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Article 1.

NYT

The United States and the Muslim World
Editorial

September 19, 2012 -- The anti-Islam video that set off attacks against American embassies and violent protests in the Muslim world was a convenient fuse for rage. Deeper forces are at work in those societies, riven by pent-up anger over a lack of jobs, economic stagnation and decades of repression by previous Arab governments.

In the wake of the Arab Spring, these newly liberated nations have become battlegrounds for Islamic extremists, moderates and secularists, all contending for power and influence over the direction of democratic change. These forces and the attacks may be beyond the control of American foreign policy, no matter what some might want to believe. Plenty of Islamist leaders, and Al Qaeda affiliates, are eager to exploit unrest for their own purposes. One particularly destructive force is Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah chief who rallied a huge anti-American demonstration in Lebanon. He is undoubtedly trying to revive his own popularity, badly damaged by his alliance with the brutal Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad. The anti-American extremists who murdered Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three of his colleagues in Benghazi, Libya, or went on rampages in other cities have reinforced the worst fears of those who see Muslims mainly through a prism of intolerance and hate. The extremists have also done serious damage to their economies; tourism and businesses cannot grow in chaos and insecurity. Instead of demanding that their governments deliver needed jobs and housing, the protesters focused on a crude video promoted by hatemongering fanatics in the United States. With the news media mostly state-controlled in the Arab world, the idea of the United States government refusing to censor offensive anti-Islam material on free speech grounds remains inexplicable to many Muslims. On Wednesday, [a French magazine published vulgar caricatures](#) of Prophet Muhammad, provoking a new wave of outrage.

In 2009, President Obama wisely sought rapprochement with Muslims. [Speaking in Cairo](#), he endorsed an approach of mutual respect and promised that, while he would never hesitate to confront extremism, America never would be at war with Islam. He also challenged Muslims to establish elected, peaceful governments that respect all their people. Few would have predicted then how many Arab nations would now be

struggling to meet that standard. As troubling as they are, the protests should be seen in context. Most of the crowds were a few thousand people or less. And many leaders — the Libyans and Tunisians, especially, but also the Turkish prime minister, the grand mufti in Saudi Arabia and, belatedly, Egyptian leaders — condemned the violence and promised to beef up security at American embassies and consulates. They need to keep speaking out and also publicly explain to their people why a relationship with the United States even matters. [The Libyans who tried to save Ambassador Stevens](#) certainly saw value in those ties.

Mitt Romney and the Republicans have leveled preposterous charges that Mr. Obama has been weak and apologetic. They have offered only confusing and often contradictory assertions in place of a coherent alternative. They haven't gotten the message that Washington cannot, and should not, try to impose its will on the fragile Arab democracies.

But it would be wrong to retreat from supporting people in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt who are committed to building democratic governments and pluralistic societies based on the rule of law as some in Congress urge. The United States has to stay engaged in whatever ways it can.

Article 2.

NYT

Talk to Iran's Leaders, but Look Beyond Them

Ray Takeyh

September 19, 2012 -- The latest tussle over red lines and deadlines on Iran's nuclear program obscures some of the genuine dilemmas now confronting the international community.

For a long time, the major powers had hoped that imposing strenuous sanctions on Iran could produce an interlocutor willing to negotiate honestly and to adhere to an exacting arms control agreement. But time may no longer permit the patient exercise of coercive diplomacy.

To temper Iran's nuclear ambitions we may need not one strategy but two. The immediate challenge is to obtain an agreement that imposes some limits on Iran's more disturbing proliferation activities. However, this

cannot be the end of the story, but an interim step to provide time for a strategy that broadens Tehran's ruling coalition and injects some moderate voices into its deliberations.

It is important to note that the Islamic Republic has persistently violated all aspects of its nonproliferation commitments. Both of Iran's known enrichment installations began as surreptitious plants that were later discovered by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Iranian regime continues to operate and expand these facilities in violation of six United Nations Security Council resolutions that call for their suspension. Tehran has refused the I.A.E.A.'s requests for information on previous weaponization activities or to grant access to its scientists and many of its facilities. Given this history, one can count on Tehran to similarly violate any agreement that it may be compelled to sign. For the Islamic Republic, as currently constituted, treaties are but diversions on its way to greater nuclear empowerment.

The international community should adopt a similar outlook in negotiating with Iran. As a first step, the focus of the major powers should be an agreement that may not necessarily address all of their concerns but puts some restraints on Iran's nuclear surge. An attempt to curtail Iran's higher grade enrichment activities, ship out some of its stockpile and close the Fordow facility would not end Iran's nuclear conundrum, but it would at least hamper its goal of getting the bomb.

