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Article 1.

NYT

A New Kind of Warfare

Editorial

September 9, 2012 -- Cybersecurity efforts in the United States have largely centered on defending computer networks against attacks by

hackers, criminals and foreign governments, mainly China. Increasingly, however, the focus is on developing offensive capabilities, on figuring out how and when the United States might unleash its own malware to disrupt an adversary's networks. That is potentially dangerous territory.

Such malware is believed to have little deterrent value against criminals who use computers to steal money from banks or spies who pilfer industrial secrets. But faced with rising intrusions against computers that run America's military systems and its essential infrastructure — its power grid, for instance, and its telecommunications networks — the military here (and elsewhere) sees disruptive software as an essential new tool of war. According to a study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the 15 countries with the biggest military budgets are all investing in offensive cyber capabilities.

The latest step occurred last month when the United States sent out bids for technologies “to destroy, deny, degrade, disrupt, corrupt or usurp” an adversary's attempt to use cyberspace for advantage. The Air Force asked for proposals to plan for and manage cyberwarfare, including the ability to launch superfast computer attacks and withstand retaliation.

The United States, China, Russia, Britain and Israel began developing basic cyberattack capabilities at least a decade ago and are still figuring out how to integrate them into their military operations. Experts say cyberweapons will be used before or during conflicts involving conventional weapons to infect an adversary's network and disrupt a target, including shutting down military communications. The most prominent example is the Stuxnet virus deployed in 2010 by the United States and Israel to set back Iran's nuclear program. Other cyberattacks occurred in 2007 against Syria and 1998 against Serbia.

Crucial questions remain unanswered, including what laws of war would apply to decisions to launch an attack. The United States still hasn't figured out what impact cyberweapons could have on actual battlefield operations or when an aggressive cyber response is required. Nor has Washington settled on who would authorize an attack; experts see roles for both the president and military commanders. There is also the unresolved issue of how to minimize collateral damage — like making sure malware does not cripple a civilian hospital.

Another big concern is China, which is blamed for stealing American military secrets. Washington has not had much success persuading Beijing to rein in its hackers. There is a serious risk of miscalculation if, for example, there is a confrontation in the South China Sea. China could misinterpret a move, unleash a cyberattack and trigger a real cyberwar. What's clearly needed are new international understandings about what constitutes cyber aggression and how governments should respond. Meanwhile, the United States must do what it can to protect its own networks.

Article 2.

The Economist

War and diplomacy in Syria

Sep 8th 2012 -- Lakhdar Brahimi, the experienced Algerian peacemaker who recently replaced Kofi Annan as the UN's special envoy for Syria, describes his new task as "nearly impossible". That seems a sound judgment. Syria's beleaguered but ruthless regime refuses to talk to its opponents until they lay down their arms. For their part, the outgunned, fractious but resilient rebels will not talk to the regime until President Bashar Assad goes. The rest of the world watches in dismay or quietly fuels the conflict, as misery mounts. In August alone, the number of Syrian refugees applying for asylum abroad doubled, to 200,000. Mr Assad has tried various tactics to stamp out the uprising, now entering its 18th month. First he promised reform, as his security forces shot at peaceful protesters. Then the regime claimed that all was well but for a few rogue "terrorists". Now, having admitted that he is fighting a real war, Mr Assad is offering a choice: his regime must be accepted or his army will scorch the earth of those who go against it. The regional governor in charge of Daraya, a rebellious working-class suburb of the capital, Damascus, that was devastated by Mr Assad's forces in August, recently visited it bearing bread. A kindly speech about resupplying the stricken town was followed by a stark warning, says a resident at the scene: harbour the rebels again and Daraya will be razed to the ground. Such warnings are taken seriously. Across the country, the army's snipers, artillery and war planes ceaselessly pummel areas suspected of rebel sympathies. With growing frequency clusters of corpses, usually of young men with hands bound, have been

found dumped by the road in government-held areas. On September 5th, 45 such bodies were said to have been retrieved in one incident. Ruthless loyalist assaults have kept central Damascus firmly under government control. Loyalist forces have regained patches of ground in Aleppo, the fiercely contested second city. Yet there are signs of ebbing government strength. The practice of pushing oil drums full of explosives out of helicopters suggests that the air force may be running out of bombs. The regime has also begun drafting reservists into the army, whose combat strength, on paper, of 280,000 men is being badly depleted by casualties, defections and dipping morale. "We don't know if they need us or just want us so we can't fight against them," says a 30-year-old who left for Lebanon as soon as the police came knocking to call him up.

But the regime's threats and its determination to consolidate may work in some areas. Its narrative of an armed Islamist and sectarian uprising is becoming self-fulfilling, thanks largely to the violence inflicted overwhelmingly against Syria's Sunni Muslim majority. Playing on fears of Sunni vengeance, the ruling clan now offers arms to local self-defence militias that draw from minorities other than its own Alawite sect, which makes up a tenth of the population but dominates the security forces. A mysterious spate of attacks attributed by the regime to "terrorists" has stoked anxieties in Jaramana, a sprawling Damascus suburb that houses many Christians and Druze. "Some people want to throw their hands up and say OK, whoever, we just want it to stop," says a local. Mr Assad may be signalling a willingness to spread fires abroad, too. In Lebanon alleged transcripts of an interrogation by the Lebanese police of Michel Samaha, a former government minister close to Mr Assad arrested in August, suggest that top Syrian security officers had supplied him with bombs intended to kill various Lebanese Sunni and Christian figures. Turkish officials suspect that Mr Assad's regime has handed Syria's north-eastern Kurdish areas to militias tied to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a guerrilla group that has been fighting Turkish forces for over 30 years. The PKK was blamed for an attack in southern Turkey on September 3rd that killed nine Turkish policemen. Such divisive tactics have long been a hallmark of the Assad family's rule. Although opposition fighters have alienated some propertied city dwellers, they retain the support of much of the rural population and have continued to wear down Mr Assad's forces. Attacks on

