THE JERUSALEM STRATEGIC TRIBUNE

TRUMP VS. HARRIS
DIVERGING PATHS

FALL 2024 - N°11

Out of Division, Strength

by Ahmed Charai

In the tumult that always accompanies a US presidential election – with each side fearing the end of "democracy" or "America" if the other side prevails – some Americans have lost sight of what admirers see clearly from afar: A remarkable, resilient country on which turns the hopes and inspirations of the world.

Every US presidential election is billed as "the most consequential election of our lives." In reality, America's current polarization is not new, not unhealthy, and its open airing of differences is what sets the US apart from much of the rest of the world.

America should not doubt the strength of its civil society, endowed with a forest of institutions, not a single tree of which can be easily felled. The US has an elected and term-limited president, independent courts that rule against governments of both political parties, and two houses of Congress that check and balance each other. It has a free press and a thicket of non-governmental organizations that act as watchdogs.

The strength of its democracy has made the United States the most powerful and influential country in the world. Its institutions work, which is why America will remain America, regardless of who is elected president.

Remember, America is dynamic. A new generation of politicians (which Kamala Harris embodies) is rising on the back of support from a new generation of Americans, who are in turn shaped by different experiences and expectations. The internet, with its immediacy, choice, and personalization, has shaped Americans under the age of 50 in ways that the Biden generation may not fathom. Both political parties will have to adapt to a rising cohort of voters.

America's ability to balance political opposites has long been its superpower. This allows the nation to move rapidly in times of crisis while more brittle nation-states crumble.

Perhaps Ronald Reagan, in one of his last speeches as President, explained best how America continually renews itself:

"For it's the great life force of each generation of new Americans that guarantees that America's triumph shall continue unsurpassed into the next century and beyond. Other countries may seek to compete with us; but in one vital area, as a beacon of freedom and opportunity that draws the people

of the world, no country on Earth comes close. "This, I believe, is one of the most important sources of America's greatness. We lead the world because, unique among nations, we draw our people — our strength — from every country and every corner of the world. And by doing so we continuously renew and enrich our nation. While other countries cling to the stale past, here in America we breathe life into dreams. We create the future, and the world follows us into tomorrow."

Now to the competition between Kamala Harris and Donald J. Trump. The Vice President, a woman of character and a former prosecutor, has benefited from the support of major Democratic Party leaders, including President Biden, former President Obama, Former First Lady Michelle Obama, Former President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, among others.

In one of the shortest acceptance speeches in Democratic Party history, Harris carefully balanced between opposing factions in her own party. On Israel, she reiterated her support – "I will always stand up for Israel's right to defend itself," while underlining that she was working to see that "the suffering in Gaza ends and the Palestinian people can realize their right to dignity, security, freedom and self-determination." She was careful to avoid divisive or bold stands on Ukraine, Taiwan, Iran or other flashpoints. The word most commonly used by America's largest news outlets to describe Harris' most important speech so far was "disciplined."

The image of former President Donald J. Trump, at the age of 78, struggling with Secret Service agents to stand, raising his fist in the air and shouting: "Fight! Fight! Fight!" resonates among his supporters and many people around the world.

But that image and that sense of grievance may not be enough to carry the election. President Trump must rally as many Americans as possible around a feasible program for the future.

He needs a sober and pragmatic plan to grow the economy for all Americans. He needs a strategy to stave off rising competition with China beyond higher tariffs, which could be economically ruinous for America. The Defense Department needs to be overhauled. Finally, the Abraham Accords need to be strengthened and expanded.

Trump needs to acknowledge that the menaces to the safety of the world are crowding around America and her allies: Iran is waging a proxy war with Israel, Russia is inching forward in Ukraine, China has put the world's largest navy to sea, and terror groups are emboldened and murderous.

To an outside observer, this presidential election is another catalyst for America's relentless national spirit to renew and grow. It is also another opportunity to show the world that America's institutions are resilient and America's constitution is revered by its public.

This is the only way forward. For Democrats and Republicans to see the good in one another and unite to rebuild America, so that it can once again inspire hope in its friends and deter its foes. ✳

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WWW.JSTRIBUNE.COM

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Art Direction & Design
SoGold, Paris, France

Printed by
GMS Print, Casablanca,
Morocco

The Jerusalem Strategic Tribune
is published by World Herald
Tribune, Inc.
Washington DC - USA

A GUIDE TO HARRIS' FOREIGN POLICY

Photo credit: Reuters/Kevin Mohatt

by Jacob Heilbrunn

How will Kamala Harris conduct foreign policy if she becomes president in January 2025? Would she hew to traditional Democratic Party stands on dealing with authoritarian regimes, climate change and foreign alliances? Or will she veer off in unpredictable directions?

One obvious place to try and answer this question might be to explore Harris' own recent foreign policy stands. In a speech at the 2023 Munich Security Conference, she denounced Putin's war in Ukraine as "an utter failure for Russia" but beyond that has not often addressed the topic. Most recently, she helped guide the talks with Russia to arrange the prisoner swap that took place in late July. Otherwise, Harris has said and done little in the arena of foreign policy.

Perhaps this reticence about foreign affairs is not surprising. Much of her political career, after all, has been devoted to domestic issues, and in the 2024 campaign, Harris, who suddenly became the Democratic nominee after Biden stepped down, is playing up her credentials as a former California prosecutor who can successfully target Trump.

Nevertheless, Harris does not possess a long track record on foreign affairs – in contrast to the backgrounds of many other vice presidents. Richard M. Nixon, vice president under Dwight D. Eisenhower, had served in the Pacific during World War II. A firm internationalist, he was a member of the congressional Herter committee in 1947, which traveled to war-torn Europe and laid the groundwork for the passage of the Marshall Plan. George H.W. Bush, Ronald Reagan's vice president, had been ambassador to China and head of the CIA. Bill Clinton's vice president, Al Gore, had served in Vietnam. As a congressman and senator, Gore was a leading voice on arms control, technological and environmental issues. He co-chaired the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission, which sought to promote defense conversion, space cooperation and business development between Russia and America. During the George W. Bush administration, Vice President Dick Cheney exercised a leading role, particularly when it came to making the case for the 2003 Iraq War. And Joe Biden, vice president under Barack Obama, had served as head of the Senate Foreign Relations committee and was given the lead on foreign policy issues like Ukraine.

If Harris' scanty record doesn't provide much insight into her future foreign policy, perhaps the Biden administration's does. According to Paul Glastris, a former speechwriter for Bill Clinton, Harris is likely to build on it. "Having spent four years under the tutelage of an accomplished foreign policy president," Glastris says, "I suspect Harris will largely stick with the traditionalist, alliance-focused national security strategy of Joe Biden, and with luck she'll also continue and even build on Biden's much more daring and innovative breaks with neoliberal trade and international economic policies." Similarly, *Politico* has reported: "In most areas, Harris would likely continue many of President Joe Biden's foreign policy objectives." It's worth looking at Biden's successes and setbacks, then, to try and discern what lessons Harris herself might draw from them.

One of Joe Biden's early moves after he became president in January 2021 was to visit

Chaos at Kabul airport, 16 August 2021. Photo credit: STR/NurPhoto

the State Department, where he declared that "diplomacy is back at the center of our foreign policy." He declared that his ambition was to revive the democratic alliances that formed the backbone of American prosperity and power and had recently been allowed to atrophy. Biden noted that it was both moral and strategic to strengthen those alliances rather than the two being at odds. "When we strengthen our alliances," he said, "we amplify our power as well as our ability to disrupt threats before they can reach our shores."

As president, Biden has pursued a foreign policy vision that was diametrically opposed to his predecessor Donald J. Trump's "America First" approach. Trump viewed alliances with fellow democracies in Europe and Asia with a measure of skepticism, disparaged free trade and sought to establish constructive relationships based on mutual interests with strong, if not dictatorial, regimes, ranging from Russia to North Korea. Trump's views belong to an older tradition in the GOP, as I sought to show in my new book *America Last: The Right's Century-Long Romance with Foreign Dictators*.

Biden, too, hewed to a longstanding tradition, but one that was based on the liberal realism adopted by the Truman administration after World War II. It holds that an alliance of democracies is mutually beneficial, that assisting weak countries is often in the American national interest and that prudent statecraft can also encompass moral considerations.

Biden's greatest blunder came when he did not seek to act in tandem with America's allies but unilaterally withdrew from Afghanistan. In implementing the plan that Trump had negotiated with the Taliban, and ignoring that plan's preconditions for withdrawal, Biden took for granted the professions of the national

security establishment that it would be a smooth and seamless exit. The reverse occurred. The American-backed government in Kabul decamped, surrendering Kabul almost without firing a shot. The chaotic footage undermined the image of competence that Biden had hitherto enjoyed.

The withdrawal may have created the impression abroad, particularly in Russia, that America was not willing to fight for its allies. Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell observed, "I think the precipitous withdrawal from Afghanistan in August was a signal, to Putin and maybe to Chinese President Xi as well, that America was in retreat, that America could not be depended upon, and was an invitation to the autocrats of the world that maybe this was a good time to make a move."

After the Afghan disaster, Biden had a chance to redeem himself abroad. One of Biden's most notable achievements has been his bolstering of American ties with NATO and support for Ukraine. In 2021, the Biden administration launched a full-court press to persuade Russia not to invade Ukraine by releasing US intelligence information that Russia was indeed about to initiate a mass invasion of Ukraine. Putin dismissed this assessment as did Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky. Numerous European leaders remained skeptical. But Biden's stance was vindicated when Russia launched its assault on February 24 and it helped him to garner international support for the beleaguered country, amounting to over $200 billion in weapons and humanitarian aid. Biden was also able to win passage of $61 billion from Congress after a lengthy delay in 2024. At the 75th NATO summit in Washington he pledged five new air defense systems for Kyiv. Far from being able to conquer Ukraine, Putin has been stymied.

At the same time, Biden has overseen the further expansion of NATO. He overcame the objections of Turkey to include Sweden and Finland as members. The two Nordic countries enhance NATO's defensive might. Finland has a conscript military with a reserve force of 900,000 and Sweden, 57,000. NATO now possesses increased naval and air power near the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad in the Baltic sea. In short, the addition of Finland and Sweden is another sign of how Putin's war in Ukraine, coupled with his threats against the West, have boomeranged against him, creating the very NATO enlargement that he professed to fear and oppose.

When it comes to China, Biden has also laid a strong foundation for Harris. Biden has maintained a number of the tariffs that Trump imposed on Beijing, while restricting the salve of advanced microchips to it. Biden has also imposed selective tariffs on China, including on steel and aluminum, semiconductors, electric vehicles, solar cells and batteries. He has pressured China to refrain from resupplying Russia with weapons for the Ukraine war and impeded its export of chemicals that are employed for the opioid fentanyl. To firm up America's presence in the region, Biden also established the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, which is supposed to serve as a surrogate for American withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Above all, Biden strengthened defense partnerships with the Philippines, South Korea, Japan and Australia. He also enhanced the trilateral relationship with South Korea and Japan, including a formal commitment to consult jointly about a security threat. While it doesn't reach the collective defense standard of NATO's Article V, it does represent a significant change in the often tense relations between South Korea and Japan.

Then there is the Middle East. Biden initially sought to isolate Saudi Arabia, but was forced to eat humble pie when he visited it in July 2022 and exchanged a fist bump with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Since then, rumors of a bilateral agreement with Saudi Arabia have been percolating, though the current hostilities in the Middle East have likely disrupted it.

The administration was caught flatfooted by October 7. "Although the Middle East remains beset with perennial challenges," wrote national security adviser Jake Sullivan in *Foreign Affairs* on the eve of the Hamas attack on Israel, "the region is quieter than it has been for decades." Biden has periodically expressed exasperation with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu while sending a steady flow of munitions.

Photo credit: Ken Cedeno/Pool/Sipa USA via Reuters Connect

Is this the one area where Harris might break with Biden policy? I spoke with Curt Mills, the editor of *The American Conservative,* who points to the influence that Philip H. Gordon, currently on Vice President Harris's staff, might exercise as a potential national security adviser. Gordon is the author of *Losing the Long Game: the False Promise of Regime Change in the Middle East.* According to Mills, "On the one hand her consigliere Phil Gordon would be an arch advocate of restraint if he were empowered. If Harris hits considerable headwinds as a neophyte president, then the chance for the brass to run her administration is far greater than it would have been under Biden who had a clear record of flouting the Pentagon." By contrast, writing in the *Financial Times,* Anne-Marie Slaughter, chief executive of the New America Foundation, suggested that "efforts to find space between Harris and President Joe Biden, most notably on Israel/Gaza, yield differences of tone rather than substance." On the one hand, Harris has declared "I will not be silent" about Gaza; on the other she has stated that she "stands with" the families of the Israeli hostages.

Harris may be a work in progress when it comes to foreign policy, but her public statements do suggest that she has already mastered the art of diplomatic ambiguity. As president, it could serve her well. ✳

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Photo credit: Reuters/Nathan Howard

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A HARRIS ADMINISTRATION ON ISRAEL–PALESTINE AND THE MIDDLE EAST

by Debra Shushan

Should she beat Donald Trump in this November's election, Kamala Harris would come into office with more foreign policy experience than most presidents. As vice president, she made 17 foreign trips, giving a high-profile speech at the Munich Security Conference and leading the US delegation to the 2023 climate summit in Dubai. She has met with many world leaders, including those of China, Ukraine, Germany, and Israel, holding her own talks with Benjamin Netanyahu during the prime minister's recent visit to the US to address a joint session of Congress.

With the catastrophic war in Gaza ongoing and impacting domestic politics here at home, there has been much speculation about what foreign policy on Israel-Palestine and the broader Middle East would look like under a Harris administration. It's not possible to know precisely, in part because Harris will avoid doing anything during the campaign that would call into question the fact that Biden is determining policy until the end of his term in January. In addition, most new presidents take time to refine their foreign approach. Nonetheless, there are a number of assumptions about which we can be confident.

Harris will support Israeli security and favor a strong US-Israel relationship, as she has as vice president and senator – and since she "was a young girl collecting funds to plant trees for Israel." She consistently supports security assistance to Israel, including the 10-year Memorandum of Understanding on military assistance negotiated under President Obama and additional funding for Israeli missile-defense systems, such as Iron Dome. Vice President Harris played a critical role in the National Security Supplemental Aid package, which included over $14 billion in aid to Israel as well as humanitarian aid for Gaza, calling congressional leadership to ensure its passage. Following Hamas' attack on October 7, Vice President Harris backed Israel's right to defend its people. She raised awareness of the sexual and gender-based violence committed that day and has met with rescued hostages and families of those still in captivity in Gaza.

At the same time, the Vice President has demonstrated care and concern for Palestinian lives and self-determination, adopting a nuanced approach on Israel-Palestine that reflects mainstream views and values within the Democratic Party and among most Jewish Americans. She has repeatedly maintained that "Israel has a right to defend itself, and how it does so matters."

In December 2023, leaks emerged from the White House that Harris was advocating a tougher approach to the Netanyahu government's prosecution of the war in Gaza. Publicly, she spoke of "heartbreaking" discussions she held with Palestinian Americans and stated, "As Israel pursues its military objectives in Gaza, we believe Israel must do more to protect innocent civilians." The following March, she broke new ground for the administration in calling for "an immediate ceasefire" for at least six weeks "given the immense scale of suffering in Gaza." She has since stated emphatically that she and President Biden "are working all around the clock every day to get that ceasefire done and bring the hostages home." Following her meeting with Netanyahu in July, she commented, "What has happened in Gaza over the past nine months is devastating — the images of dead children and desperate,

Pro-Palestinian activists outside Harris campaign event in New York, August 14, 2024. Photo credit: Michael Nigro/Sipa USA via Reuters Connect

hungry people fleeing for safety, sometimes displaced for the second, third, or fourth time... And I will not be silent."

As a senator, she took action against dangerous moves by Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Trump. In 2018, Harris signed a letter which strongly opposed President Trump's decision to cut more than $500 million in humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza. In 2020, she made clear that the new Israeli government must not carry through with provisions in its coalition agreement promoting unilateral annexation of West Bank territory, which would "put a negotiated peace further out of reach."

In a recent interview, Vice President Harris noted the "many truths that exist at the same time" regarding the war in Gaza. She spoke of the killing of "far too many innocent Palestinian civilians," the presence of "famine conditions," and the desperate need to free the hostages and get humanitarian aid into Gaza. "We need a two-state solution," she argued and has further said it's "the only path that ensures Israel remains a secure, Jewish, and democratic state" and "ensures Palestinians can finally realize the freedom, security, and prosperity that they rightly deserve." This mainstream position is highlighted in the 2024 Democratic platform and embraced by a substantial majority of Jewish American voters, who also support the US "exerting pressure on both the Israelis and Palestinians to make the compromises necessary to achieve peace."

A Harris administration, even if it inherits a ceasefire in Gaza, will face extraordinary challenges in the Middle East, which cannot be decoupled from the crisis in Israel-Palestine. For

one, Gaza will need to be rebuilt and rehabilitated, which will require the modern-day equivalent of a Marshall Plan, as well as effective security provision that will ensure that Hamas and other militant groups are not able to use Gaza as a staging ground for further attacks against Israel. Significantly, Harris was the first US official to underscore to Arab leaders the need to prioritize postwar planning, in a meeting on the sidelines of the December 2023 climate summit in Dubai. She noted that the international community would need to "dedicate significant resources" to Gaza reconstruction. Whether or not a Harris administration would lead an international effort to achieve these goals – perhaps in the context of a comprehensive regional security arrangement including Palestinian statehood and full regional normalization for Israel – is an open question.

Personnel is policy, and Harris has a team with both extensive experience and deep expertise in the Middle East.

Philip Gordon, her national security advisor, wrote about the Middle East while outside of government service. In a 2016 Council on Foreign Relations report, he said "repairing the US-Israel relationship" will require Israel taking a long series of steps including limiting and rolling back its occupation of the West Bank and welcoming the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative as a "starting point for negotiations on comprehensive peace." He advocated for multilateral engagement and diplomatic de-escalation in the Middle East and helped negotiate the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

Ilan Goldenberg, whom the Harris campaign has just tapped as its liaison to the American Jewish community, previously served as Harris' special adviser on the Middle East, worked in the Obama Administration on Iran policy and as chief of staff to the Special Envoy for Israel-Palestine Negotiations Martin Indyk. Goldenberg has written extensively on how to achieve and secure a two-state solution and how to end Gaza's "perpetual crisis." Harris tasked Gordon and Goldenberg with devising proposals for the "day after" in Gaza, working with the National Security Council and the State Department.

Governor Tim Walz, her vice presidential pick, has consistently supported Israel's security and the US-Israel relationship while a member of Congress, including by voting for US aid to Israel. He also voted for the Iran nuclear deal, calling it the "best chance we have had in years to halt the Iranian nuclear program." In March, he stated in an interview that "you can hold competing things: that Israel has the right to defend itself, and the atrocities of October 7 are unacceptable, but Palestinian civilians being caught in this... has got to end." He has expressed sympathy with Minnesotans who voted "uncommitted," praising their engagement in the democratic process and stating that they are "deeply concerned, as we all are" with the "intolerable" situation in Gaza. He has advocated for a ceasefire, humanitarian aid for Gazans, and "a lasting two-state solution."

Walz may help Harris pivot to a position that is more in line with the American electorate, and Democratic voters in particular, who are sympathetic to both Palestinians and Israelis. Contrary to conventional wisdom, voters do not believe that supporting Israel requires walking in lockstep with a right-wing Israeli prime minister.

The alternative to a Harris administration is unthinkable. As I have written elsewhere, given the track records of Donald Trump and JD Vance, a Trump-Vance administration "would likely be a disaster for Israelis and Palestinians, regional stability in the Middle East, US national security, Jewish Americans and other minorities, and democracy."

At a time when bold and effective US leadership will be essential, Harris could promise a fresh start – and one managed by smart policy experts with a vision for how to bring both security and freedom to Israelis and Palestinians, while stabilizing the region and securing US interests. ✳

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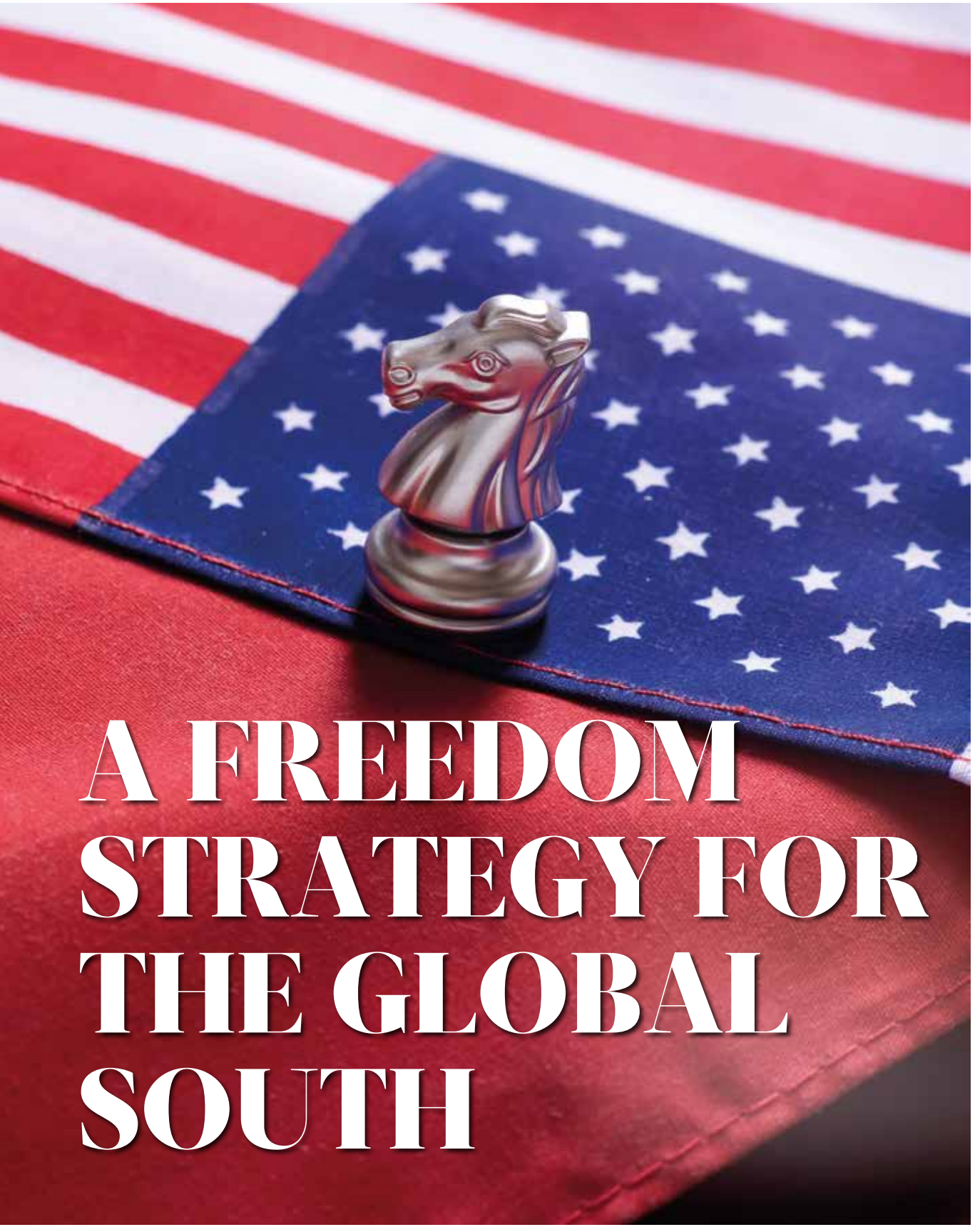

A FREEDOM STRATEGY FOR THE GLOBAL SOUTH

by Dan Negrea, Daniel Runde

In the current cold war, the US and its allies in the Free World bloc are in a sharp contest with the authoritarian, revisionist, and expansionist bloc of China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. The stakes could not be higher. If the Free World loses this contest, the freedom, security, and prosperity of Americans and its allies will be severely affected.

An important field of contest between the Free World and the authoritarian bloc is the geopolitical direction of a third bloc of countries, variously known as the Global South or the New Non-Aligned Movement. These are all developing countries that claim not to take sides between the two adversarial blocs. Some want to trade with both sides. Others are dictatorships that receive military and domestic security assistance from the authoritarian bloc.

Will the Global South choose a freedom-based model of development or an authoritarian one?

The US has national interests at stake. The US benefits from trade with these countries, with markets consisting of billions of citizens, and the US wants access to their natural resources, especially strategic minerals. Then there are diplomatic considerations since the over 100 countries in the Global South can affect votes at the United Nations. Finally, national security reasons are at play since many of these countries have strategic geographic positions. It would not be desirable, for example, to see Chinese naval bases on Africa's west coast.

The United States must propose a positive, freedom-based development model for the Global South and a plan to promote it actively and with a sense of urgency, since many of these countries are drifting into the orbit of the Chinese Communist Party.

The US message to Global South countries should be that they can accelerate their development through freedom-promoting economic, legal, and political reforms. Such policies create an enabling environment that attracts foreign direct investment and know-how transfers from the private sector of the Free World and, just as importantly, empowers these countries' entrepreneurs and innovators. Aid from governments and multilateral development banks have an important role to play. But the private sectors of Free World economies possess resources that dwarf those from governmental sources.

These essential reforms include laws and regulations advancing freedom of trade and

investment; policies punishing corruption in government, courts and business; and measures to increase the political legitimacy of their governments, because economic and legal freedoms can only survive if there is political stability.

China's President Xi famously said that countries don't need to westernize (choose freedom) to modernize. But the authoritarian development models offer only false promises because their track records are routinely inferior to those of free societies. In the 1960s, China, Taiwan, and South Korea were all poor and run by authoritarian governments. But Taiwan and South Korea have since become vibrant democracies and dynamic economies. According to the data-gathering platform Statista, Taiwan's and South Korea's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in 2023 was $32,444 and $33,192, respectively. For Communist China, it was only $17,662.

Russia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia tell a similar story. They all lacked freedom while they were part of the Communist Soviet Union and had comparable levels of development. Since 1991, the Baltics have earned very high scores for freedom and also made impressive strides economically. Their 2023 GDP per capita were $29,038, $27,026, and $23,053, respectively. Russia remains a brutal dictatorship and kleptocracy and its GDP per capita only reached $13,648.

Promoting a freedom-based development model for the Global South is a project in which the US must partner with friends and allies. Investors from the United States and allied democracies including the EU countries, Japan, Australia, South Korea, and Canada can pursue joint business projects in the Global South. Their governments can help by offering improved commercial diplomacy and business intelligence.

The United States and the Free World in general need to be confident in promoting a freedom-based development model – it is after all what created their unprecedented and admirable prosperity. This project is not purely altruistic. If the Global South drifts further into the arms of Communist China, it would create a geostrategic problem for the Free World. ✳

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THE TRUMP II ADMINISTRATION AND THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR CHALLENGE

by Matthew Kroenig, Dan Negrea

The world is on fire with two major wars in Europe and the Middle East and Iran has a malign involvement in both. As a party to the Beijing-Moscow-Tehran axis it supports Russia in its aggression against Ukraine. Iran has fueled conflict through its proxies, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis, threatening America's close ally, Israel, and upsetting regional and global stability.

In the midst of all this chaos, the most significant Iranian threat to America's national security interests has mostly been overlooked: the nuclear challenge. According to Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Iran's breakout timeline to a bomb is only one to two weeks.

A nuclear-armed Iran would pose a severe threat to US interests. It would increase the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation in the region as Iran's rivals build their own nuclear deterrents in response. It would increase regional instability as a nuclear-armed Iran would be emboldened to step up its support to terror groups and proxies. It would also create the risk of nuclear attack in the region, and –as Iran increases the ranges of its missiles – against the US homeland.

Several consecutive presidents have said that a nuclear-armed Iran is "unacceptable" and all options must be on the table to prevent it.

Unfortunately, the Biden administration does not have a clear strategy to halt Iran's nuclear progress. A Trump II administration would have an opportunity to put in place a more effective strategy.

THE FAILED OBAMA-BIDEN APPROACH

Before turning to a possible Trump II strategy, let us review several approaches that will not work. The Obama and Biden administrations attempted to solve this problem with toothless diplomacy, but their efforts failed. The starting point for today's flawed policy toward Iran was Obama's 2015 nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The fundamental flaw with the deal is that it granted Iran the right to enrich uranium. There is a big difference between operating reactors for a peaceful nuclear program and making nuclear fuel. Nuclear fuel-making is dual use in nature. Once a country can make fuel for a reactor, it can make fuel for weapons. For more than half a century, therefore, US policy has attempted to draw a bright line between sensitive and nonsensitive nuclear technologies. Washington allows and even encourages countries to operate reactors, but it prohibits them from enriching uranium or reprocessing plutonium. This is a standard that applies equally to American enemies and friends. In the 1970s, South Korea and Taiwan started secret plutonium reprocessing programs, and Washington

Iran's Supreme Leader Khamenei is briefed on Iran's nuclear achievements, June 2023. Photo credit: via Reuters

discovered them and forced the two countries to shut them down.

When it was revealed that Iran was enriching uranium in 2002, Washington's response was immediate and unsurprising. The George W. Bush administration said that Tehran must halt its uranium enrichment program. Washington won six UN Security Council resolutions demanding that Iran cease enriching uranium. As a presidential candidate, Obama wrote in *Foreign Affairs* that he would stop Iran's enrichment program.