Given Iran's nuclear progress, sabotage and sanctions may no longer be enough to slow the program; an agreement, however deficient, may be the only way to achieve this goal. The challenge would be to relinquish as little as possible of the sanctions regime to obtain such an accord.

Once an interim deal is in place, the United States must take the lead in devising a coercive strategy to change the parameters of Iran's domestic politics. A strategy of concerted pressure would seek to exploit all of Iran's liabilities. The existing efforts to stress Iran's economy would be complemented by an attempt to make common cause with the struggling opposition.

The purpose of this policy would be to so weaken the Islamist regime that it would be forced to abandon its objectionable policies abroad and negotiate a new national compact with the opposition at home. In essence, this policy would compel the Islamic Republic to make painful concessions

in order to preserve its power. The international community would not be creating new realities, but exploiting and accelerating existing trends. Under such intensified pressures, Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader, could acquiesce and negotiate with the opposition. There are members of the Iranian elite who appreciate the devastating cost of Iran's intransigence and want a different approach to the international community. The problem is that these people have been pushed to the margins. If Khamenei senses that his grip on power is slipping, he might broaden his government to include opposition figures who would inject a measure of pragmatism and moderation into the system.

The history of proliferation suggests that regimes under stress do negotiate arms control treaties: Both the Soviet Union and North Korea signed many such agreements. But history also suggests that without a change of attitude, these compacts promised much but delivered little. Once there is a new outlook — as there was in the Soviet Union when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power — then it is possible to craft durable arms limitation agreements.

As with the Soviet Union, the United States will make genuine progress with Iran only when moderate leaders assume greater control of the state. An interim accord may provide time, but that time must be used to broaden the contours of Iran's political system.

Ray Takeyh is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Article 3.

Al-Monitor (from [Al-Ayyam](#))

Palestinians Undecided on Timing Of Bid for UN Observer Status

Hani Habib

Sep 19, 2012 -- Despite the clamor caused by the Palestinian premier when he requested that [Palestine](#) be given the status of “observer state” at the United Nations General Assembly, the Palestinian Authority has decided to go forward with this request at the UN. However, the PA is still uncertain of the best way to present this demand, and is hesitant regarding the vote it

will undergo. Previously, Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Malki had said that the PA would not apply for full membership in the General Assembly this month. He said that they would submit this request some time between September 2012 and September 2013. However, according to Maliki, President Mahmoud Abbas will instead ask the head of Palestine's [mission to the UN](#) to resume contact with UN regional groups and the secretary-general in order to find the best method and time to submit the bid to ensure that it achieves majority support.

These statements have reflected Palestine's tendency to react to international pressure, particularly that of the US, and have shown the reluctance of some Arab countries to persuade their allies to support the Palestinian request. A wave of public criticism concerning the PA's position pushed the authority to submit its request at the General Assembly.

However, the PA seems uncertain of their position, since they noted that putting in a request does not mean that they are demanding an immediate vote on the bid. This has created more confusion regarding the real position of the PA.

It is known that the General Assembly has traditionally supported the Palestinian cause. However, it has now become necessary to attract even more supporters. Moreover, concentrated efforts need to be made to reach a quasi-consensus instead of a majority, especially since the [drafting of Palestine's bid](#) will include very important points. It should include a clear statement that East Jerusalem is the capital of this state based on the borders of the state on June 4, 1967. It should also note that this state is still under Israeli occupation. This would push the General Assembly and the international community to side with the Palestinian people to force Israel to withdraw completely from Palestinian territories.

However, the postponement of the vote does not really depend on [the PA's strategy in presenting their bid](#). In fact, some in the PA believe that delaying the vote is an intermediate solution, between presenting their request to the General Assembly and postponing the vote. In this case, the PA will seem as if it has fulfilled its pledge to the UN and the General Assembly, to submit its bid for statehood, while at the same time giving in to international pressure — particular from the US.

The US is pressuring the Palestinians to delay the UN bid, as it would place the Obama administration in a difficult situation given that Obama is

currently in the middle of a presidential campaign for a second term. The US notes that Palestinians will still be able to resubmit their bid, to be voted on after the US elections, since the General Assembly session will continue until September 2013. At this time, things will be clearer regarding the true nature of Palestinian and Arab efforts to attract the support of states that remain reluctant to support the PA bid.

According to press reports, the PA see the proposal of [Nabil al-Arabi](#), Secretary General of the Arab League, as a way to avoid embarrassment. Arabi suggested that Palestinians submit their bid without voting on it. This proposal indicates that some Arab states are reluctant to stand up to the US during the presidential elections, entertaining the hope that better opportunities will present themselves, should Obama win the elections. It seems that during Obama's four-year term, Arab leaders — including those in the PA — have failed to recognize that US support for Israel is absolute, regardless of elections or tactics. Both Republicans and Democrats have the same supportive position towards Israel. Those who believe that the US position will change in this regard are making a foolish gamble, and will be subjected to political and financial pressures in the framework of supporting the Israeli government.