government supply convoys have stranded remoter army units and ground assaults on air bases are beginning to take a toll on Mr Assad's air force: three out of its 27 bases may no longer be operable. Helicopters are now rarely sighted in Syria's rebel-dominated north-west because fighters have fashioned weapons to shoot them down. Pointing to their successes, rebel commanders say they will push on, with or without outsiders' help. The American administration has licensed the Syrian Support Group, an organisation of exiles, to ignore the American arms embargo and fund opposition fighters. Western leaders are growing less squeamish about dishing out aid. "We are behind the curve in seeing this as a military conflict while other regional actors step up what they are doing," admits a Western diplomat, echoing reports of a boost in arms shipments to the regime from Iran. Moves by the disparate rebel militias to unify their command structures have been quietly encouraged, in a sign of the West's impatience with Syria's squabbling political opposition. Rather than press for negotiations, Mr Brahimi may concentrate instead on simply maintaining a UN foothold in Syria's quagmire, with the intention of mediating at a more opportune time. That moment is unlikely to result from a bold diplomatic initiative for a long while. There is no sign of either side wanting to cease fire. Perhaps a particularly jarring spike in violence might jolt outside governments into more urgent diplomatic or even military action. "I hope one day I see my home again," says a dejected young writer now in exile. "But who knows if I will recognise it."

Article 3.

Al-Monitor

Will Morsi Really Offer Change for Gaza

Sophie Claudet with Saleh Jadallah

Sep 9, 2012 -- Gaza City – When Egypt reopened the [Rafah crossing border](#) with Gaza late last month, Palestinians hailed the move as a possible end to their isolation from the rest of the world after years of near-total closure enforced by both Israel and former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. " Hamas appreciates the Egyptian decision to completely reopen the Rafah crossing, and considers this step as an evidence for the good intention of the Egyptian leadership toward the Palestinian people, especially in Gaza," Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zohri said. On Aug. 25,

Egypt said the Rafah terminal would stay open from 9 [REDACTED] to 6 [REDACTED], 6 days a week except Fridays.

The Gaza Strip has four main crossings: three of them are controlled by Israel and the Rafah border is under Hamas and Egyptian control since Israel pulled out its settlers and army from Gaza in 2005. Israel-controlled Erez crossing is mainly used by businessmen, medical patients, foreigners and Palestinian officials — all requiring permits that Israel delivers sparingly. The other two passages, Karni and Karem Shalom, are used for commercial purposes and unilaterally controlled by Israel. And Gaza can only trade — albeit with great difficulties — by way of land since both its seaport and airport were destroyed by Israel during the second [Intifada](#) (2000-2005).

But the Rafah border crossing, which is the only window to the world for the great majority of Gazaans, was closed on Aug. 5 after an attack on an Egyptian security site in the Sinai peninsula left [16 Egyptian soldiers dead](#), creating tensions between the two sides.

Following the attack, Egypt accused Palestinian militants of being involved in the attack, claiming that the gunmen came in through tunnels dug between Gaza and Sinai used to smuggle goods, fuel and construction materials. The incident resulted in the temporary closing of Rafah.

Blockade devastated Gaza's fragile economy

Gazaans were all the more upset over the temporary closure since they had pinned high hopes on the regime change in Egypt following Mubarak's ouster — on top of which was the reopening of the Rafah border crossing after years of blockade. The sweeping victory of [Hamas](#) in the January 2006 Palestinian general elections and the ensuing 2007 coup the hardline Islamist movement staged in the Gaza Strip were met with a near total [blockade by Israel that was also heeded by Egypt](#). Years of closure have not only prevented freedom of movement and free trade but also contributed to skyrocketing poverty and unemployment levels in the narrow Strip. In a report published last week, the UN said 40 percent of the population lived in poverty, 80 percent of whom depend on outside aid, and that close to a third of Gazaans were jobless. Some 1.6 million Gazaans are crammed into 146 square miles, making the Gaza Strip one of the most populated places in the world. And the UN estimates that the population will rise by half a million in the next coming eight years,

meaning that is urgent to find employment opportunities for the Strip's every increasing youth. In fact, the international organization said that as things stand Gaza won't be "livable" by 2020. No later than last week, an 18-year old Gazaan set himself on fire in a desperate attempt to protest his family's dire economic conditions. He died from his wounds on Monday, September 3.

But so far, Israel has resisted international pressure to lift its blockade, which it says prevents weapons from reaching Hamas.

In the primary stages of the 2007 blockade, the ousted Egyptian regime also restricted movement. The old Egyptian regime used to open the passage three days every two months. And Egypt caused an uproar in the Arab and Muslim world when it sealed its border with the Palestinian territory during Israel's Cast Lead Operation, a move perceived as giving a free hand to the Jewish state to wage an all-out war on Gaza. Hosni Mubarak eventually eased the movement of Palestinian passengers after Israel intercepted the Gaza-bound Turkish flotilla in 2010.

Egypt's new president hailed as potential savior

After Mubarak was toppled by a popular uprising in 2011, Palestinians were happy to see him go as he was perceived to be serving Israel's interests. When Mohammed Morsi was elected president of Egypt in June, thousands of Gazaans flooded the streets to express their joy holding pictures of Morsi to celebrate the Islamist Party's victory: Hamas is very close in its ideology to the Egyptian [Muslim Brotherhood](#). In July, Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Hanyieh traveled to Cairo to meet with Morsi. A meeting during which the new Egyptian president promised to help improve the lives of Palestinians in Gaza by facilitating their travel and supplying the strip with fuel and power.

But so far, little has changed.

