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# China's Rise...
## And Why We Should Worry

*Featuring articles by* **Gordon Chang** *and*
**Rear Admiral Michael McDevitt, USN (ret.)**

*Also in this issue...*

**NORTH AFRICA:**
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## China's Rise... And Why We Should Worry

## North Africa: Promise and Peril



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## Book Reviews

# *Editor's Note*

In early 2012, the Obama administration unveiled what amounted to a major shift in policy when it formally announced a "rebalancing" of American economic and political attention to Asia. Nearly two years on, this issue of *The Journal* takes a look at the largest strategic challenge inhabiting that region: a rising an increasingly belligerent China.

Our survey starts with China expert Gordon Chang's probing examination of what, exactly, makes new Chinese leader Xi Jinping tick. Economist Thomas Palley takes a close look at the phenomenon of "China-centric globalization," and explains why it is bad for American business. Author and retired U.S. Army officer Larry Wortzel follows up with a look at the burgeoning strategic capabilities of the People's Liberation Army—and the growing power of China's military to hold American interests at risk. Rear Admiral Mike McDevitt, USN (ret.) outlines the mounting territorial disputes and maritime claims that now dominate Beijing's relations with its Asian neighbors. Jeffrey Payne of the National Defense University takes a critical look at China's Middle East policy, and explains how recent events there have challenged Beijing's approach. The American Foreign Policy Council's Stephen Blank follows up with an exploration of China's encroachment into Russia's Far East, and what it means for relations—and the strategic balance—between the two countries. Richard Weitz of the Hudson Institute wraps up our *tour d'horizon* with his take on the reasons behind China's lack of leadership in addressing our pesky North Korea problem.

From there, we turn our attention to North Africa - a region where, some two-and-a-half years into the so-called Arab Spring - Islamist forces are on the ascent and democracy is in retreat. The trend lines evident there, while almost uniformly negative, are profoundly significant both for American interests and for American allies in the greater Middle East. To that end, David Pollock of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy explores the Moroccan "exception," and explains why the North African kingdom so far has remained relatively stable amid regional upheaval. Laura Grossman of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies then chronicles the sordid course of Mali's civil war, where Islamists rose to the fore, were defeated, and could very well rise again. Two experts from the Henry Jackson Society in London, Olivier Guitta and Emily Dyer, weigh in on the current state of political play in the hotspots of Tunisia and the Sinai. And we conclude with the Washington Institute's Aaron Zelin, who maps out how Libya after Qadhafi has become a major source of regional instability.

In our Herzstein Military Forum, we are pleased to feature an article by Lieutenant General Charles Cleveland, the current head of U.S. Army Special Operations Command, on how our fighting forces must adapt to better deal with what he terms, the "human terrain." Our Perspective interviewee for this issue is Amb. Paula Dobriansky, a veteran diplomat who last served as Under Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor in the administration of George W. Bush. Our "dispatches" this time out come from Israel and Colombia, and we wrap up our coverage with reviews of four important books, on Hezbollah, the Arab Spring, North Korea, and Muslim demographics.

Here at *The Journal*, we pride ourselves in taking a sober look at the state of the world, and of U.S. policy. Today, challenges abound, as the articles in this issue so clearly illustrate. We hope that, as in previous editions, the studies collected here have helped shed some light upon the perils and opportunities facing us.

Ilan Berman
*Editor*

# China's Next Mao

Gordon G. Chang

"He has ambition to be a great leader, someone like Mao Zedong," said Bo Zhiyue of the National University of Singapore, speaking of the new Chinese supremo, Xi Jinping. "He wants to change things."[1]

China needs change, but does it need a new Mao? Megalomaniacal rule in the early years of the People's Republic resulted in tragedy and death on a monumental scale—especially in the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution—and convinced most Chinese that their leaders needed to be subject to restraints, at least informal if not institutional. Communist Party officials, therefore, moved to a collective decision-making process and, at the same time, selected paler and paler versions of Mao to lead them. As a result, each ruler of "New China" has been weaker than his predecessor, and almost everyone has viewed this downward progression as progress.

Then in walked Xi Jinping. Many, both inside and outside China, believed the first general secretary born after the Communist Party seized power in 1949 would start a new era and finally be the leader to sponsor change and repudiate the ruling organization's fanatical past.

## Back to the future

At first, Xi looked like he would fulfill these hopes. For instance, last December, just a month after his elevation to the country's top spot, he made an inspection visit to Guangdong province that many analysts compared to Deng Xiaoping's famous Southern Tour, the 1992 trip that marked the restarting of economic reforms after the tragedy of the Beijing Spring of 1989.

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Yet Xi, on his high-profile expedition, spoke in disturbing tones. In a secret speech to Party cadres, for instance, he lamented the fall of the Soviet Union. The communist superpower had collapsed, he reportedly said, because its leaders had lost faith in ideology.[2]

Xi, so far, has proven to be a staunch defender of ideological rectitude. "Our red nation will never change color," he declared early this summer while touring a village where, in 1949, Mao launched his assault on Beijing.[3] Xi wasted little time after his elevation before visiting sites frequented by Mao—and, more significantly, reorienting official discourse. Unlike his predecessors, Xi has not been hesitant to invoke Mao's name, and he is working hard to reinvigorate Maoism. Propaganda guidelines now demand that there be no criticism of the Great Helmsman, as the first leader of the People's Republic is known, and Mao is back in the classroom, as is Marx.[4]

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Xi, unabashedly, is appropriating the language of the early years of communist rule. Therefore, he is pushing "rectification" campaigns and insisting on obedience to "mass lines." The Chinese people now have, to guide them in their daily lives, Four Make Clears, Six Noes, and Seven Unmentionables. Xi's personal favorite may be the ideologically dense Two Non-Negatables, understandable only by those steeped in Party theory and history.

