and those are the things that the government was trying to get at back in the spring with these promises. That's a performance issue. We'll see how they do. I don't think that's likely to be converted into a large political movement against the regime right now, but it's a troublesome issue that they have to get on top of.

Clearly the Saudis are very worried about the Iranians, as is the United States, particularly on the nuclear front. In the report, you recommend strong U.S. assurances to the Saudis and the other Gulf states about a continued U.S. military presence, even as we leave Iraq. What can be done?

This is a very sensitive and difficult issue because we don't have that many levers. That there's a lot of talk in Saudi Arabia about what they would do if Iran were to acquire a nuclear capability. The point man on this discussion is the former Saudi ambassador, former head of foreign intelligence in Saudi Arabia, Prince Turki al-Faisal, who has basically said that if Iran obtains nuclear weapons, Saudi Arabia is going to have to consider that option. They don't really have a serious domestic nuclear industry, so it would have to be via a relationship with another country. Almost everybody who looks at this issue thinks Pakistan is the most likely source. So if the Iranians do it, the Saudis will be very inclined to do it, and it would take quite a bit of American diplomacy to try to stop that. It has to start now, because if

it waits until the Iranians cross the threshold, if that's what they do, then it might be too late.

Lastly, on Syria. Clearly the Saudis are very interested in what happens in Syria, which would have a repercussion in Lebanon. Are the Saudis actively supporting the opposition to President Bashar al-Assad?

There's certainly rhetorical support. The Saudi newspapers are full of op-eds strongly supporting the opposition and castigating Assad and the Syrian government. What the Saudi government is doing is not clear on the ground. My assumption is that if members of the opposition in Syria want money and support and even guns, they can probably get them from Saudi Arabia. I don't have any evidence that there's a big Saudi push in that direction, but I wouldn't be surprised if it were happening. Publicly, the Saudis have, in effect, called for Assad to step down and have supported the Arab League resolutions against him. As I said, the Saudi press, which in many ways reflects government thinking, is even more harsh in the way they talk about Assad and the Syrian government. For the Saudis, Syria is a really interesting point because almost every place that the Saudis have contested with the Iranians for influence in the past five or six years, they've lost. Lebanon, Iraq, even in Palestine. You know, the Saudis tried to get Hamas and Fatah together back in '07 and it fell apart, and Hamas took over Gaza and the Iranians have been much more supportive of Hamas. So I think for the Saudis, a regime change in Damascus would be a real blow to Iranian power and influence in the Arab world.

F. Gregory Gause III is Professor of Political Science, University of Vermont.

Article 5.

The Christian Science Monitor

Doomsday war games: Pentagon's 3 nightmare scenarios

Anna Mulrine

December 7, 2011 -- Pentagon planners have plenty to deal with these days – Iran in search of nuclear-weapons technology, suicide bombings in Afghanistan, and the final pullout of US troops in Iraq potentially leaving behind a security vacuum in the Middle East. But in war games in Washington this week, US Army officials and their advisers debated three nightmare scenarios in particular. Here are the doomsday visions that Pentagon planners have been poring over:

1. Collapse of Pakistan

Following the assassination of the Pakistani president in a scenario that begins in 2013, Pakistan begins to descend into chaos. It is a time of great uncertainty, in which Pakistan's "Islamist Army faction and its militant Muslim allies" decide to act. Their plan, according to the war game: "to exploit that country's growing civil disorder to seize power and create a radical Islamist state." Compounding this chaos is the confusion over who will gain control of Pakistan's nuclear weapons arsenal, estimated to number 80 to 120. These weapons are believed to be located at a half-dozen or so sites around the country. At least one site is occupied by Islamist units. "Both US and other national intelligence services have concluded that sympathetic elements of the ISI [Pakistan's spy agency] have provided Islamist officers leading the breakaway army units with the activation codes needed to arm the nuclear weapons under their control," notes the scenario, which is drawn from "7 Deadly Scenarios: A Military Futurist Explores War in the 21st Century" by Andrew Krepinevich,

a former staffer in the Office of Net Assessments, the Pentagon's futuristic and highly influential internal think tank. If this were to happen, "there may be little to prevent these weapons from being used." The principal targets of such weapons would be United States, and US citizens draw little comfort, the scenario adds, from the efforts of US government officials to emphasize the difficulties involved in transporting nuclear weapons halfway around the world, which would be necessary, they add, in order to target an American city. US forces have considered a preemptive strike on the area where the weapons are thought to be located, but Islamist forces have warned of the "horrific consequences" that would result if any foreign power attempted to do this. While the crisis in Pakistan "comes as a shock to most Americans," the scenario notes, "to many observers, including senior government officials, it is hardly a surprise at all. To them, the greatest surprise is that Pakistan did not implode sooner."

2. Rise of militant China

It is the year 2013, and "what experts are calling the greatest aggregation of naval power the world has ever seen is assembling in a long arc several hundred miles off the maritime approaches to China." The leaders of the United States and Japan are debating what to do next "in what many fear may be the opening gambits in a new world war." The People's Liberation Army is blockading Taiwan – and diplomats know that a blockade is an act of war. That's why they are calling it a "quarantine," and US allies, including Japan, are contemplating a retaliatory "counterquarantine" against Chinese ports. Defense analysts conclude that a series of internal crises in China has brought the world's great naval powers to the cusp of war. China's economic growth has slowed dramatically. This has worried Chinese leadership, which "needs a rapidly growing economy to ensure its legitimacy," according to the scenario, also drawn from "7

Deadly Scenarios" by Mr. Krepinevich, who now is the executive director of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. At the same time, China's young male population is rising, the result of China's one-child policy and widespread selective abortions that favor male offspring. Now girls are at a premium, leaving many young men unmarried and suffering "from low self-esteem, and feel[ing] alienated from (and rejected by) 'mainstream' society. Some scholars, studying the consequences of historical cases of profound sex-ratio imbalances, argue that this situation may set the stage for high levels of internal stability," the scenario warns. "They also ominously note that at times governments faced with this prospect have attempted to redirect that frustration against external rivals." A succession of US administrations, "distracted by the Long War with radical Islamist states and groups, and enjoying the short-term economic benefits of trade with China, failed to take the growing Chinese military machine seriously." Yet "for those who looked closely, the warning signs have been there." China has pursued cyberwarfare "to introduce a wide range of viruses, worms, Trojan horses, and other cyber 'weapons' into the information grids" of the United States, especially US military computer networks. China has also expanded its fleet of submarines specially equipped to "cut undersea fiber-optic cables that provide data links both to US military forces and to the civilian economy." Then, in quick succession, America suffers two major cyberstrikes. One penetrates the Pentagon's major link to troop supply lines. The other hits the New York Stock Exchange, resulting "in a termination of trading for nearly two days." Now Pentagon planners must decide how to respond.

3. Collapse of North Korea

Authoritarian dictators can repress their populations for decades, but now the regime of Kim Jong-il "is embarking on the most difficult

challenge that such regimes face: succession,” according to a scenario by Bruce Bennett and Jennifer Lind, published in the fall issue of the journal *International Security*. Yet “the transition from apparent stability to collapse can be swift.” A government collapse in North Korea “could unleash a series of catastrophes on the peninsula with potentially far-reaching regional and global effects.” This could trigger a massive outflow of the nation’s 24 million people, many of whom are severely malnourished, across the border into South Korea. With the food shortages could come civil war. Equally troubling, “North Korea’s weapons of mass destruction could find their way out of the country and onto the global black market.” As a result, the consequences of a “poorly planned response to a government collapse in North Korea are potentially calamitous.”

North Korea has 1.2 million active duty military troops. What’s more, China will likely send its forces to aid in humanitarian efforts, as well. “The specter of Chinese forces racing south while US and South Korean troops race north is terrifying given the experience of the Korean War, a climate of suspicion among the three countries, and the risk of escalation to the nuclear level.” Based on the most optimistic assumptions, according to the scenario, as many as 400,000 ground forces would be required to stabilize North Korea – more than the US commitments to Iraq and Afghanistan combined. This would strain US forces, but the Pentagon noted in its 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review that the “instability or collapse of a WMD-armed state is among our most troubling concerns. Such an occurrence could lead to a rapid proliferation of WMD material, weapons, and technology, and could quickly become a global crisis posing a direct physical threat,” the scenario warns, “to the United States and all other nations.”

Article 6.

Foreign Policy

Next Year, in Review

David Rothkopf

December 12, 2011 -- If you were asked to name the five top foreign-policy stories of 2011, it probably wouldn't take too long. You'd have to put the Arab Spring on top of the list. Next would come the Eurocrisis. Getting Osama bin Laden probably also rates. Then what? Fukushima? Turmoil in Pakistan? Year of the Drone? There might be a little debate about how to order these or which not to include. And there could very well be a discussion about whether to include arguably bigger, slower-moving stories like climate change, advances in social networking, growing risks of securitization, financialization of commodities, failures to develop effective supranational governance mechanisms, and demographic shifts creating political pressures from Russia to Israel to China to Europe and beyond. But since the year has already flashed by like a fever dream, leaving us all in the need of a shower and some serious rehydration, making such lists is not all that difficult. The real feat is in picking the most important foreign-policy stories of 2012. That requires daring, creativity and a willingness to place one's trust in the idea that no one will go back and check on these predictions in a year. And that's why they pay me those big blogger dollars -- to dust off the FP Ouija board and tell you what is waiting for you just around the turn of the year. So here they are: the most important foreign-policy stories of 2012.

Leadership change in power centers worldwide

Ok, I'll admit it, this one is too easy. We know that changes or key elections are coming in the United States, China, important countries

in Europe, Mexico, Egypt and elsewhere. It happens every year. But given the precarious nature of the world, its propensity for volatility, and the pivotal nature of the countries involved, this will be a dominant story throughout the year.

Call it an intuition or reading the tea leaves associated with recent protests, outspoken criticism of government on issues from train wrecks to smog, more overt campaigns between factions in Chinese government, and the spread of social media (some less censored than others), but China's new leaders should expect to have a more fractious constituency and a tougher time maintaining central control of the world's emerging megapower.

Collapse of the Assad dynasty in Syria

Again, this doesn't take a psychic to suss out. Bashar al-Assad's days are numbered even if he doesn't know it yet. With the resilience of the opposition, growing pressure from his neighbors, and his own government's missteps, even the support of those great guys from Hezbollah won't be enough to keep Bashar from doing a Mubarak out the back door.

Power struggle in Pakistan

Predicting this is a little like predicting that the weather tomorrow will be the same as the weather today: 85 percent of the time you are right. But the recent rumors regarding the Zardari health emergency show just how skittish everyone is. As in Egypt, the military think of democracy as the political equivalent of offering a big fake smile for the cameras. The ISI don't even bother to smile (regardless of the reaction their initials may bring when strategically tattooed on the right actress). Whether these puppet masters push to have a shill take over the country (an ex-cricketer, for example) or simply go old

school and march back into the government offices, it's a good bet that by the end of next year we have new leadership in Islamabad.

End of Ahmadinejad in Iran

If current tensions continue to grow between the little guy in the tan windbreaker and the country's backroom mullahs, it won't be the West that undoes Mahmoud Ahmadinejad but the in-fighting at home. He'll try to keep his job by picking fights with the Americans, the Israelis, the Saudis, anyone in his eyeline. But with your own people and the rest of the world putting a price on your head, the future doesn't look bright.

Global recession with a surprise winner or two

The Eurozombies may avoid catastrophe but instead produce a macroeconomic remake of Night of the Living Dead. Recession in austerity-bound Europe will only be worsened by the sweeping downturn already taking place in the emerging world, and the result could be a deeper slump worldwide. But here's the twist: the United States will win, as it is a destination for those in the midst of one of the most confusing, frustrating flights to quality in recent history. Japan too. They won't do very well at all, but in the global ugly contest they may take home least-ugly honors.

Major bank failures trigger minimal regulatory reform

"Night of the Living Dead" in the Eurozone is likely to trigger "Nightmare on Wall Street" with big, undercapitalized Eurobanks still in precarious shape even after the European Union cobbles together an aid package. Policymakers will have a hard time sleeping all year, fearing a market spike will send one bank tumbling into another (a big German or French or Spanish bank collapsing into, say, Bank of America), and the result will be ... wait for it ... more

bailouts, no haircuts for the banks, no regulation, and further proof that in the global financial casino, the house banks always win.

Spreading extremism in Africa causes United States to act

This year we saw drone bases and troops move quietly into Africa. U.S. and Western security pros are worried about the sub-Sahel and extremists throughout the region, especially in resource repositories like Nigeria. More attention will go to the region's al-Qaeda and similar franchises and, by the end of the year, this will be seen as the security threat that has climbed the most on global watch lists.

Paradigm shift in Middle East

As if the Arab Spring were not enough, the shifts continue through 2012. China and India become ever more important consumers of oil and the United States ever less important. China is increasingly recognized as key to Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and related issues, even if it pretends like it doesn't want to be involved. Thus the non-priorities of the non-aligned become the non-order of the day. The United States continues its withdrawal and shifts its attention both homeward and to Asia, while moving more initiatives toward sluggish multilateralism or stealthy but targeted white-collar interventionism. Israel continues to undermine itself with its settlement policies and is weakened by irreversible demographic trends. Turkey rises and the regional balance of power shifts, as the Turkish-Egyptian "moderate" axis starts to displace the Saudi/Gulf center of gravity. The nuclear arms race in the region grows closer while instability in Pakistan grows more threatening. And, most of all, the rise and spread of Islamist democracy becomes the curveball no one expected, creating governments that are hard for the United States to get along with and harder for them to condemn, plus a big threat to the Saudis (who can't claim their way is the only way to

protect Islam) and the Israelis (who won't be able to claim special status as the only democracy in the region). Big changes. And policymakers are likely to have a tough time keeping up, which will cause new problems.

Strengthening of the Eurozone

2011 was the year the Eurozone discovered it couldn't live without itself. 2012 will be the year the long, slow, frustrating process of building new, stronger fiscal and monetary institutions begins to gain traction. It will happen in fits and starts, and headlines that "the end is near" will continue. But if the Eurozone could make it through the year of its 12-year itch, then its motto for the year ahead will be "that which does not kill us makes us stronger."

End of Chavez and Castro

Of course, that which does kill us makes us dead. And Chavez and Castro are good candidates to depart this world in the year ahead. Even if they don't, their policies will see a major decline as they are viewed as anachronistic and ineffective (and oppositions in both countries will make their biggest gains in recent memory in 2012).

Cybershocker hits a leading economy

Stuxnet was only prelude. The sequel is coming soon to a power grid or transportation system or financial market near you. The result will change the way countries interact and trigger a massive boom in cyber security measures.

Putin's return to power tougher than predicted

It couldn't happen to a nicer bare-chested man's man. But Vladimir Putin may turn out to be only a pale imitation of his Stalinist models with the country's growing opposition showing a few judo moves

even the master himself has trouble with. He'll probably ride it out, but expect unease and crackdowns to result.

There's an unlucky 13 for you. But perhaps you have some of your own. Just get them in fast. It'll give them more time to be appreciated and then forgotten as the real events of the year ahead unfold.

David Rothkopf is a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and author of the upcoming "Power, Inc." due out in early 2012 from Farrar, Straus & Giroux.