Then it became too hard. The Obama administration badly wanted a deal, but Iran would not stop its enrichment program. So Obama moved the goalposts and undermined decades of US nonproliferation policy. He signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that granted Iran the ability to enrich uranium with limits. But—and this is a crucial point—those limits expire over time. Fifteen years after the deal went into effect, in 2030, Iran could enrich as much weapons-grade uranium as it wanted, consistent with the terms of the deal. Obama himself acknowledged that once these "sunset clauses" kicked in, the time it would take Iran to break out and build nuclear weapons "shrinks almost down to zero."

Far from eliminating or even freezing Iran's nuclear program, the deal had sanctified it, noted

Robert O'Brien in an important Foreign Affairs article this year. It merely postponed the time of reckoning in a way that would make it harder for the United States to solve the problem in the future.

Moreover, the deal did not cover Iran's other destabilizing activities. It did not restrict Iran's ballistic missile production or support for terrorism. In fact, the deal lifted a longstanding UN arms embargo on Iran, making it easier for Iran to advance its deadly weapons programs.

There was bipartisan opposition to the Iran deal in the US Congress. Every Republican and some Democrats were against the deal. Several Republican candidates in the 2016 presidential race promised to tear up the deal on day one. Trump was a relative moderate who proposed to renegotiate the deal. When renegotiation proved impossible, Trump pulled out of the deal and imposed a "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran. This was the right approach, and we recommend a variation of this strategy below.

Democrats wrongly criticized Trump for pulling out of the deal, and Biden campaigned in 2020 on returning to the Iran nuclear deal. By this point, however, Biden had essentially accepted Republicans' criticisms of the original deal. In an implicit condemnation of Obama's agreement, the Biden administration said that they would like to get a deal with longer-lasting restrictions on uranium enrichment that also covered Iran's sponsorship of terror and ballistic missile programs. Biden's strategy was to quickly reenter the 2015 deal and then negotiate a "longer and stronger" deal.

Tehran had different ideas. It smelled weakness. The Supreme Leader knew that Biden, like Obama, badly wanted a deal, so he pushed for terms that would have watered down the 2015 deal. Fortunately, Biden did not go for it, and they were unable to reach agreement.

Meanwhile, Iran continued to ramp up its nuclear program. Many analysts wrongly blame Iran's recent nuclear buildup on Trump's withdrawal from the deal, but the evidence tells a different story. The greatest increases in Iran's uranium enrichment program, such as enriching to high levels of purity, occurred under Biden's watch. Tehran was afraid to test Trump, but they knew that Biden had no plan B, and there would be no consequences for a rapid nuclear expansion.

The twenty-year international effort to keep Tehran from the bomb is close to failing.

The next Republican president will need a better strategy. What should it be?

A DETERRENCE AND DIPLOMACY STRATEGY FOR IRAN

The United States should pursue a dual-track deterrence and diplomacy strategy to solve the Iranian challenge. So long as Iran continues with its threatening behavior, Washington should lead an international coalition to increase the economic, political, and military pressure on Tehran. At the same time, the United States should hold out the option of diplomacy, if Tehran is willing to come to the table to discuss the cessation of its destabilizing and hostile activities.

This is similar to the "maximum pressure" strategy pursued by Donald Trump in the first term. It also mirrors the dual-track strategies pursued by Bush and in Obama's first term. This strategy would have likely succeeded had the United States remained steadfast in its prosecution. Instead, Obama's weak deal and Biden's desire to return to it were the aberrations that undercut a successful bipartisan US approach.

The first step of any good strategy is to clearly articulate the goal. The US goal should be for Iran to: (1) completely dismantle its uranium enrichment program and forever forswear the building of nuclear weapons, (2) halt its production of long-range missiles, (3) cease its support of terrorist and violent proxy groups, and (4) improve its human rights record. All of these are important, but goal number one is a vital US national interest. Iran must be prevented from becoming a nuclear weapons power.

A US Air Force B-2 bomber flanked by 4 US Marine Corps F-35 fighters. Photo credit: Reuters/Mike Segar

Some will argue that achieving these goals will be impossible and that Washington should settle for less. But the United States should not negotiate with itself. It should make these demands and if Iran disagrees, then they can work out their differences at the negotiating table.

Moreover, as Secretary Pompeo argued, the United States did not create the above list. Iran created the list through its bad behavior. If Tehran wants to get out from under US pressure, then it simply needs to behave like a normal country. As Henry Kissinger said years ago, Tehran needs to decide if it wants to be "a nation or a cause."

To achieve these goals, Washington should return to the pressure track. Most importantly, it should resume impose economic and financial sanctions with the goal of driving Iranian oil and gas exports to zero. These should include so-called "secondary sanctions" of any country or firm in the world that does business with Iran.

If any country or firm in Europe, Asia, or elsewhere purchases Iranian oil and gas, then it will be in the crosshairs of the US Treasury Department. This will give the rest of the world a choice. They can buy cheap Iranian oil and gas. Or they can have access to the US dollar, the US banking system, and the US market. But they cannot have both. For the vast majority

of economic players, this is no choice at all. They will be forced to sever economic ties with the rogues in Tehran in order to maintain their economic relationship with the United States. By pursuing a version of this strategy, the United States was able to drive Iran into a deep recession in the early days of the Obama administration and under Trump. But later Obama, and then Biden, let up the pressure. At the time of writing, Iran is exporting more oil than before Trump withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018.

Next, the deterrence campaign should increase the political pressure on Iran. As long as Iran is unwilling to talk seriously about dismantling its uranium enrichment program, it should be isolated diplomatically. US diplomats are too busy to waste their time in empty discussions with rogue regimes. Instead, US diplomats should spotlight Iran's role as the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism, complicity in Hamas' barbaric October 7 massacre, and daily human rights violations. Washington should take steps to support the Iranian people's aspirations for freedom, including by ensuring they have access to information and the internet despite the regime's efforts to oppress them.

Finally, and importantly, the deterrence element of the strategy will require a credible military option. The United States should make clear that if Iran dashes to the bomb, Washington will use military force to stop it. The Iranian nuclear program is a big problem, but it is located in only four nuclear facilities: Isfahan, Fordow, Natanz, and Arak. The United States has the ability to destroy these facilities using airpower, as several past defense secretaries have attested. The Iranian nuclear program could be a pile of rubble by tomorrow morning. Some of these facilities are deeply buried and hardened, but the United States has a weapon, the thirty-thousand-pound Massive Ordnance Penetrator (MOP), tailor-made to destroy such facilities. If Iran thinks that it can continue to inch its way toward the bomb, then it will do so. If, on the other hand, it thinks progress on its nuclear program will lead to a military conflict with the United States, it will stop short. Iran does not want its nuclear facilities to be bombed by the Pentagon. Tehran will be boxed in. This will provide time and space for the sanctions and political pressure to work.

A credible military option is necessary for successful diplomacy. As Reagan's secretary of state George Shultz said: "Negotiations are a euphemism for capitulation if the shadow of power is not cast across the bargaining table."

If, despite the resumption of a credible military option, Tehran dashes to a bomb anyway, then Washington should destroy Iran's nuclear program. It has the ability to do so, and such strikes would set Iran's program back for years if not forever. There are risks with such an action, such as Iranian military retaliation, but they pale in comparison to the risks of living with a nuclear-armed Iran, given thee Islamic Republic of Iran's profound hostility toward the United States. Moreover, as Trump showed through his airstrike on Al-Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani, Iran has few good options for military retaliation against the United States. Iran is afraid of a major war with the Pentagon and would opt for token retaliation.

The deterrence element of the strategy can succeed in two ways. The pressure may be so great that it collapses the Iranian regime, or it can set the table for diplomacy.

This brings us to the diplomacy leg of the strategy. Washington should use diplomacy even as it wages the pressure campaign to build the largest possible anti-Iran coalition. The pressure will be much more effective if European and Asian allies are supportive. Biden's failed strategy will make building a coalition easier. US allies can see that toothless diplomacy did not work, and we need a different approach. US diplomats should pressure the Iranian regime, engage with the Iranian people, and plan for a future regime transition to a better government in Tehran.

Finally, diplomats should prepare for a return to nuclear negotiations if and when the mullahs are serious about a deal. The terms of the desired deal are simple. If Iran really wants a peaceful nuclear program, then it can have it, and the United States will help. The international community can provide Iran with nuclear reactors and fuel-cycle services. But Iran must forever forswear the sensitive nuclear activities of enriching uranium or reprocessing plutonium. It must completely shut down its sensitive nuclear facilities.

The Obama administration bragged that its nuclear deal with Iran was extremely detailed and ran dozens of pages. They cited this as an indicator of thoroughness. In reality, it was a sign of its emptiness. It was so long because the Obama administration allowed Iran to keep such a large and sensitive nuclear program. It said that Iran can maintain several nuclear facilities, thousands of centrifuges, and stockpiles of enriched uranium. It then spelled out the details of the limits on these facilities, activities, and materials. The deal then detailed the complicated verifica- tion regime needed to monitor extensive Iranian nuclear activities.

A good deal in contrast requires only one side of a sheet of paper. It will state that, like other normal countries, Iran will never enrich uranium or reprocess plutonium. The Obama-Biden deal kicked the can down the road. The strategy articulated above will forever resolve the Iranian nuclear challenge. ✳

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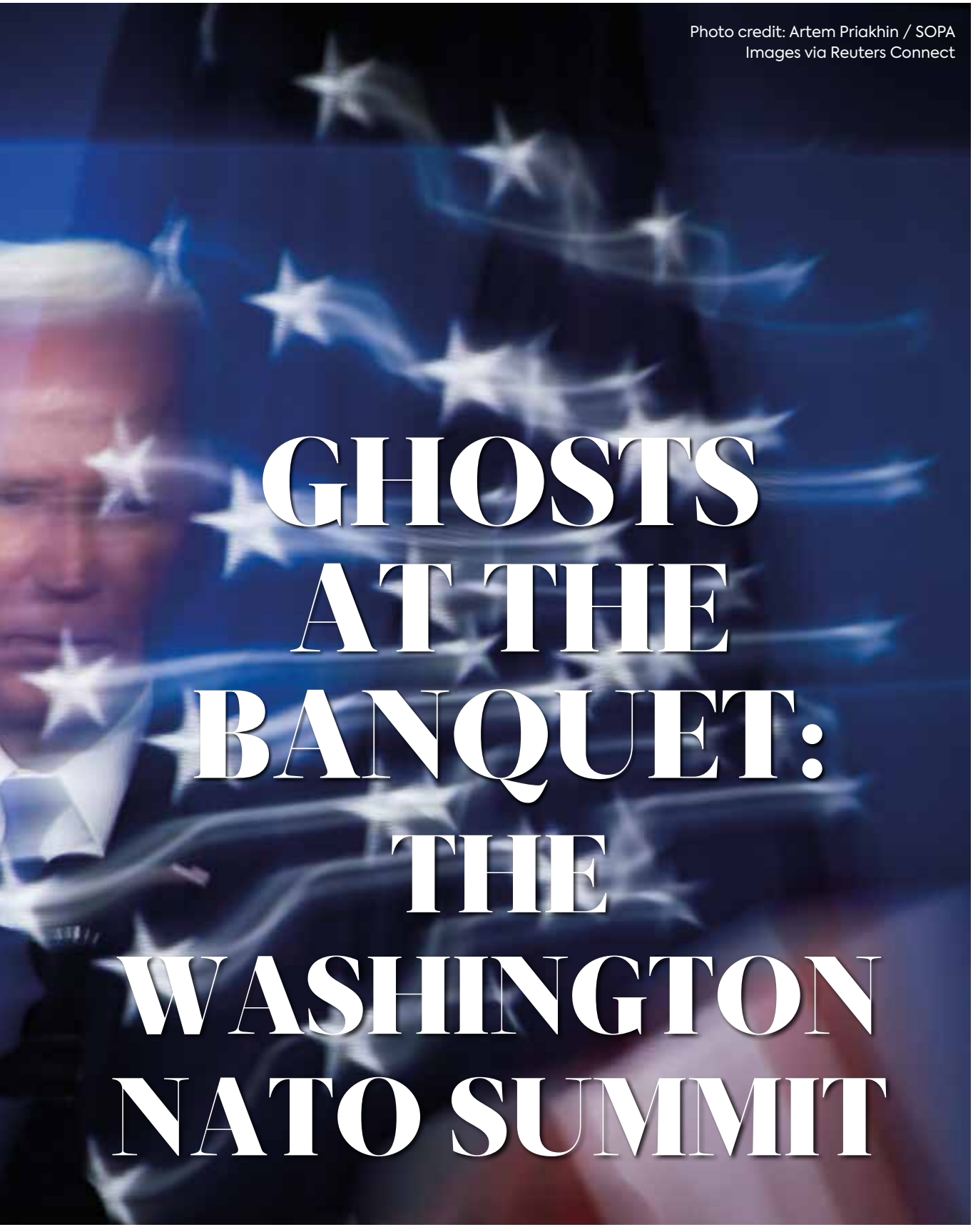

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GHOSTS AT THE BANQUET: THE WASHINGTON NATO SUMMIT

by Eric S. Edelman

The Vilnius NATO summit of 2023 was stalked by a spectre. How would the allies deal with Ukraine's NATO aspirations while its vaunted counter-offensive had gotten off to a sputtering start, amidst nuclear saber rattling by Vladimir Putin and his henchmen, eliciting in turn a focus on "escalation management" by Joe Biden's national security team. Vilnius ended, as all NATO summits are fated to end – as a success, despite unseemly recriminations between the Biden team and President Zelensky's advisors.

This year's Washington summit took place in the suffocating, sultry heat and humidity of a typical D.C. July. It gridlocked the city with intersection closures to facilitate motorcades of 32 NATO national leaders plus key Indo-Pacific allies. It was stalked by two quite different phantasms – the spectre of weak leadership among Western leaders, notably including host President Joe Biden, and what former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has characterized as the most dangerous and challenging international security environment since World War Two.

THE WAR IN UKRAINE

The questions about Ukraine which had roiled Vilnius were resolved without the contention and ill will of a year ago. The final Washington summit communique saluted the valor of the Ukrainian people for resisting Russian aggression, noted that Ukraine's path to membership and integration with NATO was irreversible and announced additional assistance from the US and other allies to build a "bridge" for the nation's eventual accession to the North Atlantic Treaty.

The new assistance includes air defense systems, a NATO training mission (to take place outside of Ukraine), a permanent civilian NATO Representative to Ukraine, a pledge of 40 billion Euros in long-term assistance to Ukraine by European members of NATO, and a joint NATO-Ukraine training center to apply the lessons learned from warfare in Ukraine and increase the Ukrainian Armed Forces interoperability with NATO. Biden also announced a "Ukraine Compact" which memorialized the bilateral security agreements, pledged at Vilnius, that have been reached by 22 of NATO's 32 members plus the EU.

These steps met many of President Zelensky's needs and much of his wish list. Left unanswered were questions about Ukraine's ability to use long-range guided strike weapons like the ATACM missiles, which the US has finally given Kyiv, against legitimate Russian military targets inside Russia proper (as opposed to occupied Ukraine and Crimea where they are permitted under the rules set by Washington).

This spring, the Biden administration relented and allowed Ukraine to target Russian logistics, command and control, and forces marshaling for attacks against Kharkiv city. Ukrainian strikes, in fact, largely blunted the Russian assault on the country's second largest city. Zelensky has been campaigning, so far unsuccessfully, for broader relief from the strictures against hitting Russian targets, in order to mitigate the ongoing damage from Russian SU-34 aircraft deploying glide bombs with devastating effects on Ukrainian forces and populated areas.

Launch of the Ukraine Compact at the NATO summit in Washington, July 11, 2024.
Photo credit: Reuters/Leah Millis

Other measures to remedy shortfalls in the alliance's ability to deter conflict and defend allies were noted in the communique. Two thirds of the member states have now met the commitment to spend at least two percent of their GDP (gross domestic product) on defense; defense spending across the European allies and Canada has grown by 18 percent in one year, the "biggest increase in decades." The communique reaffirmed the commitment for all members to meet the spending pledge and further admitted, "in many cases, expenditure beyond 2% of GDP will be needed in order to remedy existing shortfalls and meet the requirements across all domains arising from a more contested security order."

Throwing money at the problems of deterrence and defense in Europe are insufficient. The drawdown of stocks to defend Ukraine have dramatically demonstrated the parlous state of the American and European defense industrial bases. The Vilnius Summit had adopted a Defense Production Action Plan, but deficiencies in the production base have made it difficult to reach the targets set a year ago. Hence a new NATO Industrial Capacity Expansion Pledge was adopted "to accelerate defence industrial capacity and production across the Alliance, and underscores the strategic importance of transatlantic defence cooperation."

Especially striking about the summit was the degree to which it reflected the worsening international security environment and the globalization of politico-military challenges. The Vilnius communique had noted that China's "ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values." The Washington

communique went further to suggest that China "has become a decisive enabler of Russia's war against Ukraine ...and continues to pose systemic challenges to Euro-Atlantic security." Other elements of the "axis of upheaval" contributed to the deteriorating security of Europe: "the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran are fuelling Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine by providing direct military support to Russia, such as munitions and uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs), which seriously impacts Euro-Atlantic security and undermines the global non-proliferation regime."

The summit included sessions with NATO partner countries in the Indo-Pacific region including Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. On its margins, a number of bilateral and multilateral steps were announced. The US will deploy SM-6 missiles (and prospectively hypersonic missiles) on German territory, with the latter's agreement, providing long-range capability in Europe previously disallowed under the INF Treaty. The US, Canada, and Finland announced a new Polar initiative to expand production of ice-breakers and other capabilities to deal with competition in the Arctic. The US and South Korea announced new guidelines for nuclear deterrence and nuclear operations on the Korean peninsula in response to the DPRK's growing nuclear arsenal and aggressive activities.

The summit communique's language on nuclear weapons and deterrence was largely boilerplate. Left unsaid were any steps to reinforce NATO's nuclear mission in the light of ongoing Russian nuclear threats and exercises. Nonetheless, this year's meeting was a far cry from your grandfather's NATO Summit.

WESTERN LEADERSHIP

Beyond the battlefield travails of Ukraine and the tightening web of coordinated activities by the authoritarian states of Eurasia, the summit was haunted by concerns about weak Western leadership.

As the Financial Times noted, "hung parliaments, caretaker governments, and rogue mischief makers" cast a troublesome pall on the deliberations. The UK was under new management by a Labour government which won a landslide majority in Parliament, albeit with a lower vote share than it had received in a losing effort in the previous UK election. French President Macron, neutered by his own-goal snap election that has produced what may turn out to be an ungovernable situation in France, was uncharacteristically quiet during the Washington festivities. Chancellor Scholz, deeply unpopular, can scarcely provide the kind of leadership (for better or worse) that his predecessor provided.

But the overwhelming issue overshadowing all else was the future of American leadership. Former President Donald Trump's persistent lead in the polls over the past six months had already aroused alarm in Europe about his possible return to office and what it might portend for the transatlantic alliance. His former national security advisor John Bolton has for months asserted that Trump, if returned to office, would try to withdraw the US from the alliance which it has led since 1948.

Even if President Trump were unable to withdraw from NATO (either because of existing legislation or political opposition) there is much that he could do to disrupt and damage the alliance. While the summit was underway, Trump advisors informed the media, for instance, that in a second Trump term, some of the intelligence-sharing between Washington and its allies would be limited or terminated. Moreover Trump, after the summit, met with one of the chief rogue elements in the alliance, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, fresh off his visits to Moscow and Beijing, after which both Trump and Orban expressed the view that a victorious Trump would reach a peace agreement with Putin on Ukraine (largely by ceding those areas of Ukraine currently occupied by Russian forces).

The concerns over a potential second Trump term were only magnified by the sad spectacle of President Biden's political meltdown in the wake of his June 27th disastrous debate performance against Trump. NATO leaders were careful to note in public that Biden appeared sharp and engaged in their various interactions during the summit. But his introduction of Zelensky as "President Putin" and reference to Kamala Harris as "Vice President Trump"

President Biden and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg during NATO's summit in Washington, July 10, 2024. Photo credit: Reuters/Ken Cedeno

while innocent enough in normal circumstances, only served to reinforce the narrative of his increasing senescence and inability to physically serve another term. The domestic American political drama of whether or not Biden would withdraw or march forward to what seems like an inexorable defeat in November is sure to haunt the alliance for the next few weeks and months.

On a more positive note, the Washington meeting marked the first time that Sweden participated as a member of the alliance. But that also highlighted the role that Hungary and Turkey had played in delaying the accession of both Finland and Sweden. More generally, the role of holdouts like Turkey or Hungary underscores the difficulties of governance of an alliance of 32 members, with rules that privilege consensus initially intended for a more compact, uniform alliance of 12, as I and several colleagues have described in detail elsewhere.

Orban was essentially quiet at the summit and did not obstruct the consensus on aid to Ukraine. But his well-known qualms, his antics before and after the summit in Beijing, Moscow and Mar a Lago make clear that he and others can make life difficult for the alliance.

The other major source of mischief in the alliance, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, will host the 2026 NATO Summit in Turkey. After November's election, it will remain to be seen who will be the biggest troublemaker at that summit. ✳

ERIC S. EDELMAN

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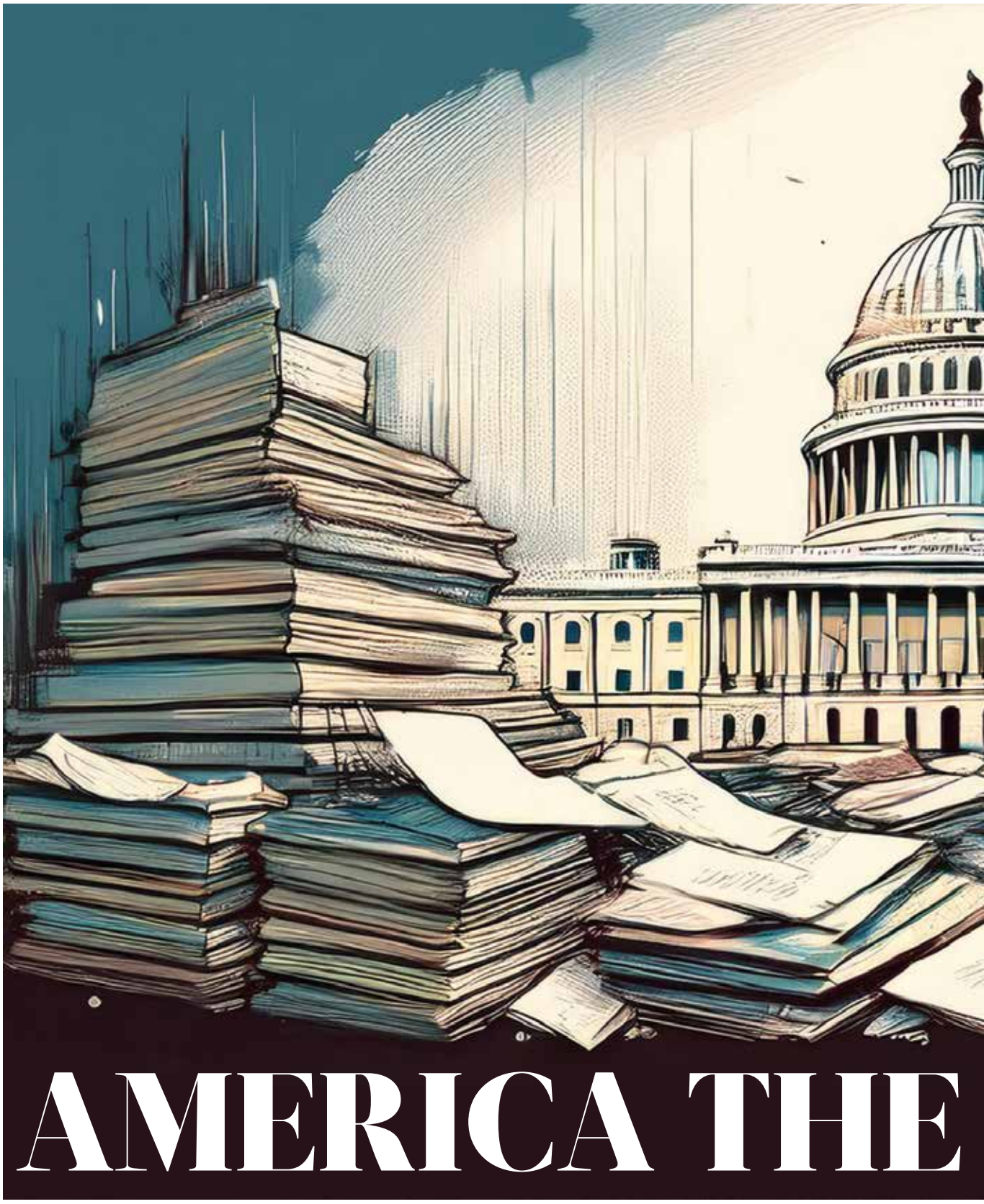

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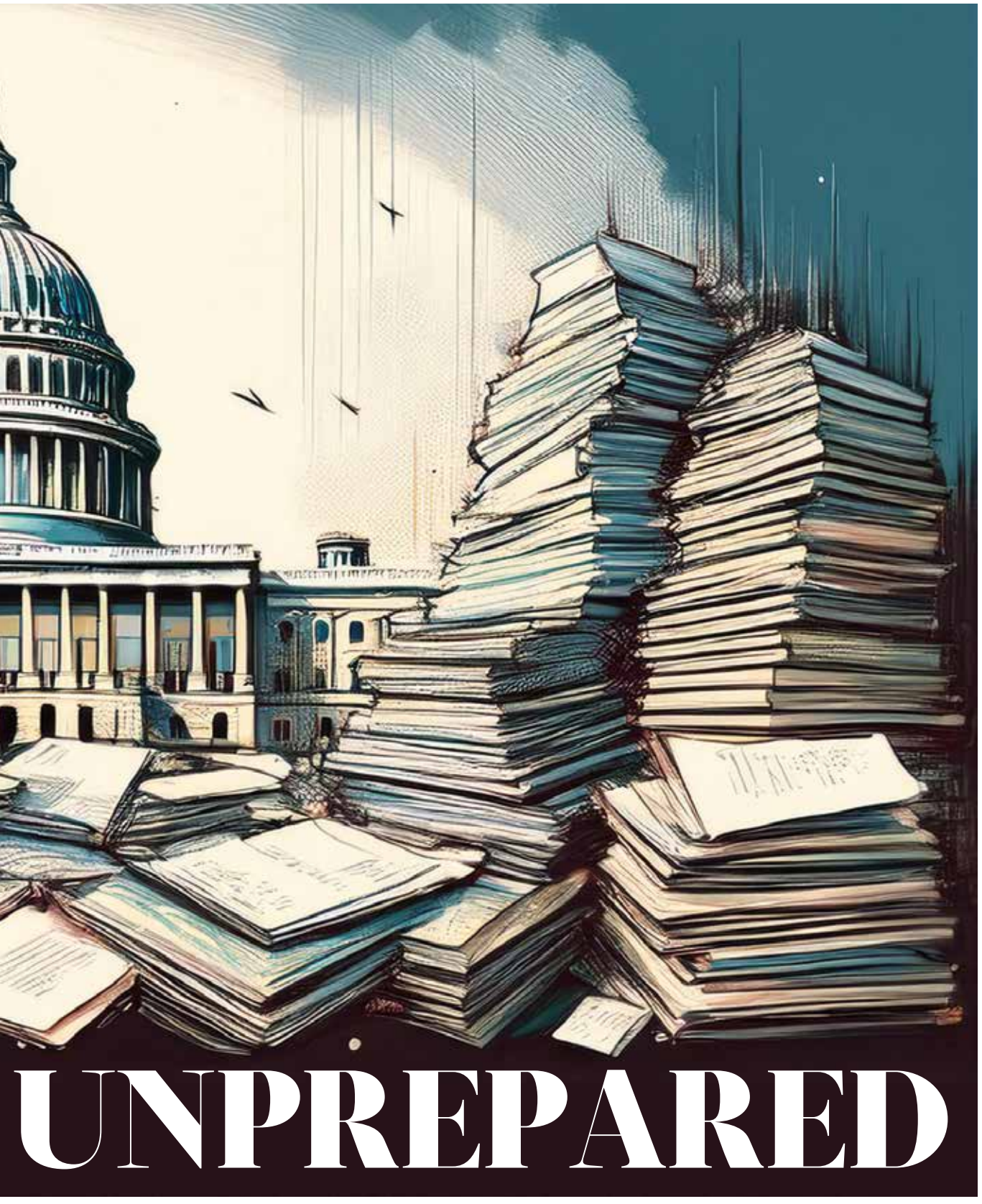
UNPREPARED

by Michael Mandelbaum

The principal product of Washington D.C. is words. They come in three different kinds of packages: memoranda, by which government departments and organizations communicate internally; op-ed articles, by which these various groups communicate with each other and the public; and reports, usually compiled under the auspices of people with expertise in the subject being addressed.

All three types are highly perishable. Almost none reaches a broad audience or is read more than a few days after it appears. Even reports, longer and more detailed than memoranda or op-ed essays, generally suffer this fate, likely including the July report of the Commission on the National Defense Strategy, a body authorized by Congress with former Congresswoman Jane Harman as chair and former ambassador and Defense Department under secretary Eric Edelman as vice chair.

That, however, would be unfortunate and even, conceivably, ultimately tragic. For this report has a stark and urgent message:

"The threats the United States faces are the most serious and most challenging the nation has encountered since 1945 and include the potential for near-term major war. The United States last fought a global conflict during World War II, which ended nearly 80 years ago. The nation was last prepared for such a fight during the Cold War, which ended 35 years ago. It is not prepared today."