And in what is known as Document No. 9, the Party's Central Committee has listed the concepts forbidden in the early Xi era. Issued in April, this circular undoubtedly reflects the new general secretary's views of the evils that undermine Chinese communism. What does Xi believe threatens New China in the new century? The first one listed is "Western constitutional democracy." Others are "universal values," a free media, and the notion of civil society. Also listed are "nihilist" criticisms of the Party's past, code for unforgivable events including Mao's many disasters.[5]

Moreover, Xi is trying to enforce this ideological rectitude with mandatory study sessions nationwide. The Chinese nation, from the great cities of its coast to desert hamlets in the west, is now being forced to read "Red."

## The return of intellectual rigidity

Is Xi's Maoism just theater? Most observers believe it to be sound and fury signifying little, if not nothing. "No one expects Xi to turn the clock back to the Mao era, during which millions of Chinese died as a result of political campaigns and a man-made famine," wrote the *Wall Street Journal*'s Jeremy Page this August, echoing a generally held view.[6]

Most China watchers, therefore, do not appear overly troubled by Xi Jinping's overt appeals to Maoism, yet there are three principal reasons to be concerned about this regressive turn in political discourse. First, there are signs that China's new leader actually believes in Maoism. "Xi is really starting to show his true colors," said one childhood friend to the *Wall Street Journal*. Comrade Jinping, according to this source, devoted himself as a teenager to reading Maoist and Marxist tracts.[7] Historian Zhang Lifan notes that Xi, when confronted with a problem, reverts quickly to ingrained Mao thinking.[8]

In this regard, many observers this June, prompted by briefings from U.S. officials before the "shirtsleeves summit" between President Obama and Xi, pronounced the Chinese leader to be politically secure, having consolidated his position at home.[9] If he were as strong as reported, then the stepped-up Mao campaigns since then are indications he is a true believer—because in this case there would have been little need for him to continue these efforts. Of course, a true-believing Xi means that China has a reactionary as a leader with consequences yet to be seen.

If Xi personally accepts Maoism, we should not be surprised he believes his Maoist campaign is popular across Chinese society. "Today's Chinese leadership—under pressure from rising expectations, social dislocation, and popular discontent—again finds itself trying to bridge a credibility gap with the Chinese public," write Evan Feigenbaum and Damien Ma in *Foreign Affairs*.[10] If they are correct, as they most certainly are in this regard, it follows that the leaders in Beijing either believe their Mao revival helps narrow that divide or think they can force acceptance of Mao by the Chinese public. In fact, Xi has repeatedly said the Party's survival is dependent on its endorsement of Mao.[11]

Can Xi really demand allegiance to the first leader of the People's Republic? Maoism clearly resonates with those at one end of China's political spectrum, but it no longer has widespread appeal. If anything, most Chinese seem to believe that a one-party system is no longer appropriate for the 21st century, much less a Maoist one. If Xi Jinping actually thinks Maoism is a unifying force today, he is badly misreading the people he rules. China's newest chief, therefore, is leading a political establishment that is now detaching itself from reality—and this is a signal of instability to come.

## Marriages of convenience

Second, it is possible that Xi's embrace of Maoism indicates division—and perhaps disorganization—at the top of the Communist Party. In this case, the Mao mania is a sign not of Xi's political strength but of his weakness, indicating that he has taken what passes for the high political ground in China and temporarily made himself a Maoist because the leadership transition—from predecessor Hu Jintao to himself—is not going well.

We have to remember that Xi, head of a divided Communist Party, has no faction he can call his own. People often say he heads the "Princelings," but that term merely describes the "second Red generation" or "Red Nobility": the sons and daughters of either former leaders or current serving high officials. These offspring have views spanning the Chinese political spectrum and therefore do not form a cohesive group in the Party.

Xi became China's supreme leader largely because, in a time of sharp factional division, he appealed to all factions, and he was able to do this primarily because he was not identified with any one faction. He was, essentially, the least unacceptable candidate. And because he still has no faction, he has had to adopt Mao as his own.

It normally takes a new general secretary two or so years to begin to make his mark, and Xi, according to this theory, is impatient, accelerating the process with his nationwide campaign. Significantly, his appeal for "ideological purification"[12] and his observation that ideology ensures "correct political direction"[13]—both made in a landmark August 19 speech—can be seen as demands for conformity with *his* views. Similarly, Xi is fond of requiring "unity" with the Party's Central Committee and its ideology,[14] and he regularly makes

stirring calls to rally around him and "win the ideological war."[15]

We have to be prepared that, in extreme cases, Xi's political weakness can lead to war of a different sort. Some believe his political vulnerabilities have not only driven him into the arms of Mao but also the clutches of the country's generals and admirals, who run what may effectively be the Party's largest and most powerful faction, the People's Liberation Army. Indeed, some, like veteran China watcher Willy Lam, believe the military is now Xi Jinping's faction.[16]

Most China watchers do not appear overly troubled by Xi Jinping's overt appeals to Maoism, yet there are three principal reasons to be concerned about this regressive turn in political discourse.

Xi, in short, is beholden to China's flag officers. Kenneth Lieberthal of Brookings, for instance, sees Xi playing the role of ardent nationalist so that he won't get on the wrong side of the military.[17]

Staying in the good graces of the generals and admirals carries with it a high price, however. It means Xi is letting them pursue their expansionist plans to grab territory from an arc of nations from India in the south to South Korea in the north. At the same time, the flag officers are using aggressive tactics to close off four-fifths of the international waters of the South China Sea, thereby bringing China into conflict with a United States that has, for two centuries, defended freedom of navigation. So we should be concerned that Xi's Maoism is a symptom of the same disease that also is putting Beijing on a path of high-profile force projection. Both, in sum, could have their origins in Xi's political vulnerabilities.