In fact, Araby's proposal, which is ostensibly meant to find a way out of this critical situation, is instead serving as a way to go further down this erroneous path. We have yet to learn from our experiences with different American administrations and their position towards Israel. Reluctance to submit and vote on the bid will eventually form a rift between the states that support our national cause. Furthermore, the procedures related to this bid began a few months ago. The PA should have made more of an effort to influence its allies and those states that were reluctant to support its bid. Postponing these endeavors until September suggests that international tours carried out by the Palestinian president, the interior minister and various envoys — which were aimed at garnering support for the bid — were in vain. This goes against statements these officials made following each visit to a different country.

The PA is being presented with [two options](#): either to stand up to US-Israeli will, or to continue to receive financial aid, in order to pressure the Palestinian people to give in to American and Israeli stipulations. The latest

popular movements against the high cost of living and corruption have served as another opportunity to take a wrong position!

Article 4.

Al-Monitor (from [Allayed](#))

Jordan's Muslim Brothers Push For Constitutional Monarch

Tamer Samadi

Sep 19, 2012 -- The [Muslim Brotherhood](#) in Jordan is seeking to finalize a confidential document that could steer its conventional ties with the state in an unknown direction. This document will include a call to adopt a constitutional monarchy model, which means that the king's sweeping powers would be undermined.

Islamist sources said that the document will include a political and economic vision to manage the country under the title "Jordan of tomorrow."

The sources told Al-Hayat that the draft document is very similar to the Nahda project that the Egyptian Brotherhood's main branch had prepared. They also noted that the draft was submitted to the Brotherhood's Shura Council in Amman in 2006, yet it did not obtain the required approval at that time.

The draft was submitted to the Shura Council for the second time in 2009, where its content caused controversy and led to heated debates. The political measures contained within the document included a call to adopt the constitutional monarchy as the form of governance in the country, which would make the king a symbolic figure with restricted powers. According to sources, the Brotherhood agreed on the document that was submitted by the former head of the Brotherhood's political committee, Arheel Gharabiya, in 2006, provided that the current leadership added some amendments after having agreed that it will adopt it during the next phase. The document will be adopted after the addition of a clause for the implementation of a constitutional monarchy model, which was adopted by the previous Shura Council, although at that time they had not agreed upon a title for the document.

Adopting the official title for the draft is subject to approval of the final copy by the Brotherhood's Shura council.

However, Gharabiya — who is one of the most enthusiastic supporters of adopting the constitutional monarchy model — told Al-Hayat that the Brotherhood leadership had “explicitly agreed on the document's clauses that are relevant to the monarchy model.”

He added that “no one is refusing the constitutional monarchy model, which is designed to make substantial changes in the regime.”

Gharabiya continued, saying that “the document would enable the Brotherhood to develop a strategic vision related to all aspects of the regime, so that they would be able to manage the country once they rise to power.”

However, the Brotherhood's second in command, [Zaki Bani Rasheid], told Al-Hayat that “the document needs a few months to be finalized,” adding, “we have come a long way regarding the economic vision in the document, which is very similar to the Nahda project developed by the Egyptian Brotherhood.”

Government spokesman Samih Maaitah, who left the Islamists' ranks and joined the Jordanian regime several years ago, asked, “How can the Brotherhood demand that the constitution be amended, yet not take part in the upcoming electoral process, which they have announced they will boycott?”

Maaitah told Al-Hayat that “every party has the right to put forward programs and plans according to the law, but the Brotherhood is trying to control the government by refraining from participating and then trying to appeal to the public.”

He noted that the state had “delivered very clear messages to the Brotherhood,” saying, “We told them to come and take part in the decision making and change process within the government. However, they responded by appealing to the public and preparing for a 500,000-man demonstration, in a clear effort to escalate the situation.”

Despite the state's and the Brotherhood's skepticism of one another, sources close to decision-making circles have said that dialogue [is still open between the two parties](#). The sources added that King Abdullah II did not meet with Islamists in person to dissuade them from carrying on with their decision to boycott.

Rasheid said that “all possibilities are open, and we are not ruling out the possibility of a royal initiative that would prevent the country from going to hell.”

In related news, a high-level official told Al-Hayat that the state is seeking to calm the [internal situation](#), and explained that an official movement seeks to bring a new political government, whose task would be to open up to the different movements and ensure the participation of all in the upcoming elections.

Article 5.