In response to the Missouri Compromise of 1819, President Thomas Jefferson said that the question it addressed, the extent of slavery in the United States, was "like a fire-bell in the night" – a warning of the terrible potential consequences that that question would have for the country. The report of the Harman-Edelman Commission has a similar purpose. It warns that brush fires are burning around the world, that a large conflagration may be imminent, and that the global fire brigade – whose mainstay is American military power – is under-equipped and generally ill-prepared for such an event.

Two features of today's world make this a particularly perilous time for the United States, its allies, and its friends. One is the existence of serious political and military challenges to American interests and values in three crucial regions of the planet. In East Asia, China is building a large military, seeking to dominate large swathes of the western Pacific that it claims, contrary to international law, as part of its territorial waters, and increasing its harassment of and threats to the independent, democratic island of Taiwan. The Chinese dictator Xi Jinping has told his armed forces to be prepared to conquer Taiwan by 2027.

In Europe, Russia has been waging a bloody, destructive war of aggression against Ukraine since February 2022. While incurring large losses of soldiers and equipment, the Russian

dictator, Vladimir Putin, has put Russia on a war footing and made it clear that his ambitions for territorial conquest are not limited to Ukraine. The next victims he presumably has in mind include the three Baltic countries — Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania — that the United States is pledged to defend by virtue of its membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

In the Middle East, the fundamentalist Islamic Republic of Iran is sponsoring client groups that have gained footholds and exercise considerable power in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen. Iran is arming and supporting the terrorists making war on Israel and aspires to evict American forces from the region. Moreover, China, Russia, and Iran are increasingly cooperating with one another, magnifying the threat that each poses, and that they pose collectively, to the United States and the free world.

The second source of danger is the rapid, ongoing change in militarily relevant technology, specifically the digital revolution and the remarkable recent progress in artificial intelligence. A country that lags behind in making use of these technologies in battle will lose to a country on the cutting edge. Because the pace of technological transformation is so rapid, even in areas where the United States has a lead over other countries – and the report suggests that in some of them China may already have overtaken America – that advantage is precarious. To make matters even more dangerous, modern technology in the hands of an enemy can have a devastating impact on the American homeland. According to the Commission, a cyberattack on critical infrastructure could affect

"the availability of power, water, wastewater, and the systems that underpin economic, transportation, and financial systems. Access to critical minerals and goods needed to run the U.S. economy and build weapon systems would be completely cut off. Major war would affect the life of every American in ways we can only begin to imagine."

American foreign policy must have as its overriding purpose deterring the assaults that these three aggressive powers are capable of launching. Successful deterrence involves having the credible capacity to defeat such assaults. The main theme of the Commission's report is that such a capacity is now lacking.

To acquire it will require changes in the American defense establishment, force posture, and politics, changes that are taking place too slowly or not at all. The pace of advance in military technology means that, to secure American interests, the Department of Defense will have to become more flexible, more agile, and more adept at rapid innovation, for this purpose working more closely with the country's private sector, which is where most relevant innovation now occurs.

In addition, for the world of today and tomorrow the United States needs more weaponry of all kinds, from artillery shells to naval vessels. The country's current defense-industrial base cannot supply it because, in the three decades since the end of the Cold War, it has shrunk dramatically. American security will therefore require more firms devoted to defense and more and bigger defense plants. All this, of course, costs money; and as large as the current defense budget is – 823 billion dollars – it is insufficient.

Expanding the national commitment to defense, in turn, requires public advocacy of such a course by the nation's leaders and a commitment to it on the part of the American public. Neither is currently in evidence. In this election year, the international challenges to the United States, the needs of its armed forces, and the approach of either major party presidential candidate to the duties of commander-in-chief, have thus far gone virtually unmentioned. To the threats that the Commission describes, the country is not paying attention.

This inattention has grim precedents in American history. The United States was not prepared for the Civil War or either of the two World Wars. The Korean War, which began in

1950 and which the country promptly entered, also came as a surprise to the public at large. In each case, the country managed, over time, to muster the military force necessary for success on the battlefield, but only after having paid a price in territory lost and casualties suffered. In the next war, the cost of unpreparedness could be painfully, even tragically high.

One particular kind of Washington report sometimes does, contrary to the general pattern, receive sustained attention: a report investigating a major failure, such as the one issued by the commission that looked into the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. If the recommendations of the Commission on the National Defense Strategy are not heeded, and disaster strikes as a result, there will surely be a panel charged with discovering the reasons for what happened, and its findings can just as surely be known in advance. They were expressed decades ago by General Douglas MacArthur: "The history of failure in war," he said the year before the United States formally entered World War II,

"can almost always be summed up in two words: Too late. Too late in comprehending the deadly purpose of a potential enemy. Too late in realizing the mortal danger. Too late in preparedness. Too late in uniting all possible forces for resistance."

The message of the Harman-Edelman Commission to the American public is: it's later than you think. ✳

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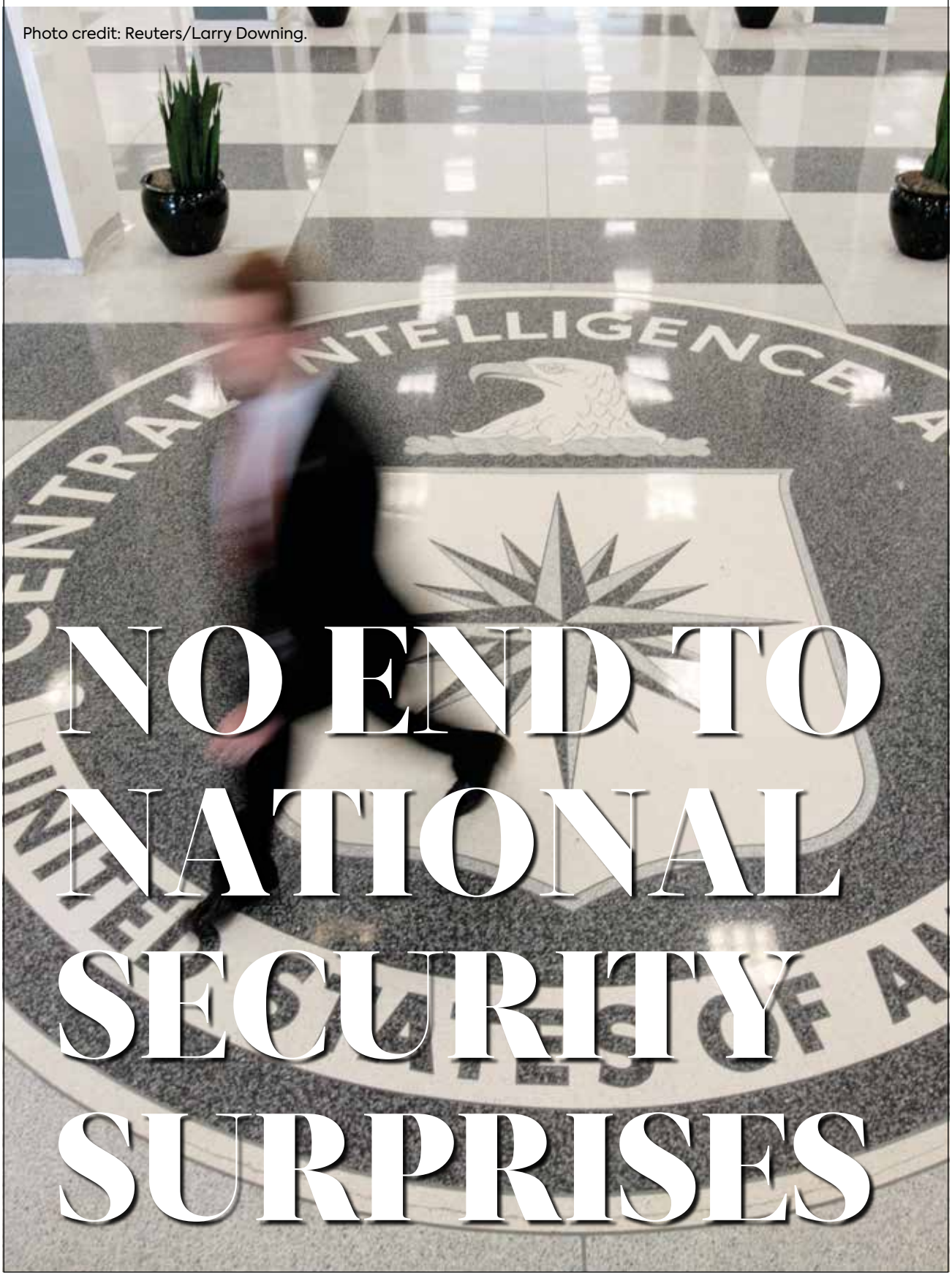

Photo credit: Reuters/Larry Downing.

NO END TO NATIONAL SECURITY SURPRISES

by Casimir Yost

The surprise was total and horrific—Israeli men, women and children brutally killed or taken hostage by Hamas on October 7, 2023. Israel's vaunted intelligence services failed to provide adequate warning, its military—the Israeli Defense Forces—failed to provide adequate security, and Israeli political leadership remained cocooned in their comfortable assumptions about risks to Israeli security posed by Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

But Israelis are hardly unique in succumbing to surprise. Every U.S. president from Franklin Roosevelt at Pearl Harbor to Donald Trump with the COVID pandemic, to Joe Biden with the fall of Kabul, has confronted surprising events, with strategic implications.

Of course, not all surprises are bad. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was largely unanticipated and a good news event with positive implications for Germany, Europe and the world.

The futurist, Peter Schwartz, writing with Doug Randall, observed about strategic surprises that they are "events that if they were to occur, would make a big difference to the future, force decision makers to challenge their own assumptions about how the world works, and require hard choices today." George W. Bush entered office convinced that he would focus on great power competition only to discover that the balance of his presidency, after 9/11, was consumed by wars in the Middle East, largely against non-state actors.

The corollary to Schwartz's definition of surprise is that too frequently the response to surprise can itself have a broader impact than the original event. Recall that nineteen hijackers on 9/11 precipitated the complete and total redirection of U.S. national security policy for at least a decade. Israel's war with Hamas has now spread across the region, in part because Israel decided it must demonstrate resolute deterrence after having failed to do so before October 7. Threats to Israel from Iran, Yemen, Syria and Lebanon have intensified. And U.S. leaders are once more consumed by events in the Middle East—hardly what President Joseph Biden intended when he took the oath of office in January 2021.

Surprise, of course, can come in many forms. Americans are most familiar with the tactical surprise of a military nature such as the October 7 attack. It is to avoid tactical surprises that much government effort and expense is devoted. But systemic shocks such as the fall of an important leader–or a cataclysmic natural disaster–can also transform national agendas. The effects of the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979, for example, continue to reverberate not only in the Middle East but also in a variety of other regions of the world. Finally, what have been termed tectonic shifts can also be strategically significant and surprising in their broader consequences. The contemporary rise of China is a case in point.

Sometimes the intelligence community (IC) provides timely and actionable warning as it did prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. But sometimes a failure to issue a warning has dire consequences and exposes faulty assumptions. The Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community released to the public February 6, 2023, did not mention Hamas. This omission was compounded when National Security Advisor, Jake Sullivan, in remarks likely

Aftermath of the deadly October 7 attack by Hamas, in Kibbutz Beeri, in southern Israel.
Photo credit: Reuters/Alexander Ermochenko

vetted by the IC and penned days before October 7, 2023, stated in Foreign Affairs magazine of the Middle East that, "the region is quieter than it has been in decades."

What explains these failures to anticipate? One possibility was that America's IC was overly reliant on Israel's well-regarded intelligence services to sound alarms about Palestinian unrest. U.S. intelligence services were necessarily focussed on Russia-Ukraine, China, and the cyber and technology threats of the future. Inevitably, tough choices have to be made about the deployment of finite surveillance capabilities. Invariably, ramping up surveillance in one region means accepting higher risk in others. Global coverage of possible threats to U.S. interests cannot be uniform.

It is also possible that the IC warned–but policymakers did not listen and act. In 2014 the IC was accused of being slow to warn about the rise of ISIS and the Obama Administration was criticized for being slow to react to warnings when they came. Then director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, admitted in an interview with Washington Post columnist David Ignatius on September 18, 2014, "what we didn't do was predict the will (of ISIS) to fight." Similarly, few predicted Hamas' "will to fight" on October 7, 2023.

More surprises are coming. On February 5, 2024 the IC issued the third annual threat assessment of the Biden era. It makes for ominous reading, cataloging threats from a variety of states: Russia, China, Iran, North Korea; non-state actors: global terrorism, transnational organized crime; and transnational issues: from disruptive technology to the environment to health security. What are we missing? What might trigger a broader disruption?

Americans can be slow to address emerging threats, even when they are clearly identified in a timely fashion. The IC and other analytic entities in and out of government can warn but will policy makers listen and act?

It is hardly surprising that harried policy makers, preoccupied by conflicts in the Middle East and Europe, would not be eager to carve out time each week to think rigorously about future disruptive events. In fact, every administration since World War II has been captives of their inboxes. The Eisenhower Administration, arguably, was the last to build strategic planning into its national security decision making.

In fairness, the pace of change is far more rapid than in the Eisenhower era, thanks in part to social media which exerts pressure on governments to make rapid decisions. Innovations, such as AI, are outpacing human, political control. We are in uncharted waters–requiring that long-held assumptions be identified and challenged. Not the least of these relates to America's role in the world. Bill Burns, the director of the CIA, wrote, when he was between government assignments, "that we have drifted into one of those rare periods of transition, with U.S. dominance in the rearview mirror and a more anarchic order looming dimly beyond."

So called "middle powers"—Turkey, Israel, Iran, India— matter more to the stability of their regions and have the capacity to pull their larger partners into conflicts. Big powers like China and Russia are implementing new and worrisome strategies to put American interests at risk. FBI director Christopher Wray has warned repeatedly that "Chinese government-linked hackers have burrowed into U.S. critical infrastructure and are waiting for the right moment to deal a devastating blow." The non-state sector, from terrorists to tech moguls, is a disruptor of the status quo.

America find itself in a world of fragmenting authority while nations remain linked as never before by economic ties, movement of peoples, and accelerating and fast dispersing technological capabilities. The Intelligence Community is largely staffed to focus on the urgent and the soon, not the possible and the future. Most analytic attention is devoted to responding to immediate requests from harried policymakers. Anticipating strategic surprise requires that the government anticipate uncomfortable contingencies and set in place the processes and resources to meet them.

What is to be done? Policymakers must demand strategic, over-the-horizon analysis of emerging threats and opportunities, which invariably will be speculative and will posit multiple possible "futures." They may crave certainty–"actionable intelligence,"–but must also seek analysis which is less about certainty and more about possibility.

On the supply side, the CIA and its sister agencies must do a better job of rewiring a workforce accustomed to believing that all wisdom resides on their classified systems and that all analysis must be grounded in hard evidence. Much of what the analyst of the future will need to know will come from interacting directly with experts and rapidly evolving subject matter disciplines. But, the IC, burned by leaks and fearful of foreign espionage, has erected significant legal, budgetary and bureaucratic encumbrances to outreach beyond the gates of intelligence facilities and has allowed contracts, which facilitated such outreach in the past, to lapse. The National Intelligence Council (where I once worked) is less open to outside input than even a few years ago.

Singapore could provide us with some useful pointers. Long-range thinking is built into government decision making in that small island nation. Successive prime minsters, dating to the legendary Lee Kuan Yew, have demanded it. If Singapore can think ahead, then why not the United States? If President Biden demanded it, the IC would seek to meet the demand—provided the president and his advisors took the time to listen. ✳

CASIMIR YOST

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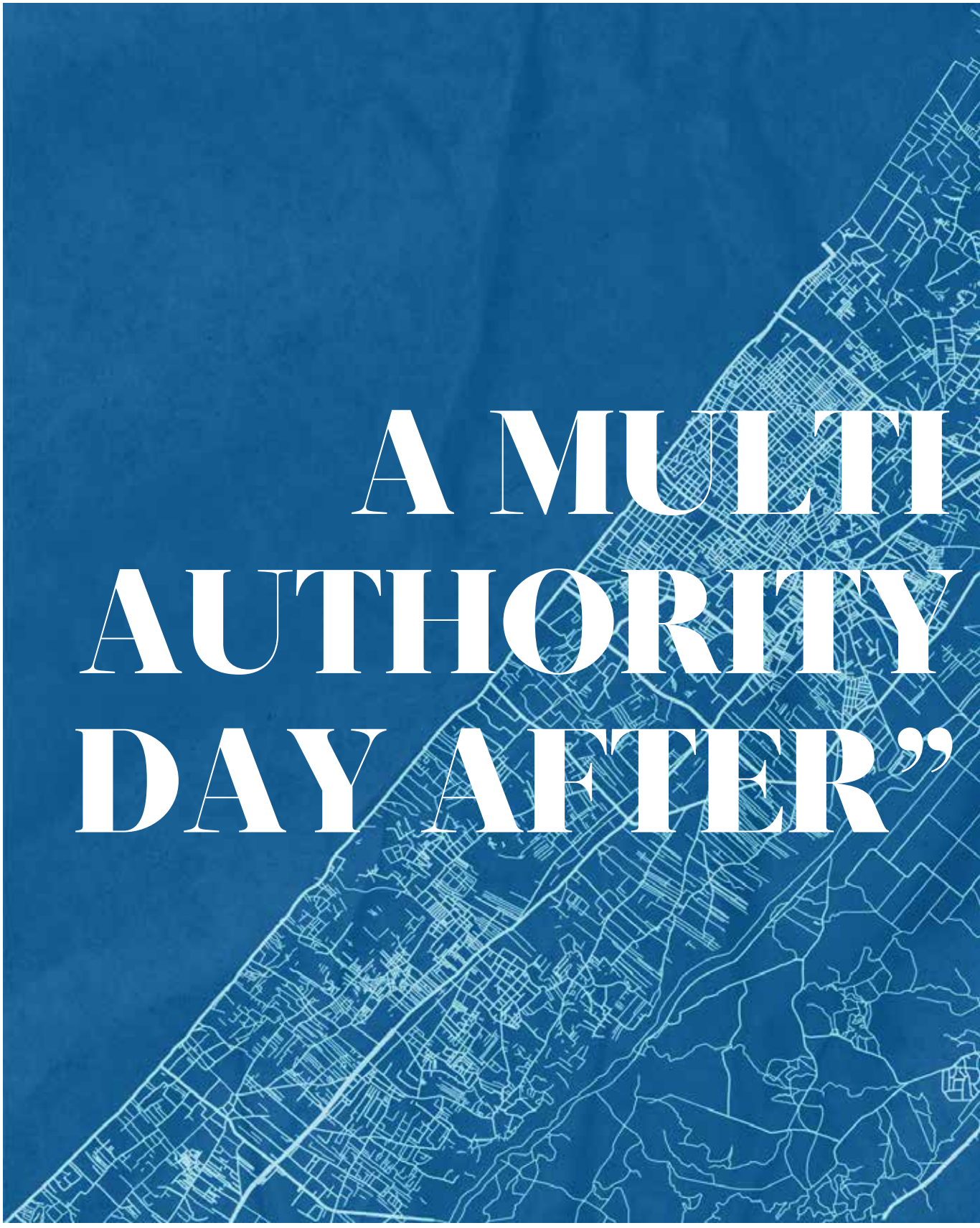


A MULTI AUTHORITY DAY AFTER"

NATIONAL FOR "THE IN GAZA

Photo credit: Shutterstock.

by James Jeffrey

Hamas's terrorist attack of October 7 and the Israeli, American, and Iranian/Iranian proxy responses have already fundamentally changed the Middle East. The priority now rightly is on ending the fighting, yet history shows that what comes after a war is as important as combat results in securing a lasting peace.

To ensure that an attack like October 7 cannot happen again, and that the people of Israel and Gaza can live in dignity and peace, the United States and Israel should work with regional and non-regional states to implement a Multinational Authority to temporarily administer Gaza. That Authority would establish security, remove Hamas's control of civil governance, start Gaza's physical and social reconstruction, and provide for a better life for the people of Gaza to live alongside the State of Israel. A team of foreign policy and military experts including Keith Dayton, Eran Lerman, Robert Silverman, Tom Warrick and this writer have presented such a comprehensive plan May 7 in a joint Atlantic Council/Wilson Center public event.

President Biden has argued that October 7 marks an "inflection point" in the region. There have been two others in the last fifty years: the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the 1991 Kuwait War. Both events repulsed attacks, enhanced American engagement, and generated a period of stability and diplomatic progress. With Hamas remnants likely to be defeated, and regional escalation – at this point – almost certainly deterred, the key decision for a third such period is "the day after" in Gaza.

So far, ideas for stabilization and security are all over the map, with no concrete plan fully deployed, let alone generally accepted. The initial Israeli default option, a mix of continued Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) engagement and local Palestinian leadership, has found little support outside Israel. Biden administration ideas, while still opaque, point towards an interim international presence that replaces the IDF, and eventually passes authority to the Palestinian Authority (PA). That step would depend on the PA being capable and Israel assenting. The US administration's approach

US Secretary of State Blinken visits the Kerem Shalom border crossing to Gaza with Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, May 1, 2024. Photo credit: Reuters/Evelyn Hockstein/Pool.

appears to be on the right track, but the devil is in the details.

To flesh out the administration's ideas, the plan proposes the following:

The US promote a Multinational Authority to administer Gaza on an interim basis after Israeli forces leave. The Multinational Authority would report to an International Contact Group, with both these entities created by an international charter drafted by the United States in consultation with Israel and Egypt, and other key Arab and G-7 governments, to give international legitimacy. The charter of the Multinational Authority would include a consultation mechanism with the PA. Legal authority for assuming governance could be based on one of several alternatives: (i) the PA ceding temporary responsibility; (ii) a well-drafted UN Security Council resolution under Chapter VII that gives a one-time-only authorization, not a renewable mandate nor any UN direct oversight; or (iii) Israel taking responsibility for Gaza as an Occupying Power under international law and then transferring its authority to the Multinational Authority pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding.

The plan then lays out the road map for operating the Multinational Authority, led by a High Representative. It would be funded by Contact Group governments, have the ability to receive funds from other governments, and field its own teams for finance, security,

transportation, ministry liaisons, opinion polling, and public affairs, with logistical support from Israel and Egypt and other nations.

Security is a pressing responsibility of post-conflict governance. The United States and other Contact Group governments would organize a multinational Policing Force to carry out "presence patrols" until a post-Hamas civil police and gendarmerie can be vetted and trained to take on policing responsibilities. The Policing Force would include a small number of American military personnel for command, logistics, intelligence, staff, and back-office functions. Much experience shows that only if the United States commits personnel will other countries contribute.

The plan assesses that the Palestinian Security Forces deployed in the West Bank are not prepared to take on the Gaza mission at present.

An important lesson from both Bosnia and Iraq is the need for the interim governing body to have formal authority (as enshrined in the Dayton Accords which ended the Bosnian conflict) to leverage provision of reconstruction and other services. This becomes an urgent requirement when population elements or local authorities block security, de-radicalization or long-term stabilization activities (an authority the international community tragically lacked previously in Gaza).

In drafting this plan the authors have drawn on our collective stabilization experience in the Balkans and the Middle East, as well as many historical examples. Successful examples include the aforementioned Dayton Accords for Bosnia, the Kosovo NATO and EU engagement, the Defeat-ISIS international coalition, the Sinai-based Multinational Observer Force, and the US-led Multilateral Force in Iraq 2007-2011.

What distinguishes these successful examples are strong American involvement in organization, leadership, and at least some troop presence, serious combat capability, and unity of command of all elements of international engagement, from security to humanitarian aid to governance and reconstruction.

The authors have discussed the plan with Israeli and American officials, and provided summaries to selected Arab states' representatives. As a plan for an interim stabilization presence in Gaza, it does not address the critically important question of how the international community arrives at a stable ceasefire and elimination of Hamas' military dominance of Gaza, which are the preconditions for any "day after" approach to Gaza.Nor does the plan propose a "day after the day after" roadmap for permanent Palestinian control of Gaza or resolution of the underlying Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

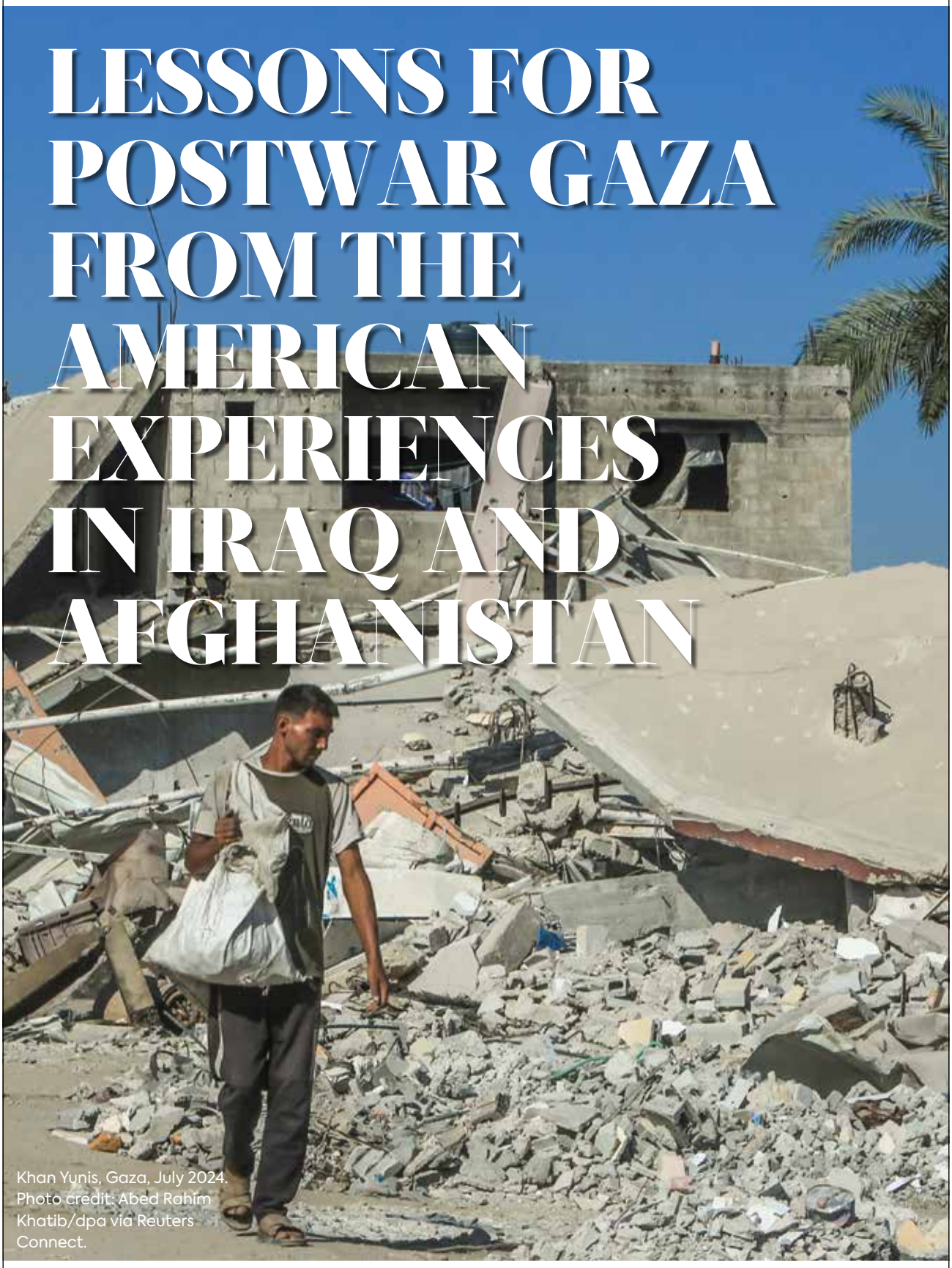
Instead, this plan supplies a crucial toolkit for responding to the current situation, with detailed action agendas for each of these priority areas. It is organized on a modular basis; those governments involved in Gaza planning have the option to pick and choose elements. But the package as a whole represents the authors' view of what is necessary to secure interim peace and stability in Gaza after a permanent ceasefire.

The world has seen many failed international efforts despite their well-thought out technical programs. What is crucial is the right overarching security, governance, and stabilization architecture. We believe this plan provides one such architecture. ✳

JAMES JEFFREY

James Jeffrey was deputy national security advisor of the United States from 2007-2008. He also served as US ambassador to Iraq, Turkey and Albania, as Special Presidential Envoy to the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS, and as a US infantry officer in Vietnam. He is currently the chair of the Middle East Program at the Wilson Center.

LESSONS FOR POSTWAR GAZA FROM THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCES IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN



Khan Yunis, Gaza, July 2024. Photo credit: Abed Rahim Khatib/dpa via Reuters Connect.

by Ronald E. Neumann

"Don't repeat our mistakes—we can do it ourselves." This line occurred to me as I listened to discussions of "the day after" in Gaza. Plans and ideas need to address the detailed problems of implementation.

I do not pose as an expert on Israel or Palestinian affairs. Rather I draw from the painful lived experiences of serving in Iraq (2004-2005) and Afghanistan (2005-2007) and subsequent years working in and on Afghanistan and reflecting on other experiences from Vietnam to the Philippines.

My lessons are as follows:

✷ Reform of a corrupt, inefficient government through outside advisors is a mirage. We cannot substitute for effective local leaders or create them if they do not exist.