Abed Ghani Abu Salama, a Palestinian teacher at a secondary school, said that reopening the crossing was a good step. However, he said he was hoping that the new Islamist leadership in Egypt would completely lift the blockade on Gaza.

"The tyrant was brought down and now Egypt is experiencing a new era of democracy. We hope Morsi will turn that black page and open a new page for better relations," Abu Salama told Al-Monitor. "After years of suffering, Gaza residents need to be rewarded not punished."

Others in Gaza said they were optimistic about the impact of the Muslim Brotherhood's election. Abed Rahman al-Khaldi, a university student who supports Hamas, said it was still early to judge the Islamist leaders in Egypt but that he was counting on their religious solidarity. His friend Abed Rahman, also a Hamas supporter, said: "I do trust Brotherhood leaders but they need a chance until they become stronger. If they have enough power, they will not only open the crossing but will liberate Palestine."

Abu Al-Waleed, a shop owner, said that after initially worrying about the Egyptian president not holding enough power in the face of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), he now believes the president had no excuse to continue the same policies towards Gaza.

"If President Morsi ends up adopting Mubarak's policy toward Gaza, he will be responsible for isolating Gaza from the outside world and for creating humanitarian crisis for all Gaza residents. Now he has enough power to end the suffering of Gaza," Abu Al-Waleed said.

Mustafa Ibraheem, a Palestinian human rights activist, urged Egypt to treat Palestinians fairly and not to inflict punishment on them.

Egypt should deal with Gaza as they deal with any other country in the Arab world. Even if someone from Gaza does wrong against Egypt, they do not have the right to impose a collective punishment on a whole people," the activist recently wrote online in a veiled reference the temporary closing of Rafah following the Sinai attack.

A free-trade zone with Egypt?

[Palestinians](#) are still waiting for more from Egypt.

According to an official at the Hamas ministry of interior, about 40,000 Palestinians, including medical patients and students have their names registered with the ministry waiting for their turn to travel. Palestinians officials are also hoping to create a free-trade zone between Rafah and Egypt, on the very land under which [hundreds of tunnels are used by Palestinians to smuggle](#) in basic commodities — and not only weapons — from Egypt to circumvent the blockade. Speeding up trade with Egypt is all the more urgent that Morsi ordered the destruction of more than 100 tunnels following the Aug. 5 Sinai attack. A local Palestinian news agency reported last week that the land authority in Gaza had already started leveling land to prepare the ground for a duty-free zone, west of the Rafah

crossing. But the Hamas government may be getting ahead of itself. Although the economy ministry sent a plan for a duty-free area to Egypt's authorities, it has yet to receive an answer from Cairo.

"Establishing a duty-free zone will play an important role in lifting the blockade on Gaza and will strengthen the political unity with Egypt as well as with the Arab and Muslim world," said Alaa Al-Rafati, the economy minister. "A special delegation from the ministry will travel to Egypt to discuss the proposition of this zone," Rafati added.

Separately, Hanyieh urged Egypt on Tuesday (Sept. 4) to let much-needed Qatari fuel enter the Gaza Strip. "I call on the Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi to give orders to the concerned authorities in his government to ease the process of sending the shipment of Qatari fuel and to accelerate the procedures for establishing the duty-free zone," said the Hamas prime minister as he was presiding over the first cabinet meeting of his reshuffled government.

To date, Egypt has not sent the required amounts of Qatari fuel to run Gaza's only power plant, which only resumed operations in July after six years of inactivity because of the Israeli-Egyptian siege. Besides its own power plant, Gaza relies on Israel and Egypt for its electricity and had, until July, experienced power cuts of up to 18 hours a day. Hamas is also hoping to seal an agreement with Cairo to link its electricity grid to Egypt's.

Saleh Jadallah is a Palestinian print and photo freelancer in Gaza.

Article 4.

Guardian

Gaza: an early warning of disaster

[Robert Turner](#)

9 September 2012 -- The international system is often accused of failing to give adequate early warning; of being myopic and not furnishing the appropriate powers with data and analysis that would allow an effective,

timely response to predictable disasters. With the recent publication of the report, [Gaza in 2020: a Liveable Place?](#), it would be hard to level these accusations at the UN country team in the occupied [Palestinian territory](#). The report is a trend analysis based on data from authoritative sources, such as the UN's specialised agencies, the World Bank and the IMF, which sets out where Gaza will be in less than eight years' time. This is early warning writ large.

By 2020 the population of the tiny Gaza Strip will grow by half a million people: 500,000 more to be fed, housed, educated, employed. More than half of the population will be under 18, with one of the highest youth populations as a proportion anywhere in the world.

The lack of safe drinking water is the most urgent concern in Gaza today and it will only get worse in the years to come. The coastal aquifer is the main water source, but 90% of its water is not safe for drinking without further treatment. Three times as much water is currently extracted from the aquifer as is recharged from rainfall every year. This situation is not sustainable. By 2016, the aquifer may become unusable, and damage to it may be irreversible by 2020 without remedial action now. Already, people have to drill deeper and deeper to reach groundwater. The UN Environment Programme recommends resting the aquifer immediately, as it would otherwise take centuries for it to recover. At the same time, demand for water is projected to grow to 260m cubic meters per year in 2020, 60% more than is currently extracted from the aquifer.

Only one quarter of sewage is currently treated. The remaining three quarters are dumped into the Mediterranean sea. Based on population growth, the amount of sewage and waste water that is generated per year could increase from 44m cubic meters today to 57m cubic meters in 2020. Current treatment plants need to be expanded and improved, and new ones built.

These predictions have profound implications for all humanitarian and development organisations in Gaza, in particular the [UN Relief and Works Agency](#) (UNRWA) which works with Gaza's refugee communities. Some 70% of the population are refugees, with UNRWA's current caseload of over 1.2 million expected to rise to some 1.5 million by 2020. This 30% increase in refugees will require massive investment to maintain current levels of service.