The Washington Institute

As Jordan Stumbles, the U.S. Response Is Crucial

[David Schenker](#)

September 19, 2012 -- Yesterday, Jordan's King Abdullah approved a new and restrictive media law only two weeks after implementing -- and quickly canceling -- fuel price increases nationwide. The ill-advised price hike, the widespread protests it sparked, and the latest palace initiative to police the internet all come at a particularly sensitive time for the kingdom. In addition to the refugees and security pressures associated with the Syria crisis, Jordan has been racked by demonstrations since December 2011 due to the slow pace of political reform, endemic corruption, and the anemic economy. While reinstatement of the fuel subsidy may temporarily mollify the restive population, the media law will only add to the growing list of popular grievances, further complicating Abdullah's efforts to preserve stability.

BACKGROUND

Over the past year and a half, protests have become a ubiquitous feature of political life in Jordan. Unlike in Tunisia and Egypt, where demonstrators demanded an end to unpopular authoritarian regimes, Jordanian protests have largely focused on electoral reform, official accountability, and economic relief, albeit laced with criticism of the monarchy. In the initial months of the region-wide Arab uprisings, Abdullah was able to attenuate the movement's momentum by firing his government, spending liberally, and initiating real constitutional reform. The changes to the kingdom's charter proved popular and were considered a positive first step. But when the king balked at electoral reform, the protests spiked, and a nascent opposition coalition of historically disenfranchised Palestinian Jordanians, politically constrained Muslim Brotherhood Islamists, and traditionally pro-monarchy East Bank (Bedouin) Jordanians began to emerge.

POLITICAL REFORM INTERRUPTED

Fuel price controversies aside, the electoral law remains Jordan's major source of political foment today. Since 1993, the kingdom has employed a "one man, one vote" system in multi-candidate districts that impairs Islamist electoral performance. At the same time, the government's advanced system of gerrymandering -- which gives more representation to pro-monarchy districts -- has limited the number of Palestinians in parliament, retarded the development of political parties, and assured the palace of generally friendly legislatures. This summer, the king responded to protests by directing parliament to pen a new electoral law promising to combine the current system with a national-list ballot. Initially, protestors seemed optimistic that new reform-minded prime minister Awn Khasawneh would deliver a compromise solution. Yet the measure passed in July was a disappointment: the national-list component added only twenty-seven members to an expanded 140-seat legislature, and members of the pro-monarchy military, intelligence, and security forces were permitted to vote for the first time. Apparently frustrated with such interference from the palace, Khasawneh tendered his resignation, publicly criticized the new law, and lamented to the Jordanian daily al-Ghad that when he became prime minister, he had "believed there was an opportunity for real reform." As anticipated, the Muslim Brotherhood responded to the changes by announcing that it would boycott the parliamentary elections

slated for December. Describing the decision to avoid real reform as a "miscalculation," MB deputy general guide Zaki Bani Irsheid told the pan-Arab daily al-Sharq al-Awsat that the king had essentially "put the country into a very real crisis." Subsequently, 400 prominent politicians and civil society personalities in Jordan sent Abdullah a petition urging him to postpone the December vote to prevent a "failed election" plagued by low turnout. Soon afterward, however, Khasawneh's successor, Fayez Tarawneh, announced on television that the elections would not be delayed, and that no further amendments to the electoral law would be forthcoming.

A PERFECT ECONOMIC STORM

The political discontent has been exacerbated by increased economic pressures. Syria's instability has resulted in nearly 100,000 refugees entering Jordan, posing heavy financial costs and taxing already-scarce natural resources -- particularly water in the parched city of Mafraq, near the burgeoning Syrian refugee camp of Zaatari. Meanwhile regional developments have scared tourists away from the kingdom, undermining an already-weak economy and adding to the high youth unemployment rate (currently around 30 percent).

Even more detrimental have been the repeated attacks on the Sinai natural gas pipeline, which have cut the supply of cheap gas to Jordan and forced Amman to purchase the expensive commodity on the open market. Making matters worse, Abdullah was compelled to raise monthly government salaries by \$28 last year just to keep up with rising commodity prices. In one recent survey, for example, 76 percent of Jordanians reported that their salaries had not kept pace with the cost of living. With state revenues down and expenses up, Jordan's budget deficit this year is predicted to reach nearly \$3 billion. In 2011, a \$1.4 billion Saudi grant kept Amman solvent, but without regular largesse of that magnitude, Abdullah has little wiggle room -- more than 80 percent of this year's \$9.6 billion budget is allocated to government salaries. To help weather the storm, the king has secured a \$2 billion International Monetary Fund loan that is due to move forward in December. Initially, the IMF made the recent fuel price hike a precondition for the financing, viewing it as a necessary reform. Given international sympathy for Jordan, however, Abdullah's reinstatement of the subsidy is unlikely to impact the loan's disbursement.