✷ Security must precede economic development. Trying to make major advances in both at the same time will not build local support.

✷ International Arab forces may be an important element of security, but they neither can nor will work on their own.

✷ A US role will be essential to the operation of the security force.

Meeting these challenges is possible but will require careful examination and understanding that there will be a high chance of failure. Above all, it will be important not to settle on a concept or idea without having carefully thought through how it is to be implemented.

WHO GOVERNS?

If Israel is not to administer Gaza then another entity must do so. Some Israelis have considered growing a government out of the Gaza clans. The Biden Administration has called for a role for the Palestinian Authority (PA). The experience of Iraq and Afghanistan raises serious questions about both ideas.

The idea of using the clans in Gaza to govern requires that groups who have been largely powerless suddenly assume power and cooperate to utilize it responsibly and without the benefit of a demonstrated popular mandate. This is unrealistic. Real power and real money are at issue. The clans may have a political base, although how strong after years of Hamas suppression is speculative. What they do not have is power of their own. Their ability to govern will be challenged by Hamas and other radical groups.

Without forces of their own, they will be dependent on others. If they turn to Israel, they become puppets of a detested outsider. If they must turn to Arab forces or other outsiders, then they will find that they cannot depend on orders being followed because other nations will not simply abandon their authority over their own forces.

American soldiers and journalists near the temporary pier to deliver aid, off the Gaza Strip, June 25, 2024.
Photo credit: Reuters/Amir Cohen

In both Iraq and Afghanistan, where there was much stronger leadership from the US than a clan government is likely to have, the forces of Canada, UK, Germany, Spain, Italy and others each responded to separate national directions and separate "red cards"—i.e., things they would not do without specific permission from their own governments. Such approval was rarely given and never quickly.

The history of Arab forces is more limited but not more inspiring. UAE special forces in Afghanistan were comparatively effective but most other Arab force presences were largely symbolic, unwilling to engage quickly or effectively. In Yemen, Saudi and UAE forces obeyed different political directives from home and developed separate political alliances.

Aside from security, considered more below, an authority in Gaza will be challenged to build a coherent and functioning authority out of today's ruins while excluding Hamas from visible power. Lacking established power and probably unity, this authority is unlikely to be the result of the Gaza clans taking over. In Iraq we saw and are still seeing how the shifting power dynamics that result from depending on local political groupings to govern actually undermined coherent governance. In Afghanistan, the Parliament quickly became an auction house for moving foreign assistance and projects to MPs' political supporters. Moving resources to supporters is in many respects a natural function of politics but when it is a raw contest for power unrestrained by established

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah, February 2024. Photo credit: Mark Schiefelbein/Pool via Reuters

institutions and respected political norms it is unlikely to lead to coherent governance.

This brings one to the PA, which seems to figure prominently in what is known of the American proposals for administration. That the PA is both inefficient and corrupt is well known. The US answer is some form of political rebuilding of the PA. Perhaps that might be possible—but not in the time frame being discussed. Here the examples of Iraq and Afghanistan are particularly instructive but need to be examined in some depth.The underlying problems lay in leadership, not because leaders did not understand the value of better or even more honest government but because their other interests, including survival, took priority. If reducing support is likely to lead to loss of power, few leaders will willing commit political suicide. Large networks of support have been built on the ability to siphon off resources. This is unlikely to be voluntarily undermined in the interest of better government.

Pressure, through "conditionality," was invoked as a solution by international donors for twenty years. It failed in both Afghanistan and Iraq. This is a complex subject but one of the main reasons is that the rewards of corruption go to the individual and pressure is applied to the state. If a person or party can put away millions of dollars in foreign lands the fact that aid may be cut off to the state is rarely a restraint on the behavior.

Selective and targeted pressure is possible but is difficult to manage without detailed knowledge and skill. I once cut off $10 million for diesel power in Kabul to force a policy change in

the Ministry of Power. When nothing happened as a result it took time to understand that the minister thought my demands were actually a cover for forcing his removal. Thus, from his point of view, there was no reason to concede on the policy issue. Only when I was fortunate enough to find a local contact with the technical knowledge to understand what I sought, and the confidence of the minister to be believed, were we able to get a resolution. This is simply a small example of how difficult it is to apply even very targeted pressure.

Does this mean that reform is impossible? No, but it does underline the importance of local leadership committed to better governance for their own reasons. In the Philippines, President Ramon Magsaysay became famous for the kinds of governmental reforms and personnel appointments so critical to reform and to suppression of an insurgency. But in the case of Vietnam, when his friend and sometimes mentor, Edward Lansdale tried to persuade Vietnam President Ngo Dinh Diem to follow similar policies, the effort was largely unsuccessful. Ghana and Rwanda also show that reform and improvement in governance is possible but, as in the Philippines, the essential element is the determination of the national leader.

Even without a single, dynamic change in leaders, changes in political culture have happened. Taiwan and Korea have each moved from kleptocratic authoritarian governments to functioning and prosperous democracies. But these changes took decades. Without either long term changes in culture or dramatic changes in leadership, similar success stories are hard to find.

The US has been unwilling to confront the requirement of having either strong local leaders who want reform or very long term institutional and social change. Our national preference has been to increase money and advice in search of rapid change. This has been the story not only of Afghanistan and Iraq but also of Vietnam. The approach has failed.

That said, the circumstances could be different in Gaza. The PA has had effective administrators so there is capability, but such effective individuals were ultimately crippled by the senior political leadership. Without backing for reform from the most senior leaders, neither dedicated local bureaucrats nor outside advisors brought reform in Afghanistan or Iraq. How that would be different in Gaza will require considerable thought beyond short term advice and financing.

SECURITY CHALLENGES

Security trumps economic development in building political support. We had 20 years of trying to bring development without putting in place security in Afghanistan, on the theory that development would generate popular support. That effort failed. I do not mean that development can or should be ignored. But if local leaders cannot be reasonably assured of physical survival, they will not support the government.

This leads to some difficult issues. Hamas is likely to survive as at least a low-level movement with violent potential. The Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ) is still active, and a mapping of militant groups in Gaza lists several others and new ones may arise. A force that can successfully confront them will need to meet several requirements.

First, it will have to be militarily capable. PA forces are not numerous enough to do the full job on their own. An Arab force alone will have the debilities noted above. Moreover, the idea that Arab countries will put their forces in a position where they will have to kill Palestinian Arabs on behalf of Israeli security does not meet the laugh test, unless the governments concerned can relate operations directly to progress toward a Palestinian state. Such political linkage is part of US proposals. It is a high bar for Israeli politics.

Even assuming an international force with a significant Arab component can be constructed, it would need to be able to deal with Israeli security demands and requirements. Israeli requirements to suppress threats to Israel cannot and should not be ignored. In many respects, PA operations in the West Bank before the Gaza outbreak of October 7 did meet most Israeli requirements. But they did so in part with the involvement of US and other military advisors whose presence was essential both

to the training of the force and to resolving tensions between the Palestinian and Israeli forces.

How a Palestinian or multinational force is to be trained, governed, and overseen is a significant issue. Neither the detailed plans nor the time needed to be functional have been spelled out. The adequacy of both plans and time needs to be considered before the concept is accepted, not after the force is on the ground.

Our own experiences in multiple countries, not just Iraq and Afghanistan, testifies to the fact that this type of operation is difficult and time consuming. American forces have excelled at building the capability of small units. They have largely failed to construct whole armies in the midst of combat.

THE LEGAL MANDATE

In the case of Gaza, there will be an additional issue. Israel can be expected to have repeated and strong demands for action of the security force on a wide range of recurring issues. Israel will have very good reasons to strike unilaterally if it perceives a threat. These day-to-day challenges will require prompt and decisive responses. That suggests some necessary elements. One is that the force providing security has the unity of command to respond effectively to challenges. If it has to seek guidance from some form of committee it is likely to be crippled and the Israelis will not be patient partners.

Secondly, the mandate of the security force must be strong enough for decisive, including lethal, action. The international record of agreeing to such a mandate is not encouraging. Pressures for compromises on everything from force equipment to rules of engagement can be expected in the search for multilateral political agreement, especially if UN Security Council agreement is required, as is likely. But watering down the mandate to secure political agreement will risk creating forces like UNIFIL in Lebanon or the early UN forces in Bosnia or Rwanda, that were reduced to being spectators of battle and even massacres.

There are examples of forces with the necessary mandate and leadership. Bosnia after the Dayton Accords provides the best example but there are others from smaller operations like that in Sierra Leone, led by the British, and the UN operations in East Timor with a multinational command and a heavily Australian led force as recounted by Lise Morage Howard. What is clear from these contrasting examples is that the mandate and leadership on the ground is critical. It would be better to give up the entire project than to accept a weak mandate or some form of committee leadership which would lead to probable failure of the policy because of weak execution.

It is possible to succeed in such a mission but, and it is a big but, trying to field the force and build it at the same time is fraught with the potential for failure—and failure would mean either the return of militants or Israeli occupation or both, and the unraveling of the political solution that depends on the force.

THE INDISPENSABLE US ROLE

The future civilian and military operations will need close linkage. If the security forces are too independent, then the civilian administration will quickly be seen as weak and useless. Israeli security demands are likely to clash with the views of the administering authority's civilian leadership. There will be ample opportunities for confrontation. How is this to be handled without either compromising security or placing the civilian administration in a position where it has to choose between being seen locally as powerless or an Israeli puppet?

There are a variety of ways of avoiding the dilemmas of mandate, authority, and security described above. Whatever the course chosen, it will have to meet certain requirements. There will need to be a way of maintaining Israeli confidence in the security force but the Israelis cannot run it or either the PA and the necessary countries will not cooperate or the force will lose local political acceptance. This points to the need for a US military role. Other countries may be able to train and advise a local security force but only the US military is likely to have the credibility to assuage Israeli concerns.

This does not mean that US tactical forces must be employed. It does mean that US

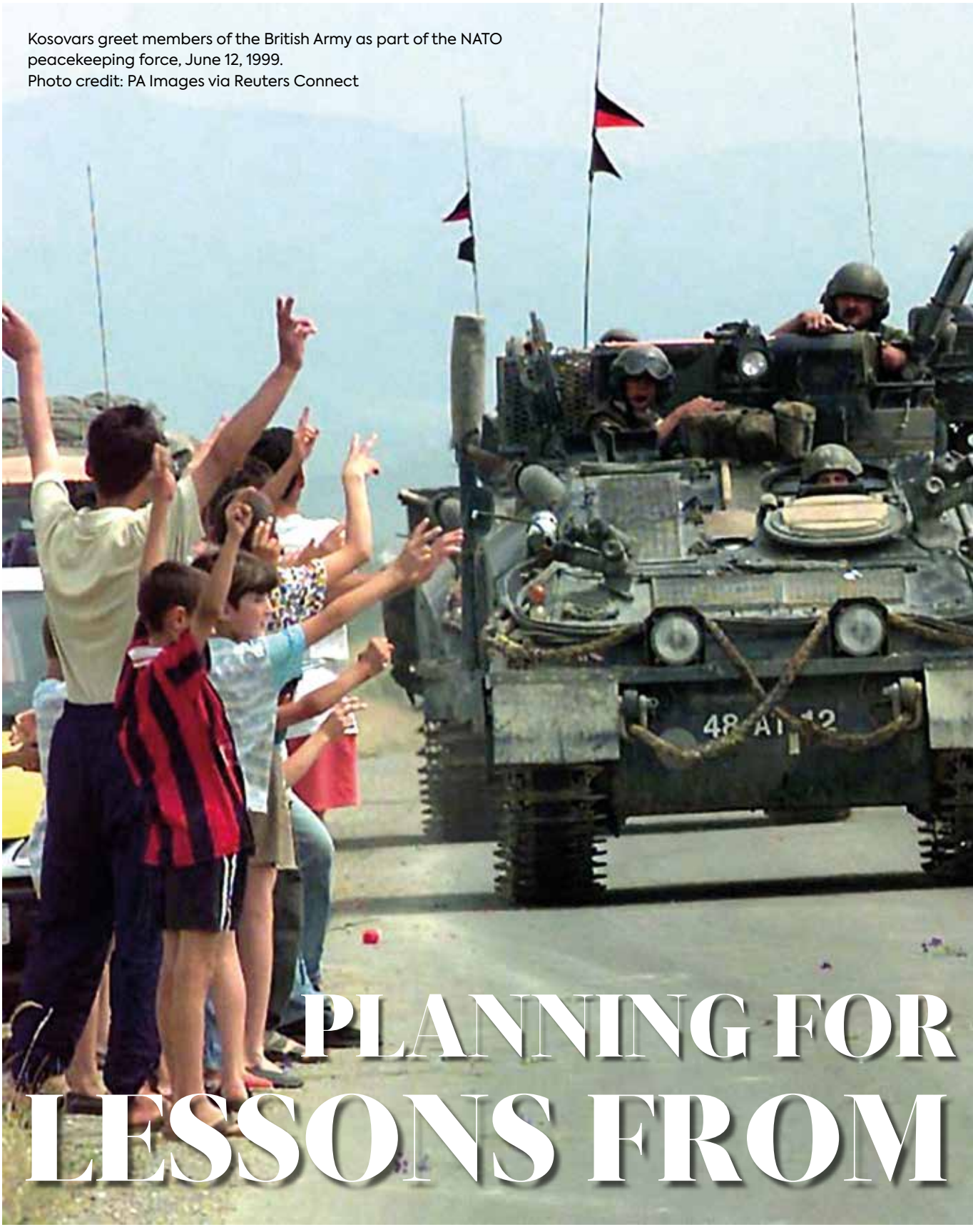
A Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) soldier in the Sinai Peninsula, September 2022. Photo credit: IMAGO/piemags via Reuters Connect

personnel will need to play a role in the overall operation of fielding a security force, managing its operations on the ground, and coordinating with the political authority. There is no other country with the required political weight and acceptance to play this role. If the current Biden Administration insistence on "no boots on the ground" prevents such a US role the odds against success will rise to dizzying heights.

The problems of the "day after" in Gaza are legion. It truly is a wicked problem. But if a solution is to be found, it will require close attention to the difficult areas of policy execution that extend well beyond the policy conceptions themselves. ✳

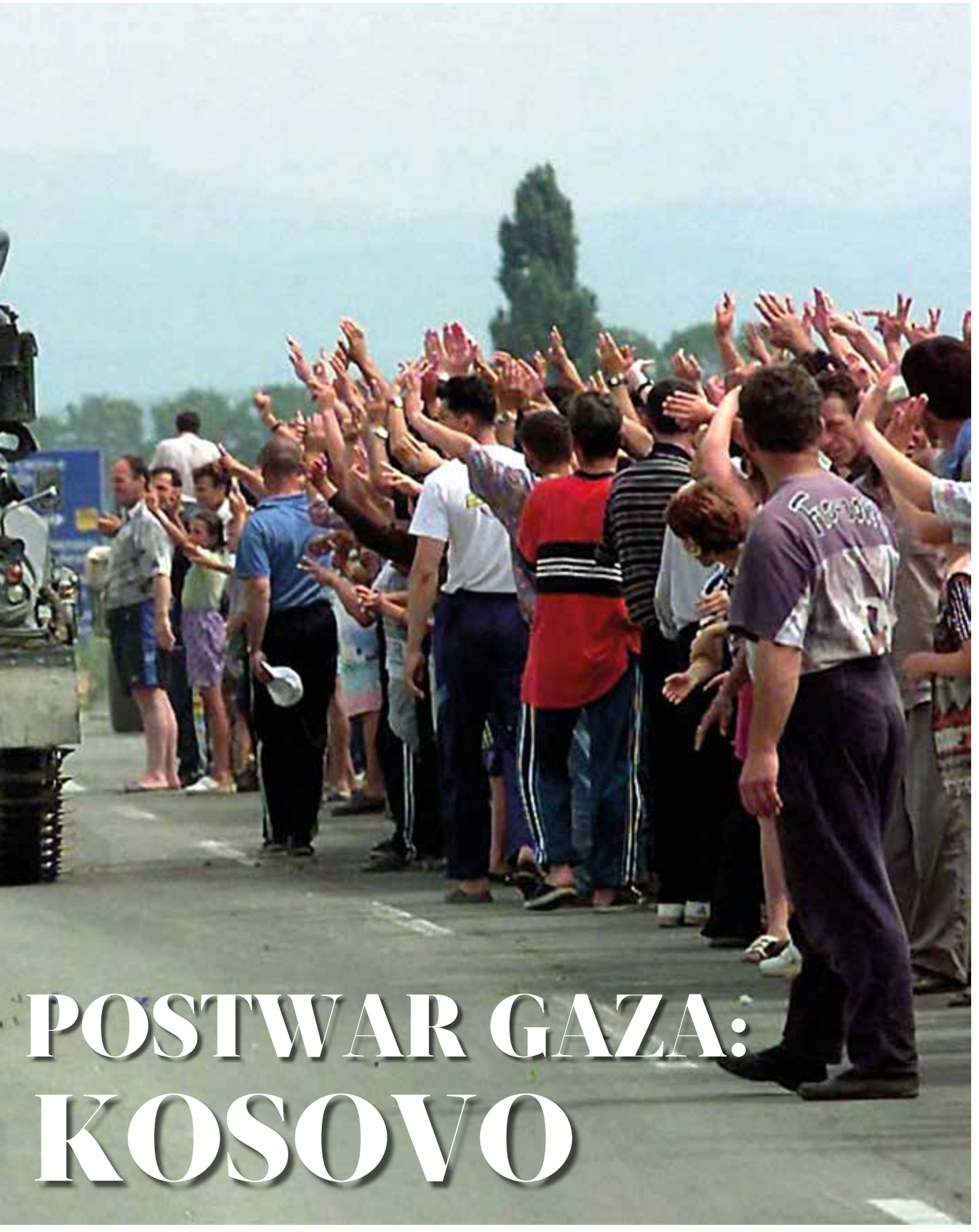
RONALD E. NEUMANN

Ronald E. Neumann was US ambassador to Algeria, Bahrain and Afghanistan, a senior officer in Iraq, and in his distant past an infantry officer in Vietnam. He is the President of the American Academy of Diplomacy.



Kosovars greet members of the British Army as part of the NATO peacekeeping force, June 12, 1999.
Photo credit: PA Images via Reuters Connect

PLANNING FOR LESSONS FROM



POSTWAR GAZA: KOSOVO

by Philip S. Kosnett

As the war in Gaza drags on, so do efforts to identify a model for postwar governance and security. The experience of Kosovo following NATO's 1999 expulsion of Serbian forces may offer some lessons.

A BRIEF HISTORY REFRESHER

In March 1999, in the wake of a growing Kosovo Liberation Army insurgency, an upturn in Serbian repression of the ethnic Albanian majority in Kosovo, and a failed effort at a diplomatic solution, NATO launched a bombing campaign to induce the withdrawal of Serbian forces. In June, Belgrade withdrew its forces. A Military-Technical Agreement between NATO and Belgrade, along with UN Security Council Resolution 1244, established a NATO-led peacekeeping force and an interim UN mission.

In 2008, Kosovo declared independence with the support of the United States and most EU and NATO member states, and the UN mission handed over administrative authority to an elected Kosovo government. Serbia, Russia, China, and some EU members (Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Romania, Slovakia) refused at the time, and still refuse, to recognize Kosovo's independence. Serbia's constitution declares Kosovo "an integral part of the territory of Serbia."

Today, EU- and US-led efforts to broker normalization continue, with the foreigners frequently appearing more interested in a deal than the governments in Belgrade and Pristina. NATO troops remain in place to deter violence between Kosovo's Albanian majority and Serb minority and to discourage Belgrade from sending forces into Kosovo to protect the latter, as it periodically (if ritualistically) threatens.

LIKE GAZA TODAY, POSTWAR KOSOVO WASN'T READY FOR SELF-GOVERNANCE

By the time of the Serbian withdrawal in 1999, Kosovo had suffered considerable human, physical and economic damage (although less than in Gaza), and perhaps 20% of the population had become refugees in neighboring countries. As Kosovo's residents straggled back, international stakeholders concluded that however its political status was to be ultimately resolved, Kosovo could not reasonably be expected to set itself on the road to reconstruction and self-administration without foreign assistance. At its peak, thousands of UN administrators and police ran everything from economic development to traffic policing.

When the UN mission was established in 1999, independence from Serbia was far from clear. Indeed, Security Council Resolution 1244 states that "an agreed number of Yugoslav and Serb military and police personnel will be permitted to return to Kosovo" at an unspecified date. Within two years, however, momentum for independence was unstoppable, with the US a key proponent. As time went on, Kosovars increasingly chafed at being administered by foreigners. In 2001, the UN decreed a Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government which led to the establishment of a Kosovo presidency and other institutions even while the UN mission retained authority.

Over time, Kosovo evolved into a functional multi-party democracy, although one that remains heavily dependent on foreign

Albanian woman outside the NATO airbase in Tirana, May 12, 1999. Photo credit: Reuters

economic assistance and diaspora remittances. After independence in 2008, the UN mission contracted in size but has not gone away. The UN Security Council has been unable to agree on its fate, in light of the opposition by Serbia, Russia, and others to Kosovo independence. UNMIK today is a monitoring agency with little influence, derided when not ignored by Kosovars.

An international governance body in Gaza could learn from the UN mission in Kosovo's reasonably smooth transition to local control. How long before Gazans chafe at trading one set of "occupiers" for another, in the absence of an agreed path (either timeline or conditions-based) back to local autonomy, if not independence?

BUT NATO FACED A COMPARATIVELY BENIGN SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Kosovo's Albanian majority welcomed NATO troops as liberators, and Kosovo's minority Serb community – those who chose to stay – generally saw the NATO presence as protection from the Albanian majority. An important difference between Kosovo and Gaza is that NATO has allowed Belgrade no role in security in Kosovo, and the modest Kosovo Security Force (which evolved from the demobilized Kosovo Liberation Army) does not pose a cross-border threat to Serbia.

NATO's strength is down from its original 50,000 troops to about 4,500, predominantly European with an American component built around several hundred National Guard troops. (I served as a political officer at the US Office in Pristina – the forerunner of the US embassy where I was later Ambassador – in 2003, just after the Guard replaced active duty forces in Kosovo. The older, calmer Guard troops seemed better suited to the peacekeeping mission in this low-threat environment.)

NATO was not meant to be the primary policing authority, and after independence, a Kosovo national police force and justice ministry took over from UNMIK in providing security in most of the country. Residents of four predominantly Serb municipalities established parallel police and courts. From 2013 to 2022 these were integrated into national institutions,

but that ended (for now, at least) with a downturn in Pristina-Belgrade relations.

The 200+ NATO troops who have died in Kosovo in a quarter century have been lost in traffic accidents and non-combat incidents, a price governments seem to find acceptable even as they mourn the fallen. But NATO can be a magnet for violence. In September 2023, Serb demonstrators confronting Kosovar police turned their anger on KFOR troops, injuring dozens. People in both communities complain that NATO and KFOR are too solicitous of the other community and slow to come off the bench when violence flares – as in the case of anti-Serb rioting in 2004 and a firefight between Kosovo police and Serb gunmen in 2023.

In this unpredictable environment, few Kosovo citizens – Albanian, Serbs or members of smaller minority groups – would like to see either NATO or the small EU police force withdrawn prior to a comprehensive peace agreement.

AN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY FORCE IN GAZA WOULD FACE GREATER CHALLENGES

Stakeholders and observers agree that, in the short term, there is no viable way to stand up a Gazan police force both capable of maintaining order and that Israelis will trust.

There are no Israeli civilians in Gaza to equate to the existence of Kosovo's Serb minority and thus, unlike Serbia, Israel need not worry about protecting an ethnic minority across the border. But Israel will focus on preventing any repetition of October 7 and will insist on having a cross-border security role in Gaza, in order to prevent the territory from serving once again as a base for attacks into Israel.

The alternative to a continued Israeli presence inside Gaza would thus appear to be an international peacekeeping force – perhaps with both military and police components, as in Kosovo – with the muscle, capability, and freedom via robust rules of engagement to tamp down any terrorist threat. That's a tall order, especially since such a force would also have its work cut out winning the support of Gaza civilians. The absence of a clear endgame would also seem likely to discourage some potential participants.

What international force – whether led by the UN, the Arab League, NATO, or some other entity – would have the capability and authority needed to ensure that no armed Palestinian groups – whether elements of Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, or others – engaged in cross-border attacks, or targeted the peacekeeping force itself? One plan calls for the US to organize and lead a hybrid international force, noting that "the United States has far more experience organizing the kind of military structure that will be required for Gaza, having done similar missions in Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan."

A salient question is how Palestinians might view American peacekeepers, given American support for Israel? Perhaps cognizant of this sensitivity as well as the likely domestic political impact of American casualties, the plan's authors suggest that the United States "provide a number of vital enabling capabilities and 'back office' military personnel, although there should be no large-scale U.S. ground troop presence in the [multinational] policing force."

To turn this back to Kosovo – for many years the conventional wisdom was that if the Americans were to pull out of the NATO force, other allies would make for the exits. But recent iterations of the annual NATO exercise in Kosovo, through which members ante up troop contributions, suggest allies would be willing to stay the course rather than pull the plug, as long as the Kosovo-Serbia issue remains unresolved. All bets would be off, however, were the situation in Kosovo to deteriorate to the point where NATO found itself suffering combat losses.

This sort of open-ended commitment cannot be taken for granted, either in Kosovo or in Gaza. Without an exit strategy for the international force, will Gazans come increasingly to target peacekeepers, seeing them as Israeli surrogates? How many American or other peacekeepers would have to become casualties before their governments got cold feet? Would terrorists attack contributing nations at home, in an effort reminiscent of (successful) efforts to intimidate some European participants in the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq?

Gazans return to neighborhoods in eastern Khan Younis after Israeli forces pulled out from the area, July 30, 2024. Photo credit: Reuters/Mohammed Salem

CONCLUSION – PEACE AND RECONCILIATION WILL REQUIRE BOLD ACTION

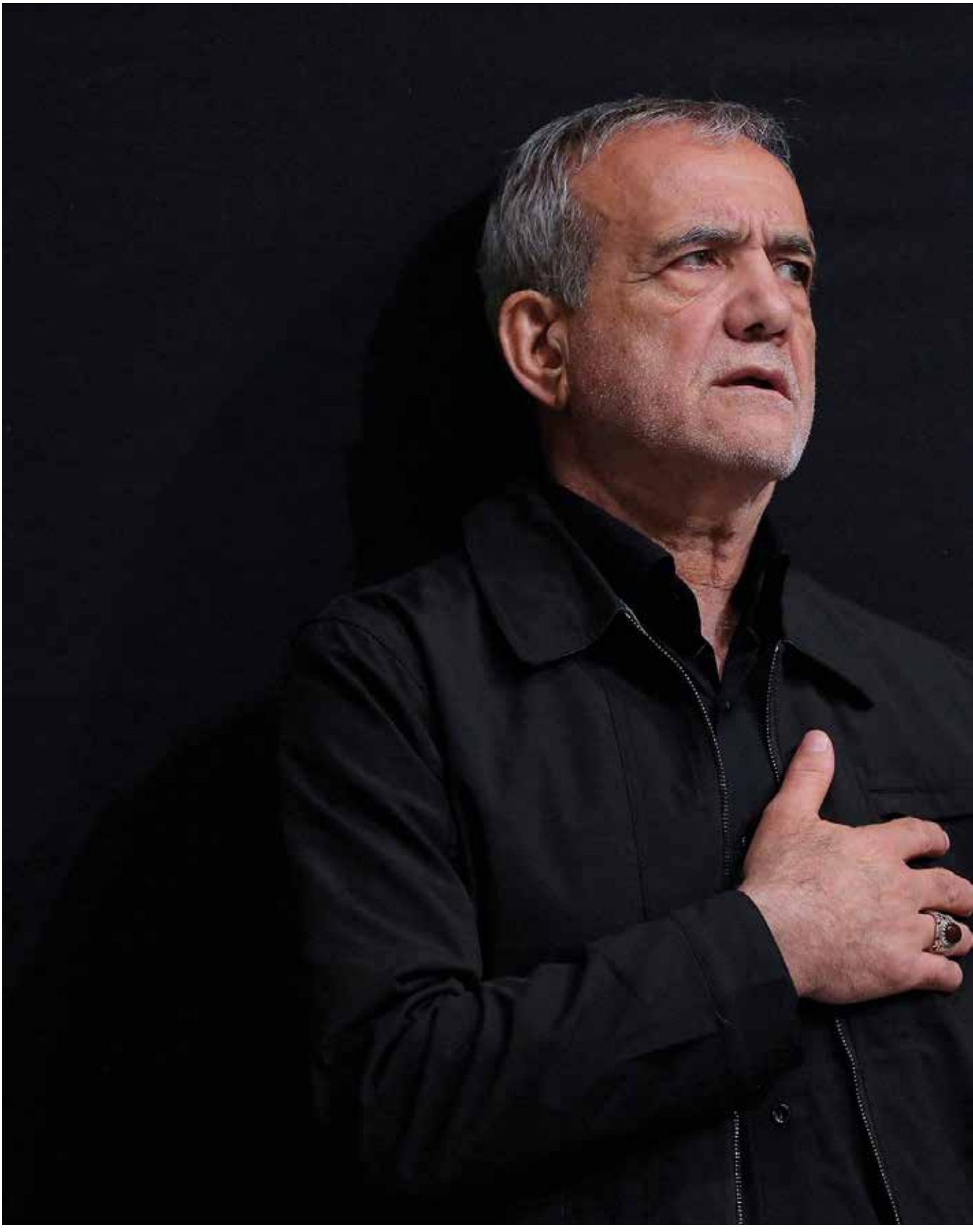
The story of Kosovo and Serbia, like that of Gaza and Israel, is one of competing narratives and parallel grievances. The two main lessons for Gaza from Kosovo are, first, the utility of an international governance and security mission that is transitional in nature and, second, the need for that mission to go in with an exit strategy.