## A tactical feint?

Third, Xi's Maoism—whether truly embraced or not and whether or not a product of weakness—is in fact changing the political climate in China at a crucial time. Optimists maintain that Xi's promotion of old-time ideology is not a feared "lurch to the left" but merely an obligatory tip of the hat to remnant leftists, who have been most recently angered by the prosecution of the charismatic Bo Xilai. Bo, who used populist Maoist themes as the boss of the metropolis of Chongqing, was found guilty in September of various crimes in a fascinating—and incompetently run—show trial. Xi, the thinking goes, now needs to appease the Party's left wing before he can proceed to sponsor desperately needed economic reforms. As an Asian diplomat told Reuters in August, Xi has not in fact been trying to revive Mao. What he is doing is more "a political necessity."[18]

There is in fact a tradition in high-level Chinese politics of bowing "left" before moving "right." And those who believe Xi is following this well-trodden path can point to the fact that Document No. 9 lists the questioning of Deng Xiaoping's program of "reforming and opening up" as one of the evils to be avoided. "It is beyond doubt that Xi and Li understand, and even acknowledge, that reform is no longer a choice but a necessity," write Feigenbaum and Ma in their *Foreign Affairs* article, referring to China's leader and his forward-thinking premier, Li Keqiang.[19]

Yet even minor economic reforms may be difficult to implement in the current political climate, and the repeated praise for Mao is making the situation worse for those seeking positive change. "Now the leftists feel very excited and elated, while the liberals feel very discouraged and discontented," said Xiao Gongqin of Shanghai Normal University to the *New York Times* in August.[20]

Xi's reactionary rhetoric also restricts his flexibility at a time when he is deciding how far he can go in sponsoring far-reaching economic reforms. "It is most unlikely that the head of state would level a public attack on a policy he intends to adopt," writes Robert Elegant, the author of a pioneering biography of China's communist leaders in the early 1950s.[21] An abrupt turn would, to say the least, make him look like a schemer of the worst sort.

## Ominous portents

As Elegant suggests, Xi's Maoist rhetoric does not fit easy with the type of change many would like to see. Yet the consequences of his full embrace of the Great Helmsman are even more far-reaching. As Xiao Gongqin notes, the situation in China could even "get out of control."[22]

The warning, sounding unduly alarmist, should be of concern nonetheless as there is a feeling among leaders that the country is in fact unstable. In March of last year, for instance, then Premier Wen Jiabao said that China could descend into another Cultural Revolution.[23] Observers at the time thought he was being melodramatic. From the perspective of today, however, we can see how China's political system might unravel.

Xi Jinping, unfortunately, is roiling Chinese politics at the moment by starting a chain of events he may not be able to manage. For one thing, he is purging political opponents under the guise of a crackdown on corruption. One of these probes, against Zhou Yongkang, the former internal security chief, breaks the most sacred rule of Chinese communist politics.

To heal the Party's grievous wounds caused by Mao Zedong's decade-long Cultural Revolution, leaders in the early 1980s, after the trial of the Gang of Four, decided that no member or former member of the Politburo Standing Committee could be investigated. They were, in short, no longer accountable for misdeeds. The theory was that if top leaders knew they would not be hunted down, as they were in Mao's Cultural Revolution, they would be willing to withdraw gracefully after losing political struggles. In other words, Deng Xiaoping, Mao's crafty successor, reduced the incentive for political figures to fight to the end and, as a result, tear the Communist Party apart.

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Xi, however, is reversing the process and upping the stakes, something evident in the tribulations of Mr. Zhou as well as the more famous Bo Xilai, who has been handed an unusually stiff sentence of life imprisonment. Before his fall last year, Bo made a spectacular bid for a seat on the Standing Committee, the apex of political power in China, and it is clear that his recent conviction is not for violations of law but unforgivable sins in the Xi era, open ambition and political disobedience.

The imposition of severe criminal penalties is a sign that China is returning to a period that many thought long past. Xi Jinping, a strongman now or one in the making, looks like he is resurrecting the Communist Party's horrific history by breaking rules that have kept the peace since the end of the Cultural Revolution. What began with his seemingly harmless talk of the "China Dream" last November has deteriorated into the Maoist ranting of today. And there is no indication that Xi, who is looking like the second extremist leader of the People's Republic, is going to stop the march backward anytime soon,

so the stability of the post-Mao era may be coming to an end.

As one of Xi's childhood friends said in August about his Maoist campaigns, "I think this is just the beginning."[24] It's probably more accurate to say that Comrade Xi's enthusiastic endorsement of Mao is more like the end, at least the end of progress for the People's Republic.

At the moment, the world can only wonder whether Xi's China can survive another Mao—and shudder if it in fact cannot.

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# The Perils of China-centric Globalization

Thomas I. Palley

The last thirty years have witnessed the creation of an integrated global economy. However, what began as a project for globalization has gradually been transformed into a project of "China-centric globalization." This phenomenon has grave economic and geopolitical implications for the U.S. It also carries major implications for other countries, though those implications obviously vary according to country-specific economic and political details.

China-centric globalization is characterized by three features: (1) The emergence of China as the global center of manufacturing—the so-called "factory for the world"; (2) The creation of a new dollar zone shared by the U.S. and China, and supported by China's adoption of a pegged dollar exchange rate; and (3) The emergence of a massive U.S. trade deficit with China, combined with the transfer of a significant chunk of U.S. manufacturing capacity there.

Table 1. **U.S. trade statistics and the emergence of China-centric globalization**
(X=goods exports, M=goods imports, GDP=gross domestic product)

| | [X+M]/GDP | [X-M]/GDP | China X/X | China M/M | China[X-M]/[X-M]/ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1960** | 6.7% | 0.1% | | | |
| **1980** | 17.0% | -0.1% | 1.8% | 0.1% | N.A. |
| **2000** | 20.2% | -4.5% | 2.0% | 8.1% | 18.8% |
| **2010** | 22.0% | -4.4% | 7.1% | 18.8% | 42.2% |

Source: Economic Report of the President, Congressional Research Service, Census Bureau and author's calculations.

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China-centric globalization is an extension and evolution of corporate globalization, which in turn evolved out of the post-World War II free trade era. This evolution is visible in U.S. trade statistics, as shown in Table 1. The first stage of this evolutionary process ran from 1945–1980, and constituted what is known as the "free trade" era. This period was characterized by rising trade openness, measured by goods exports and imports as a share of GDP, with roughly balanced trade. The second stage ran from 1980–2000, and constituted the era of corporate globalization which was marked by a continuing rise of trade openness, but now with rising goods trade deficits as a share of GDP. The third has run from 2000 to the present day and constitutes the era of China-centric globalization. It has generated a continuing rise in the goods trade deficit as a share of GDP, plus an increase in the share of U.S. imports from China.

Globalization was always problematic for both national security and national shared economic prosperity. China-centric globalization only makes it more so. Why is this the case? First, because it aggravates the impacts of globalization on both national security and shared prosperity. Second, because it constrains U.S. economic policy space. Thus, it has hindered U.S. attempts to escape the Great Recession by limiting capacity to address the trade deficit via exchange rate adjustment, and it promises to block any future attempts to recalibrate globalization so as to make it more equitable and environmentally sustainable.

## Manufacturing and economic security

The U.S.–China economic relationship has been marked by transfers of technology and manufacturing capacity to China, significant financial investment in China, and the emergence of a huge trade deficit that over the years has made China the largest foreign holder of U.S. government debt. These developments have raised widespread economic and national security concerns about the impact of China-centric globalization.

One principal concern has been the erosion of U.S. manufacturing owing to the trade deficit with China and the diversion of investment from the United States to China. The argument is that decline of manufacturing threatens prosperity via reduced long-run productivity growth. That is because manufacturing has historically enjoyed faster productivity growth than other sectors of the economy and may also have positive external effects on productivity growth in those other sectors.[1] Furthermore, a reduced manufacturing sector undermines the capacity to export and increases reliance on imports, thereby risking the creation of a structural balance of payments deficit that can constrain growth and employment. Lastly, loss of manufacturing jobs can have negative short-run growth effects, because manufacturing jobs have historically paid higher wages, manufacturing is a large job multiplier, and manufacturing has traditionally had a higher rate of unionization (which exerts a positive impact on overall wage structure and income distribution).

What does this look like in practice? According to the calculations of economist Robert Scott, the U.S.–China trade deficit caused the loss or displacement of 2.3 million jobs between 2001 and 2007.[2] These adverse job effects were felt in all 50 U.S. states, affected all categories of manufacturing employment, and adversely impacted displaced workers who suffered an average income loss of $8,146 per year.

Erosion of the manufacturing base also entails national security risks. That is because a shrunken manufacturing base and increased reliance on imported manufacturing goods (either final goods

or intermediate inputs) can threaten the ability of the U.S. to adequately equip a modern military and fight a lengthy war. Such dependence would create a potential national security risk for the U.S., regardless of the foreign country providing the imports. But it becomes especially significant given the extent of U.S. dependence on China—and given China's uncertain geopolitical relationship with America.

Table 2 captures the increased U.S. dependence on imported manufactured goods over time. In 1980, non-petroleum goods imports were equal to 30.5 percent of U.S. manufacturing GDP. By the peak business cycle year of 2000, this ratio had risen to 78 percent, and by 2007 it was 96.3 percent. Over the same period (1980–2007), Chinese goods imports rose from 0.6 percent of non-petroleum imports to 19.7 percent, and they rose from less than 0.2 percent of manufacturing GDP to 18.9 percent. In 2007, the peak year of the last business cycle, goods imports from China were therefore almost one-fifth of total U.S. manufacturing output.

Citing figures from the U.S. Business and Industry Council, Sheila Ronis reports that between 1997 and 2004 import penetration for aircraft increased from 15.2 to 24.5 percent; for aircraft engines and engine parts from 40 to 51.6 percent; for relays and industrial controls from 24.1 to 46 percent; for analytical laboratory instruments from 29.9 to 44.7 percent; for metal-cutting machine tools from 58.6 to 72 percent; for turbines and turbine generators from 25.4 to 49.4 percent; and for speed changes, high speed drives and gears from 38.5 to 63.1 percent.[3] These declines in U.S. manufacturing capacity coincide with the implementation of the strong dollar policy in 1997 and the subsequent onset of China-centric globalization.

This loss of manufacturing capacity has both static and dynamic security implications. At the static level, it potentially undermines the U.S. ability to provision the military and provide security. At the dynamic level, it threatens the future strength of the U.S. economy because manufacturing is a critical source of productivity growth, and a smaller manufacturing base implies smaller future gains from productivity improvements. This dynamic threat promises to increase as China moves up the manufacturing value chain and displaces increasingly advanced sectors of the U.S. economy.

A second concern is off-shoring of R&D facilities to China and other emerging economies. Off-shoring of R&D is worrying because it stands to reduce the flow of future innovations, thereby diminishing future economic strength and prosperity. It also adds to China's own economic strength.[4] A survey by China's Ministry of Commerce reported that by June 2004 multinationals including GE, Intel and Microsoft had set up over 600 R&D centers in China, involving expenditures of more than $4 billion.[5] Between 1992 and 2004, China more than doubled its expenditures on R&D, from 0.6 percent of GDP to 1.3 percent, and almost all of this expenditure has been funded by foreign investment.[6] Moreover, much of this R&D has been focused in the high-tech industry, and it is attracted by strategically designed Chinese policy.[7]

Table 2. **Composition of U.S. trade and its relationship to U.S. manufaturing GDP**
(M=goods imports)

| | Non-petroleum M/ manufacturing GDP | China M/Non-petroleum M | China M/manufacturing GDP |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1980** | 30.5% | 0.1% | 0.0% |
| **2000** | 78.0% | 9.1% | 7.1% |
| **2007** | 96.3% | 19.7% | 18.9% |

Source: Economic Report of the President, Bureau of Economic Affairs and author's calculations.

The growth of China's manufacturing capacity has clearly strengthened its ability to support a large, fully equipped modern military. Much modern manufacturing technology is either directly dual-use in nature, or lends itself to a learning process that enhances indirectly a country's military potential. In this sense, foreign direct investment in non-military manufacturing facilities can potentially undermine national security.

## Financial security

Trade deficits must be financed, and the financing of the U.S. trade deficit with China has contributed to the build-up of large Chinese holdings of U.S. financial assets. These large Chinese financial holdings raise concerns about a financial security threat. While this threat should not be overstated, China's holdings of U.S. debt still provide reason for concern, especially as they would give China another point of leverage during a geopolitical crisis or showdown with the U.S.

From a financial security perspective, the danger is that China might disrupt U.S. financial markets by engaging in strategic selling of its holdings, which in turn could injure the U.S. economy.

As of May 2013, Mainland China and Hong Kong held $1,453.7 billion of U.S. Treasury securities, representing 35.5 percent of all foreign official holdings of such securities. In December 2012, federal debt held by the public (i.e., excluding holdings of Social Security, the Federal Reserve, etc.) was estimated to be $9,909.1 billion, so that China and Hong Kong own 14.7 percent of the total. These holdings pose both an economic cost and a financial security threat.

With regard to cost, the debt entails interest payments to China that are a form of tax on the U.S. economy. To the extent that these payments go unspent, the drain of income puts deflationary pressure on the U.S. and global economy. To the extent they are spent, that is good for demand and stimulates production, but it also means that U.S. output in effect goes to China rather than to increasing U.S. economic well-being. As with household debt, there is a real cost to becoming an international debtor, as a country must pay over part of its income as interest.

With regard to financial security, China's financial holdings give it significant power and leverage over U.S. financial markets. China's Treasury holdings were slightly larger than the Federal Reserve's holdings, which stood at $1,213 billion as of February 23, 2011. At that date, the total value of Federal Reserve assets was $2,537 billion, making China's holdings equal to approximately 50 percent of the Federal Reserve's balance sheet. That means China can affect U.S. financial conditions just as profoundly as the Federal Reserve can.

From a financial security perspective, the danger is that China might disrupt U.S. financial markets by engaging in strategic selling of its holdings, which in turn could injure the U.S. economy. This renders the U.S. economy potentially hostage to Chinese policymakers and for that reason constitutes a national security risk.

However, this threat can easily be overstated. First, China is constrained from undertaking such actions, because it would incur losses on its asset holdings if it sold them to drive down bond prices and drive up U.S. interest rates. China would also suffer economic damage if the U.S. economy were hit because of China's dependence on exports. As Maynard Keynes famously observed: "If I owe you a pound, I have a problem, but if I owe you a million, the problem is yours."

Second, the U.S. has significant defenses against financial aggression. U.S. debts to China are denominated in dollars and represent a promise by the Treasury to pay dollars at date of maturity. Consequently, the Federal Reserve can always create money and buy any debt that China chooses to sell. Such action by the Federal Reserve would have implications for inflation, the exchange rate and global financial markets, but it would blunt any immediate damage caused by Chinese selling. The recent financial crisis and interventions of the Federal Reserve have shown the power of the Fed, and that power can also be used to check hostile financial actions by China.

Lastly, the U.S. Treasury has emergency powers to freeze Chinese holdings in the event they are being used to undermine national security. Such freezes have been invoked before in dealings with dictatorships in Iran, Iraq and Libya, and they could be used again in case of a crisis with China.

For all these reasons, the financial threat is not as serious as it is sometimes portrayed. But it is still real, and gives China the power to cause costly financial disruption. History also provides a lesson about the power of finance. In 1956 the Eisenhower administration used its creditor powers to pressure Britain to withdraw from the Suez Canal and hand it over to Egypt. The U.S. is in danger of giving similar power to China.[8]

## Geopolitical security

Whereas significant attention has been directed at the issues of manufacturing and financial security, much less has been given to the issue of geopolitical security. Here, China-centric globalization has major ramifications that impact every region of the globe (East Asia, Africa, Australia, Latin America, and Europe), and these implications appear little appreciated.

The key feature is that the post-Cold War world is marked by a new form of geopolitical competition. In the Cold War era, the currency of competition was military and ideology. In the new era, the currency of competition is economic power that fashions durable commercial alliances. China-centric globalization gives China economic and financial power to build these alliances, while it also undermines that of the U.S., and by doing so dramatically weakens U.S. geopolitical power and security.

### China's geopolitical financial challenge

In addition to the financial security threat, China-centric globalization also creates a geopolitical financial challenge. First, China's financial wealth gives it increased power in multilateral institutions like the IMF and World Bank. It also gives China financial power to woo domestic elites, a power that was recently on display in Canada with China's purchase of the energy firm Nexen. Regardless of the economic merits of that transaction, it showed China's capacity to deploy financial resources and affect domestic politics by exploiting differences of interest within Canada. Second, it gives China increased geopolitical influence and power via its ability to grant credit and foreign aid. This increased power is not just vis-à-vis developing countries. It also affects developed economies, as evidenced in China's courtship of Eurozone crisis countries (particularly Greece) during the current crisis.