UNFORCED ERRORS

Despite the quick reversal, the palace-approved fuel-price misstep could cost the king another prime minister: according to recent polls, Tarawneh's popularity is the lowest for a premier since the Kabariti government sixteen years ago. A loyal monarchist, Tarawneh has served as advisor to both Abdullah and his late father Hussein, with demonstrated experience in navigating through tumultuous times. If he is forced out, it would be a real -- and unnecessary -- loss.

Amman's handling of the electoral reform process has also aggravated the crisis. Instead of offering enough new national-list seats to placate the mainly Islamist opposition with a meaningful parliamentary bloc, the palace dug in its heels. Traditionally, the monarchy's opposition to electoral reform has prompted little popular blowback, but in the milieu of the Arab uprisings, this approach seems heavy handed. The media legislation ratified by the king this week is sure to fuel resentment as well. Allegedly aimed at curbing online pornography, the law includes provisions designed to hold websites operated by Jordanian nationals to the same censorship standards as locally published and distributed newspapers, especially concerning the increasingly common "crime" of insulting the monarch. Taken together, these apparent palace missteps have spurred an unlikely rumor in Jordan: that Prince Hassan, the brother of and longtime heir apparent to King Hussein, will soon be appointed to succeed Tarawneh as prime minister.

WASHINGTON'S ROLE

Nearly two years into the wave of unrest that has swept the Middle East, reliable pro-American governments like Jordan's are increasingly scarce. And there is no guarantee that the kingdom's tenuous stability -- and pro-American strategic orientation -- will endure. Since 2010, Freedom House has characterized Jordan as "not free," a dangerous appellation given the new regional dynamics. With Jordanians publicly accusing the royal family of graft and demonstrating against the new electoral law in the monarchy's stronghold of Karak, Washington must find room on its full Middle East plate to focus on the pressing challenge of domestic stability within this key regional partner. In terms of direct financial assistance, the administration is certainly doing its part. Earlier this month, Washington signed an agreement providing Amman with an additional \$100 million of

aid, bringing total 2012 U.S. grants to \$477 million. Although this sum -- which includes \$284 million to bolster the kingdom's ailing budget -- is large for a country of just over six million people, it is not enough to help Jordanians weather the regional storm. Continued U.S. support for supplemental Saudi funding may help, but more should be done. Aside from funding, perhaps the most important contribution the administration can make is a consistent message of clarity and commitment to incremental but forward-looking reform that leaves Jordan more open, representative, and transparent -- but not another domino tipping toward the Muslim Brotherhood. The ongoing changes in Syria and Egypt will likely have an enormous negative impact on Jordan and U.S. interests there. Accordingly, Washington should work closely and cooperatively with the kingdom's leaders, providing alternatives to rash changes that some will advocate as a way to stay ahead of the region's political tidal wave.

David Schenker is the Aufzien fellow and director of the Program on Arab Politics at The Washington Institute.

Article 6.

The Daily Star

When imperialists happen to be Muslim

Michael Young

It never ceases to amaze how Arab eyes are forever on the lookout for some manifestation of Western hegemonic intent or condescension toward the Arab world, and how this vigilance seems to break down whenever it involves non-Western states behaving the same way. This comes to mind after the announcement Sunday by the commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, Gen. Mohammad Ali Jaafari, that members of the Guard's Quds force were present in Syria and Lebanon, albeit only as "advisers." Imagine the sarcasm had Barack Obama said such a thing. Jaafari, against overwhelming evidence to the contrary, explained that the Revolutionary Guard's presence "does not mean that we are militarily present [in Syria and Lebanon]. We offer advice and opinions based on our experience." Iran has never hidden its sense of neo-imperial entitlement in the Middle East, despite its claims to speak for the oppressed of the earth and to represent a bulwark against imperialism. Leaders in Tehran look upon their

country as a natural regional dominator, and such thinking helps explain why they feel that they have a right to develop nuclear weapons, or at least the capability to build them.

Iran maintained an expansionist urge following the fall of the shah in 1979. Many regarded Iran's regional militancy as reflecting a broad desire to lead a revolutionary global umma, or Muslim community. In fact, Iranian nationalism has repeatedly proved more powerful in influencing Tehran's behavior in the Arab and Muslim worlds. And when Jaafari says that Iran offers "advice," he means it will ensure that Syria and Lebanon serve Iran's interests.