With a quarter century of relative peace between Belgrade and Pristina, comprehensive normalization remains elusive. Neither nation feels a compelling need to work through their distrust to achieve peace, justice, and prosperity. In Kosovo, a few civil society groups are dedicated to working across communal boundaries to seek reconciliation, but theirs is not the predominant view. Thus far the EU, key European capitals, and both Democrats and Republicans in Washington have remained committed to supporting Pristina and Belgrade along the path to peace, but neither resources nor patience is inexhaustible.

If Serbs and Kosovars seem complacent as they follow a slow, incremental process of negotiations, perhaps after October 7 and its aftermath a greater sense of urgency will take hold among Israelis and Gazans ready to earnestly begin to negotiate a way forward to live as neighbors. An opportunity to break with the past exists, but will not remain indefinitely. ✳

PHILIP KOSNETT

Philip S. Kosnett, a former US diplomat, served as ambassador to Kosovo and as chargé d'affaires in Turkey and Iceland. He now writes and consults on global affairs. He is the editor of *Boots and Suits: Historical Cases and Contemporary Lessons in Military Diplomacy* (Marine Corps University Press, 2023).



A VIEW FROM TEHRAN: THREATS FACING THE NEW PRESIDENT

Iranian President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian. Photo credit: via Reuters

by Alan Eyre

Iran's new president, Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, entered office in July with low expectations and no voter mandate, having the narrowest margin of victory for any president since the 1979 Revolution. Had it not been for a sizable Azeri ethnic turnout supporting him in three of Iran's 31 provinces, the election would have been far closer than it was. (Pezeshkian is half Iranian Azeri and his first language is Azerbaijani.)

Against his deeply unpopular hardline opponents, Pezeshkian ran toward the center, pledging fealty to the Supreme Leader's policies while also promising economic and social reforms and better relations with the West.

Now ensconced in his Pasteur Street office in Tehran, Pezeshkian must prioritize the threats Iran faces. The US national security strategy categorizes threats based both on country of origin and topic (the latter being what CIA Director William Burns calls 'problems without passports' such as disruptive technologies, pandemics, and the threat of climate change). For Pzeshkian's benefit, here are the topical threats organized by animal, a virtual bestiary of wolves, swans and rhinos.

WOLF CLOSEST TO THE SLED: ECONOMY

A well-worn military aphorism advises 'killing the wolf closest to the sled' or prioritizing imminent threats. The wolf closest to Pezeshkian's sled is Iran's chronically underperforming economy. According to the World Bank, during the 'lost decade' between 2011 and 2020 Iran's GDP contracted annually at a rate of 0.6 percent, with close to ten million Iranians falling into poverty. Although the economy has done better since then, largely due to improved oil sector exports, inflation remains dangerously high, especially in food and housing markets.

Pezeshkian ran promising to improve the economy. His campaign stressed the need for less corruption and more transparency, structural reforms, and improved international relations (especially with the West) that would enable lifting of sanctions and increased foreign direct investment. Part of the reason Supreme Leader Khamenei approved of Pezeshkian's candidacy was this putatively greater appeal to the West, or at least to Europe.

Khamenei's prescription for Iran's economy, however, has not been outreach to the West but rather autarkic calls for a 'Resistance Economy' that avoids the pain of sanctions by relying on domestic production. This slogan has not been translated into strategy, and instead Iran has resorted to a 'Look East' policy.

A powerful entrenched elite fearful of losing its prerogatives and a hostile Majlis dominated by conservatives place limits on how far Pezeshkian can go in his desire for economic reform and outreach to the West.

In terms of domestic social issues, although Pezeshkian made soothing noises when running about lessening compulsory hijab enforcement and internet restrictions, it is unclear how much progress he can make here. Iran's median age in the reformist era of President Khatami era (1997-2005) was 19; now it is almost 34, making youth mobilization more difficult. The regime recently managed the wrenching mass protests touched off by the late 2022 death of

Supreme Leader Khamenei and President-elect Pezeshkian at the endorsement ceremony in Tehran, July 28, 2024. Photo credit: Parspix/ABACA via Reuters Connect

Mahsa Amini, another reason for feeling public pressure on reform is less urgent.

Iran's foreign policy is largely determined by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp under the aegis of the Supreme Leader. Here the new president's problems call to mind the Persian saying 'the bigger your roof, the more the snow.' While Iran's regional network of proxies, to include Hezbollah, Hamas, the Houthis and Iranian-aligned militia groups in Iraq, has enabled it to stymie US regional strategy, it has also vastly expanded Iran's own strategic vulnerabilities. Recent events, to include the July 31 assassination of Hamas leader Haniyeh in Tehran, are further evidence of Iran's being locked into a destabilizing escalatory cycle with Israel that could preclude any Pezeshkian initiative to improve Iran's international profile.

BLACK SWAN: SCLEROTIC GOVERNMENT

At the other end of the threat spectrum from the imminence of the wolf closest to the sled are black swans. Risk analyst Nassim Taleb defines black swans as rare and unpredictable high-impact events. You don't see them coming and they do serious, sustained damage, like the COVID-19 pandemic.

How prepared is Iran for a black swan event? Taleb classifies complex systems, to include governments, as either fragile, (damaged by change), resilient (undamaged by change) (resilient) or anti-fragile (improved by change).

If the best preparation against a destabilizing crisis is to have a flexible, responsive and decentralized system, Iran is in big trouble. Power is concentrated at the national level,

Power blackout in Tehran, July 2021. Photo credit: Majid Asgaripour/WANA (West Asia News Agency) via reuters

where government is corrupt and ideologically hidebound, as evidenced by, inter alia, its handling of the COVID crisis.

Pezeshkian knows this well, which is why he has vowed to appoint a young, technocratic cabinet, a refreshing change in a country where a 97-year old Ayatollah Jannati was recently reappointed as head of the Guardian Council, one of Iran's most powerful institutions. However, his personnel choices so far, to include his first vice president choice of the 73-year old reformist Mohamad Reza Aref, are not characterized by dynamism. Regardless, Pezeshkian must begin the process of administrative reform.

GRAY RHINO: CLIMATE CHANGE

Between the high visibility of the wolf and the unseen terrors of the black swan are gray rhinos. As Michele Wucker says in her book, "most of the crises in the world are very likely occurrences...we may not be able to foresee the details or the timing, but the outlines are hard to ignore." A gray rhino charging down upon Iran is climate change and its regional effects, to include extreme heat and drought.

Climate change has already arrived in the Middle East. A 2023 RAND study predicts this about the Middle East: "More frequent and more severe extreme heat events, coupled with drier conditions, will make agricultural production more difficult." The Soufan Center reports that, with temperatures in the Middle East warming at a rate 50 percent higher than the rest of the Northern Hemisphere, continuous access to air conditioning – and thus reliable electricity – becomes critical.

Iran's aging and mismanaged electrical grid is not up to the demands rising temperatures are bringing. According to Iran's Tasnim news on July 20, temperatures in Iran rose

above 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) in approximately 170 weather stations across Iran. Heat waves have caused massive power outages throughout the country, affecting Iran's residences and industries. Per regional energy analyst Dalga Khatinoglu, Iran's electrical grid currently produces fewer than 400 terawatt hours annually against a demand of approximately 500 terawatt hours (for comparison, the much smaller UK generated 325 terawatt hours in 2022).

What worsens Iran's and Middle East's climate woes is the fact that it is one of the least economically integrated regions in the world. Optimal climate adaptation can best be done regionally, to include shared electrical grids and shared best practices. But there has been no regional conversation on cooperating on adaptation to climate change, much less any actual coordination.

Similarly, there has been no regional discussion of what to do about migration triggered by climate change. As Iran analyst Banafsheh Keynoush has noted, migration in Iran has already greatly increased, as people flee northwards from rural, largely southern heatscapes that yield no livelihood. The flow from rural south to major cities in Iran's north will increasingly stress municipal governments, already chronically under-resourced. Additionally there is the looming possibility of refugee flows into Iran from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq, as their governments prove increasingly unable to deliver essential goods and services to their citizens.

The Middle East is the world's most water-stressed region, holding 14 of the 17 most water-stressed countries globally, according to the UN. Iran is rated as 'high' on the water stress levels (below 'critical'). As United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health Director Professor Kaveh Madani and others have pointed out, "water is intrinsically connected to national security in Iran and the rest of the Middle East." While there have been protests over water scarcity for years in Iran, the government has never escaped from a vicious cycle of poor management of its water resources. As such, Madani characterizes present-day Iran as essentially 'water bankrupt.'

CONCLUSION

Pezeshkian faces a hardline conservative Maljis and a powerful but ailing Supreme Leader fearful of reform and bent on preserving his legacy. There is a Persian saying, "the hand you cannot cut, you must kiss," and the pragmatic Pezeshkian has been kissing many powerful regime hands. But such blandishments will not convince them to act against their own interests.

So, what is likely to happen? Iran's elite will judge Pezeshkian largely on the basis of how he deals with the headline threats, and the wolf closest to the sled is the economy. During Pezeshkian's July 28 'Endorsement Ceremony,' the Supreme Leader said "The priority is with economic issues. A sustained, strong, thought-out economic drive is needed." Any Pezeshkian diplomatic initiative towards the West, aimed at an economic opening and a lessening of sanctions, will be influenced by the ongoing battle for escalation dominance between Israel and Iran.

Pezeshkian would be well advised to also devote significant energy to prepare Iran for the crash of the gray rhino – climate change – bearing down on it. He is aware of this issue; during the late July heatwave he tweeted "we need to move [economic] production out of Tehran, bring it closer to the sea, to a place where water and electricity supply won't be a problem in the future".

Although the feasibility of such a move is questionable, that he was talking at all about policy and resource constraints is encouraging. The threat of climate change will require increased cooperation among governments. If Pezeshkian were to begin the essential task of climate adaptation, or even just begin the needed policy conversation, this would be a boon not just for Iran, but also for a whole region facing electricity and water shortages. ✳

ALAN EYRE

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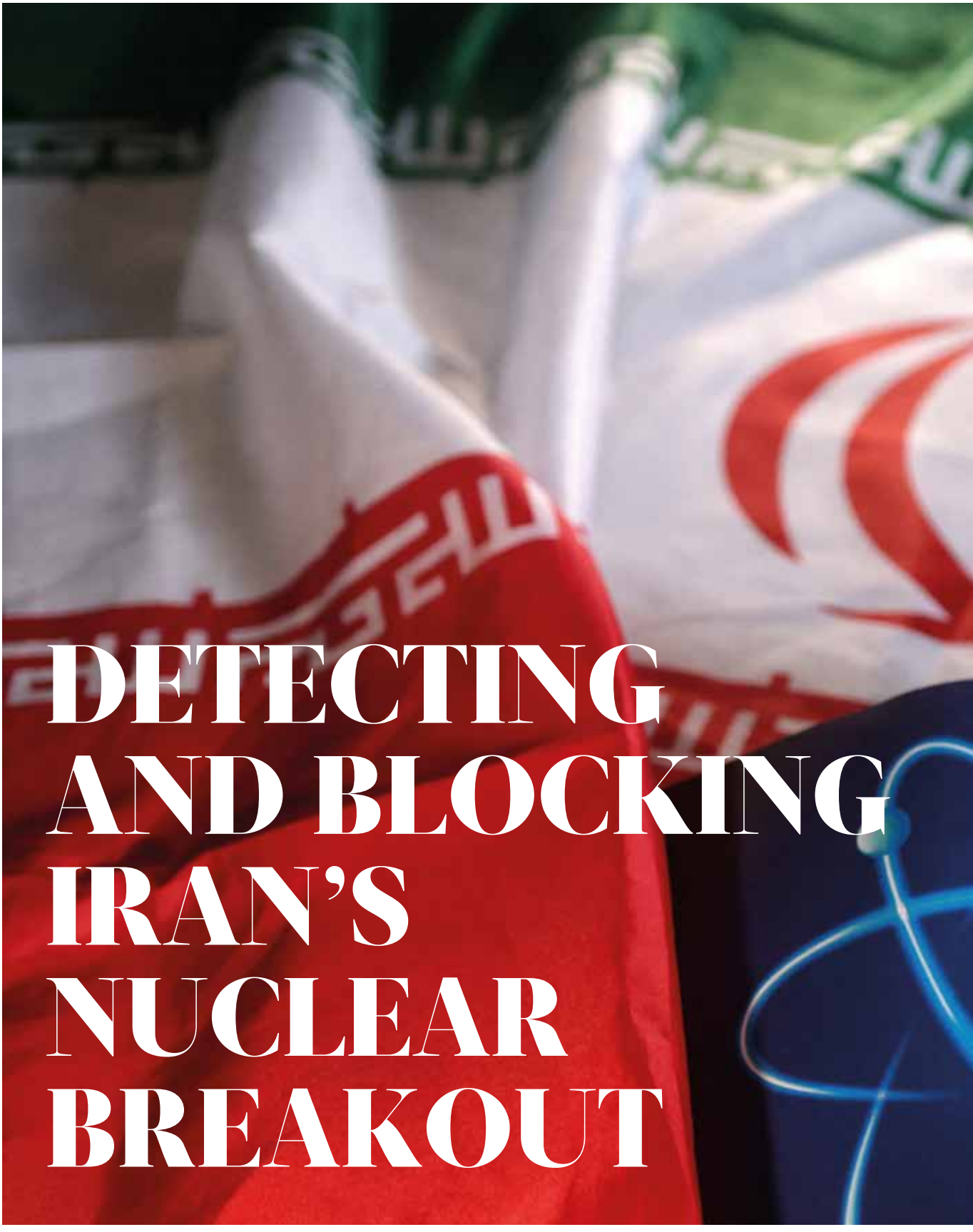

DETECTING AND BLOCKING IRAN'S NUCLEAR BREAKOUT

Photo credit: Reuters/Dado Ruvic/Illustration

by Olli Heinonen

The Iranian missile and drone attack on Israel in the early morning hours of April 14 serves as a reminder of Tehran's dangerous role in Middle Eastern affairs. Imagine the impunity with which Iran might act if it felt emboldened by possession of a nuclear umbrella or an ability to retaliate with nuclear weapons. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) renewed recently its concerns over this prospect.

IRAN'S FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH ITS NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS

The IAEA has tried since 2003 to verify the declarations which Iran was required to make under the comprehensive safeguards agreement it signed. Yet after 20 years, Iran still has not permitted access either to its nuclear sites for inspection or to relevant Iranian technical experts for interviews.

Rafael Grossi, the IAEA director general, has repeatedly raised concerns about the course and purpose of Iran's nuclear program, most recently at the IAEA board of governors meeting November 22, 2023. In response, Mohammad Eslami, president of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, warned there would be no further transparency until sanctions on Iran are lifted.

Western intelligence officials have continued to state, with due caution, that there is no conclusive evidence as yet that Iran's leader Ali Khamene'i has decided to cross the last threshold and build a nuclear weapon. But as Mr. Grossi pointed out, owing to the lack of information, it could be too late someday for the international community to detect and block such a "breakout" action, when such a decision is actually made by Iran.

PATHS TO A BREAKOUT

Iran has sufficient stocks of highly enriched uranium to permit a speedy breakout. Prior to 2003, Iran had processed hundreds of kilograms of uranium metal – not yet enriched, but accumulated secretly, without reporting these nuclear materials to the IAEA as required by the safeguards agreement.

In addition, according to IAEA reports, Iran acquired a relevant Soviet document from a clandestine proliferation network, describing the steps required to produce uranium metal components for a nuclear weapon.

The secrecy of these activities, and the effort to obtain weapons designs, both indicate that very early on, Iran was in breach of its

IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi at the Board of Governors quarterly meeting in Vienna, Austria, March 4, 2024. Photo credit: Reuters/Lisa Leutner

undertaking – under the Non-Proliferation Treaty – not to pursue a military program. More recently, Iran's accumulation of fissile material puts it within a short leap to the level of enrichment of 94 percent or more of uranium 235, which is the isotope needed for a chain reaction and a bomb.

To develop a nuclear weapon using uranium enrichment, the Iranians built an extensive infrastructure of centrifuges, gradually raising the level of enrichment well beyond what would be needed for any civilian purpose. They accepted temporary limitations on enrichment under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2015, which stipulated maximum enrichment of 3.17 percent. After the US withdrew from the Plan of Action in 2018, Iran resumed enrichment at levels clearly indicating its intentions, enriching first to 5 percent (July 2019), then to 20 percent (January 2021) and finally to 60 percent (April 2021).

Iran did reduce temporarily the production of 60 percent enriched uranium in the second half of 2023. But it is currently producing this grade of uranium at the rate of nine kilograms per month, sufficient to quickly bring it within range of possession of "weapon-grade uranium" (i.e., enriched to 94 percent).

Enrichment to 60 percent has no practical purpose, other than as a penultimate step to obtaining weapons-grade levels.

IRAN'S EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE IN PRODUCING URANIUM

Uranium enrichment is carried out by spinning in the centrifuges a gas, the uranium compound with fluoride. In order to make a bomb, the enriched uranium needs to be once again turned into uranium metal and tooled for bomb components. Since the establishment of Iran's nuclear weapons-related programs, in the mid-1980's, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran has devoted substantial resources to produce uranium metal in secrecy, without reporting those efforts to the IAEA as required by its safeguards agreement. IAEA investigations revealed that as early as the 1980's, several kilograms of uranium metal were produced. In the early 1990s, 400 kilograms of uranium fluoride were obtained from a foreign country and processed into uranium metal. Thus, the technology necessary for tooling a bomb has thus been within Iran's reach for decades.

In February 2024, Iran began building a fourth research reactor in Isfahan. Such a reactor will require advanced nuclear fuel, which the manufacturing process of uranium metal can produce as an interim step. Given Iran's extensive experience in uranium metallurgy, this could theoretically be used as cover to make fuel enriched to 80-90 percent for the reactor under construction.

ONCE IRAN DECIDES TO BREAKOUT, IT COULD HAPPEN WITHIN SIX MONTHS

The existing stockpiles of 20 percent and 60 percent enriched uranium offer attractive options for a quick breakout. Alarmingly, such a step would be difficult to detect by the technical means used by Western intelligence agencies: the enrichment installation needed for the one, decisive last leap would require less than 1,000 advanced centrifuges, which can be put to work in a small and relatively easily hidden floor space. The necessary workshop for uranium conversion to metal, and machining of weapon components, would be even smaller. This will make such installations difficult to find when located in secret industrial locations, or in secure facilities underground.

The Iranians have had access to a basic design of a warhead for years. A well-designed device would require, depending on the explosive yield sought, at least 15 kilograms of weapons grade uranium and thus, taking into account manufacturing losses, about 18 kilograms would be needed.

In short, by using two sets of its existing IR-6 cascades with four cascades with 164 centrifuges in each, Iran can produce what is necessary for a nuclear military capability, once the final decision is taken in Tehran. This can be computed as follows:

Installation 1 using 140 kilograms of 60 percent enriched uranium could produce enough weapons grade uranium for four nuclear weapons within about 30 days for each warhead. Thus, components for four bombs could be available after 130 days.

Installation 2 using 650 kilograms of 20 percent enriched uranium could produce enough for four nuclear weapons. In that case, components would be available for the first weapon after 60 days, and for all four within150 days.

If other components, explosives, and electronics are manufactured in parallel, or have already been stocked before the actual decision on the breakout is made, an Iranian deterrent with eight nuclear warheads is achievable in half a year's time.

NEXT STEPS

In December 2022, President Biden privately remarked that the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was "dead," amidst Iran's efforts to ramp up production of highly enriched uranium.

If there is to be a new nuclear deal with Iran, it would need to cover all three elements of a nuclear weapons program – production of fissile material, weaponization, and means of delivery using ballistic and cruise missiles. It would also need to include a fourth element – credible means of enforcing Iran's undertakings. In addition, and without regard to the scope of Iran's enrichment program, it is time to implement as much as possible a real-time accounting system at uranium enrichment plants, as is the case in the monitored plutonium processing plants in Japan (See Book of Abstracts).

Negotiators need to be prepared to manage further provocations by Iran, which could break the present publicly established red lines, such as no enrichment above 60 percent. It would be extremely dangerous for America and the free world to dash to a new agreement – offering further compromises over proliferation goals. Advocates of a compromise might argue (as they did in the past) that such a deal is "better than nothing." But it would in fact be very dangerous to reward Iran's breach of its commitments.

Given the size of Iran's fissile material stockpiles, the calculations above about an Iranian nuclear deterrent in six months time, and the indications of work on weapon design, the message is clear. Unless Iran is stopped soon, the breakout to a bomb will be very difficult to detect and equally difficult to destroy. Therefore the demands on Iran must be backed not only by sanctions but also by the willingness to take military action. Several key facilities must either be dismantled though a monitoring regime or destroyed militarily for Iran's nuclear weapons project to be brought to a real halt this time. ✳

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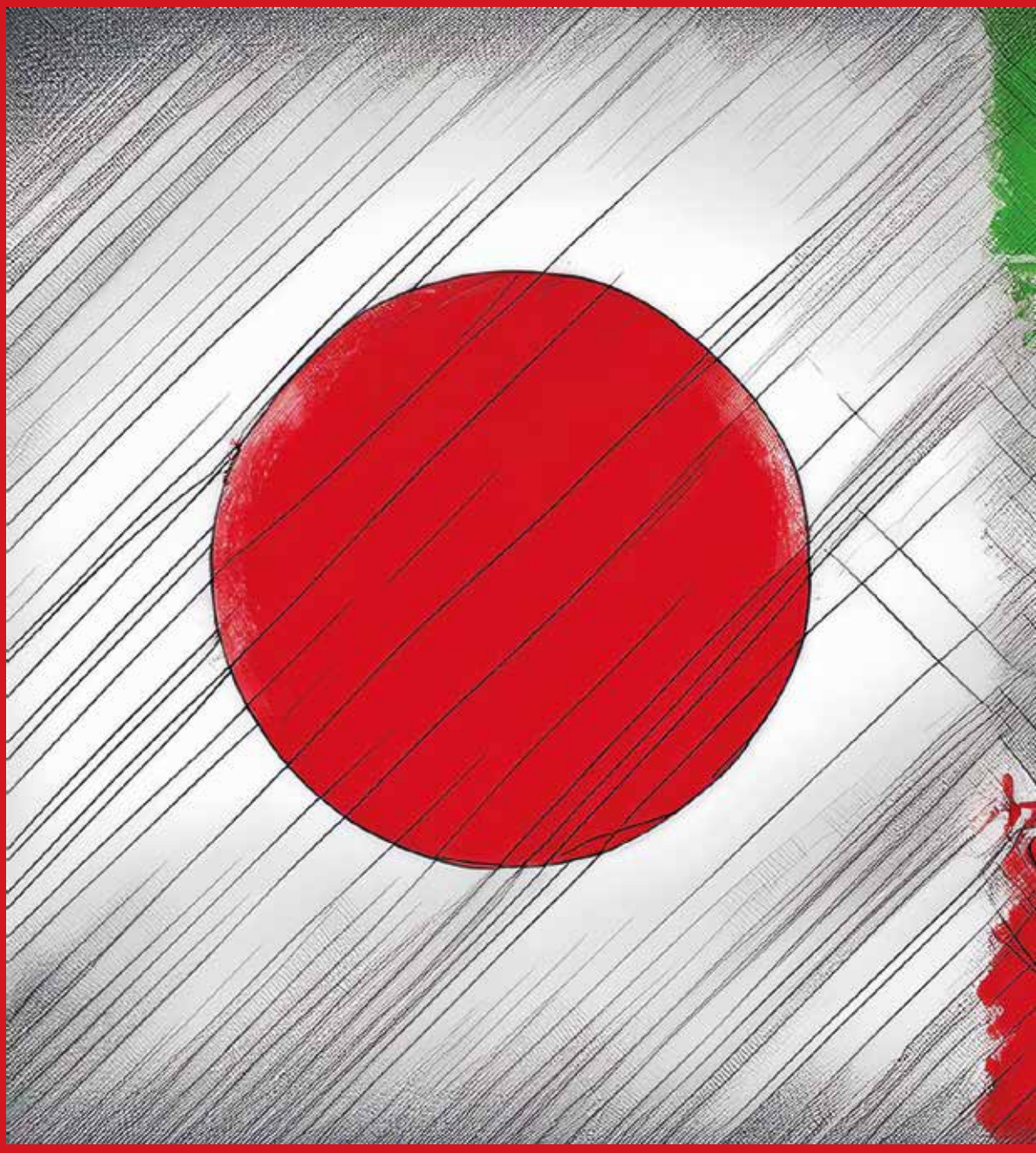
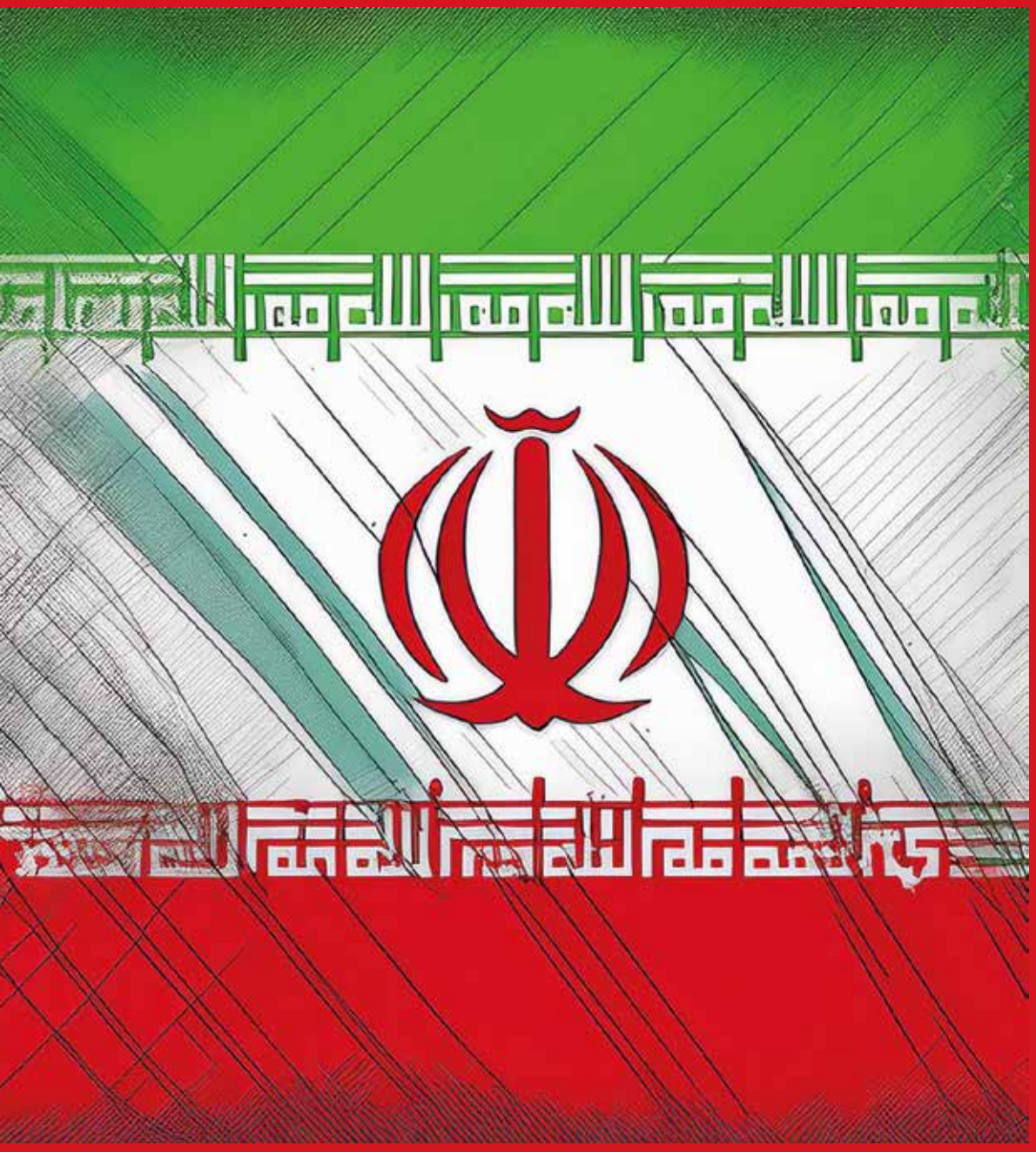


JAPAN CONVERGING



AND THE US ON IRAN

by Mitsugo Saito

For Japan, a good relationship with Iran was for decades essential for its economic prosperity. Japan had a policy of "agreeing to disagree" with the US over Iran. Today, that policy has started to change.

A RELATIONSHIP BASED ON JAPAN'S QUEST FOR ENERGY SECURITY

Overviews of Japan and Iran note that trade and cultural ties have existed for over one thousand years. This is mostly accurate. For example, a beautiful glass goblet in the Japanese Imperial Treasury was brought to Japan (via China) during the Sasanian Empire. However, the modern relationship between Japan and Iran is based on realpolitik on both sides.