Take health: in 2011 there were over 4.4 million patient visits to UNRWA health centres, that could be expected to rise to over 5.7 million annual visits at current rates. UNRWA's 21 health centres currently have an average catchment of approximately 57,000 registered refugees; without new clinics that would rise to over 74,000 by 2020. To bring UNRWA closer to WHO standards, the agency currently needs an additional 90 doctors and 95 nurses. To maintain current service levels by 2020, UNRWA would need to add five new health centres, 220 doctors and over 300 other health professionals, and that is without improving the present level of service (over 100 patient visits per doctor per day).

In the education sector, currently UNRWA has 247 schools in 130 buildings, with 93% double shifting – the same building serving two separate shifts of students and teachers each day. To maintain our current student teacher ratio we would need over 2,000 teachers and support staff.

On social protection UNRWA distributes food to over 900,000 refugees, after which some 44% remain food insecure because of a lack of jobs.

Without improvements in the economy that can only come about with the lifting of the blockade that figure will rise to over 1 million. An additional 350,000 refugees by 2020 means some 20,000 new shelters will be required.

Our prescription to avert this looming but avoidable catastrophe is simple. While the UN has condemned the rockets many times, we continue to demand a lifting of the blockade, which is costing the international community hundreds of millions of dollars each year. Allow the people of Gaza to enjoy the standards of development and economic prosperity for which they yearn. They are capable of self-sufficiency. They do not want the current levels of 80% aid dependency to continue and neither do the world's taxpayers who fund the international aid agencies. Let us address the root causes of this looming disaster rather than expecting the international community to foot the bill to mitigate their disastrous consequences.

Robert Turner is Gaza Director of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees

Asia's next revolution

Sep 8th 2012 -- ASIA'S economies have long wowed the world with their dynamism. Thanks to years of spectacular growth, more people have been pulled from abject poverty in modern Asia than at any other time in history. But as they become more affluent, the region's citizens want more from their governments. Across the continent pressure is growing for public pensions, national health insurance, unemployment benefits and other hallmarks of social protection. As a result, the world's most vibrant economies are shifting gear, away from simply building wealth towards building a welfare state.

The speed and scale of this shift are mind-boggling (see [article](#)). Last October Indonesia's government promised to provide all its citizens with health insurance by 2014. It is building the biggest "single-payer" national health scheme—where one government outfit collects the contributions and foots the bills—in the world. In just two years China has extended pension coverage to an additional 240m rural folk, far more than the total number of people covered by Social Security, America's public-pension system. A few years ago about 80% of people in rural China had no health insurance. Now virtually everyone does. In India some 40m households benefit from a government scheme to provide up to 100 days' work a year at the minimum wage, and the state has extended health insurance to some 110m poor people, more than double the number of uninsured in America. If you take Germany's introduction of pensions in the 1880s as the beginning and Britain's launch of its National Health Service in 1948 as the apogee, the creation of Europe's welfare states took more than half a century. Some Asian countries will build theirs in a decade. If they get things wrong, especially through unaffordable promises, they could wreck the world's most dynamic economies. But if they create affordable safety nets, they will not just improve life for their own citizens but also become role models themselves. At a time when governments in the rich world are

failing to redesign states to cope with ageing populations and gaping budget deficits, this could be another area where Asia leapfrogs the West. Beyond Bismarck and Beveridge

History offers many lessons for the Asians on what to avoid. Europe's welfare states began as basic safety nets. But over time they turned into cushions. That was partly because, after wars and the Depression, European societies made redistribution their priority, but also because the recipients of welfare spending became powerful interest groups. The eventual result, all too often, was economic sclerosis with an ever-bigger state. America has kept its safety net less generous, but has made mistakes in creating its entitlements system—including making unaffordable pension and health-care promises, and tying people's health insurance to their employment.

The record in other parts of the emerging world, especially Latin America, is even worse. Governments have tended to collect insufficient tax revenue to cover their spending promises. Social protection often aggravated inequalities, because pensions and health care flowed to affluent urban workers but not the really poor. Brazil famously has a first-world rate of government spending but third-world public services. Asia's governments are acutely conscious of all this. They have little desire to replace traditions of hard work and thrift with a flabby welfare dependency. The region's giants can seek inspiration not from Greece but from tiny Singapore, where government spending is only a fifth of GDP but schools and hospitals are among the best in the world. So far, the safety nets in big Asian countries have generally been minimalist: basic health insurance and pensions which replace a small fraction of workers' former income. Even now, the region's social spending relative to the size of its economies is only about 30% of the rich-country average and lower than any part of the emerging world except sub-Saharan Africa.

That leaves a fair amount of room for expansion. But Asia also faces a number of peculiarly tricky problems. One is demography. Although a few countries, notably India, are relatively youthful, the region includes some of the world's most rapidly ageing populations. Today China has five workers for every old person. By 2035 the ratio will have fallen to two. In America, by contrast, the baby-boom generation meant that the Social Security system had five contributors per beneficiary in 1960, a quarter of

a century after its introduction. It still has three workers for every retired person.

Another problem is size, which makes welfare especially hard. The three giants—China, India and Indonesia—are vast places with huge regional income disparities within their borders. Building a welfare state in any one of them is a bit like creating a single welfare state across the European Union. Lastly, many Asian workers (in India it is about 90%) are in the “informal” economy, making it harder to verify their incomes or reach them with transfers.