The Iranian-Israeli standoff over nuclear weapons is a tale of competing regional hegemonies. Israel seeks to maintain its monopoly over such weapons, while Iran means to end that monopoly. Both have a dangerously exaggerated sense of self-importance. Iran has threatened to engulf the region in flames if it is attacked, while Israel has sought to enlist the U.S. in an assault on Iran to prevent the Iranians from developing a nuclear capability, the dire consequences notwithstanding.

The Middle Eastern lexicon today fails to properly express that the impulse for regional domination is as strong among non-Western Muslim states as among Western states, if not more so. How odd, given that most of the empires ruling over what would become the modern Arab world were native to the region – Egyptian, Sassanid, Umayyad, Abbasid and Ottoman, to name the more obvious ones.

The story of the Arab world in the last decade has been one of increasing marginalization at the hands of its periphery, above all Iran, Turkey, and Israel, even if Israel's superiority has been in relative decline when compared, let's say, to what it was during the 1960s and 1970s. Great attention has been focused on the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, which is usually interpreted as an instance of aggressive Western neo-imperialism. And yet how ironic that the Iraqi intervention allowed Iran to again throw its weight around regionally, thanks to the Bush administration's removal of an old Iranian enemy in Saddam Hussein and his replacement by a Shiite-controlled order, many of whose representatives were close to Tehran.

Turkey, in turn, reacted to the European Union's implicit rejection by looking for newfound relevance within its vicinity, and under an Islamist

government no less. This has pleased some Arab states and displeased others. However, the Turkish aspiration for “zero problems with the neighbors,” as Foreign Minister Ahmed Davutoglu envisaged it, proved absurd. As Turkey began advancing its core interests, these were always going to clash with the core interests of its neighbors.

It’s puzzling how many people in the Arab world appear more amenable to the regional ascendancy of Muslim states such as Iran or Turkey than to that of Western countries, above all the U.S. Puzzling not because consistency requires that they should embrace Western hegemony as well, but because it requires rejecting any form of hegemony whatsoever, whatever its origin.

There are Arabs who fear the rise of a Shiite Iran, just as there are others, mainly Shiites, who welcome this. By the same token, Turkey is frequently deemed by Sunnis to be a valuable counterweight to Iran, which cannot but displease certain Shiites. Sectarian discord has divided the Arabs, making it easier for Iran and Turkey, and others, to augment their authority at the Arabs’ expense.

Turkey and Iran are perhaps not as forceful as Western colonial powers were at the start of the last century. Still, Lebanon and Syria are close to being Iranian protectorates, and Turkey has never hesitated to enter Iraq or Syria to subdue the Kurds. When the two countries, and Israel, reflexively shape their surroundings in order to preserve their regional sway, this tells us that we are in the presence of domination not so different from the one once enforced by Western states. But then the West offers so much more convenient a target.

Article 7.

The Washington Post

“Notes on a Century: Reflections of a Middle East Historian”, by Bernard Lewis with Buntzie Ellis Churchill

Warren Bass,

As a young graduate student, I won a brief visiting fellowship to Tel Aviv University, only to find that my hosts did not quite know where to put me — and so I somehow wound up in the office of the legendary Middle East historian Bernard Lewis, who, I was told, would occasionally drop by the university during his global peregrinations. I would be periodically interrupted by a diffident knock, and I still wince at the memory of the looks of the pilgrims who had come in search of the great man only to find me instead.

The office in Tel Aviv was part of ██████ high-flying academic life, which he recounts in his new memoir, “Notes on a Century” (co-authored with his companion, the magnificently named Buntzie Ellis Churchill). Lewis has led a staggeringly productive life — publishing a jaw-dropping 32 books — and seems to have had more fun than any department worth of more somber professors.

Lewis begins with a lovely portrait of a London Jewish childhood of modest means, with his punctilious English mother and his soccer-loving, opera-loving, news-loving father. Young Bernard had a gift for languages; he gulped down “The Count of Monte Cristo” in French at age 13 and, at age 16, tried to woo a girl with “a series of poems that, insanely ambitiously, [he] wrote in Hebrew.”

In 1933, Lewis began in earnest to study the Middle East. In 1946, “out of the blue,” he was invited by an Oxford historian to write a short book that became ██████ classic “The Arabs in History” — sweeping, ambitious and written with his signature elegance and wit. Its lasting success left him startled, grateful and “at times somewhat irritated” since it had been cranked out by “a young, immature and inexperienced scholar in three months.”

In 1949, on academic leave in Istanbul, Lewis obtained a permit to enter the Ottoman Empire’s central archives, previously closed to foreigners.

The next year, he thrilled to the sight of a free and fair election in Turkey in which the defeated government crisply and honorably packed it in and turned over power. All this led to probably his masterpiece, “The Emergence of Modern Turkey,” which ends with the 1950 landslide and details “the emergence of a secular, democratic republic from an Islamic empire.”