Japan's quest for energy security, particularly in securing oil imports, has been a critical focus since the mid-20th century. President Roosevelt's ban on American oil exports to Imperial Japan in July 1941, when America supplied 90 percent of Japan's oil imports, prompted the Japanese Imperial Government to declare war against the US and its allies in December of that year.

Securing oil imports to sustain Japan's post-World War II economic growth remained a paramount national concern and led Japan to naturally gravitate towards Persian Gulf oil exporters. Despite Japan's continuous efforts to diversify its oil sources over time, the Persian Gulf region still has a 90 percent share of Japanese oil imports even now. Among Persian Gulf oil-exporting countries, Iran was the largest oil exporter to Japan in the 1970s.

This oil-based relationship with Iran started with the "Nitsushou Maru" episode. In 1951, Iranian Prime Minister Mosaddeq nationalized the British-owned Anglo-Iranian oil company. As a countermeasure, the UK government banned Iranian oil exports and applied a naval blockade along the coast of Iran. In 1953, Idemitsu Kosan, an aggressive Japanese oil company, sent an oil tanker, the "Nitsushou Maru," to Iran, which dodged the British blockade and returned to Japan full of Iranian oil.

Iranians highly appreciated this venture, and thus began the close bilateral relations. Iran's share of Japan's oil imports reached almost 50 percent in the 1970s. Even after the 1979 Islamic revolution, Iran's share of Japan's oil imports remained around 10 percent, until 2011. One key factor in Japan's continuing dependence on Iran is the fact that each oil refinery is tailored to a type of crude oil; and many Japanese oil refineries were optimized for Iranian light crude oil.

Signing of the Azadegan oil development deal in Tehran, February 2004. Photo credit: Kyodo via Reuters Connect

Before the 1979 Islamic revolution, Japan was not only a major buyer of Iranian oil but also a significant investor in Iran. In 1974, a Japanese consortium invested over a billion US dollars and started to build the Iran Japan Petrochemical Company, Iran's first major petrochemical industrial complex. The Japanese consortium was obliged to withdraw from the project in 1984 after the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war.

The 1979 Islamic Revolution and US embassy hostage crisis severely damaged Iran's relationship with all of US allies – with the exception of Japan. It continued to import as much Iranian oil as possible. Furthermore, the Japanese government engaged in shuttle diplomacy to mediate between Iran and Iraq during their war in the 1980s, because of the risks to Japanese oil imports from the Persian Gulf. It was a rare case of a Japanese diplomatic initiative (along with the peace process in Cambodia and reconciliation in Myanmar). Because the US and other G7 countries somewhat favored Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war, out of fear of Iran's radical Islamist ideology, an Iran suffering from international isolation likely appreciated these Japanese efforts.

ERA OF US-JAPAN "AGREEING TO DISAGREE" OVER IRAN

Even after the Iran-Iraq war ended in 1988, Japan continued to support Iran not only by importing Iranian oil but also by supporting Iranian national projects, which often caused friction with the US, resulting in a mutual policy of "agreeing to disagree."

This was unusual for post-World War II relations between Japan and the US. Japan has depended on the US security umbrella for its national security and, in general, compromised whenever the US had serious demands on it. For example, Japan accepted voluntary export controls of textiles, automobiles, and semiconductors to the US; Japan opened its domestic market to US agricultural and technology products and insurance services.

Iran, however, was an exception in US-Japan relations owing to Japan's desperate dependence on imported oil. The Japanese side believed its relations with Iran wouldn't damage relations with the US since they didn't directly affect US business interests..

There were two notable cases of "agreeing to disagree" during this period.

In 1990, the Iranian government requested a significant loan from Japan to build the Masjid-e-Soleiman hydropower station project. Immediately, the US government opposed the loan because it would free up Iranian funds to support terrorism. After the negotiations with the US, the Japanese government did agree to reduce the loan from 1.2 billion US dollars to 300 million, but still extended the loan to Iran.

In 2000, the Japanese government agreed to develop Iran's Azadegan oil field. However, in 2002, the US requested that the project be suspended owing to the revelation of Iran's secret nuclear program. Despite US pressure, a Japanese consortium started developing the Azadegan field in 2004. With growing US pressure and international concern about Iran's nuclear program, the Japanese consortium finally gave up the project in 2010; it was subsequently taken over by the Chinese state-owned oil company CNPC.

Although the US government constantly discouraged Japan from having closer relations with Iran, sometimes it also asked Japan to use its influence on Iran. For example, on July 28, 1985, President Regan called Prime Minister Nakasone and asked that Japan engage Iran, believed to be behind the kidnapping of dozens of Americans in Lebanon. PM Nakasone sent a special emissary to Tehran, Damascus, and Beirut, but the mission was unsuccessful, partially because the Iran-Contra affair was ongoing and the Iranians suspected this genuine Japanese effort of being false.

ZENITH OF JAPAN-IRAN RELATIONS

The period between Prime Minister Abe's visit to Tehran in June 2019 and Iranian President Rouhani's return visit to Tokyo in December 2019 was the zenith of Japan-Iran realpolitik relations. Abe's visit to Iran in June 2019 was not a courtesy call. It was initiated at the request of President Trump, who had resumed unilateral economic sanctions to pressure Iran to renegotiate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Trump asked PM Abe to persuade Iran to talk with the US (as described in John Bolton's book *The Room Where It Happened,* pages 385-386).

In Tehran, PM Abe proposed some Japanese political and economic initiatives as incentives to convince Iranians to negotiate with President Trump, and the Iranians showed interest. They also knew that PM Abe had established an excellent relationship with President Trump and thus could perhaps exercise some influence on him.

Tough negotiations ensued between Japanese and Iranian diplomats, up to and including during President Rouhani's visit to Japan in December. Iranians always seek "a final discount" in such negotiations, as they do in the bazaar. President Rouhani had a very long meeting with Abe in Tokyo, causing

the cancellation of an official banquet at the Japanese Prime Minister's residence on the evening of December 20, 2019. But no agreement or consensus was reached and Abe's initiative failed. Perhaps because US economic sanctions had only resumed six months earlier, Iranians hadn't yet faced severe financial difficulty. If negotiated one year later, the Abe initiative might have resulted in the Iranian attitude being more flexible.

Abe's failed full-scale diplomatic initiative in 2019 ended Japan's realpolitik approach toward Iran. Japan has since kept its distance from the Islamic Republic of Iran owing to a focus on Japan-US relations.

GROWING JAPANESE SECURITY CONCERNS

Why? Over the past decade, geopolitical tensions in the Asia-Pacific initiated by North Korea and China are growing. North Korea continues to develop ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons that threaten Japan. China is rapidly expanding its military power and behaving with a more assertive attitude towards its neighbors, including Japan.

In particular, China claims sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands, which are tiny, deserted islands close to Taiwan that have a significant strategic value for China as access to the Pacific Ocean. China is using "salami-slicing tactics" to send first hundreds of fishing boats, followed by coast guard ships on the pretext of protecting Chinese fishing boats, to drive off Japanese fishing boats. Through these measures, China intends to undermine Japan's effective control of the Senkaku Islands.

Ironically, when US power was overwhelming in the Indo-Pacific region, Japanese national security, protected by the US, was taken for granted by the Japanese. The Japanese didn't hesitate to "agree to disagree" with the US on Iran. But now, with growing threats from North Korea and China, while US military power appears to be overstretched particularly in Europe and in the Middle East, Japan's security environment has changed.

Today Japan needs to be more confident about the US commitment to its security, leaving no room to "agree to disagree" with the US over Iran. The Iranian people may have recognized a gradual but fundamental change in the Japanese attitude toward them. Iran can no longer count on Japan as a friend in need. ✳

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Photo credit: IMAGO/APAimages via Reuters Connect

HIDDEN DISCORD IN THE RUSSIA–IRAN ALLIANCE

by Ksenia Svetlova

When Iran's President Raisi died in a helicopter crash in May, President Putin expressed condolences and called Raisi a "very reliable partner." Russian Muslims offered prayers for Raisi at Moscow's main mosque, and Russian state television provided continuous updates on the funeral arrangements from Iran.

Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, who also perished in the crash, worked at strengthening ties with Russia. Other than joint drone production, however, the results after two years are not living up to the grand pronouncements and celebratory rhetoric.

ARRESTED DIPLOMATIC DEVELOPMENT

"The efforts to finalize a comprehensive cooperation agreement between Russia and Iran have been temporarily halted due to issues on the Iranian side," Russia news agencies reported by June 11, quoting Zamir Kabulov, director of the Second Asian Department of the Russian Foreign Ministry. With rumors spreading, both Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov clarified that the delay was because of Iran's early presidential elections, following the death of President Raisi, and unspecified "parliamentary procedures in Iran."

Work began on a bilateral framework agreement in January 2022, following President Raisi's visit to Moscow. It was supposed to redefine relations between the two countries. However, after two years of negotiations, the Russian Foreign Ministry is still unable to provide an estimated timeframe for the agreement's conclusion.

BROTHERS IN ARMS

In 2022, Iran agreed to supply Russia with thousands of drones for use in Ukraine. Every Russian and every Ukrainian has heard by now about "Shaheds" – the cheap but lethal Iranian drones that are pounding Ukrainian cities. In return, Russia agreed to furnish Iran with advanced fighter jets and air defense technology.

According to US intelligence and media reports, Russia has built a drone factory in cooperation with Iran east of Moscow, in the Alabuga special economic zone. This factory is expected to produce thousands of Iranian Shahed-136 drones, as well as other types of drones with upgraded capabilities. The direct danger to Ukraine is evident, but Israel and Saudi Arabia should also be worried, as these

Wreckage of an Iranian-made Shahed drone shot down in Chernihiv, Ukraine, May 2023. Photo credit: Handout / Latin America News Agency via Reuters Connect

drones might also find their way to the Middle East. Data on Russian launches of Shahed drones collected by the Ukrainian military indicate that Alabuga is ahead of production schedule and has already supplied approximately 4500 of the promised 6000 drones as of late April 2024.

What about the Russian part of the deal? In December 2022, the official Iranian press agency IRNA announced that Russian SU-25 stealth fighter jets would be delivered to Tehran by March 2023. As of June 2024, no fighter jets have been delivered. Also, there were reports of Russia supplying Iran with advanced air defense weapons, potentially including the S-400 system, and Mi-28 attack helicopters, but again no delivery as yet.

The reasons are not clear: Russia might be unwilling to supply Iran with these advanced technologies, or Iran might not have the funds to pay for them, or both.

GREAT ECONOMIC EXPECTATIONS, MIXED RESULTS

In 2022, Moscow and Tehran agreed to settle trade balances in national currencies and connect the Russian Mir and Iranian Shetab bank payment systems. Iranian

officials suggested that Tehran could serve as a transport hub for Russian imports and exports. The National Iran Oil Company and Russia's Gazprom signed a $40 billion memorandum of understanding. In 2023, VTB Bank became the first Russian bank to open a representative office in Iran (but then quickly denied that fact).

Despite the fanfare, annual two-way trade between Russia and Iran declined to around $4 billion in 2023. By comparison, in 2022 the annual two-way trade between Russia and Turkey reached over $62 billion. These official trade statistics do not include military sales; Iran has repeatedly denied it sends weapons to Russia nor is Moscow eager to disclose its military sales. It's also the case that the official figures don't count Russian wheat which probably enters Iran through various unreported schemes.

Nevertheless, the inability to elevate bilateral relations and translate them into growing economic cooperation is telling. Despite some initial enthusiasm, Russian products haven't conquered the Iranian markets. Both countries are blocked from using the SWIFT network of international payments; transfers are made through Russian Mir Business Bank. The problem is that Mir is forced to use an official Iranian foreign currency rate that is very different from the market rate. Therefore, there is little incentive for Russian businessmen to trade with Iran and get paid in rials at an artificial rate.

Another point of friction is shipping. Russia and Iran compete with each other to use old tankers to carry their oil exports. These tankers are poorly insured or not insured at all, and therefore in high demand among the club of sanctioned countries.

Meanwhile, Russia is promoting a new transport route to Iran. Last May it issued a $1.4 billion loan to Iran to start building a railway that would connect the Iranian cities of Rasht and Astara, the latter of which is on the border with Azerbaijan. This would be part of a rail route moving cargo supplies from St. Petersburg on the Baltic to Bandar Abbas on the Persian Gulf. The idea is to build a "sanctions-proof" route. According to the Russian press, construction of this project will be launched later in 2024 and will take five to six years, if things go as planned. India is a potential partner in this project, though a major investment in Iranian infrastructure might risk its relationship with the US.

CONCLUSION

Russia and Iran seek to shape a new global order and weaken the West. They plan railroads that will be "sanctions-proof," share intelligence and work together on drone production. Facing Western pressure, they are compelled to ally with each other.

Weakening this alliance are mutual suspicions and lack of economic opportunities, exacerbated by Western sanctions. Both countries are cash-strapped. Sustained pressure through sanctions and secondary sanctions is necessary. But it will require unity in the West and the support of others, especially India and the Gulf states. ✳

KSENIA SVETLOVA

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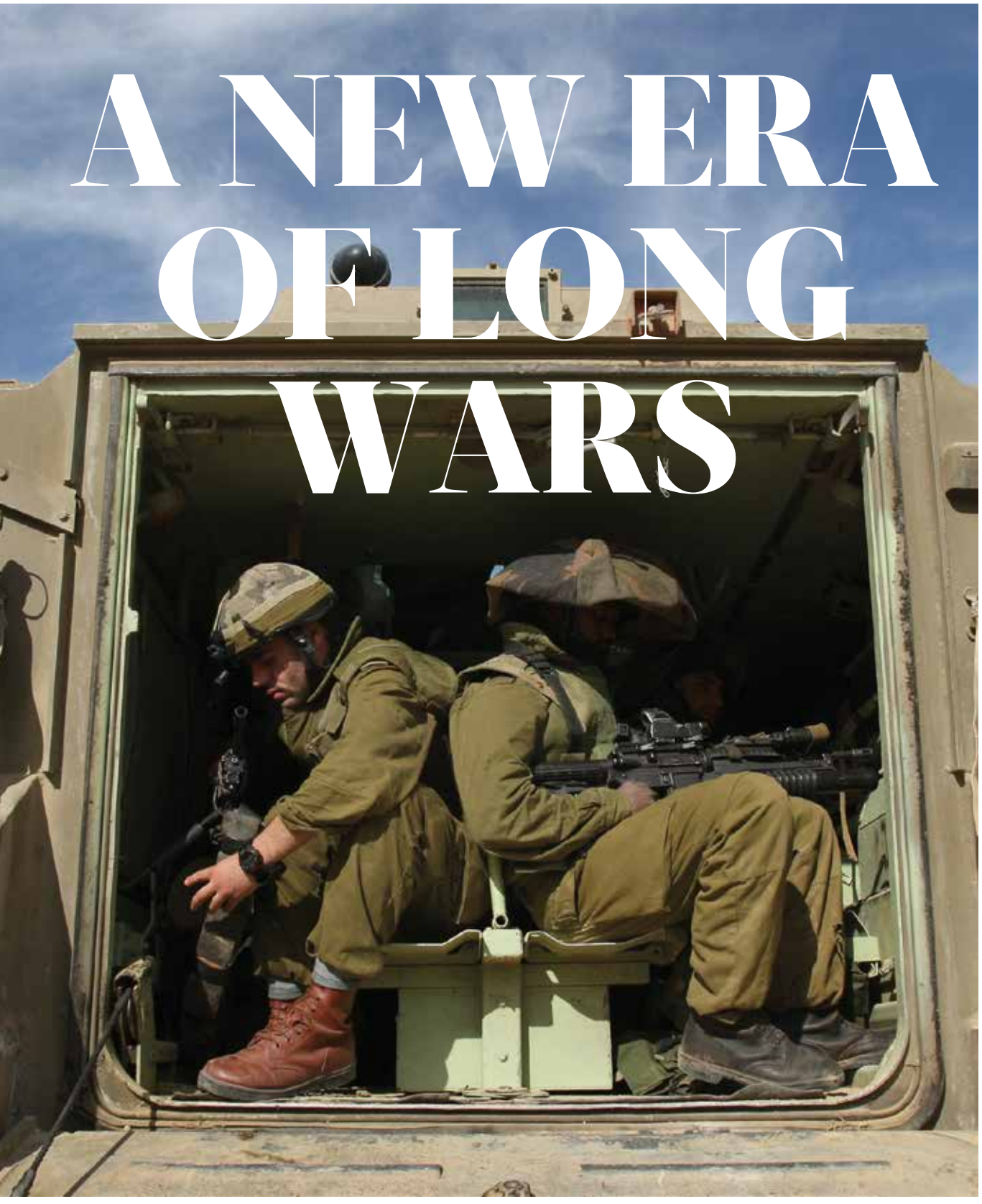
Ukrainian soldiers (left, photo credit: Reuters/Marko Djurica), Israeli Soldiers (right, photo credit: Reuters/Baz Ratner).

A NEW ERA OF LONG WARS



BY YAAKOV LAPPIN

The conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine signal a shift in the nature of warfare. The advent of long wars will affect both military strategy and broader national decision-making. Long wars require not just military readiness but also economic planning, especially civilian and military long-term logistical planning.

For Israel, this is a particularly challenging development, as the country's defense establishment has spent decades operating under a doctrine based on winning short wars against conventional armies. In fact, the IDF's Momentum Plan, in effect between 2020 to 2024, was based on enabling the Israeli military to do just that – achieve rapid victories over adversaries.

Historically, Israeli strategy was characterized by swift, decisive victories, achieved by calling up mass reserves and taking the fight into enemy territory. This approach owed to Israel's small size, lack of strategic depth, and limited national resources. The idea was to achieve lengthy periods of stability and prosperity between conflicts.

Israel's enemies had other plans. They entrenched themselves as terror armies within and underneath civilian areas in both Gaza and Lebanon, leading to longer wars.

WARS IN GAZA AND LEBANON

The prolonged engagement in Gaza and the accompanying medium-term conflict with Hizbullah in Lebanon suggest the need for a paradigm shift towards sustainable approaches to combat that can endure over time.

Eran Ortal, former the head of the Dado Center for Interdisciplinary Military Studies, raised the concept of "sustainable strategy" in a April 2018 paper. A sustainable strategy goes beyond merely countering threats; it must allow a nation to persist in a military campaign by adapting to evolving threats and managing internal tensions. For Israel, this means balancing operational resilience and resource management while maintaining strategic agility.

Militarily, one of the lessons going forward is that Israel must significantly enlarge – and keep enlarging – its stockpile of munitions. This involves a combination of diversifying sources of import of ammunition and, where feasible, boosting domestic production.

Israel cannot be sure that the United States will be able to keep supplying it with the ammunition at the pace that Israel needs, since other American allies – Ukraine today and possibly Taiwan in the future – could compete with Israeli requirements for key supplies like artillery and tank shells.

The Israeli Defense Ministry's recent shift towards greater domestic production of ammunition, following the exposure of Israel's over-dependence on the United States, is a step towards this sustainability.

The Defense Ministry's plan, known as Independence, aims to reduce reliance on the United States by boosting domestic production of air-to-ground munitions and shells. This strategy includes substantial orders to local defense firms. However, the Ministry must also consider purchasing affordable munitions from abroad to maintain a sufficient stockpile for wartime.

The question of where to procure munitions such as mortar shells and bombs – domestically or abroad – should be guided mainly by economics. It may be more cost-effective to procure them abroad. It is not economical for Israel to simply start producing all of its own ammunition, when some of it can be purchased from other suppliers, such as countries in eastern Europe and Asia, more cheaply.

There is a political factor as well. Relying on emergency imports from the US creates a dangerous level of dependence on the latest whims and interests of the White House, which no one can assure will always line up with Israel's own interests. In addition, certain munitions, like Iron Dome interceptors, must be produced in Israel for strategic reasons.

The size of the weapons stockpile on the eve of the war is more important than a country's ability to import arms or produce them after the war breaks out. Domestic production will not be able to keep up with the rate of wartime usage. The key is to ensure that Israel can amass a substantial stockpile swiftly before the next lengthy war begins.

The IDF's Galilee Rose war drill, held in February 2021, simulating extensive air strikes on Hizbullah targets, highlights the scale of munitions required for a prolonged conflict.

The exercise revealed that the Israeli Air Force would need to strike approximately 3,000 enemy targets every 24 hours, suggesting that in the first three weeks of a full-scale war against Hizbullah, the Air Force alone would likely require at least 60,000 air-to-ground munitions. A longer war could easily see that number rise to around 100,000.

These numbers go far beyond what Israel was likely stockpiling on the eve of the October 7 Hamas attack, and serve as a reminder that it is too easy to underestimate how quickly ammunition runs out in lengthy wars. The fact that Israel required hundreds of US cargo flights and shipments of ammunition during the Gaza war is testament to the tendency to dangerously underestimate the length of wars.

The scenario of a drawn-out conflict with Hizbullah means Israel must also stockpile food, medicine, and fuel, and ensure that every sector of the economy can function, meaning that government planners must look beyond military affairs, according to former Israeli intelligence officer Doron Tamir.

WAR IN UKRAINE

With a population of 45 million, Ukraine has demonstrated resilience and unity in the face of significant losses. The protracted conflict with Russia, which boasts a population of 150 million, underscores the importance of sustained military and economic efforts. Israel, with its smaller population and geographical size, must draw lessons from Ukraine's endurance.

Russia was surprised by the length of the war that it launched, having falsely assessed that its initial February 2022 armored ground offensive, aimed at seizing Kyiv from the north and territories in the east, would quickly topple the Ukrainian state and force it into submission.

As Russia's tanks, armored personnel carriers, and trucks were destroyed in convoys targeted by anti-tank missiles on long roads, Moscow gradually realized that it would have to rearrange its entire economy, military, and international relations to remain in a lengthy war.

Israel must be prepared for potentially simultaneous conflicts with Hizbullah and Iran, which could be triggered either by a strike on the Iranian nuclear program or by Iran joining a war in Lebanon. This kind of long war further underscores the need for readiness and preparation for worst-case scenarios. ✳

YAAKOV LAPPIN

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Navy ships from NATO member nations in sail.
Photo credit: ZUMAPRESS.com via Reuters Connect

ASSURING IN THE

DETERRENCE MEDITERRANEAN

BY JAMES FOGGO

It is springtime in the Mediterranean, as cruise ships busily make their way from port to port in some of the popular tourist destinations like Lisbon, Naples, the Adriatic Coast, and the Greek Isles. The Med looks peaceful to the people in the lounge chairs of those ships. However, such tranquility is only guaranteed by the gray giants that cruise the same waters, the multi-national aircraft carriers and support ships of NATO navies. These huge ships, displacing up to 90,000 tons, are capable of generating massive destructive power, but that is not their mission. Rather their mission is one of deterrence, and so far, they are doing an excellent job.

NATO's Striking and Support Forces, headquartered in Lisbon, hold an annual exercise, a recurring "Peacetime Vigilance Activity" now in its seventh year. This year's iteration was larger than any of the prior six, involving more ships and more NATO members, all under the command of US Navy Vice-Admiral Tom Ishee.

Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, the father of the American nuclear navy, had a favorite Latin expression: Si vis pacem, para bellum... which translates as, "If you want peace, prepare for war."

Now let's examine the last six months in the Mediterranean theater of operations. For many years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has fomented violence on Western allies and their partners through its proxies that include the Houthis of Yemen, Hizbullah in Lebanon, and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, as well as a vast network of other affiliated violent extremist organizations.

When Iran's partner, Hamas, invaded Israel on October 7, the Western response was swift and effective. The United States dispatched two aircraft carrier strike groups to the region—USS Gerald R. Ford and USS Dwight D. Eisenhower. The Ford was extended on station and returned home after her maiden deployment last Christmas. USS Eisenhower has completed her mission and will return home soon.

The presence of these two aircraft carrier strike groups and their associated support ships probably deterred further attacks by the terrorist group Hizbullah in Lebanon and other violent extremist organizations operating in the theater. Furthermore, USS Eisenhower was on scene and engaged on 13 April when Iran launched a barrage of over 170 drones, over 30 cruise missiles, and more than 120 ballistic missiles at Israel. Incredibly, the next day, battle damage assessments indicated that 99% of the Iranian weapons were destroyed before reaching their targets.

So, what will happen now that USS Eisenhower is headed back to the United States? Should we be worried about a spillover of violence in the Middle East to the Mediterranean theater? Who will conduct the air policing missions and sea-based deterrent patrols to ensure that areas of current conflict in Syria, Lebanon, Gaza, Israel, and the Red Sea

do not spill over into the sovereign territories of European allies? Who will ensure that the sea lines of communication around Europe remain open for the safe passage of goods and services and the flow of humanitarian aid to war-torn regions like Ukraine or Gaza?

The answer lies in the strength and capability demonstrated by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO was created in April 1949 with the signing of the Washington Treaty by 12 Allies in Washington, D.C. This year's NATO summit will celebrate NATO's 75 years of existence in Washington in July 2024. Accordingly, the Mediterranean exercise couldn't have happened at a better time.
As USS Eisenhower prepared to depart the Mediterranean theater, NATO assembled four different maritime strike groups from Italy (ITS Cavour); Spain (ESP Juan Carlos I); France (FS Charles de Gaulle); and Türkiye (TCG Anadolu), all operating in consort with a strong message of deterrence from NATO.

This maritime exercise offered three "first-evers." First, France transferred authority for the operations of its nuclear-powered aircraft carrier the FS Charles de Gaulle and its strike group to NATO. That means the 10 percent of the French Navy present on that ship and its associated support elements were working under a NATO flag.

Second, the Turkish Navy showcased its naval capabilities in its new amphibious ship TCG Anadolu, and its accompanying escorts, peforming maritime interdiction operations; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations; and amphibious operations on Sazan Island, off the coast of Albania.

Third, Sweden joined this exercise as a full-fledged NATO ally with liaison officers at NATO headquarters in Lisbon and Swedish Grippen aircraft providing air policing and air support to activities throughout the exercise's expanded area of operations.

NATO's responsibility and reach have grown from a group of 12 founding nations to 32 nations today. NATO therefore provides security and stability for the one billion people that comprise the populations of its member nations.

NATO's Mediterranean forces will continue to do its part under the capable leadership of Vice-Admiral Inshee and his multinational staff. According to a NATO spokesperson:

Peacetime vigilance activities have become ingrained in the NATO Strike Force's operational routine, delivering effects across sea, air, and land domains to provide deterrence and reassurance while enhancing Allied connectivity. Ranging from the Central Mediterranean to the Black Sea region and all the way up to the Baltic Sea, and covering three Joint Operations Areas these forces assert NATO's capability to protect every inch of Allied territory with the naval resources that are organic to the theatre.

We can't afford to have it any other way. ✳

JAMES FOGGO

Admiral James G. Foggo, US Navy (ret.) is the Dean of the Center for Maritime Strategy and a member of the board of directors of the JST. He is the former commander of US Naval Forces Europe and Africa, and Allied Joint Force Command, Naples. He commanded NATO joint exercises (Baltic Operations) in 2015 and 2016 as well as Exercise Trident Juncture in 2018.

Photo credit: Reuters/Umit Bektas

TURKEY AND ISRAEL TIES AT LOW EBB, BUT COULD RECOVER

BY DOV S. ZAKHEIM

Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has a rocky relationship with Israel and bilateral relations have currently reached a nadir. But Erdoğan pursues a transactional foreign policy in general and, if interests re-align, he could once again restore robust relations with Israel.

A long-time supporter of Hamas, Erdoğan bitterly criticized Israel's 2008 incursion into Gaza that took place shortly after Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert visited Ankara. Two years later, Turkey severed diplomatic relations with Israel in the aftermath of the 2010 Mavi Marmara incident, named after a ship in the flotilla sponsored by the Turkish Foundation for Human Rights and intending to break the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip. Nine Turkish citizens died and others were injured when Israeli naval special forces boarded the ship.

When he broke off relations in 2010, however, Erdoğan did not interfere with Turkish-Israeli trade, which at the time amounted to a total two-way volume of $3.5 billion. In 2016, Erdoğan reversed himself, Ankara re-established formal ties with Israel, and trade nearly tripled between the two countries. Israel's exports to Turkey amounted to $2.3 billion in 2022, the last full year before the current Hamas war; Turkish exports to Israel that year totaled $7 billion. They dropped to $5.4 billion in 2023, owing no doubt at least in part to the outbreak of the Gaza war.

Even after the 2023 dip in trade, Turkey remained Israel's fourth largest trading partner. And two-way Turkey-Israel trade was the largest non-hydrocarbon trading relationship in the Middle East (where regional integration is thin overall).

Political relations also continued to warm prior to the Gaza war. Erdoğan welcomed Israeli president Isaac Herzog to Ankara in March 2022, calling the visit "historic" and a "turning point" between the two states; it was the first such visit in fifteen years. Nevertheless, it came as no surprise that Erdoğan bitterly criticized Israel's response to the October 7 Hamas attack.

The tone of Erdoğan's attacks has become ever more venomous. He has spoken of Israeli genocide and subsequently asserted that Israel was running "Nazi camps." Still, for several months after the onset of the conflict, he appeared to give the terrorist organization little more than verbal support.

Turkey did cancel joint events and Erdoğan recalled his ambassador to Israel for "consultations" but trade with the Jewish state continued at or near pre-war levels until April 2024, when, arguing that it needed to inspect all goods entering Gaza, Israel prohibited Turkish cargo aircraft from dropping humanitarian supplies to the embattled Strip. Ankara immediately retaliated by imposing restrictions on exports to Israel of 54 products including

Erdoğan meets with Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Istanbul, April 2024.
Photo credit: IMAGO/APAimages via Reuters Connect

aluminum, steel, construction products, jet fuel and chemical fertilizers. Israel in turn banned some Turkish products.

Even then some trade continued apace, until the first days of May, when Erdoğan announced a complete export cut off – although refraining from immediate implementation of the measure. The Turkish Ministry of Trade gave companies three months to fulfill their existing orders, via third countries. In addition, and perhaps more revealing of Ankara's economic priorities, Turkey said it was stopping exports to Israel only during the duration of the Gaza war.

The war could end before the three-month deadline comes into force, and normal trade relations could resume in the wake of a ceasefire in Gaza. There is growing pressure on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, both inside Israel and from Washington and Europe, to terminate the conflict in exchange for the release of hostages and Saudi recognition of Israel. That pressure has intensified with both Defense Minister Yoav Gallant's public criticism of Netanyahu's management of the war followed by former Defense and Deputy Prime Minister Benny Gantz's threat to leave the war cabinet and the governing coalition on June 8. Should the war end, or Netanyahu's government fall before August, Erdoğan may well reverse himself once more, as he has done in the past.

Israel retaliated against Erdoğan's ban. Less than three weeks after the Turkish president's announcement, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, whose Religious Zionist party constitutes a far-right pillar of the Netanyahu coalition government, announced that Israel would revoke its free trade agreement with Turkey. Moreover, unlike the Turkish ban, Smotrich's announcement indicated that Israel's withdrawal from the free trade agreement would remain in force as long as Erdoğan remained president of Turkey – at least through his five-year term that ends in 2028. Given previous levels of trade between the two countries, Ankara and Jerusalem were engaging in what could only be termed economic stupidity.

There are reasons for optimism about the future Israel-Turkey relationship. Both Israel and Turkey share interests in the Caucasus, where they support Azerbaijan's Aliev regime. Israel supplied at least seventy percent of Baku's armaments until 2020. In 2023 Israel supplied Baku with weapons that contributed to its successful seizure of the hotly contested Nagorno-Karabakh region. Turkey has furnished the Azeris with Turkish arms and conducted joint military exercises since 2020. And Ankara has provided political support to Baku in its conflict with Armenia ever since Azerbaijan achieved its independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Iran also maintains neighborly relations with Azerbaijan, but it publicly protests the country's relations with what it calls the "Zionist entity." In contrast, Erdoğan has said little about Israeli-Azeri relations. [Iranian president Ibrahim Raisi died returning via helicopter from a ceremony on the Iranian-Azeri border to mark the completion of the Qiz-Qalasi Dam, a joint project between the two countries, and the third such jointly constructed dam.]

The conditions placed on Ankara's limited trade cutoff with Israel, like Erdoğan's relative silence on Israel-Azerbaijan ties, indicate that the Turkish strongman has not ruled out the possibility of yet another about-face in his relations with the Jewish state. ✳

DOV S. ZAKHEIM

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THE FAILURE OF THE "ECONOMI PEACE" MODEL IN THE MIDDLE

C

EAST

BY DORON MATZA

On September 26, 2021, Israel's then Prime Minister Naftali Bennet took the podium at the UN General Assembly and laid out a grand vision for the Middle East. It was a modernist, advanced, technological future (as befitted Bennet, a former high-tech entrepreneur) in which Israel would play a major role – focused upon a world of economic utility rather than identity politics.

Bennet was not the first to have this vision. He echoed the strategy pursued since 2009 by governments led by Binyamin Netanyahu. At its core is the idea of an "economic peace," a regional experiment in which Israel has been engaged for at least 15 years.

A VISION OF MODERNISM AND PROSPERITY

The roots of "economic peace" date to the early days of the Zionist movement, specifically to Theodore Herzl's utopian novel Altneuland ("Old-New Land") published in 1902, in which the pull of modernity is clearly the moving force of his political project.

As Herzl envisioned it, Zionism would bring to the "East" the promise of progress, modernization and development, and fulfill a significant moral duty towards people now degraded by neglect and poverty. Side by side with this moral purpose, he saw this mission as a strategic appeal to the peoples of the region which would induce them to accept the presence of the Jewish national movement. Herzl's State of the Jews was supposed to be based on a western European, inclusive model, i.e., one that the Arabs of the land could be part of, owing to their own self-interest and the recognition of the benefits the Zionist movement can bring.

Herzl's vision was followed by other Zionist leaders. In 1919, Chaim Weizmann signed an agreement with Prince Faisal, the son of the Hashemite King of the Hejaz (an agreement left unfulfilled, because the French soon drove the Hashemites out of Syria) which articulated this expectation of economic benefits. David Ben-Gurion and his socialist associates initially posited that Zionist progressive influence could lead to the liberation of the Palestinian Arab serfs from the domination of their landowners, and in return those former serfs would recognize the Jewish right to self-determination. Even Ze'ev Jabotinsky, while warning against such illusions, hoped that "there shall live in peace and prosperity the Son of Arabia, the Son of Nazareth, and mine own Son."

The Abraham Accords signing ceremony at The White House, September 15, 2020.
Photo credit: Oliver Contreras/Sipa USA via Reuters Connect

In the early years of the Israeli state, despite the hostilities, the imprint of the economic peace vision lingered, as modernity was again being put on offer as a tool of transforming relations with neighboring Arab states.

PARTIAL REALIZATION OF THE "ECONOMIC PEACE"

By the 1990s, Shimon Peres, one of the architects of the Oslo Accords with the PLO, articulated a new version of this concept – a "New Middle East" that was technologically advanced and economically integrated.

But Peres was not to realize this vision. More than any single leader, it was the economic transformation of Israel into an affluent, technologically innovative "Start-Up Nation" that moved the vision forward. There was some support as well among the hopes generated in the Arab countries in the upheavals that began in late 2010 – the "Arab Spring" – which were about the quest both for liberation from repressive autocracies and for redistribution of wealth and reversal of the global patterns of growing inequality. It was under these circumstances that Israel found the opening enabling it to translate Herzl's ideas of economic benefit into a strategy, utilizing the relative advantages Israel has acquired in recent decades.

Thus in the early years of the decade 2010-2020, It became possible for Israel to link up

economy, diplomacy and politics and propose the following to its Arab neighbors: growth, stability and modernization in return for the suppression of Islamist ambitions and the traditional identity politics of the Middle East. Israel re-shaped its relationships with the region in three circles, with a common thread through all: the nearest, with Israel's Arab citizens; then with the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; and further afield with the neighbors – Egypt and Jordan – as well as with the Gulf states and Morocco.

With the Arab citizens of Israel, the Netanyahu governments implemented an unprecedented policy of integration into the national economy: significant sums were directed towards narrowing socio-economic gaps, improving infrastructure in Arab communities and promoting higher education. This culminated with the Bennet-Lapid government of 2021-2022, in which political cooperation with the Arab community reached a new level when an Israeli Arab political party joined a governing coalition for the first time in Israel's history.

Similar policies were applied in the West Bank. Israel generated a pattern of "cooperation amidst a conflict" with Mahmoud Abbas' Palestinian Authority: the government offered access to the Israeli economy and labor market in return for security cooperation.

Egypt and Jordan were offered benefits of their own – specifically, natural gas and water – while the culmination of the economic peace efforts came with the Abraham Accords of 2020, bringing to light a decade or more of semi-covert cooperation between Israel and some of the Gulf dynasties. The main aspect of these relationships was economic, but there was also a common security interest vis-à-vis the common Iranian threat.

SUCCESS AND BACKLASH

This grand strategy, economic and utilitarian, in effect broke the region into two camps: that of the beneficiaries, including those who engineered the new system or shared in it,

The Israeli city of Lod, after clashes between Israeli Arab demonstrators and police, May 2021.
Photo credit: Reuters/Ronen Zvulun

willingly (such as the Gulf states) or unwillingly (such as the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank); and that of the resistance whose inspiration was the "Old" Middle East as defined by nationalist and Islamist identity politics. In the last two decades the beneficiaries seemed to be gaining ground at the expense of the resistance, so much so that the region seemed to be on the verge of realizing Francis Fukuyama's global notion of the "End of History." But this proved to be an illusion.

Israel indeed broadened the scope of its relations in the region, signed new agreements, enjoyed relative security and stability, and in coordination with the Trump administration tried to apply the logic of economic tools even further: pressuring Iran through sanctions to induce it to abandon its nuclear project and take a place in the camp of beneficiaries, offering inducements to the rogue elements in the neighborhood, above all Hamas but also Hizbullah, insofar as the maritime delineation agreement with Lebanon was supposed to give Lebanon hope for gas income, in return for moderating Hizbullah activism.

But while Israel was trying to re-define the Middle East through economic strategies, cracks began to appear. The camp of resistance formulated an alternative vision of the power of identity politics and of the Jewish-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab conflicts. The camp of resistance accentuated the fissures between those who benefited from economic cooperation with Israel (such as the Palestinian Authority elites) and those who felt left behind (including peripheral elements of Israeli Arab society in the mixed Arab-Jewish cities in Israel, who generated riots in May 2021).

The economic peace model generated self-delusional assumptions within the Israeli establishment, which began to see it not only as a tool of conflict management, but as a way of bringing the entire conflict to its end. This delusion, in turn, blurred Israel's grasp of actual realities on the ground and reduced the investment in the implements of hard power – the military, the police, the security services – which should have been at the ready if the strategy failed.

The rejection by peripheral groups – geographically, sociologically or politically marginalized – sought to break the rules of the game that the utilitarian center tried to impose. This breakdown was joined, gradually, by the Iranians, pro-Iranian militias in Syria and Iraq, and Hizbullah, which began to challenge Israel in the north. Thus a new campaign gained momentum, with repeated "pinpricks" – terror, short rounds of warfare, occasional use of missiles – aimed at undermining the Israeli strategic order.

This new effort reached a crescendo in the assault on October 7, 2023, with a massive rocket attack coupled with the attempted conquest of the border communities and the murder, rape, and abduction of Israelis.

The timing of the Hamas invasion serves as proof that the dismantling of the "economic peace" concept was uppermost in the minds of the resistance camp. It came when efforts to bring about Saudi-Israeli normalization seemed to almost mature – which would have consolidated the Abraham Accords architecture. The assault was deliberately designed to lead to a regression back to the ideological identity politics of the Middle East and the familiar fault lines – Zionists vs. Arabs, Jews vs. Muslims – and bring the Palestinian question, which had seemed to fade from the regional agenda, back to center stage.

WHERE CAN THE ECONOMIC VISION GO NOW?

Eight months into the Gaza war, the resistance has registered a success in challenging the foundations of the new regional order. True, Hamas has been badly mauled but it is not yet defeated. The Iranian attack on Israel on April 14 was defeated, but the US, upon whom the Gulf states rely for their security, failed to deter Tehran from launching it. The logic of common

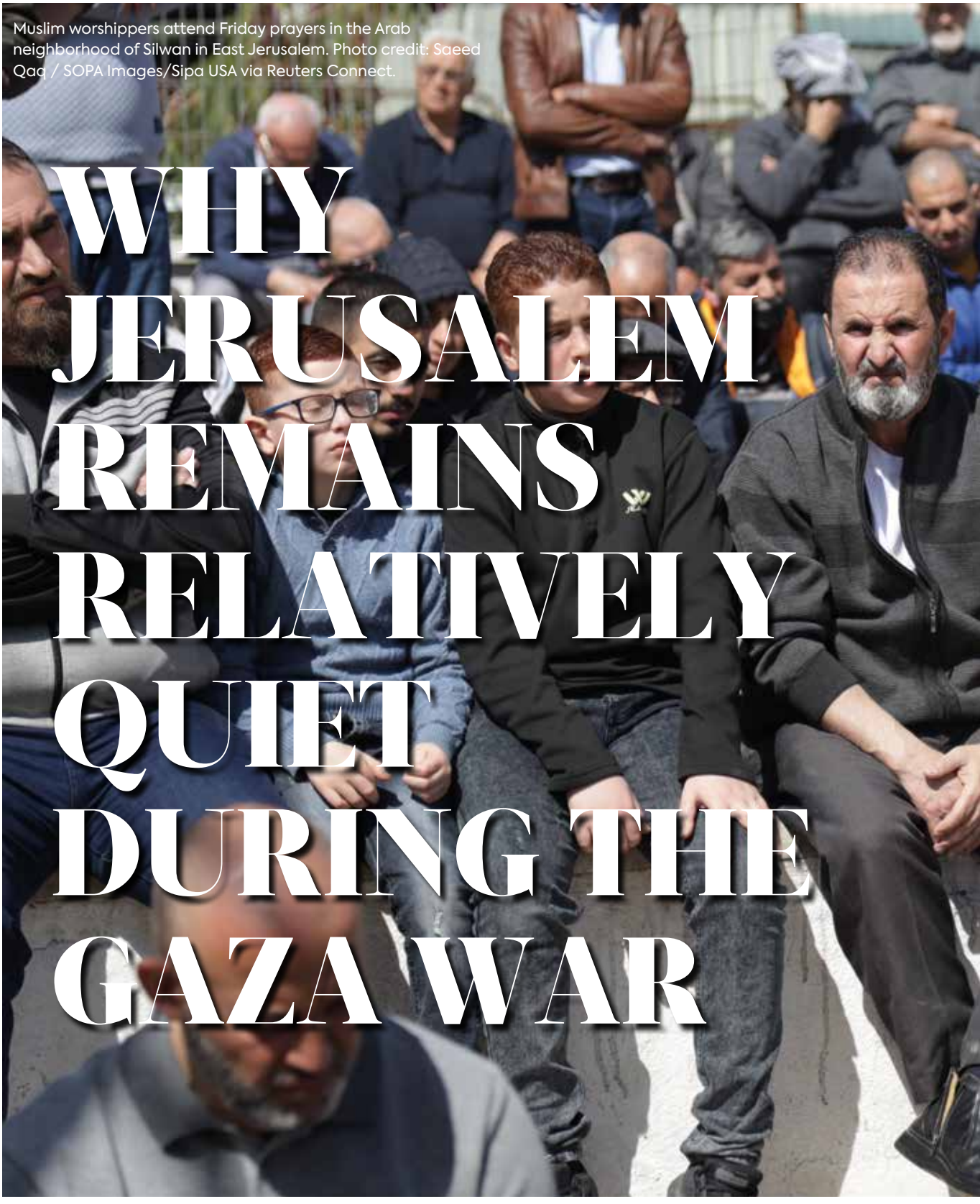
interests – economic and military – is still at work; but overall the region seems to be sliding back to the identity and ideological patterns of the 20th century.

The war undid Israel's stable security environment and undercuts its economic prowess and technological edge. The Palestinian question is central once again, so that even Israel's Abraham Accords partners – and the would-be new partner, Saudi Arabia – insist on conditioning the relationship on progress towards a solution, based on the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002. The notions of "arrangements" and even cooperation between rivals have been replaced by stark, classical binary definitions of war versus peace. Even Israeli internal politics, which in his hopeful UN speech Bennet described as an experiment in bringing together left and right, Jews and Arabs, based on the discourse of benefits, have been largely dominated once again by sharp ideological discourse and division.

The region is thus facing a complex reality, in which the "New Middle East" – utilitarian, economic, pragmatic – is severely challenged by the "Old" – ideological, political, totalitarian. This shift of fortunes, paralleled by similar reversals of economic integration elsewhere from Ukraine to Taiwan, will require those who still want to believe in the benefits of peace to adopt, paradoxically, aspects of the rationale of their enemies. This will require a painful adjustment, which for Israel means the abandonment of the illusions of recent decades and a restructuring – military, social, political and ideological – which will enable it to prosecute the regional war which began on October 7 and which is very far from over. ✳

DORON MATZA

Doron Matza, a former senior Israeli intelligence officer, is a lecturer in Middle Eastern affairs at Ahva College.



Muslim worshippers attend Friday prayers in the Arab neighborhood of Silwan in East Jerusalem. Photo credit: Saeed Qaq / SOPA Images/Sipa USA via Reuters Connect.

WHY JERUSALEM REMAINS RELATIVELY QUIET DURING THE GAZA WAR

BY EYTAN LAUB

Recently I called up an Arab friend in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Kufr 'Aqab. Having just returned from Israeli military reserve duty, I felt out of the loop and wanted to know what's happening, especially why East Jerusalem's Arab population seemed to react to this war differently than it had in previous rounds of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

My friend laughed, but answered in earnest. Listen, he said, we in Kufr 'Aqab have much to lose. We already fear that any confrontation would have consequences. Making trouble may put our residence rights at risk. Furthermore, he added, not a few in the neighborhood, including his own family, have applied for Israeli citizenship and participating in disturbances would hardly help with that.

Most Maqdisiyyin, the Palestinians of East Jerusalem, are permanent residents but not citizens of Israel. They have equal rights under Israeli law to receive Israeli social insurance and Jerusalem municipal services and to vote in municipal elections. But the great majority have chosen not to apply for citizenship in the state, though they have the legal ability to do so.

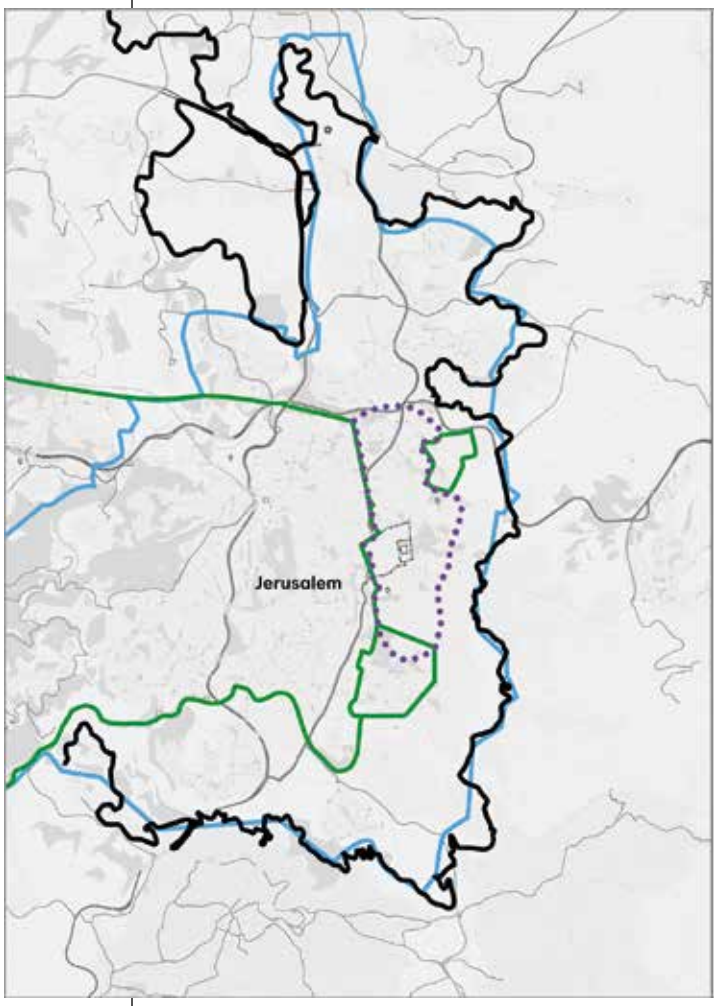
In recent years, the numbers of East Jerusalemites applying for Israeli citizenship has risen, as the social stigma of becoming Israeli has begun to erode and despite an Israeli naturalization process that can take years and result in denial (because of the requirement to show Jerusalem residence or the need to pass a Hebrew language test). The number of East Jerusalemites granted citizenship has also risen, from 827 in 2009 to over 1,600 in 2020.

To make sense of the situation faced by my friend, one needs to understand the specifics of his neighborhood of Kufr 'Aqab, which lies outside the separation barrier erected twenty years ago. There may be an emerging new reality in East Jerusalem which offers both improved conditions and a possibly better future for all in Jerusalem – Jews and Arabs alike.

JERUSALEM AS SYMBOL

This relative calm is all the more striking since Jerusalem, Al-Quds or the Holy One, is in many ways the symbolic focal point of the conflict. The names for Hamas operations invoke Jerusalem: in May 2021, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad in Gaza launched rockets into Israel under the banner of Ma'arakat Sayf al-Quds, The Sword of Jerusalem Operation, and now we are in the midst of Tufan al-Aqsa, the Al-Aqsa Flood.

There are several reasons for this centrality of Jerusalem. For centuries, Jerusalem was holy to the Muslims, albeit not the Muslim world's political center. In the 8th century, under Islamic rule, the newly established coastal plain city of Ramleh, with its strategic location on the roads connecting Egypt and Syria, was the administrative capital of the province. In



The Green Line - Armistice border between Israel and Jordan, 1949-1967

East Jerusalem municipal border under Jordanian rule, 1949-1967

The expanded Jerusalem municipal border from 1967-today

The separation barrier between Jerusalem and the West Bank, 2003-today

The Changing Borders of Jerusalem. Map credit: MAPA – mapping and publishing, Eytan Laub, "This is Jerusalem" Organization.

modern times, the Ottomans and then the British (the latter sometimes invoking a return of the Crusaders) restored Jerusalem's political significance as the provincial capital.

The emerging Palestinian national movement, as it took shape in the 1920s, was in need of effective symbols. With Jerusalem as the holiest place for the Jewish faith and the third holiest for Sunni Islam, to which most Palestinians adhere, both sides would rally around this cause. Jerusalem was a central Jewish symbol – Zion is a name for Jerusalem. The Palestinian movement defined itself through the struggle to resist Jewish immigration and Jewish sovereignty. Then as now, the Zionist movement was not perceived by Palestinians as secular in nature, and for many Palestinians it is seen as a religious endeavor ultimately aimed at rebuilding the Temple on the ruins of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The importance and imagery of al-Aqsa and of the Dome of the Rock rose especially after they "fell in the hands of the Jews" in 1967 – serving the Palestinians' quest to turn it into the cause of all Muslims (some 2 billion people) rather than just the Arabs (hundreds of millions) or the Palestinians alone (estimated at less than 15 million overall).

The symbolic centrality of Jerusalem to the conflict places a special burden on the Arabs of East Jerusalem who are torn, as my friend suggested, between their Palestinian, Muslim, and Israeli identities. This dilemma is further complicated as they see themselves as guardians of the Holy Places, a mission entrusted to them by Salah al-Din (Saladin) once he drove the Crusaders out of the city in the late 12th century.

EAST JERUSALEM – THEN AND NOW

After the Six Day War of June 1967, Israel both expanded the borders of East Jerusalem and annexed the expanded municipality to Israel. About 65,000 Arab residents of Jerusalem and a few outlying villages in the expanded municipal area came under Israeli jurisdiction.

Jerusalem neighborhood of Kufr 'Aqab, showing lack of trash collection. Photo credit: Eytan Laub, "This is Jerusalem" Organization.

Today, owing to both natural growth and internal migration from the West Bank into the city, the Arab residents of the city number about 370,000, about 39 percent of the city's population.

Though residents can vote in the municipal elections, few do so. In an interview in the 1990s, the long-serving Labor Party mayor of Jerusalem Teddy Kollek reflected on his legacy: "We bandied slogans about but did not deliver. We promised again and again that we would equalize the rights of Arabs in the city with those of the Jews – empty words... We never gave them a sense of equality before the law. They remained second or third class citizens. Yes, we did provide for sanitation and water supply, but that was because we feared the spread of cholera without it."

Even today, Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem are neglected. Their electricity is still provided by a Palestinian company (which buys it from the Israeli Electric Corporation and then sells it with a 12 percent mark-up); public transport is run by local groups unaffiliated with the regular Israeli corporations; most neighborhoods still lack a master plan, and in the absence of building permits, illegal construction is rampant (which means the Israeli utilities cannot connect such housing to electricity and running water). The rate of poverty among East Jerusalem Arabs is among the highest in Israel – distinctly higher (at 60 percent) than among Israeli Arab citizens (39 percent).

THE CAUSES OF NEGLECT AND THE TURNING POINT

Explanations for this disparate treatment vary and tend to be politically colored. Deliberate ethnic discrimination played a role, perhaps in the minds of some Israeli extremists aimed at encouraging Arabs to leave. On the other hand, rejection of municipal services by Arab residents and even violent assaults on city workers – since their presence was perceived as illegitimate cooperation with the Zionist

occupier – was another reason. The reluctance to vote for city hall added another factor: in a democracy, active constituents are courted and served and these residents generally don't vote.

Another important reason for neglect and now for a shift in municipal policy was the level of uncertainty as to whether Israel would indeed retain East Jerusalem.

In May 1949, Israel annexed, under the terms of the armistice agreement with Jordan, a number of Arab towns and villages in the area of Wadi 'Arah in northern Israel, including the present city of Umm al-Fahm. There, too, Arabs were offered the choice of becoming citizens of the new state of Israel – and within a few years all took the option. In Wadi 'Arah, there was a certainty that their villages and towns would remain in Israel.

This certainty about East Jerusalem's incorporation into Israel didn't exist until recently. In numerous peace negotiations and planning efforts – the Oslo process, the Camp David talks in 2000 between Ehud Barak and Yasser 'Arafat; the Geneva Initiative in 2003, and the Annapolis process launched in 2007 – the envisioned agreement would have involved a partition of Jerusalem under which the Jerusalem Arabs would become residents of the capital of Palestine, not of Israel.

Under such circumstances, can the mayors of Jerusalem be blamed for choosing not to build and develop in neighborhoods which may soon become part of a different state? And can East Jerusalem Arabs be blamed for not participating in the political and urban life in a country that may soon no longer be theirs – all the more so when the future Palestinian state may accuse them of treason if they did participate?

Uncertainty breeds, metaphorically, a fence-sitting mindset. As it turns out, what changed the mindset was a real, physical fence, which defined a border, served as a statement of intent, and changed the realities of daily life in the city.

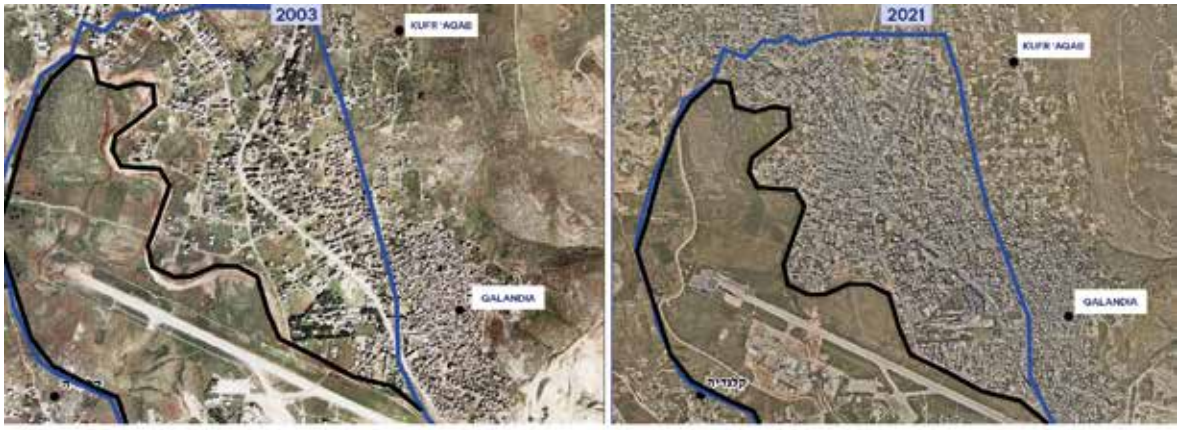
In September 2000, the uprising known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada began. Once again Jerusalem was at center stage. In response to terror attacks, Ariel Sharon's government erected a separation barrier between Israel and the West Bank; Jerusalem was one of the first sites where it was constructed.

The separation barrier for the first time physically separated East Jerusalem from the West Bank. The larger Arab metropolitan area extending from Ramallah, north of Jerusalem, to Bethlehem in the south was severed and fell apart. Families could no longer freely visit their relatives in Jerusalem. A distinct definition of East Jerusalem Arabs, who until then were somewhere between Israeli Arabs and West Bank Arabs, has begun to emerge. With it come their own preferences, beliefs, and political attitudes towards the Palestinian Authority and towards Israel.

Back to my friend in Kafr 'Aqab: The separation barrier does not fully correspond with the municipal border drawn in 1967. Most significantly, the village of Kafr 'Aqab and the Shu'afat refugee camp are inside municipal Jerusalem but outside the separation barrier. The fear of losing Jerusalem residency drove an estimated 80,000 people in these neighborhoods to move inside the separation barrier – driving real estate prices sky high. At the same time, a counter real estate trend emerged: the two neighborhoods outside the fence but inside the municipal borders became a cheaper housing alternative, and one which retained easy access to the West Bank.

Thus, among the 370,000 Arabs in East Jerusalem, spread over 43 square kilometers, no less than 120,000 – nearly a third – crowd into these two neighborhoods of the city which are outside the separation barrier, covering less than 3 square kilometers. The burst of building there began with the barrier, the wish to remain within Jerusalem's (and Israel's) jurisdiction and the realities of the local real estate market.

The barrier removed the key reason for neglect. It made for certainty. The barrier is perceived by both sides as the future border with a Palestinian state to come. Israel has for the first time physically signaled to Arabs of



The Jerusalem neighborhood of Kufr 'Aqab and Atarot airport in 2003, before the West Bank separation barrier was built.

Kufr 'Aqab and Atarot airport in 2021 after the separation barrier was built.

Municipal border between Israel and Jordan, 1949–1967

Barrier line

Photo credit: Eytan Laub, "This is Jerusalem" Organization

East Jerusalem – and to itself – that the Arabs neighborhoods of the city are, and will remain, part of Israel.