Cuddly tigers, not flabby cats

How should these challenges be overcome? There is no single solution that applies from India to South Korea. Different countries will, and should, experiment with different welfare models. But there are three broad principles that all Asian governments could usefully keep in mind. The first is to pay even more attention to the affordability over time of any promises. The size of most Asian pensions may be modest, but people collect them at an early age. In China, for example, women retire at 55; in Thailand many employees are obliged to stop work at 60 and can withdraw their pension funds at 55. That is patently unsustainable. Across Asia, retirement ages need to rise, and should be indexed to life expectancy. Second, Asian governments need to target their social spending more carefully. Crudely put, social provision should be about protecting the poor more than subsidising the rich. In fast-ageing societies, especially, handouts to the old must not squeeze out investment in the young. Too many Asian governments still waste oodles of public money on regressive universal subsidies. Indonesia, for instance, last year spent nine times as much on fuel subsidies as it did on health care, and the lion’s share of those subsidies flows to the country’s most affluent. As they promise a broader welfare state, Asia’s politicians have the political opportunity, and the economic responsibility, to get rid of this kind of wasteful spending. Third, Asia’s reformers should concentrate on being both flexible and innovative. Don’t stifle labour markets with rigid severance rules or over-generous minimum wages. Make sure pensions are portable, between jobs and regions. Don’t equate a publicly funded safety net with government provision of services (a single public payer may be the cheapest way to provide basic health care, but that does not have to mean every nurse needs

to be a government employee). And use technology to avoid the inefficiencies that hobble the rich world's public sector. From making electronic health records ubiquitous to organising transfer payments through mobile phones, Asian countries can create new and efficient delivery systems with modern technology. In the end, the success of Asia's great leap towards welfare provision will be determined by politics as much as economics. The continent's citizens will have to show a willingness to plan ahead, work longer and eschew handouts based on piling up debt for future generations: virtues that have so far eluded their rich-world counterparts. Achieving that political maturity will require the biggest leap of all.

Article 6.

The Daily Beast

Israel's settler movement is alive and stronger than ever

Dan Ephron

September 10, 2012 -- Dror Etkes should have been pleased. Six years ago, the 44-year-old Israeli peace activist asked Israel's High Court of Justice to intervene in the case of a Jewish settlement outpost in the West Bank built on Palestinian farmland. Etkes, who spends much of his time fighting settlement expansion, thought the Migron outpost could be a test case. But when the court finally ordered Israeli authorities to evict the settlement's 50 families last week, he couldn't bring himself to celebrate. For one thing, the government is now building a much bigger housing project a few miles away to accommodate the ousted residents. But the larger issue is that more and more Israelis are migrating to settlements —a disturbing trend for people still hoping to see a Palestinian state established in the West Bank. Indeed, in the time it took to process the Migron case, the settler population has swelled by more than 30 percent to 360,000 (not counting those living in East Jerusalem). And with an array of government incentives and subsidies, there is little sign that the trend will subside. "It's a bitter victory," Etkes said, speaking over the grinding of bulldozers where the new settlement is being built. Before its destruction, Migron was the

flagship of unauthorized settlement outposts—communities erected without formal permission from the Israeli government. Its removal is undoubtedly a setback for the settler movement. But the story of Migron and dozens of other outposts that even Israel deems illegal (most of the world considers all West Bank settlements illegal) is a testament to the vast influence the settlers wield in Israel and their ability to consistently outmaneuver their opponents. Over the past decade, Israeli governments have made repeated promises to dismantle the outposts, including a specific pledge to the United States as part of the 2003 peace plan known as the Roadmap. But most are now likely to get retroactive approval and grow into full-fledged settlements, making it harder and harder to imagine an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. “The objective [of the settlers] was to prevent the establishment of an Arab country between Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea,” wrote Nahum Barnea, one of Israel’s most respected columnists, in the daily newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth last month. “It is safe to say that the objective has been achieved.”

The saga of Migron began, improbably, with a cellphone tower some 11 years ago, early in the second intifada. Palestinians were ambushing Israelis in the West Bank, and settlers complained that they were losing reception at a certain bend in the road south of Ramallah. Worried that if an attack ensued, victims wouldn’t be able to call for help, Israeli authorities placed a cell tower on a hill high above the bend. The tower required a guard—Palestinians were also vandalizing Israeli property—and the guard needed a trailer. By 2002 settlers had towed several more trailers to the hilltop and called the place Migron, the name of the biblical town where King Saul camped out before attacking the Philistines. The new squatters at Migron never received permission from the Israeli government to build a settlement. But that wasn’t unusual. By 2003 scores of unauthorized outposts dotted the West Bank—part of a right-wing backlash against Israeli governments, which while encouraging growth within settlements, had promised the U.S. not to establish new ones. Yet Migron was different. The land settlers seized there (and at a few other outposts) had specific Palestinian owners—in this case, residents of the nearby villages Burka and Deir Dibwan. Israeli courts going back to 1967 had given their approval for settlements to be built on public land in the West Bank—territory to which no one held a deed. But they had struck down attempts to

confiscate privately held land for the purpose of settlements. The distinction made the squatters at Migron lawbreakers twice over. Itai Harel, a 38-year-old social worker, was among Migron's first residents. He not only built a home in the settlement, but a horse stable where he teaches troubled and disabled kids youths to ride and care for the animals. Harel refused to speak to reporters who visited the hilltop last week, a rocky plateau with stunning vistas in every direction. The settlers were busy packing their belongings and dismantling light fixtures, before demolition crews arrived. But Harel's father, Israel, did talk to Newsweek, scoffing at the idea that residents could establish their community without at least implicit support from the government. "Who installed the electricity, the water, the roads, the security?" said Harel, who helped found the settler movement. "They got approval from government offices for all these things."

In a way, Harel is right. In court proceedings, the state admitted knowing from the outset that the land on which Migron was built belonged to Palestinians. "Because the subject of discussion is an outpost that was built on private lands, there is no legal possibility to accept its existence," lawyers for the state wrote in response to the petition. (The judges rejected claims by the settlers that they had legally purchased the land from Palestinians). And yet, for more than a decade, government officials provided the settlers at Migron with all the services required for a community to function.