### East Asia and the global supply chain

China-centric globalization has also dramatically impacted U.S. geopolitical standing in East Asia. Here, the critical change has been the restructuring of the global supply chain.

Globalization has always raised supply chain security concerns because

sourcing from outside one's borders is intrinsically more dangerous. The traditional threat metrics consist of the vulnerability of the foreign supply chain (often proxied by distance); the extent of foreign supplier diversification (proxied by the number of supplier countries); and the extent of quantitative reliance on foreign suppliers (proxied by imports as a share of manufacturing output). Greater distance, fewer supplier countries, and greater quantitative reliance all increase the potential national security threat.

China-centric globalization has increased this threat by making the U.S. global supply chain more vulnerable to interruption and more dependent on China. This is illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. Figure 1 contains a stylized illustration of the 1980s global supply chain that had the U.S. supplied by many East Asian countries (Japan, South Korea, etc.). This exposed the U.S. to dangers of distance, but the supply chain was relatively well diversified and the level of quantitative dependence was also low. Figure 2 shows the new supply chain that places China at the center in a role as product assembler. China receives inputs from East Asian suppliers, assembles them, and then ships the finished goods to the U.S. This middleman position gives China increased leverage.

Figure 1. **Stylized representation of the 1980s global supply chain**

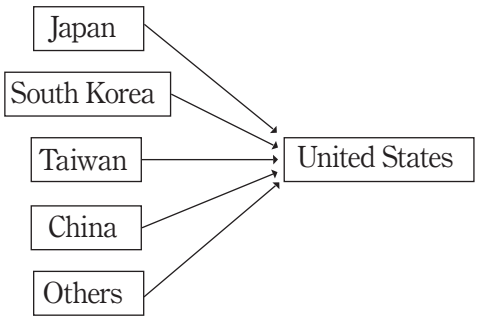
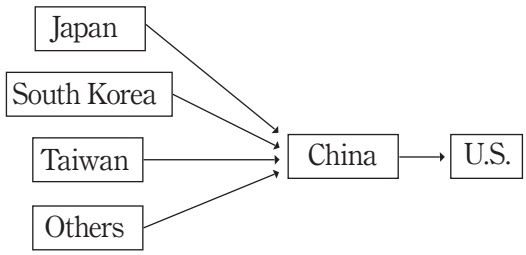



Figure 2. **Stylized representation of the 2000s China-centric global supply chain**




It also makes East Asian countries more dependent on China which increases China's regional power. Moreover, it projects China as the engine of regional economic growth, for which China gets significant diplomatic credit, when in fact the U.S. is the ultimate engine since demand for East Asian inputs is derived from U.S. demand for Chinese-assembled products.

### China's resource diplomacy in Africa, Latin America, and Australia

China-centric globalization has also hugely increased China's geopolitical power with the natural resource exporting regions. The basic logic is that by making China the factory of the world, it has created the basis for new commercial alliances. The economic logic of these alliances is that China exports manufactured goods to these countries and in return receives imports of natural resources.

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union never could accomplish that because it was a resource exporter and was in competition with these countries. Consequently, it had little to offer economically and, instead, offered guns and ideology. The U.S. used to be the supplier of goods and buyer of resources but, as its manufacturing base has shrunk, it has been increasingly displaced by China. That places the U.S. in a weaker position versus China than it was versus the Soviet Union.

Resource exporters have benefitted from China's rise via increased raw material prices, access to cheaper manufactured goods, and from Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI). But they also suffer. First, China is undemocratic and its commercial practices promote the "natural resource curse," enshrining corruption and violations of human rights and labor standards, and thereby harming development.[9]

Second, China's mercantilist commercial policy and under-valued exchange rate undermine manufacturing development in resource exporting economies.

Third, higher resource prices are not a "free lunch"; they promote exchange rate appreciation that drives deindustrialization—the so-called "Dutch Disease." These problems are particularly acute for Latin America, which has a large population and is, in many ways, in development competition with China, which is an industrial rival.[10] China's low wages and policy of wage suppression inflict a further blow to Latin American development, attracting jobs away from the region and dampening wage growth in the region, something that is critical for domestic development.[11] The bottom line is that the new relationship between China and resource exporters has inexorable commercial logic, but it is not necessarily good for development.

### The Trans-Atlantic relationship between the U.S. and Europe

Lastly, China-centric globalization also has implications for America's Trans-Atlantic relationship with Europe which has been the bedrock of the post-World War II international system. The structure of global production under China-centric globalization exerts a tendency to pull the U.S. and Europe apart by creating rivalries between them.

As mentioned above, China has already used its financial strength to woo Europe during the current Eurozone crisis. Second, with regard to trade, there has been some decline in the significance of trade with Europe for the U.S. as measured by the size of total trade relative to GDP. Third, and most importantly, the new economic structure tends to create a "prisoner's dilemma" situation between the U.S. and Europe. The two would do best by cooperating in their dealings with China, but the structure of China-centric globalization has them engaging in mutually injurious competition that benefits China.

This is particularly evident in the aircraft industry in the competition between Boeing and Airbus. China has been able to use its state control over purchasing by Chinese airlines to manipulate Boeing and Airbus into patterns of disadvantageous competition. These patterns include forced technology transfer and shifts of manufacturing and assembly to China. That has cost jobs and investment, and it threatens the long-term prosperity of both of these key companies by potentially creating a commercial rivalry.

## Trouble ahead

China-centric globalization is very problematic for the U.S. from both an economic and a geopolitical standpoint. The problems are not going away. In fact, they promise to get worse. The trade deficit with China, investment diversion to China, and China's exchange rate policy has already hindered U.S. economic recovery from the Great Recession of 2007-09. After falling in 2009, the goods trade deficit with China has increased steadily and now stands at record levels in both absolute terms and as a share of the total goods trade deficit.

Yet it has been very hard to get discussion of this issue on the policy table. There are several reasons for this. First, and foremost, is the fact that many large corporations have benefited from China-centric globalization and they control

international economic policy discourse in Washington. As significant beneficiaries, they block any challenge to the status quo. That speaks to a grave weakness in the U.S. political system. Corporations have become the most powerful political actors, but their goal of global profit maximization is different from the goal of advancing the national interest.

Second, there is little understanding of the distinction between globalization and China-centric globalization. That fosters the misunderstanding that rolling back China-centric globalization is synonymous with rolling back globalization. As the foregoing suggests, however, this is decidedly not the case.

Third, globalization (which includes China-centric globalization) creates "lock-in," whereby economic arrangements are difficult to reverse except at considerable cost. That cost discourages change, and sustains current dynamics.

Finally, there is a conceit that there are no security dangers inherent in our economic dependence on China, because economic links will turn China into a democracy and democracies do not go to war with each other. History, however, shows that conceit to be very dangerous; in the late 19th century, there was a seismic shift in relations between Great Britain and Germany that ultimately led to World War I. Britain and Germany had monarchs who shared a common lineage, yet they still went to war. The differences between the U.S. and China are more pronounced; they are not close allies, have many areas of competition, and have different political systems. That speaks to the dangers of China-centric globalization, which has been allowed to develop with great rapidity and little public discussion of its implications and consequences.

1. See Thomas I. Palley, T.I., "Manufacturing Matters: The Impact on Productivity Growth, Wages and Income Distribution," AFL-CIO *Economic Policy Paper* No. 35, 1999.
2. Robert E. Scott, "The China Trade Toll: Widespread Wage Suppression, 2 Million Jobs Lost in the U.S.," Economic Policy Institute *EPI Briefing Paper*, July 30, 2008.
3. Dr. Sheila R. Ronis, statement before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, July 17, 2006.
4. China's rise as a high-tech manufacturing powerhouse is documented by Ernest H. Preeg in *The Emerging Chinese Advanced Technology Superstate* (Manufacturers Alliance/MAPI and Hudson Institute, June 2005).
5. See U.S. Embassy of the People's Republic of China, "Foreign Investors Eager to Move to China," January 23, 2006.
6. See Chris Buckley, "Let a Thousand Ideas Flower: China is a New Hotbed of Research," *New York Times*, September 13, 2004.
7. See Kathleen Walsh, "Foreign High-Tech R&D in China: Risks, Rewards and Implications for U.S. – China Relations," The Henry Stimson Center, Washington, DC, 2003.
8. One major difference is that Britain owed dollars to the U.S., which meant it could not print money to pay back its borrowing. The U.S. owes dollars to China and can always print money to repay those debts. That highlights the strategic and economic importance of not having foreign-currency-denominated debt.
9. For a discussion of the natural resource curse see Thomas I. Palley, "Lifting the Natural Resource Curse," *Foreign Service Journal* 80 (December 2003), 54–61. For a discussion of the economic and political benefits of labor standards see Thomas I. Palley, "The Economic Case for International Labor Standards," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 28 (January 2004), 21–36, and "Labor Standards, Democracy and Wages: Some Cross-country Evidence," *Journal of International Development* 17 (2005), 1–16.
10. See Kevin Gallagher, *The Dragon in the Room: China and the Future of Latin American Industrialization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).
11. See Thomas I. Palley, "A New Development Paradigm: Domestic Demand-Led Growth," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, September 2002, http://www.fpif.org/.

# Enter the Dragon

Larry M. Wortzel

There is a deep irony to the incongruity between the level of economic trade and investment between China and the United States on the one hand, and the competitive military postures of the two, on the other. While China is a member of the World Trade Organization and a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, their respective militaries distrust each other deeply. The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) sees the United States as its most likely potential enemy, while the American military is deeply wary of growing Chinese military capabilities.

Yet creating some sort of containment strategy to limit China's military growth—similar to the one that the United States, its European allies, and Japan maintained against the Soviet Union during the Cold War—is simply not practical, not least because U.S. allies and friends would object were one to emerge. America's closest allies are committed to strong economic and trade relationships with China and, short of a war, would not favor true containment.[1]

As a result, the U.S. has adopted a risk management approach in Asia, maintaining a forward presence in the event that China threatens American allies or uses force against Taiwan. It has "rebalanced" military forces in Asia to reassure allies and seeks to keep in place the Tiananmen-related arms sales embargo in the European Union as one means of slowing China's military growth.

This approach is logical. The European Union and China are two of the world's biggest trading partners.[2] China's largest trade partners in the region are Malaysia; Thailand, a U.S. ally; and Singapore, which allows the U.S. to maintain a military presence.[3]

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Collectively, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is China's third-largest trading partner and is projected to be China's top trading partner by 2012.[4] Japan, South Korea, Germany, and Australia all have healthy trade balances with China. All this means that, for Washington, there is a fine balance between "hedging" against China's military growth and maintaining robust economic, trade, and diplomatic relations with friends and allies.[5]

## Grounds for conflict

From a security standpoint, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) sees the United States as its most likely and most capable potential enemy. For the U.S., potential conflict with China stands out as one of the most serious military contingencies its forces could face. China's leaders and its citizens are still quite prickly about sovereignty and territorial matters, which could spark conflict. Also, there are potential points of conflict on the Korean Peninsula, where the Korean War is really not settled—only held at bay via an armistice—and North Korea is quite unpredictable. China only has one security alliance in the world, and that is with North Korea.