Lewis later settled into what he hoped would prove a stimulating, prolific and noncontroversial academic life at Princeton. Two out of three isn’t bad. In 1978, [Edward Said](#), a brilliant, up-and-coming Palestinian American literary critic at Columbia University, published “Orientalism,” and Middle East studies were never the same. Said accused an older generation of European scholars of advancing “fundamentally a political doctrine” riddled with paternalism and condescension, designed to justify imperial control of the exotic East by portraying it as backward, sensual, despotic, unchanging and generally inferior to the West. Lewis was one of Said’s main targets — “a perfect exemplification,” Said wrote, “of the academic whose work purports to be liberal objective scholarship but is in reality very close to being propaganda against his subject material.”

At a stroke, Said turned the word “Orientalist” from a discipline into a slur, and the rift in Middle East studies remains large and sullen. In his chapter on the donnybrook, Lewis — clearly still smarting — blasts Said’s thesis as “just plain wrong. His linking European Orientalist scholarship to European imperial expansion in the Islamic world is an absurdity.” Many of Said’s charges in “Orientalism” — such as accusing Lewis of trying to depict Islam as “an irrational herd or mass phenomenon” and “an anti-Semitic ideology, not merely a religion” — are indeed wildly overstated and crude. Still, a man determined to lay the post-Said doubts to rest would probably have been wiser not to write twice about President Turgut Ozal of Turkey flashing “his enigmatic Turkish smile,” or to assert that the founding events of Islamic history shape the “corporate awareness” of Muslims everywhere, or to offer what Lewis admits “may appear to be a blatantly chauvinistic statement,” namely that “this capacity for empathy, vicariously experiencing the feelings of others, is a peculiarly Western feature.”

Lewis found himself back in the spotlight after Sept. 11, 2001, when his book “What Went Wrong?: Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response”

unexpectedly hurtled up the bestseller lists. “Osama bin Ladin made me famous,” Lewis writes. He was sought out by Vice President Dick Cheney and his staff, “not to offer policy suggestions but to provide background.” Lewis writes that he “was saddened by the willful vilification of Cheney by the liberal media.” But he bristles at the charge that he provided intellectual ballast for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, writing that he opposed the war and instead backed U.S. “political support and a clear statement of recognition” for a “provisional government of free Iraq” based in the Kurdish-ruled north.

Lewis was told to funnel further suggestions through [Stephen Hadley](#), Bush’s second-term national security adviser. The e-mails Lewis reprints here will do little to soothe his critics. While Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman [Martin Dempsey](#) recently concluded that Iran, for all its radicalism, was still “a rational actor,” Lewis warned Hadley that Iran’s rulers are so fanatical and apocalyptic that even nuclear deterrence “would have no meaning.” Lewis also shares one clanger that one suspects Hadley would have preferred remained private: “Sir Harold Nicolson once said that one can never be certain what is in the mind of the oriental but we must leave the oriental no doubt what is in our mind.”

Lewis has lived long enough to see almost certainly the most exciting upheaval in Arab politics since the founding of the modern Arab state system. But the Arab Awakening leaves him wary, not exultant. Even before the Muslim Brotherhood’s candidate won Egypt’s first democratic presidential election, Lewis warned against “a dash toward Western-style elections” that could empower Islamic radicals: “A much better course would be a gradual development of democracy, not through general elections, but rather through civil society and the strengthening of local institutions.” This epitomizes William F. Buckley Jr.’s definition of a conservative as someone who stands athwart history yelling “Stop,” and history seems to be paying no mind.

The concluding chapters of “Notes on a Century” feel more crabbed of spirit than its earlier, sunnier reminiscences of scholarly discovery and stimulating encounters with everyone from Isaac Stern to Scoop Jackson to the shah of Iran. Still, we are fortunate to have this chatty memoir, even if it is ████████ earlier classics that will truly endure. At one point, Lewis approvingly quotes the author [Anatole France](#), who once said of a scholar,

“He’s a truly great historian; he has enriched his subject with a new uncertainty.” We will miss Lewis when he is gone, and we will not find anyone to fill his chair.

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Article 8.

The Wall Street Journal

The Tyranny of Algorithms

[Evgeny Morozov](#)

Automate This

By Christopher Steiner

(Portfolio Penguin, 248 pages, \$25.95)

September 19, 2012 -- In "Player Piano," his 1952 dystopian novel, Kurt Vonnegut rebelled against automation. For Vonnegut, the metaphor of the player piano—where the instrument plays itself, without any intervention from humans—stood for all that was wrong with the cold, mechanical and efficiency-maximizing environment around him.