THE IMPACT OF CERTAINTY

Certainty changed perceptions and conduct on both sides. The Government of Israel (which has a Ministry for Jerusalem Affairs) is increasingly involved in municipal projects in East Jerusalem including public transport and infrastructure – at the total cost, over two five-year plans (2018-2023, 2023-2028) of 1.45 billion US dollars.

City Hall began to draw up master plans for neighborhoods which for many years had been left unattended, and where most of the construction lacks permits. The city, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, is making significant efforts to regularize the unpermitted housing construction retroactively and thus making possible further development, often in dialogue with residents.

On the Arab side, there is a partial, hesitant opening of doors to Israel – specifically regarding employment and education. Hebrew courses have turned from a taboo sign of tatbi' or normalization with the enemy, to a sought-after privilege; dozens of Hebrew language study locations have popped up. The Israeli high school matriculation program is steadily gaining ground at the expense of the Palestinian one (a steady rise of 30 percent in recent years).

Requests for citizenship are inching up, and my Kufr 'Aqab friend believes that an absolute majority of these requests (including his and his wife's) come from the two Jerusalem neighborhoods beyond the fence, where the residents fear they would lose their link to Israel if a diplomatic compromise leaves them on the Palestinian side of the border.

Thus patterns of migration and registration reflect a preference to remain linked to Israel. This should not be misread, however, as signs that peace is about to break out. Changing attitudes will take years and maybe decades.

For this hope to be achieved in the long run, the road runs through the East Jerusalem education system, where the Palestinian educational system's matriculation tests are still extant (based on the even more anti-Israel version used in Jordan until 1967). The anti-Israel texts taught in UNRWA schools were highlighted in the media after the radical attitudes and activities of UNRWA workers came to the fore during the war in Gaza. Having seen the UNRWA school texts, I share the concerns. On the other hand, elsewhere in the Arab world there have been successful efforts, especially in the UAE, to weed out incitement and Jew-hatred in the school curricula, proof that it can be done. But it has yet to happen in the Palestinian curricula used in East Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, other factors push in the opposite direction, with fears about Al-Aqsa feeding the rise of Islamist movements who reject all negotiated outcomes. According to the Palestinian pollster Khalil Shikaki, in 2017 only 33 percent of East Jerusalemites thought that the Palestinian goal should be a state "from the river to the sea." Now during the Gaza war 59 percent do.

This would not be the first case in which social and economic integration generates as a first reaction both radicalization and national-religious self-definition so as to ward off assimilation. Still, extremists who seek to fire up the streets do not necessarily reflect the real-life wishes of the population.

CONCLUSION

Annexed in 1967, East Jerusalem after 55 years has finally begun to find its way to integration. East Jerusalemites find themselves at the volatile stage of drawing close to a new dispensation on one hand and giving vent to politically radicalized views on the other. The sense of certainty first created by the separation barrier can lead to integration in the city. This does not generate love nor peace, but it does lead to acts of practical reconciliation.

For Israel, certainty should be bolstered by budgetary investments, construction, growing involvement and encouragement to enter local politics. These can slowly steer Jerusalem in the right direction, while neutralizing divisive issues. Working to advance areas of agreement, and avoiding a patronizing approach while dealing firmly with any threats to security and attempts to violently disrupt the integration – this can lead the city to a better future in the long run.

Internationally, those who seek peace would do well to invest in drawing the two sides living in the city together, not apart: reducing the intensity of conflict, monitoring incitement on both sides, and investing in education for tolerance. Good neighborly relations are possible in this city and there are signs that, even in an environment of war in the region, they are growing. ✳

EYTAN LAUB

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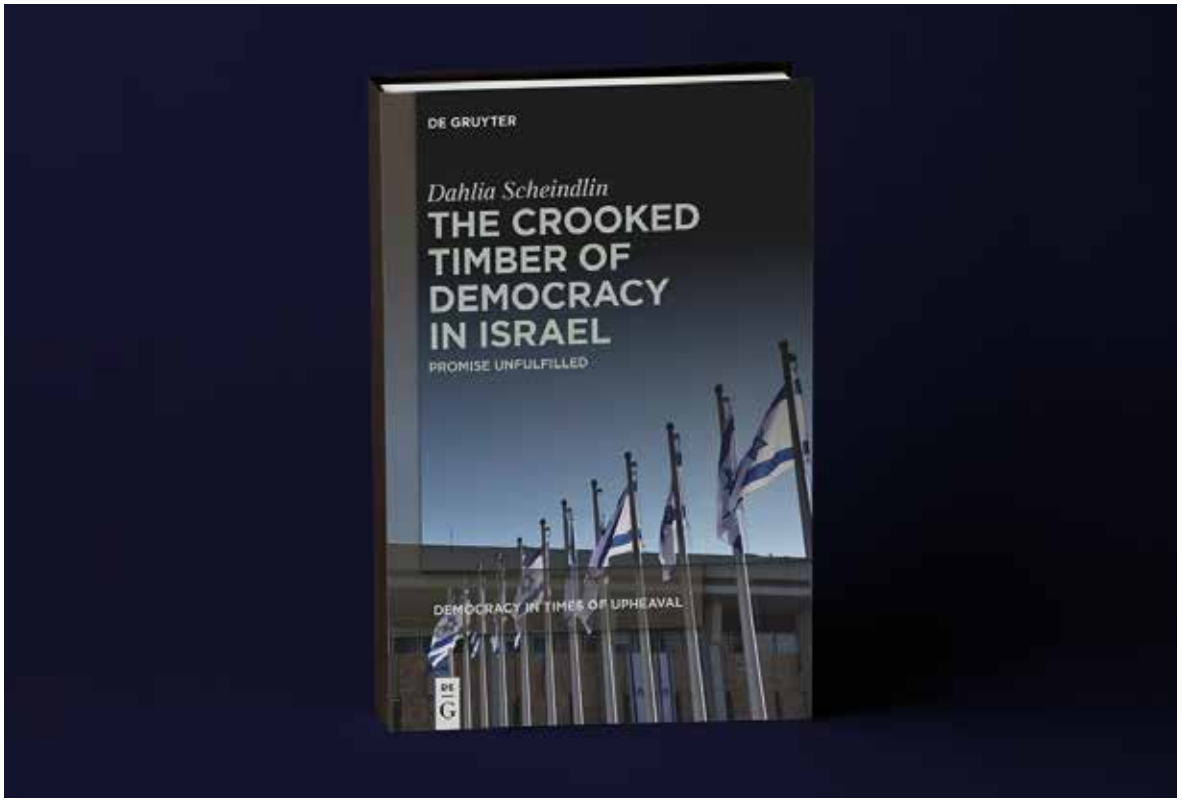

ISRAEL'S DEMOCRACY AND THE PROPHETS OF DOOM

The Crooked Timber of Democracy in Israel, Promise Unfulfilled
by Dahlia Scheindlin

BY ROBERT SILVERMAN

The story is told of an American journalist who went to Israel for a three-day visit. When asked on the second day what she was writing, she replied, 'a book with the title: "Israel, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow."'

Dahlia Scheindlin is the opposite of that journalist. For 25 years, she has lived and worked in Israel as a pollster, consultant and journalist. Now she has written a deeply researched history of the State of Israel's democracy. I learned from this book, despite its infusion of political partisanship, a feature of nearly all coverage of Israel, from left to right. Sometimes after you account for an author's politics on Israel there is little to nothing left of substance in the book or column. But this book has plenty of substance left to enjoy, after necessary adjustments.

To her credit, Scheindlin discloses up front, "I have worked for Israeli political parties in the center and, more often, on the left...a book about democracy is no place to avoid transparency about my own priorities." She concludes not with thoughts about Israel's institutions or internal development but rather about Israel's relationship with the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. "Zionism cannot be predicated on preventing the self-determination of Palestinians and still be democratic."

In fact, Palestinian state building is primarily up to the Palestinians. It should be the subject of a separate book that would focus chiefly on what the Palestinians have done, and not done, to achieve statehood. The great majority of Israelis, according to consistent poll results, are mainly concerned with ongoing Palestinian threats to their security. Blaming Israel for the failure of the Palestinians to create a peaceful, functioning state alongside Israel is a one-sided conclusion that mars this book.

But there are many things this book gets right once it delves into Israel's political history and evolution of its institutions. In her explanation of the pre-state period, Scheindlin gives perhaps the best available short synopsis of three visions of Zionism: Ben Gurion's socialist, statist and Zionist above all; Jabotinsky's liberal democracy and ultranationalism; and religious Zionism's God, then State. She describes a pre-state Jewish political culture resting on political bargaining, consensus-building and power-sharing that led to Israel's parliamentary system.

The chapter on Israel's "stillborn constitution" of 1949-1951 resonates with revelations minor and major. The Free Irish Constitution of 1922 turns out to have been

a major influence on Jewish thinking about a constitution, especially from former Chief Rabbi of Ireland Itzhak Herzog (grandfather of the current president) and Leo Kohn (drafter of the Jewish Agency's proposal who had earlier contributed to the Irish one). She notes that "the religious parties bear the most historical responsibility for preventing a constitution." Orthodox Jewish jurisprudential support for a secular constitution remains an elusive goal for this still young state.

Prime Minister Ben Gurion also opposed the constitution. It would have constrained his and the ruling Labor Party's power at a critical time of state building. Scheindlin brilliantly details his various objections both public and private. She cites his speech to the constitutional committee in July 1949, "The American constitution has turned into a conservative, reactionary institution that stands against the will of the people." Ben Gurion particularly objected to judicial review of legislation, stating "I think I am capable of understanding things as well as the best judge in the world." He also thought a constitution in 1950 could not represent the masses of Jewish immigrants yet to arrive, but who would certainly come. Thus in his view, a constitution should await a future generation and a politically mature country.

Scheindlin details another failed effort, that of the small opposition Liberal party to promote a bill of rights in the 1960s (the Liberals were then Menachem Begin's junior partner in the opposition coalition). But she neglects to note that in the earlier constitutional debates of 1950-51, Begin himself, as head of the opposition, proposed a constitution with a bill of rights. In her detailed and otherwise useful description of the legal advancement of the Israeli Arabs, she also neglects to note that Begin championed their civil rights along with those of other Israeli citizens.

Another aspect of Israel's political culture that Scheindlin describes is the habit of equivocation, what she calls "Tergiversation Nation" (a play on the jingoistic term "Start-Up Nation"). Its master practitioner was Levi Eshkol, Israel's third prime minister, who "continued a long tradition of purposeful, even strategic, non-decision...to include non-decision about a constitution defining either borders or the country's identity; the sources of law and authority; deferral of legislation over the most sensitive issues; and of course refusing to state openly what Israel intended to do with the Occupied Territories."

And yet, at the same time, Israel is undeniably a liberal democracy. The promises of its declaration of independence, of "full social and political equality of all of its citizens, without distinction of religion, race or sex," are being upheld in courtrooms in the most difficult of regional environments. Scheindlin cites Freedom House, the non-governmental monitor of freedoms worldwide, in her introduction on "What is Democracy." Freedom House consistently ranks Israel as the only free country in the Middle East.

Scheindlin knows Israel too well to ignore this reality. She occasionally lets slip her feeling for this very multicultural, very democratic society, as in this passage describing an impromptu Hanukah lighting at the Tel Aviv municipal library where she was researching the book:

"Most people had left to watch the final match of the World Cup, but a small group of library rats joined, among them a young man holding the waist of a woman in a miniskirt; the man placed his other hand on his head during the blessings in lieu of wearing a kippah. Another woman wore orange flared shorts and high skin-tight boots with chunky white rubber heels. We contributed the occasional scattered "amen," sang a few of the songs, and went back to work. It felt about as coercive as the brightly lit Christmas market on the central road of Haifa or the carnival atmosphere alongside a certain tranquility in Muslim neighborhoods during Ramadan."

Such passages remind me of the weekly Torah portion "Balak" in the Book of Numbers,

a highlight of mid-summer in synagogues throughout the world. Here is a reminder of the story:

The Prophet Balaam, famed for his eloquence and wisdom, knows his job is to curse this people, the children of Israel. He ascends a mountain overlooking the plain where the Israelites are encamped. Then as he prepares to curse Israel, he looks down and sees a sea of tents stretching to the horizon. The intended curse turns into a blessing:

How goodly are your tents O Jacob,
Your dwellings O Israel.

Scheindlin and fellow Israeli critics find faults (that is their job). In a larger sense, however, they pay testament to the freedom of expression and the diversity of views that thrive in this embattled democracy. ✳

ROBERT SILVERMAN

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Photo credit: Shutterstock

FALLING IN LOVE WITH THE CONSTITUTION IN AMERICA AND ISRAEL

An Interview with Yuval Levin

BY TUNKU VARADARAJAN

The United States is a country riven by political and cultural fractures and tensions. And in the present day, the American Constitution is as much a source of vexation as it is of inspiration. Timely, indeed, is a new book by Yuval Levin, a 47-year-old, Israeli-born political scientist who is the director of social, cultural and constitutional studies at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) in Washington, D.C. Titled "American Covenant," the book describes how the Constitution unified the United States—and could do so again if Americans were to give it a chance. Mr. Levin was interviewed by Tunku Varadarajan, a fellow at AEI and a writer at The Wall Street Journal's editorial page. The transcript was edited for clarity and concision.

Tunku Varadarajan: Did you write this book because you felt that America had fallen out of love with its Constitution?

Yuval Levin: I think that's fair. I have been trying to figure out the sources of our divisions and the breakdown of our political culture. And that meant thinking about the ways in which we're divided, but also thinking about why we deny ourselves the tools we have for overcoming those problems. And those tools are, especially, constitutional tools. On the left and the right, there's increasingly an impatience with the American Constitution. People find it too constricting, too slow.

I think of the parable of "Chesterton's Fence." [The English literary critic and philosopher] G.K. Chesterton said, "If you inherit a piece of property and there's a fence on it, and you want to take it down, make sure you understand why it's there before you take it down. And maybe you'll find that you should take it down, but if you can't understand why it's there, leave it where it is because somebody had a reason and you should make sure you understand it."

Americans inherited a constitutional system, and our reaction to it is very often to say, "tear it down." At the very least, we should understand first why these things have the shape they do.

On the left and the right, there's increasingly an impatience with the American Constitution. People find it too constricting, too slow.

You say you've noticed impatience with the Constitution on both left and right. But it's always been my sense that the left is a little more impatient.

Yes, the left is more so. Progressivism really arose as a movement of impatience with the Constitution.

On the left and the right, there's increasingly an impatience with the American Constitution. People find it too constricting, too slow.

But you say that the right is impatient, too. How?

First, there's a conservative tendency toward a kind of judicial activism. Now that the Supreme Court leans more in our direction, we've forgotten why we've thought that it should be restrained all those years. I think we were right and we should remember why. And second, there is also — more on the margins of the right — a tendency now to think that the constitutional era is over, the left has already broken the Constitution, that for us to pretend that it's still there is just to disarm ourselves. And so instead, let's acknowledge that that's all gone and that politics is war. Now, I think that's not right. It gives much too much credit to the left, and we still need the Constitution.

You're not just referring, are you, to the Trumpian right … Is that correct?

There's an element of that in some of the Trumpian right. There's also an element of that, I would say, in a kind of post-liberal right that's not all Trumpian, and it's not about Trump. I think it's serious, but I also think it's mistaken about what the Constitution is for and about what's required for the country to function and flourish.

While I disagree with them, I think it's a serious argument. And I think the argument of the progressives is serious, too. Their impatience is rooted in a political vision that has some force, but which I think ultimately is mistaken and needs to be answered.

How would you define this "post-liberal right"?

I think of people like Adrian Vermeule, the Harvard Law professor, or someone like Pat Dineen, who is a political theorist at Notre Dame. These are intellectuals, not political activists. There are certainly some activists who think this way too. They argue that the kind of classical liberalism that's advanced by the Constitution is not sufficient to advance the common good in our society. They're a minority, thankfully, but a vocal one. And I think they're worth responding to. My book certainly mostly speaks to the left, but it does also disagree with this side on the right.

Equally, Yuval, the left isn't a monolith. Not everyone on the left is progressive.

That's right. But I would say the constitutional thought of the left at this time is progressive and it treats the Constitution as a relic of the 18th century, as undemocratic, as inefficient, as a refuge for corruption and racism. I think that's all wrong.

So would you say that even mainstream Democrats are constitutionally progressive?

I think they are. There are times when they are openly hostile to the Constitution, but even in other times they treat it as something that has to be tolerated only because it's hard to change. But in their ideal system, we would have a more radically assertive government.

So they treat it as a sort of annoying speed bump on the road to progressive Nirvana.

I think they do. And look, we now have open hostility to the Supreme Court, where it is described as illegitimate by Democratic politicians day after day. We have increasing hostility to the Bill of Rights, to free speech and religion.

Live out constitutionalism, actually engage in politics, coalition-building and persuasion, and do the work of legislating, of involvement in civic life. Not just vote every few years and then watch cable news, but be active citizens.

Is the hostility to the Supreme Court also a hostility to the Constitution?

Yes. To argue against the independence of the judiciary, implicitly and often explicitly, ultimately amounts to an argument against the system we have.

So to call into question the legitimacy of the Supreme Court as currently constituted is

in effect to call into question the legitimacy of the Constitution?

Yes. Look, the members of the Supreme Court as currently constituted were appointed in accordance with the Constitution. And I would argue the Court now is more true to the Constitution than the courts have been at any other point in my lifetime. To find that unacceptable, it seems to me, is to be hostile to the constitutional order.

Are you saying that the court is acting in a way that's activist right now?

Generally, no. The current court is working to restore the constitutional order. It's the only part of our government that I would say is closer to working properly now than it was 50 years ago.

Can you give me some examples?

The court sees its role as keeping the actors in our system in their place rather than as resolving public disputes itself. So when it overturns Roe v Wade, for example — it says this is an issue that belongs in the hands of the democratic public and not in the hands of the judiciary. And we can see already that there's going to have to be a process of persuasion in the states, and that process is going to have to force people to put their best arguments forward. That's how these kinds of debates happen.

Another area is administrative law, where the Court is reestablishing its own proper role, forcing Congress to do its job and forcing administrative agencies back into their place. We see that with the overturning of the Chevron decision this term. The court is trying to reassert the coherence of the constitutional order. And I think in that sense it's doing a great constitutional service. I'm a fan of this court.

Given the tensions that followed the overturning of Roe v Wade, it wasn't enough for those who supported the Supreme Court's decision to say, "Guys, calm down, the Court is acting in accordance with the Constitution, so just chill."

There's also a need for a broad project of public education about the Constitution, which is going to take a long time. I don't have much hope that I'm going to persuade today's progressive activists of anything, but I need to talk past them to the rising generation of Americans who need to see that they're not inheriting a burning pile of garbage, that they're inheriting a great resource for living in the modern world. And those arguments need to be made. They need to be made in the language and terms of contemporary American life to another generation. The left is very active in speaking to that rising generation and, in my view, thoroughly misinforming them about the country they're inheriting.

So what can we do? What I can do is write a book. I don't expect it to change the world, but I think, one by one, these kinds of actions have to fill that gap so that younger Americans can see that there is another argument and a reason to take seriously what their fathers did.

So you're playing a long game. Are you basically asking us to skip a generation or two as irredeemable?

Not necessarily. We have to fight in this

Live out constitutionalism, actually engage in politics, coalition-building and persuasion, and do the work of legislating, of involvement in civic life. Not just vote every few years and then watch cable news, but be active citizens.

generation too. We are winning some political battles and losing others. But we have to speak to the younger generation of Americans. And the next generation, absolutely. Civics education has to happen. It has to happen in elementary, middle and high schools and in the universities. The right is waking up to that need.

So if I can summarize your book in one-line: the way to resolve our constitutional wars is to find answers or solutions within the Constitution ...

... and to live out constitutionalism, actually engage in politics, coalition-building and persuasion, and do the work of legislating, of involvement in civic life. Not just vote every few years and then watch cable news, but be active citizens.

I forewarned you that I would ask you about Israel, the other democracy where people have nearly come to blows over constitutional issues. In this, is Israel like the US?

I think there are some analogies. There's also a profound dis-analogy.

I think Israel in some ways has exactly what the United States lacks — and lacks exactly what the United States has. Israel has a lot of solidarity. There's a real national feeling in Israel, a sense of national belonging that is very real in people's lives.

But the institutions of Israel's government are weak. They make no sense at all. They're barely thought through. And Israel has managed to avoid disaster despite having so little institutional structure because of its solidarity.

The United States has much less social solidarity, but it has very strong and well-conceived institutions. I think in a funny way, the last few years have forced me to ask which of these is better than the other. They're both problems. And both countries feel those problems intensely.

There is a clear, written out, thought through, evolved but explicit structure. I think we benefit enormously from that. And I think Israel would benefit from having such a thing, too.

Which is more perilous, a lack of solidarity or a lack of institutions?

Israel's situation is the more dangerous of the two. I don't just mean dangerous because of its neighbors, but when you rely on solidarity without institutional support, you leave yourself vulnerable to a social crisis that undermines that solidarity and leaves you with nothing underneath. And I think Israel, before October 7, seemed like it was nearing such a crisis. What would actually happen if the prime minister tells the army to do one thing and the court tells it to do another thing? And the prime minister says actually I'm in charge. It's entirely unclear. There is no structure to answer that question.

Whereas there is in the United States ...

Yes. There is a clear, written out, thought through, evolved but explicit structure. I think we benefit enormously from that. And I think Israel would benefit from having such a thing, too.

There is a clear, written out, thought through, evolved but explicit structure. I think we benefit enormously from that. And I think Israel would benefit from having such a thing, too.

American institutions work to produce some solidarity. The Constitution does do that by forcing us to bargain and accommodate and build coalitions. It forces us to build some solidarity. It's not going to be [solidarity] like Israel's. But forced to choose, I would choose to have our strong institutions.

The source of Israel's solidarity is its shared history and religion.

Yes, which we are not going to have.

We're not?

I mean, we have a shared history. But the United States has always been very diverse. It is now intensely diverse, and we can't count on Israel's kind of social solidarity to see us through.

Is it possible to wonder whether the very strength of our institutions has, in some way, worked against the consolidation of solidarity in the United States? We haven't really needed it because there's always this kind of institutional safety net that saves us from meltdowns.

There is some truth to that. It is easy enough to be a minority in America that we don't have to think that hard about integration. That has been a problem because integration is a good thing. The assimilation of immigrants, the self-conscious construction of a common culture, is an important thing. And there have been times when Americans have been pretty good at that. I do think now we are not good at that. And it's true, the institutions sometimes save us from the consequences. I'm still glad we have them, but yes, I think there are ways in which they keep us from having a coherent national culture in some cases.

Does the Constitution require assimilation in some way?

I think it does. I think the Constitution does assume a set of premises about the purpose of citizenship and the nature of civil society, certain kinds of responsibilities that don't come naturally. They're a function of citizen education. An American is not a natural phenomenon. Americans don't fall from the sky. They're a social achievement. Americans have to be made and they're made by our culture. They're made by our institutions.

You're a naturalized American citizen yourself.

Yes. The promise of the possibility of that kind of integration is a matter of personal experience. I've seen it happen. I see how the appeal of the American ideal is not simply a matter of blood and soil or who your father is. It really is possible to become an American. I know that's true. And part of what moves me to defend this country is that having come from elsewhere, I know that this is not the natural human condition. This is an extraordinary achievement and the alternative to it is social breakdown. And I think too many critics of our system take for granted the kind of social peace that we have.

Do immigrants understand and appreciate the Constitution better than many native-born Americans?

Yeah, maybe. I think there's always been a strand of defenders of America who are immigrants. It happens elsewhere too. I wrote my dissertation at the University of Chicago on Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine, and it occurred to me that they were both of this type. Paine was English, came to America and became the greatest champion of American civilization. Burke was Irish, went to England, and became the greatest defender of the English constitution of the 18th century. I don't think it's entirely a coincidence. They could see what wasn't obvious to the native-born. They could see what it was that was distinct about the societies they were in. Fish don't see the water. It's just all they know. But if you've seen something else and then you come here, I think it's much harder to be as down on America as so many people are. And it's much easier to see what's extraordinary and good about it.

So Americans should learn from the immigrants in their midst?

Yes, I do think so. Look, immigrants now are often encouraged to be critical of America, to see it as some kind of an oppressive power, an imperial power. And I think that's crazy. Surely to come here as an outsider, to be welcomed and allowed to be a part of what happens here, that's an extraordinary thing. So I'm grateful for it. And all the work I do is a kind of professional gratitude for America.

When did you come to America?

I was eight years old. I came from Israel. My parents are native-born Israelis. I think, now, in a funny way, they both had American personalities long before they ever came here. They started a business together in Israel, which was a strange thing to do in 1970s Israel. It was a small residential construction company. My father's an engineer, and they ran it together. The hyperinflation of the 1980s in Israel destroyed their business. They had nothing, and so they did another crazy thing. They moved their family to a place where neither of them had ever been before. They had three young children and came here and started over.

Is there something that America can teach Israel, and vice-versa?

Sure. America can teach Israel about how to contend with division, about how to sustain a healthy political culture. They're similar cultures, in a funny way. They're both founded nations, and live with an idea of their own existence being a kind of achievement, which isn't everybody's view.

There's an interesting sense of precariousness about Israel's existence that used to be true of 19th century America. If you think about the American national anthem, it's from 1814. It's just a song about surviving the night. It's not a song of triumph and victory. It's a song of amazement at the very existence of our society. And Israel is very much like that. Israel's national anthem too. It's a song of hope about someday creating Israel. That's a very odd way to think about yourself, but I think there is a connection between these ways of a new nation conceiving of itself. ✳

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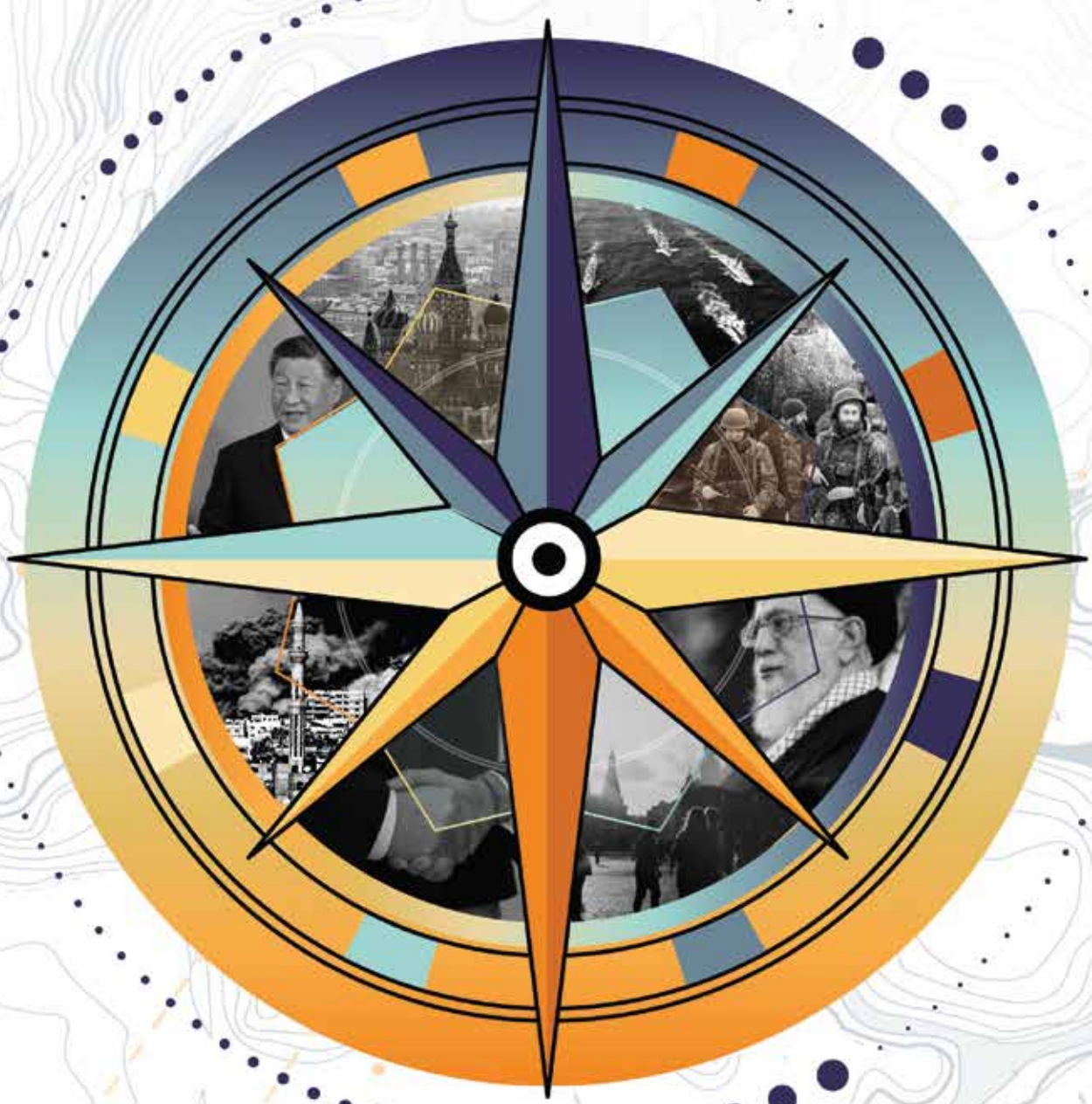
A Journal of World Affairs by the Foreign Policy Research Institute

ORBIS

WINTER 2024 VOL. 68, NO. 1



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