Even after the court sided with Etkes and Palestinian land owners in 2008, successive Israeli governments put off dismantling Migron, hoping to avoid a collision with the powerful settler lobby. Prime Minister Netanyahu stalled until the high court practically forced his hand. Still, the Migron settlers have promised to hold a grudge. "The government of Israel will not be able to wash its hands of the brutal rape that is being carried out under its open eyes, through its silent approval," they said in statement last week. "Today, the prime minister has gone down in eternal infamy as a member of a destructive band of preceding prime ministers who chose to raise a hand on the settlement enterprise in the land of Israel."

In the aftermath of the dismantling of Migron, that enterprise is still going strong. Building starts spiked by 20 percent in 2011 over the previous year, according to the left-leaning group Peace Now and 2012 could be even

better for the settlers. With Israel's economy starting to dip, the high financial price of settlement expansion is getting more attention than usual. Dismantling Migron and resettling its residents alone could cost the state millions of dollars. And yet, polls show nearly half of Israelis continue to support settlement expansion, while Netanyahu's approval rating remains above 50 percent. Some activists now argue that petitioning the high court over settlements should be avoided because they've backfired too many times. After a court case forced Netanyahu to evacuate roughly 30 families from another outpost earlier this year, he simply approved the construction of hundreds of new homes elsewhere in the West Bank. The Migron eviction has triggered a similar spree. Nevertheless, Etkes says he'll continue to fight back. After obtaining land-registry data for the entire West Bank through Israel's Freedom of Information Act, he now estimates that about 35 percent of the territory on which settlements were built is the private property of Palestinians. "It creates a discussion," he said about the court cases. "It forces Israelis to look at their own reflection in the mirror." Unfortunately for Etkes, reflections, like beauty, are often in the eye of the beholder.

Article 7.

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Political Islam versus modernity

Tarek Heggy

"Bear witness for us, O pen/ That we shall not sleep/ That we shall not dither between 'yes' and 'no'" -- Amal Donqol

It is my view that whether political Islam is defined as a religious theocratic movement or a political movement in the modern sense of political movements, the currents of political Islam have a position concerning the type of value system that contemporary intellectuals in advanced societies recognise as constituting the foundations of a culture of progress and modernity. So a conversation must be held between some of these value systems and the mentality and behaviour of exponents of currents of political Islam. This is what I shall attempt to do in this essay, which aims to place political Islam side by side with a number of values

associated with modernity and progress. The conception of the modern state: modern Islamists are unable to understand or accept or even admire the modern state system, which is the product or the result of centuries of political, cultural, social and economic struggle over the course of human progress. When the Prophet took ill (during the last days of his life) he tasked his close companion, Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, with deputising for him in leading the prayer. When the prophet passed away shortly afterwards, a large number of Muslims considered that this entrusting of the leadership of the prayer constituted an indication from the Prophet that Abu Bakr was to be his preferred successor. And this is what in fact took place in the aftermath of the problems associated with the Saqifa compact (saqifat bani sada). From the very first day Abu Bakr became "the prophet's 'deputy'" or successor.

It is this historical model that dominates Islamists' thinking. This model (necessarily a simplistic one in step with the simplicity of a time of experimentation) prevails still over the mind-set of most Islamists, in whom the interweaving of "religion" and "politics" is a thoroughgoing one. Some decades later, attempts were made to philosophise and theorise this experiment in a number of books known today as works on Al-Ahkam Al-Sultaniya (Rulings on Governance), such as Al-Mawardi's Al-Ahkam Al-Sultaniya. Even though the specifics of such rulings do no more than reflect the condition and level of evolution in man's political thinking over a period of five centuries starting from the seventh century AD, specifics which are simplistic and in many instances downright primitive and silly, the mind-set of contemporary exponents of Islamism still retains an admiration for them as something presenting a comprehensive alternative to the system of the modern state.

PLURALISM: There is little doubt that the culture of more progressive societies, and their general intellectual climate, are founded upon the premise that "pluralism" constitutes one of the most important markers of human existence in its most advanced stage, and indeed that it is one of the prerequisites of human progress. There can be no progress for peoples who do not believe in pluralism or who fail to construct their culture and general climate upon the acceptance of what pluralism achieves. Just as Marxism presented a nemesis for pluralism when all of its social, cultural, economic and political systems were founded upon the dismissal of

everyone and everything that opposed the basic foundations of Marxism, political Islam can do naught else but lead to this same dismissal -- for all the Islamists' declarations of belief in pluralism. This is because the Islamist is dominated by the thought that he is 100 per cent in the right. After all, how can this not be the case given that God himself enters with him into all epistemological, cultural, economic, political, legal and constitutional arenas? And scientific arenas too: where is the Islamist, for example, who accepts the theory of evolution?

OTHERNESS: This (or the acceptance of the other) is the product of the debate on pluralism. If life (for those who believe in pluralism) is founded upon a broad pluralism in various spheres of living, organisation, thinking and principles, the first thing it demands of modern man is to accept the other (in all that "other's" various forms). But if the Islamist -- who believes that God stands at his side and that he is the closest to truth in all manner of arenas -- maintains any belief in accepting the other, his acceptance is a relatively moderate (or at times microscopic) one. He may tell us that he believes in the rights of woman, but he will then tell us that women are qualified to work in "most" but not all posts! And he will tell us, unequivocally, that a woman (and even a non-Muslim) cannot become a head of state. He will also tell us, in his own words, that he believes in religious freedom, but he will lay down for others what it is that they may believe in. For the Islamists in Egypt (writing now in 2012) are saying that a man has a right to be a Muslim or a Jew or a Christian but he does not have the right to be a Buddhist or a Bahaai. In the same way, Islamists cannot agree that freedom of religion means that a Muslim can leave Islam.