Vonnegut would probably be terrified by Christopher Steiner's provocative "Automate This," a book about our growing reliance on algorithms. By encoding knowledge about the world into simple rules that computers can follow, algorithms produce faster decisions. A gadget like a player piano seems trivial in comparison with Music Xray, a trendy company that uses algorithms to rate new songs based on their "hit-appeal" by isolating their patterns of melody, beat, tempo and fullness of sound and comparing those with earlier hits. If the rating is too low, record companies—the bulk of Music Xray's clientele—probably shouldn't bother with the artist.

As we think through the role that algorithms should play in our lives—and the various feats of automation that they enable—two questions are particularly important. First, is a given instance of automation feasible?

Second, is it desirable? Computer scientists have been asking both questions for decades in the context of artificial intelligence.

Many early pioneers reached gloomy conclusions. In the mid-1970s, Joseph Weizenbaum of MIT railed against depriving humans of their capacity to choose, even if computers could decide everything for us. For Weizenbaum, choosing and deciding were different activities—and no algorithm should be allowed to blur the difference. A decade later, Stanford's Terry Winograd attacked the philosophical foundations of artificial intelligence, arguing that everyday human behavior was too complex and too spontaneous to be captured in rules. The philosopher Hubert Dreyfus said as much in the 1960s, when he compared artificial intelligence to alchemy. But Mr. Winograd's critique, coming from a respected computer scientist, was particularly devastating.

Mr. Steiner, a former reporter for Forbes and currently an Internet entrepreneur, glosses over his subject's historical background. He does introduce us to the first known algorithm—found on clay tablets near Baghdad and dating to roughly 2500 B.C., it recorded Sumerian instructions for how to equally divide grain harvest between a varying number of men—but, alas, he doesn't go much further. For most of his book's 10 chapters he simply explores different sorts of contemporary algorithms and their uses, from their embrace by record labels to their potential to transform health care.

The author explains "the algorithmic takeover" of the past three decades by linking it to Wall Street's fascination with algorithmic trading, whereby traders recede into the background and leave it to the algorithms to identify and act on arbitrage opportunities. Judging by the recent Knight Capital debacle—one of the main cheerleaders for algorithmic trading squandered \$440 million when one of its algorithms went rogue—this is, indeed, an important subject. But is Wall Street the driving force behind the culture-wide algorithmic fetish so aptly diagnosed by Mr. Steiner? Or is it just along for the ride?

Mr. Steiner does air some qualms with the proliferation of algorithmic decision making, and some of these are on target. Writing of companies like Music Xray, he wonders whether algorithms will "lead to a music world of forced homogenization" rather than promote innovative artists. But the author goes too far: "Algorithms may bring us new artists, but

because they build their judgment on what was popular in the past, we will likely end up with some of the same kind of forgettable pop we already have." An important concern—but why blame the algorithms? After all, record labels could also employ algorithms to identify music that is fresh and diverse. Instead of spotting consensus items, they could highlight risky outliers.

It isn't the algorithms that favor the mainstream over the avant-garde but the music industry. Algorithms don't build their judgments on anything—their creators do. One can easily imagine a very different music industry that would still profit from algorithms but favor very different kinds of artists. The inherent risk associated with Mr. Steiner's technology-centric approach is that the institutional logic inscribed in the algorithms suddenly becomes invisible, as we direct our fury at the technology instead.

On the whole, though, Mr. Steiner believes that we need to accept our algorithmic overlords. Accept them we might—but first we should vigorously, and transparently, debate the rules they are imposing.

Following several high-profile scandals involving algorithmic trading, regulators in Hong Kong have recently proposed that all such algorithms be audited and tested every year. Similar calls have been made with regard to independent audits of Google's search algorithms—if only to avoid the impression that the company might be favoring its own services in its search results.

Consider predictive policing—an area that Mr. Steiner doesn't discuss but one that captures just how tricky the politics of algorithms could get. Police departments across America are rapidly embracing software that, by drawing on past crime data, suggests where and when crimes might happen next. It all sounds fine in theory—but will it open the door to even more racial profiling? Police could blame their algorithms and say: "My algorithm told me to arrest this man!" Some legal scholars already seriously entertain this possibility. Private companies, moreover, might eventually step in with proprietary algorithms. Do we want our legal system to run on opaque code?

While "Automate This" hints at some of these thorny issues, it says very little about the ways to resolve them. The real question isn't whether to live with algorithms—the Sumerians got that much right—but how to live with them. As Vonnegut understood over a half-century ago, an uncritical

embrace of automation, for all the efficiency that it offers, is just a prelude to dystopia.

Mr. Morozov is the author of "The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom."