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Article 1.

Washington Post

## **United States needs to reevaluate its assistance to Israel**

Walter Pincus

October 18 -- As the country reviews its spending on defense and foreign assistance, it is time to examine the funding the United States provides to Israel.

Let me put it another way: Nine days ago, the Israeli cabinet reacted to months of demonstrations against the high cost of living there and agreed to raise taxes on corporations and people with high incomes (\$130,000 a year). It also approved cutting more than \$850 million, or about 5 percent, from its roughly \$16 billion defense budget in each of the next two years.

If Israel can reduce its defense spending because of its domestic economic problems, shouldn't the United States — which must cut military costs because of its major budget deficit — consider reducing its aid to Israel?

First, a review of what the American taxpayer provides to Israel. In late March 2003, just days after the invasion of Iraq, President George W. Bush requested the approval of \$4.7 billion in military assistance for more than 20 countries that had contributed to the conflict or the broader fight against terrorism. Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey were on that list.

A major share of the money, \$1 billion, went to Israel, “on top of the \$2.7 billion regular fiscal year 2003 assistance and \$9 billion in economic loans guaranteed by the U.S. government over the next three years,” according to a 2003 study by the Congressional Research Service (CRS).

Then in 2007, the Bush administration worked out an agreement to raise the annual military aid grant, which had grown to \$2.5 billion, incrementally over the next 10 years. This year, it has reached just over \$3 billion. That is almost half of all such military assistance that Washington gives out each year and represents about 18 percent of the Israeli defense budget.

In addition, the military funding for Israel is handled differently than it is for other countries. Israel's \$3 billion is put almost immediately into an interest-bearing account with the Federal Reserve Bank. The interest, collected by Israel on its military aid balance, is used to pay down debt from earlier Israeli non-guaranteed loans from the United States.

Another unique aspect of the assistance package is that about 25 percent of it can be used to buy arms from Israeli companies. No other country has that privilege, according to a September 2010 CRS report.

The U.S. purchases subsidize the Israeli arms business, but Washington maintains a veto over sales of Israeli weapons that may contain U.S. technology.

Look for a minute at the bizarre formula that has become an element of U.S.-Israel military aid, the so-called qualitative military edge (QME). Enshrined in congressional legislation, it requires certification that any proposed arms sale to any other country in the Middle East "will not adversely affect Israel's qualitative military edge over military threats to Israel."

In 2009 meetings with defense officials in Israel, Undersecretary of State Ellen Tauscher "reiterated the United States' strong commitment" to the formula and "expressed appreciation" for Israel's willingness to work with newly created "QME working groups," according to a cable of her meetings that was released by WikiLeaks.

The formula has an obvious problem. Because some neighboring countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, are U.S. allies but also considered threats by Israel, arms provided to them automatically mean that better weapons must go to Israel. The result is a U.S.-generated arms race.

For example, the threat to both countries from Iran led the Saudis in 2010 to begin negotiations to purchase advanced F-15 fighters. In turn, Israel — using \$2.75 billion in American military assistance — has been allowed to buy 20 of the new F-35 fifth-generation stealth fighters being developed by the United States and eight other nations. Another military program, called U.S. War Reserves Stocks for Allies, begun in the 1980s, allows the United States to store arms and equipment on Israeli bases for use in wartime. In the 1990s, the arrangement was expanded to allow Israel to use the weapons, but only with U.S. permission. During the 2006 war against Hezbollah in Lebanon, the United States gave permission for Israel to use stored cluster artillery shells to counter rocket attacks. The use drew international complaints because the rockets struck civilian rather than military areas.

The initial limit was \$100 million worth of stored missiles, armored vehicles and artillery munitions, but that has increased over time. It reached \$800 million in 2010, \$1 billion this year and by 2012, it is expected to grow to \$1.2 billion.

Since the mid-1990s, the United States and Israel have been co-developing missile defense systems designed to meet threats from short-range rockets as well as longer-range ballistic missiles. All of the systems involved have gained support from Congress, which frequently earmarks additional funding for Israeli weaponry.

For example, the House and the Senate added \$129.6 million to the \$106.1 million the Obama administration had in the fiscal 2012 budget for these programs. In the 2011 bill, Congress added

\$205 million for the Iron Dome system, which defends against short-range rockets and mortars. That was on top of \$200 million the administration sought for the U.S. contribution to other cooperative missile-defense systems.

Among reductions now being discussed in Israel is a delay in purchasing more Iron Dome systems beyond those to be paid for by the United States' \$205 million. In addition, the Israeli military may freeze its spending on other missile defense systems, the very ones for which Congress approved additional funding this year.

The question for the Obama administration, Congress and, in the end, perhaps the American public, is: Given present economic problems, should the United States supply the money to make up for reductions the Israelis are making in their own defense budget?

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Article 2.

Asharq Al-Awsat

## **Will Abbas return to the negotiation table?**

Ahmed Othman

Wednesday 19 October 2011 -- On 2 September 2010, the peace negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis began under the auspices of the US with the objective of reaching an agreement establishing a Palestinian state and guaranteeing Israel's security. Approximately one month after the beginning of the negotiations, the Palestinian leadership withdrew and refused to return to the negotiation table unless the Jewish state committed to cease settlement building on occupied Palestinian territory. With Abbas absent from the negotiations, Netanyahu continued with the construction of thousands of housing units in the West Bank and Jerusalem's Old City, without the Middle East Quartet or the US being able to stop this.

In a bid to solve this impasse, the Palestinian leadership decided to go to the UN to request the recognition of the Palestinian state – in accordance with the 1967 borders – as a full UN member-state. As they were aware that the UN General Assembly cannot implement this [full-member state recognition] without UN Security Council approval, the Palestinian leadership decided that it must first take this resolution to the UN Security Council in order to humiliate the US and Israel before international public opinion. The US administration and representatives of the European Union [EU] attempted to dissuade the Palestinians from taking this issue to the UN, something that only increased [Palestinian President] Mahmoud Abbas's determination to resort to the UN Security Council and acquire Arab

League support for his stance.

At the same time, the Hamas and Islamic Jihad movements – who are in control of the Gaza Strip – declined to meet Abbas’s request to recognize a Palestinian state according to the 1967 borders, insisting that this would mean relinquishing the claim to Palestine’s historic territory, “from the river to the sea”. The stance taken by Hamas and Islamic Jihad corresponds to the position taken by Tehran. Indeed, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi, in a press statement issued on the side-lines of the first Islamic Awakening Conference held in Tehran, said “Palestine is not divisible, and it cannot be divided into two parts as some are saying.” He added “Iran’s official stance is that Palestine belongs to all Palestinians...and we do not approve of the breakup of Palestine.” The Iranian Foreign Minister also stressed that “we will never recognize the Zionist regime.”

Abbas then travelled to New York, where he met with US President Barack Obama, who told him that the only way for Palestine to secure a state is via negotiations with Israel, otherwise Washington would not approve Palestine’s membership request to the UN and will even utilize its veto to prevent this, if necessary. French President Nicolas Sarkozy intervened to try and help both the Americans and Palestinians save face, proposing that Palestine be granted non-member UN “observer” status provided that Abbas agrees to resume unconditional negotiations with Israel, including him dropping his condition that Israel cease settlement construction. Abbas refused to bow to all these pressures and went to the UN General Assembly where he derived great satisfaction and pleasure from the reaction of those who filled the UN chamber to listen to his speech, which received 13 rounds of applause and 3 standing ovations. Abbas announced that he had submitted Palestine’s request to join the UN to Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. In his address, Abbas lauded Ban Ki-Moon for saying that “the Palestinian State

should have been established years ago.” The UN Secretary-General may have been referring to UN Resolution 181 [United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine] which was adopted in 1947 and which granted the Palestinians the right to establish a state, although they failed to take this step for 63 years. During Abbas’s speech to the UN General Assembly in New York, tens of thousands of Palestinians took to the streets in Ramallah and the rest of the West Bank to celebrate their leader’s speech. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas [in a meeting with senior representatives of the Palestinian community in the US, shortly before his UN speech] also refused to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, saying “they talk to us about the Jewish state, but I respond to them with a final answer: we shall not recognize a Jewish state”. This is despite the fact that UN resolution 181 – adopted in 1947 – granted the Jews the right to establish their own state. [During his UN speech] Abbas referred to Palestine as being holy land for the Muslims and Christians, but did not mention the Jews, saying “the Holy Land, the land of Palestine, [is] the land of divine messages, the ascension of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the birthplace of Jesus Christ (peace be upon him).” As soon as Abbas finished his speech, the Middle East Quartet – made up of the UN, the EU, the US, and Russia – urged the Palestinians and Israel to return to negotiations, drawing up a timetable to reach an agreement by the end of the year. The Middle East Quartet said that it wanted full proposals to be submitted within the next three months, so the question that must be asked here is: what position will Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority [PA] take now? Will the Palestinians return to negotiations without imposing pre-conditions? Will Netanyahu agree to cease settlement construction this time?

It is important that the Palestinians recognize, from their past experience, that their window of opportunity is closing, and what

they reject today may be impossible for them to even acquire tomorrow. A few weeks before the end of his presidential term, Bill Clinton invited Yasser Arafat and Ehud Barack to Camp David to negotiate. When the two parties failed to reach an agreement, Clinton put forward his own proposal for the two sides to accept. Whilst Ehud Barack indicated that he was prepared to accept this, Arafat rejected the US president's proposal and returned to Ramallah. Clinton's proposal, in fact, included more than what Abbas is demanding today; namely a Palestinian state whose capital is Eastern Jerusalem, Palestinian sovereignty of the Temple Mount, the return of 95 percent of the West Bank to be part of the [new] Palestinian state, enlarging the Gaza Strip by incorporating parts of the adjacent Negev desert, and Israel relinquishing some of its settlements on Palestinian territory. The proposal also included the return of the first generations of refugees to Israel, with all Palestinian refugees being granted the right of return, with the rest of the refugees being granted compensation, and nationalization for those opting to remain in other countries.

If Abbas had continued with negotiations last year, the two sides may have reached a point that required international intervention to settle, as was the case with the second round of Camp David negotiation. If this had occurred, the Palestinians could have obtained an international decree this year backing their demands. So, will Abbas return to the negotiating table, or will he waste another year and grant Netanyahu a new opportunity to build thousands more settlements on Palestinian soil?

Article 3.

Reuters

## **Blair: Mideast mediators want border proposals**

Mohammed Abbas

Oct 19 2011 -- International mediators will press Israel and Palestinians to table their ideas on security arrangements and the borders for a two-state solution to the Middle East conflict within three months, envoy Tony Blair said on Wednesday.

Blair said the mediators would hold separate meetings with the Israelis and Palestinians next week in Jerusalem, the latest effort to revive the peace process.

Blair is the representative for a Quartet of mediators, made up of the United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations. By arranging separate meetings, the Quartet failed to meet a goal set out in a September 23 statement to bring the parties together for a "preparatory meeting" aimed at reviving the peace talks which broke down more than a year ago.

Blair said the September 23 statement had also called on the parties to set out their "detailed proposals on borders and security in three months".

"If we can get the parties to agree to do this, then within three months we'll know where everyone stands on two of the central issues," Blair told Reuters.

"If we can get to a point where within three months you see what the parties' proposals are on the borders, you'd see where the gaps are. And that would be in my view a huge advance," he said.

The last round of peace talks between Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

broke down over a year ago, just a few weeks after it started, because of a dispute over Jewish settlement expansion.

The Palestinians say Israel must halt all settlement building on land where they seek to establish their independent state before any more talks.

Abbas also wants Israel to agree to clear terms of reference which make clear its agreement in principle to the idea of a Palestinian state emerging in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem.

Netanyahu says he is ready to sit down for talks with Abbas right away but has refused to impose new restrictions on the expansion of the settlements.

Israel recently unveiled plans for new settlement building including 2,600 homes on land near East Jerusalem, where the Palestinians aim to found their capital.

"The settlement decision is a problem, I mean there's no doubt about that. The Quartet has continually made clear its concerns and disagreement with this. But I go back to one very simple thing, which is that in the end the best way to resolve this settlement question is to resolve borders," Blair said.

Blair has faced increasingly vocal criticism from Palestinian officials who have accused him of being pro-Israeli. Some have suggested he should be replaced. Blair denied the accusation of bias.

Saeb Erekat, a senior Palestinian official, criticized the Quartet on Wednesday over what he described as its weak response to the latest Israeli settlement building announcements.

"We had hoped from the Quartet to hear, at the very least, one sentence saying Israel is responsible for destroying the peace process," Erekat told Voice of Palestine radio.

"This is what we will discuss with them," he said, referring to next week's meetings.

Article 4.

Wall Street Journal

## **The unintended consequences of Nicolas Sarkozy's support for Palestinian statehood**

Jonathan Schanzer and Claudia Rosett

October 20, 2011 -- The Palestinian drive for United Nations membership is backfiring on one of its most vocal early supporters, French President Nicolas Sarkozy. What began as a French bid to one-up a weak U.S. foreign policy is now devolving into a struggle over continued U.S. funding for the only significant U.N. organization headquartered in Paris: the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco). In recent weeks, while the Palestinians have pressed forward with a bid for full membership in Unesco, both French diplomats and U.N. officials have been quietly back-pedaling on the issue. Like so many maneuvers at the U.N., this reversal appears to be less about grand matters of principle than about money. According to American law since the 1990s, the U.S. is prohibited from giving funds to any part of the U.N. system that grants the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) the same standing as member states. This could amount to a shortfall of more than \$70 million per year to Unesco. Currently, Unesco operates with an annual budget of more than \$325 million, to which the U.S. is by far the largest contributor, giving 22%. France, while prizing Unesco as its showpiece U.N. tenant, chips in just 6.1%. In years past, France has already tasted what it means for Unesco to forgo U.S. funding. In the 1980s, the U.S. withdrew from Unesco, returning only in 2003 under President George W. Bush. Apparently, the Quai d'Orsay has no wish to repeat that experience. French diplomats are now saying that, despite their earlier backing of

the Palestinian unilateral bid, Unesco is "not the right time, nor the right place" to wrestle with the question of Palestine.

Yet only in March, Mr. Sarkozy had elbowed past a dithering President Obama, signaling that France would likely support the international recognition of a Palestinian state. "The idea that we have time [to negotiate a deal between Israel and the Palestinians] is a dangerous idea. We must finish," Mr. Sarkozy said at the time.

French diplomats privately indicated that the Palestinian statehood initiative would "level the playing field" between Israel and the Palestinians, and lead the way to an equitable solution to the conflict. In July, France announced it would upgrade the PLO delegation in Paris to a diplomatic mission. Spain, Portugal, Norway and a handful of other European states soon did the same.

By early September, with a showdown looming at the U.N. General Assembly annual opening in New York, the Palestinians claimed to have 128 of the U.N.'s 193 member countries backing their bid for statehood. As the European country spearheading this effort, France looked likely to emerge as a leading backer of the statehood initiative. Instead, President Obama's pledge to veto the Palestinian application in the Security Council turned out to be unwavering. While the application submitted on Sept. 24 by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas remains under consideration in the Council, the French understood that a climb-down to a General Assembly vote granting observer status was the more viable scenario. Thus, the French failed to deliver on Mr. Sarkozy's spring swagger. Rather than push for full Palestinian membership, Mr. Sarkozy retreated, proposing in his Sept. 21 address to the General Assembly: "Why not consider offering Palestine the status of United Nations observer state?" Ratcheting back his own earlier rhetoric, he insisted that this compromise "would be an important step forward."

But the French had created a monster. Mr. Abbas was not satisfied with merely having applied for U.N. membership. He took his cause to Unesco, having learned that the window for membership would be open this fall, only to be closed again for the next two years. Full membership must first be recommended by the Unesco executive board, then approved by a two-thirds majority of Unesco's 193-state General Conference, due to convene in Paris on Oct. 25.

Earlier this month Unesco's 58-nation executive board approved a draft resolution for Palestinian membership, sponsored by several Arab states, by a 40-to-4 vote. The four countries opposed were the U.S., Germany, Latvia and Romania. Among the 14 countries abstaining was none other than France.

The French position is now hard to pin down. Mr. Sarkozy backs the deliberation process at the Security Council, but hesitates to support Palestinian membership in a relatively minor appendage of the organization. Within Unesco itself, similar hesitations are emerging. Senior Unesco officials made the rounds in Washington this week, meeting with Obama administration officials, legislators and other influential Beltway types, trying to convince them that Unesco's activities are in America's interest and hoping to find a loophole that could help circumvent the law that could leave them without U.S. taxpayer funds. The Unesco mess is only one unintended consequence of France's bid to support the Palestinian drive for statehood. There will undoubtedly be others.

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Article 5.

CNN

## **New Dangers After The Israel-Hamas Prisoner Swap**

Robert Danin

October 19, 2011 -- PLO chairman Mahmoud Abbas returned to Ramallah last month from New York triumphant, having defiantly stood up to the United States and others by submitting Palestine's application for statehood to the United Nations Security Council. On Tuesday, in contrast, Abbas doubtlessly felt politically deflated as he welcomed newly freed prisoners whose release was engineered by his two political adversaries - Hamas and Israel.

Such are the vagaries of rapidly shifting Israeli-Palestinian politics. One moment Abbas is up, the next he feels compelled to host his rivals' supporters whose violent actions ran precisely contrary to his own political approach. Last week I provided a first look at the immediate implications of the Shalit exchange. Now, as the dust settles further from the drama of the prisoner exchange, certain realities come into clearer focus:

First, despite the increased flexibility just demonstrated by both Israel and Hamas in closing the deal, the prisoner exchange does not presage a new peace opening between the two bitter foes as some suggest. The Gaza-Israel border just became even more dangerous. Hamas and other radical groups have called for additional kidnappings of Israeli soldiers and settlers to serve as bargaining chips. And senior Israeli military officers have begun ordering their soldiers not to be taken captive alive, even if that means injuring or killing their fellow comrades in arms to thwart a Palestinian abduction operation.

At a more strategic level, Israel will probably seek to reestablish its deterrence and military supremacy vis-à-vis Hamas. This means Israel will strike heavily against targets in Gaza should militant groups there launch projectiles into Israel or appear to be preparing any abduction operations against Israeli targets.

Second, the prospects for serious Israeli-Palestinian peace talks are, if anything, dimmer in the period ahead. Recall, Abbas's request for statehood has not gone away, and is making its way through the Security Council bureaucracy. Should it come to a vote, the Palestinians will either fail to get the necessary nine votes in favor, or the United States will veto it. In either case, a defiant Abbas will feel even more inclined to take it to the United Nations General Assembly and the certain attainment of non-member statehood status. This will likely trigger a strong Israeli (and possibly American) counter reaction that will hardly grease the wheels for renewed talks. Such U.N. actions, and possible Israeli counter responses, increase the prospects for renewed Israeli-Palestinian violence on the ground.

Third, popular sentiment is once again pushing Palestinian leaders across the Hamas-Fatah divide to renew their unity efforts. Wide-scale demonstrations in March in both Gaza and the West Bank precipitated last spring's Fatah-Hamas unity deal. There is a simple reason the deal was not adopted: neither Hamas's nor Fatah's leaders really want it. Hamas is happily ensconced controlling Gaza, and Mahmoud Abbas's people exclusively control the West Bank. Neither particularly wants to share with the other. This will be all the more the case after the prisoner exchange. Nonetheless, both sides will go through the motions of further reconciliation talks to appease public opinion.

Still, important opportunities exist for improving the situation through creative action. First, Quartet envoys are set to meet next Wednesday in Jerusalem with Israeli and Palestinian representatives

as called for by the Quartet's September 23 statement laying out stepping stones to and a timeline for resumed negotiations. These diplomats have their work cut out for them. It is still imperative, in light of the increasingly volatile atmosphere, that a pathway be created back to negotiations.

But the Quartet's September 23 statement also called for the diplomats to "consult and identify additional steps they can actively support towards Palestinian statehood individually and together." In other words, the international community should focus not just on diplomacy but also on the more fruitful state-building actions that Prime Minister Fayyad has shepherded over the past three years.

This focus on building Palestinian capacity has produced significant economic growth and reduced donor dependency as recognized by the World Bank, IMF, and other international bodies. Accountable and effective Palestinian security services have made the streets of once no-go areas like Jenin, Nablus and Hebron safe for Palestinians. And it has created effective Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation - the sine qua non for real diplomatic progress.

In light of emerging political challenges and increased volatility, now is not the time for benign neglect. The international community, along with Israel and the Palestinian Authority, should focus on rapid, practical, on-the-ground steps to help mitigate increasing dangers resulting from the Israel-Hamas prisoner exchange. A new window of opportunity for peace has not opened. But preventing a potentially explosive situation is important while the parties' immediate priorities are focused on areas other than diplomacy.

*Robert Danin is the Eni Enrico Mattei Senior Fellow for Middle East and Africa Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations.*

Article 6.

The National Interest

## **The Real Recep Tayyip Erdogan**

Morton Abramowitz

October 19, 2011-- Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been something of a rockstar not only in the Middle East but also in New York. His recent trip to the U.N. General Assembly was marked by high-profile interviews with Fareed Zakaria and Charlie Rose as well as by numerous articles proclaiming him the man of the hour and Turkey a new power, no longer dependent on the West and with its own agenda.

Erdogan has transformed Turkey in a way that no other leader has since Ataturk. The country is more dynamic, democratic and freer than it has ever been. Turkey's vast economic growth has enabled it to again become a significant international player. He has particularly re-engaged with the Middle East and elevated Turkey as a model for the area. His activism and his anti-Israel stance are immensely popular domestically and in most Middle East countries. By all accounts Mr. Obama sees Erdogan as a constructive partner, speaks with him frequently by phone and seeks his views on the region. Given all this, deciphering Erdogan's worldview is increasingly important. Many in and outside of Turkey are concerned about how much his dedication to Islam drives his actions in the Middle East. A penchant for emotional, personalistic rhetoric has sometimes clouded the "principles" of liberty and democracy that Erdogan says guide him. Some, less charitably, say he drones on ad hoc on all sorts of issues, often conveniently forgetting his previous stances. His selective application of principles on both international and domestic issues has left many asking: Who is the real Erdogan? Here we seek to probe that question.

## Islam and Justice

Erdogan, who grew up in Turkey's Islamic political parties, was shaped by his personal and political roots in Islam. He sees the world as controlled by the non-Muslim West, which continually and systematically mistreats Muslim countries. He sees Israel dominating its Muslim neighbors while receiving special treatment from the West. Meanwhile, Muslim countries such as Sudan and Iran are sanctioned and isolated for the same behavior. Principal actors in this unjust system are the UN and the Security Council because they enable Israel to maintain military and nuclear superiority over its Muslim neighbors. As the leader of a democratic and economically successful Muslim state, Erdogan sees himself as the voice of an oppressed Muslim constituency that includes the peoples of the Middle East, most importantly the Palestinians, and increasingly the Muslims of Africa. Erdogan frequently identifies justice as his guiding principle, with Islam often the primary factor in his evaluation of justice and victimization.

The Palestinians in Gaza are ground zero of Erdogan's unjust world. Israel cruelly oppresses them without consequences. The small number of rockets from Gaza hitting Israel are irrelevant to Erdogan compared to Palestinian casualties generated by Israel. Israel is able to maintain its superiority because of the double standards of the United States and other Western countries. The Security Council's silence on Israel's weapons of mass destruction while Muslim Iran is sanctioned because of its nuclear program (which Erdogan continues to defend as peaceful) is a primary indicator of that biased view.

Turkey has supported the U.S. war in Afghanistan and broader U.S. efforts against terrorism. However, Erdogan's rubric for determining what constitutes terrorism or war crimes is heavily influenced by his view of Islam. If a leader is Muslim, then he "cannot commit genocide" because Islam forbids murder; such was Erdogan's defense

of Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir for his massive destruction of Darfur, many of whose people were not Muslims. Likewise, if an Islamic group like Hamas is fighting Israel, that group can be called "freedom fighters." However, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), whose members come from Muslim Kurdish families, should be labeled terrorists (as they are by most Western countries) and cannot be Islamic because they are also killing civilians and fighting the democratic Turkish state. This he distinguishes from organizations like al-Qaeda and the Taliban that claim to be Islamic but commit acts of terrorism. With the notable exceptions of Bashir and Hamas, Erdogan's rubric has not put him in direct conflict with the U.S. policy on terrorism.

Erdogan's focal point is where Islam, democracy and secularism intersect—as, for example, in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, where efforts are being made to form new governments. As a messenger for Islam's compatibility with democratic values, Erdogan sought to fill a gap in discussions over the Middle East's future. In Cairo, he made the case for secular government, how a religious man can lead a secular democracy and not sacrifice his religiosity or the secular nature of the state. Erdogan is putting his brand of Islam and democracy front and center.

### Solipsism

Erdogan's ascendance in Turkey has been mirrored by a new narrative in which he has become the focus of policy. He speaks of his emotions and personal relationships as key determinants in Turkey's orientation toward other countries. Regarding Syria, Erdogan explains that Assad no longer has a place in his heart and that his "patience" for Assad's violence against his citizens has ended. This, coupled with a trip to a Syrian refugee camp, is often cited as the reason for Turkey's changed stance. Turkey and Syria had developed close economic and political ties under Erdogan's

leadership. Concentrating on his feelings toward Assad rather than Turkey's strategic and economic interests, Erdogan puts himself forward as the embodiment of Turkey

Erdogan's sense of a personal calling to defend the world has extended to Africa. His visit to Somalia at the end of Ramadan was dotted with the language of generosity and unselfish regard for the Somali people. The trip was indeed exceptional. Few foreign leaders of any persuasion have visited Somalia. He had an article this past week on Somali aid in *Foreign Policy*. His laudable announcement of aid and reconstruction projects was accompanied by an invitation to the West at the recent General Assembly meeting to also participate in responding to the famine, as if no other country had provided aid previously. Of course Turkey, under his leadership, has paid little attention to Somalia the past eight years. It was almost as if the Somalia problem had not existed until Erdogan discovered it. Despite the worthwhile goals of trying to bring more basic healthcare and infrastructure to the country, Erdogan's narrative seemingly revolves around himself more than around Somalia's people. Speaking as the leader for the victimized, he sees countries such as Muslim Somalia as opportunities to demonstrate the economic and political reach of Turkey and to showcase his international leadership.

### Kurds

As many leaders find, it is sometimes difficult to balance "principles" with hard political realities. Erdogan's biggest contradiction stems from the large Kurdish minority in Turkey. More than any other Turkish leader, he has shown flexibility towards the Kurds. The Democratic Opening, while short on tangible benefits, was significant because it seemed the first serious attempt at a political solution to a problem most popularly viewed in Turkey as a military one. The recent revelation that the government was negotiating with the PKK's leader is further evidence of a willingness to break from the past.

Despite his talk of democracy and liberty abroad, Erdogan has found it difficult to stick to those policies at home. In response to recent deadly PKK attacks, he vowed to push a military solution until the last Kurdish rebel lays down his weapons. That has not worked in the past. Finding a path forward will be difficult, particularly with the uptick in PKK violence, and that will be a consideration in the new civilian constitution the Turkish political parties have begun to draft. Whether it provides the Kurds serious democratic change will be an acid test of Erdogan's ability to fashion a more open and democratic Turkey.

What do we make of all this?

Clearly, Erdogan is a skilled and charismatic politician who has stepped onto the world stage with impressive gusto. He dominates Turkey, and few in the media dare to challenge him—he brooks little criticism. He is dedicated to growth and has pursued Turkey's economic interests, even when they conflicted with his own personal ideology. He has articulately laid out a case for Islam's compatibility with secularism and democracy at a moment when the direction of the Middle East's future is cloudy.

However, he is a man of strong—even visceral—feelings who clearly believes he has a mission, and the strong support of his people has put the wind at his back. He wants to shake things up internationally, meaning the West's domination of the global system, and particularly the Middle East, can no longer be at the expense of Muslims. He sees Israel as a culprit, and his dispute with Israel goes far beyond last year's Israeli attack on a Turkish ship seeking to break Israel's blockade of Gaza. This perspective puts him at odds with central principles of U.S. policy, focused on Israel's security as a primary concern. Erdogan's pragmatism and seasoning as a third-term prime minister should not be discounted. As Turkey's participation in NATO action against Libya and its agreement to host a NATO radar

shield suggest, Erdogan is more in tune with geostrategic concerns and the balancing of interests than some here may choose to believe. He clearly wants, and thinks he can have, a strong relationship with the United States, even in the Middle East. The Obama administration has given him no reason to doubt that. His fierce ambition, his solipsism and his religious worldview, however, blend into a combustible mixture that makes him an unpredictable ally.

*Morton Abramowitz, a senior fellow at The Century Foundation, was American ambassador to Turkey 1989-91.*

Article 7.

Foreign Policy

## **Why the electronic wars of the future will actually save lives**

Tim Maurer

OCTOBER 19, 2011 -- According to an intriguing story in this week's New York Times, the Obama administration decided not to use cyberwarfare against Libya, opting instead for a conventional attack on Muammar al-Qaddafi's defense installations. Officials feared that it would set a precedent and invite other countries (think: China, Russia) to use similar means of attack in the future. As James Lewis, a cybersecurity expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, succinctly put it, "We don't want to be the ones who break the glass on this new kind of warfare."

Senior officials such as Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta warn that the "next Pearl Harbor we confront could very well be a cyber attack." But what if cyberwarfare is not such a bad thing after all, though? What if it saves lives? The evidence so far actually suggests that cyberwarfare costs fewer lives compared with traditional types of warfare. The prevailing view, however, holds that cyberwar is a terrifying prospect. The influential 2010 book *Cyberwar*, for instance -- co-authored by Richard A. Clarke, who was responsible for cybersecurity at the White House until 2003 -- paints a gloomy picture of potential future cyberattacks that could involve cutting millions of people off the electrical grid or, worse, as in the case of an attack on aviation control or a nuclear power plant, cost thousands of lives. Yet the evidence of cyberwarfare, so far, reveals a very different picture. The cyberattack on Estonia in 2007 was the first to make major international headlines. But its damage was limited: The

Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack overburdened servers in Estonia and brought down several websites. Something similar happened in Georgia during the war in 2008. Such attacks could theoretically cost lives if they shut down emergency hotlines, for example. But they're not the sort of thing that should keep us up at night.

The Stuxnet virus, on the other hand, was a very different animal. It infected computer systems and altered code in a way that made it too risky to run centrifuges used in Iran's nuclear facilities. Some experts estimate that Stuxnet pushed back Iran's nuclear development by several months, possibly years, and what's wrong with that? This particular cyberattack may have actually saved rather than cost lives. Consider similar situations in the past. Former Vice President Dick Cheney, for example, writes about one such incident in his new memoir. He describes the decision-making process that occurred as the United States considered whether or not to bomb a Syrian nuclear facility in 2007. Despite Israeli requests to do so, President George W. Bush decided to pursue a diplomatic rather than military option. So Israel took matters into its own hands. Cheney writes, "Under cover of darkness on September 6, 2007, Israeli F-15s crossed into Syrian airspace and within minutes were over the target at al-Kibar. Satellite photos afterward showed that the Israeli pilots hit their target perfectly."

Clarke writes about the same incident in his book, speculating how "Many North Korean workers had left the construction site six hours earlier ... to the few Syrians and Koreans still on the site, there was a blinding flash, then a concussive sound wave, and then falling pieces of debris." Clarke's imaginative account is probably more fiction than based on intelligence information. Yet it highlights an important point: Despite the attack being a perfect hit, a few people were probably still killed. So is cyberware a better alternative to

traditional war? Not necessarily. Three conditions will determine whether cyberwarfare will actually reduce the human costs of war: First, security improvements. If critical civilian infrastructures such as hospitals, nuclear power plants, and transportation control systems can be better protected -- for instance, by identifying and fixing vulnerabilities, isolating an attack, as well as creating back-up mechanisms to restore targeted systems -- it significantly reduces the probability of cyberwarfare being able to cause direct bodily harm. Second, norms governing the use of cyberwarfare. Will states, for instance, retaliate against a cyberattack with kinetic warfare? If a country responds with conventional weapons to, say, an adversary taking down its electrical grid, then all bets are off. But if strategic planners are able to work out a model of deterrence for the digital age, then we may all be safer for it. An open question is whether the possibility of conducting a less violent cyberattack would actually decrease the inhibition to perpetrate an attack in the first place. Third, nonstate actors. My argument focuses only on interstate war excluding violent conflict with non-state actors such as terrorists. At present, though, this threat is considered to be minimal because of the resources and expertise needed to mount a sophisticated cyber attack like Stuxnet. Cyberwarfare might be how we will fight the battles of the future. The evidence so far suggests, however, that a digital Pearl Harbor would cost fewer lives than the attack 70 years ago. It might not be pretty, but from a humanitarian point of view, that's good news.

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