RELATIVISM: Out of the womb of faith in pluralism issues faith in otherness (the acceptance of the other). And out of the womb of either comes "relativism". By this I mean that in the culture and climate of a more progressive society the concept of the relative nature of opinions, rulings, theories and interpretations is widely shared. The Islamist may say, in his own words, that he believes in relativism, yet a discussion with him on the subject of women, non-Muslims, the theory of evolution or opposing viewpoints will always go to prove that the Islamist cannot welcome relativism. For by his nature he must extend the "absolute" beyond the realm of the private and personal onto the realm of public affairs. Consequently he alone -- as opposed to anyone else on the face of the

planet today -- is the one who, in his ideology, possesses "permanent solutions" that may not be changed to face up to problems which by their very nature are changeable. If you were to say to him that these solutions are the product of specific times and places he will become angry and simply reject this logic. For a number of weeks now (writing in August 2012), the former supreme guide of the Muslim Brotherhood Mahdi Akef declared that anyone who disagrees with the conceptions of the Muslim Brotherhood is "stupid and ignorant". Words such as these encapsulate the Islamists' view and opinion concerning any alternative perception.

THE RIGHTS OF MAN: The rights of man, including the right to think and the right to express his views, alongside other rights, are the product of mankind's struggle conducted over long periods. The problem the Islamist has with the rights of man is that he can only accept their presentation as something that he believes to be the will of God. If we were to say to him that it is a human right to be a Buddhist or a Bahaai, he will reject this and say that the rights of man in this respect are limited to the three Abrahamic faiths. If we were to say to him that it is a woman's right to dress as she pleases he would refuse this on the basis of his morals that he also sees as expressing the will of God. And if we were to say to him that it is a Muslim's right to become a Jew or a Christian he will once again employ his (absolutist) morals to refuse this human right. Thus, for the Islamist, there is an upper ceiling, or a number of upper ceilings, to the rights of man, ceilings that in his conception are also the will of God.

WOMANKIND: Women as such, the fear of them and the desire that they inspire, and at the same time the wish to place her in a cage and keep her under constant supervision, these are some of the most conspicuous Islamist standpoints vis-à-vis womankind. There is no doubt that the Islamist sees the woman as a lesser being (albeit only marginally) than the man. He even makes use of what nature has imposed on women in order to establish that she is religiously inferior (that the onset of a woman's monthly period places her in the eyes of the Islamist on a lower religious footing than that of a man). Most Islamists are preoccupied -- to the point of hysterical delirium -- with women. The result of their delirium (much as with the case of the Haredi Jews) is that she becomes in their conception the source and the cause of most sins. The Islamist, generally, sees that this dangerous source of sinfulness must be hedged in with restrictions. Despite

an Islamic society like Saudi Arabia surrounding the woman with unprecedented levels of restrictions, this society has been and is still witnessing the greatest degree of chaos in sexual relations.

Instead of concerning himself with punishing the man (the wolf), the entire focus of the Islamist is fixed on imprisoning "the victim" under observation in a cage. As I always say: instead of keeping the flies off, we choose to lock up the honey in cupboards! In the light of such a mentality, the rights of women have the lowest ceilings imposed upon them. Anyone can put this to the test by asking any Islamist to take another look at such things as the following: the testimony of a woman in court or elsewhere as being worth half the testimony of a man (in a Saudi court of law the testimony of a woman, such as Madame Curie who has won two Nobel Prizes in science, would be worth half the testimony of a man who has barely finished primary school). Alternatively you will not find an Islamist who is prepared to take another look at the inheritance of a woman being half that of the man, or whether a woman is qualified to occupy the office of head of state, or whether he would agree to a woman being in a position to licence marriage or divorce, or have custody of her sons and daughters, and so on.

THE RULE OF LAW IN ITS MODERN CONCEPTION: The Islamist is of the firm conviction that submission to positivist constitutional and legal rules (that is, those that have been set down by man) is a grievous sin. It is a sin on the religious level and a sin on the social level too, in that the Islamist believes deep down that mortals are not qualified to shape a constitutional and legal system governed by mortals. Ever since Egypt in 1883 transferred to a modern positivist legal system, Islamists remained critical of the existence of a legal system set down by mortals. When the writings of Sayed Qotb (1906-1966) became the most important literature in political Islam (many of them taken from the Indo-Pakistani Islamist Abul-Ela Al-Mawdudi whose writings are some of the most important causes of wars between Pakistan and India) the philosophy of the Islamists vis-à-vis positivist laws has been the following: God alone is cognizant of man's failings and consequently their non-qualification to fashion laws governing relations between men in all its various forms. This is the core of the theory of Al-Hakimiya that all Islamists hold to, even if they differ on the period of time required to apply this theory. One of the most important by-products of this theory, and which is the essence of the

Islamist mind-set, is that man should not lay down rules governing relations between men but instead observe the rules established by God and not mankind. Even now no leader of any current of political Islam undertakes to review the concept of Al-Hakimiya presented by Sayed Qotb in his famous work Milestones on the Way (which is considered to be a regurgitation of earlier ideas propounded by Abul-Ala Al-Mawdudi). Thus the Islamist is faced with a continuing difficulty vis-À-vis all positivist, legal, constitutional foundations. Even if a great legal scholar such as Al-Sanhouri -- the author of the 1984 Egyptian Civil Code -- says that he sees nothing in all of the regulations and materials of this code derived from French civil law that contradicts the principles of Islamic Sharia, nevertheless this counts for nothing among the currents of political Islam. The Islamist continues to believe that his primary political mission is to apply a comprehensive legal system derived from Islamic Sharia, that is -- in his view -- the laws that express the will of God.

VIOLENCE: It is clear that the leadership of most currents of political Islam refuse to describe suicide operations undertaken by many Islamists against non-combatant individuals as terrorist operations. There is no doubt that most of these leaders do not consider someone such as Osama bin Laden to be a terrorist. Indeed most of them have, and still do, look upon Bin Laden brimming with appreciation and admiration for him. When an Islamist candidate for the post of president of the Republic of Egypt was asked a few months ago whether he considered Osama Bin Laden a terrorist or not, he replied "America is terrorist". The truth is that the Islamist cannot condemn "violence" against civilians in all its shapes and forms. Nothing demonstrates this more than the failure of contemporary man to agree on a universally accepted definition of terrorism. Islamists are one in maintaining that it is their right -- and indeed their duty -- to distance themselves from any agreement on how to define terrorism before such time that they have fully attained power. I make the claim that no less than half the sons and daughters in societies such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Yemen would reject someone like Osama bin Laden being described as a terrorist.

A BALANCED INTELLECTUAL FORMATION: I have always believed, and still do, that not a single fanatic upon the surface of the Earth is the product of a balanced intellectual formation. None of the various fruits of

human inventiveness in all or most of the spheres of intellectual and cultural creativity have ever found their way in a balanced, measured form into the mentality of the Haredi Jew or the fundamentalist Muslim. Or to put it another way, if any of the fruits of human inventiveness initiated by the ancient Greek and Roman civilisation, or the fruits of the Renaissance and the period following the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution, or the most important products of human creativity over the last three centuries (which are the richest centuries in human history) should make their entry into a man's mental composition, then that man simply cannot be a fundamentalist or a fanatic. I was fortunate enough to be granted the opportunity to see up close what it is that a Haredi Jew or a Salafist Muslim, or the militant Muslim followers of the Hanbali school or those who admire the fatwas of Hanbali faqihs and proselytizers like Ibn Taymiya and Ibn Qayim and Mohamed Abdel-Wahab (among whom feature all the clerics of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and all the lands of Sunni Islam) take for reading material. I got to know up close that the bulk of these folk have never read, and still do not read, anything beyond the literature of their specific religious denomination. Indeed, I might add that I have heard the warnings issued by dozens of prominent clerics in Saudi Arabia against reading what I would call the fruits of human creativity -- from Homer to Dante, from Shakespeare and Racine to Voltaire and Jean Jacques Rousseau and Diderot, from Descartes to Kant, from Victor Hugo to Albert Camus. And I know intimately their rejectionist position on symphonic music, the figurative arts and theatre. Perhaps the following anecdotes demonstrate the tragedy we are writing about here: in August 2012, Chinese astronauts returned to their launch base and a picture was published of a female Chinese astronaut exiting the spaceship aided by one of her colleagues. A Salafist Internet website ran the photograph with a commentary that did not address the various aspects of brilliant achievement represented by the picture. Instead the commentary focussed on the "degeneracy" represented by the image of a female astronaut with her colleague supporting her arm to help her exit the spaceship! A few years ago a fire broke out in a girls' school in Saudi Arabia; many of the girl students attempted to leave the burning building but were turned back by the school's firemen with the result that they burned to death, since they

were not wearing their veils at the time they were attempting to escape incineration.

HUMANITY: The literature, culture and thinking of Islamists is based upon the division of the world (and of its peoples) into two: the first called the Abode of Islam, the second named the Abode of War. This division prevails still over the Islamists' mind-set, which, in light of the authority of this literature, has difficulty in understanding, digesting, embracing and accepting the modern concept of humanity and the influence it has had on breaking down barriers and frontiers between cultures and societies. I have no doubt that Islamists look upon the other (who necessarily belongs to the Abode of War) as an enemy in one form or another -- an enemy constantly held to be responsible for all of their problems, starting from colonialism and including everything that has happened up to the present day. Two years ago Abdel-Moneim Abul-Fotouh, a famous leading light in the Muslim Brotherhood who entered the electoral race for the Egyptian presidency in May 2012, issued a book in which he stated that all the problems of contemporary Islamic societies were caused by colonialism. Abul-Fotouh did not explain to us why it is that the Europeans embarked on colonising us instead of us colonising the Europeans. Similarly Abul-Fotouh did not tell us why most regions of the Arabian Peninsula have remained deeply backward for a century despite the fact that they were never colonised.

TAQIYA (CONCEALMENT): Taqiya is a Shia concept that seeps into the political practices of contemporary Islamist groups be they Shia or Sunni. The concept of taqiya means that at such time as the Islamists on the ground constitute the weaker power, they have the right to proclaim in public precisely the opposite of what they hold in secret. This manifested itself clearly in the behaviour of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt after the fall of the former President Hosni Mubarak. The positions they adopted were often contradictory to that which they had previously declared even just a few months earlier.

The danger of taqiya comes to the fore whenever Islamists make declarations, in their meetings with representatives of cultures that despise mendacity, on such matters as their repudiation of violence and their respect for the rights of women or their respect for non-Muslims. To make such declarations as these -- which fly in the face of what their minds

actually think and intend -- is religiously permitted for them for as long as they have yet to attain total empowerment. I have no doubt that had Niccolò² Machiavelli himself heard from some Muslims of the concept of taqiya he would have agreed with them and considered them even more Machiavellian than himself.

In short, after 40 years of studying political Islam, its literature and writings -- including university theses on the Islamic system of hadd punishments -- I can see no possibility of there being any agreement between political Islam and the values of progress and modernity. At the same time I believe that the pragmatic practice of politics (in the light of contemporary constitutions and laws) may permit developments that may render Islamist political parties similar to Christian parties in Europe. But I am speaking here of a possible, and by no means certain, trajectory, and I am talking of a long journey, which up to now I see no tangible evidence of having been embarked upon.

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