Taiwan also is a potential flashpoint. Recently, tensions across the Taiwan Strait have been comparatively low. Trends in trade, banking, bilateral tourism, and air traffic shipping have improved, even if Beijing still threatens to use force should it perceive Taipei moving toward independence.[6] Millions of tourists from China are flocking to Taiwan on direct flights each year, contributing to Taiwan's economy. The Taiwan Relations Act does not bind the United States to Taiwan's defense, but if a conflict were to develop across the Taiwan Strait, it would seriously affect the political and security interests of the United States, and those of Japan as well. After nurturing a democracy on Taiwan for decades and seeing the democratic system it encouraged become so vibrant, it is not likely that the United States would simply sit by and watch how a China-Taiwan conflict plays out.

The rebalance of U.S. military forces to Asia, the AirSea Battle strategy and the accompanying Joint Operational Access concept of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff are good examples of the type of careful "hedging" required of the United States. At the strategic level, this involves maintaining a strong military presence in Asia, a cooperative security relationship between allies and partners in Asia, and a realistic perspective on economic, diplomatic, and trade relations. At the operational level, however, AirSea Battle scares U.S. allies and potential partners because it involves precision military strikes deep inside China that probably would escalate any conflict.

From the standpoint of China's own historical self-perception, the history of foreign intervention in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries makes the PLA, China's leaders, and the populace very sensitive about sovereignty and territorial matters, producing constant tension for U.S. military forces in Asia. The disagreements between China and the Republic of Philippines over reefs and islands in the South China Sea complicates matters for the U.S. because of its defense treaty with the Philippines. In the East China Sea, the dispute between China and Japan over the Senkaku Islands, which Japan administers, can involve U.S. forces because of U.S. treaty commitments to Japan.

## The PLA, rising

With its global economic interests, its dependence on imports of energy and natural resources, and its foreign investments, China is no longer an isolated, inward-looking country. It is building a military that can continue to respond to domestic problems and secure sovereign

territory, but also must patrol and keep open vital sea and air lines of communication while defending its economic and political interests far from home.[7] This improvement in force projection marks a transition from a military that worried about China's immediate borders to one that has been instructed by the Communist Party to be prepared to defend more distant national interests. Indeed, then-Chinese President Hu Jintao told the armed forces to do this in his December 24, 2004, speech on the "Historic Mission of the PLA."

To be a global military force, however, requires global command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR). Over approximately two decades, the PLA has built a real-time C4ISR capacity that uses space systems. China's combat ships and aircraft, as well its missile systems are now equipped with data-links that allow them to use this C4ISR system.

As the nation's interests widen and its economic strength provides for the required military capacity to defend those interests, it is natural for the Chinese military to grow and evolve. However, the more troubling aspects of the PLA's developing C4ISR capabilities are the way that they enable a longer reach. Already, the PLA Navy can create conditions that may force the U.S. Navy to modify its activities and its strategies out to the "second island China," about two thousand kilometers from China's coast. The PLA's national command-and-control system is redundant, secure, and affects conventional and nuclear missile force readiness, alert status, and the capacity of the Second Artillery to respond to crisis.

Perhaps the most troubling and volatile aspects of the PLA's development of C4ISR capabilities, however, is that it has led China's military to directly target those same capabilities in the United States and supporting U.S. forces. This action has implications for nuclear deterrence and warning, for space systems, for electronic warfare, and for cyberwarfare.

It is the PLA's improved C4ISR capability that allows China to project and control its limited forces into the western and southern Pacific. China's naval and air force modernization in particular is closely linked to this capacity. Even if the PLA Army lags somewhat, it also is more effective because of it.

In a relatively short time, perhaps a decade, the PLA Navy has made a transition from operating only around China's coast to a force that can conduct blue-water operations. China's navy is still no peer of the U.S. Navy, and it is probably inferior to Japan's. However, no other nation in Southeast Asia is able to challenge the PLA Navy currently. This empowers China's forceful posture on maritime rights, fishing rights, underwater resources, and disputed territory in the South China Sea. The ASEAN states are not willing to band together to counter China's improved navy; mutual distrust stemming from historical disputes has hampered cooperation. As a result, Asia's nations tend to rely on the United States with regard to security issues.

China also is creating a series of places where the PLA Navy can stop to refuel, take on provisions, and do repairs. As China's naval modernization progresses, this "string of pearls" will facilitate longer reach for its fleets. As the PLA Navy improves its at-sea refueling capability and deploys more support ships and a greater amphibious capacity, it will range further abroad, to other continents, in defense of China's interests.

Improvements in nuclear submarines mean that the PLA Navy can conduct operations over a wider area with longer endurance. It also means a new deterrent capability. China's ballistic missile submarines should be operational in a few years, and this will change China's deterrence posture, and provide new

means for it to hold potential adversaries, especially the United States, at risk. In response, the U.S. and Japan will need to improve their capabilities to monitor the movements of Chinese ballistic missile submarines and to detect them undersea.

The PLA Air Force also is improving its ability to conduct operations at a longer distance from the coast and to project force outside the Asia-Pacific region. A 2010 air exercise with Turkey demonstrated the capacity to use airpower outside China if necessary, while the evacuation of citizens from Libya the following year demonstrated that China needs even more transport and refueling aircraft.

The PLA Army, however, lags behind the Navy and Air Force in its ability to project itself. Still, improved air and sealift will make it a player in the future. Along China's periphery, however, the PLA Army is still a lethal, if not overwhelming, force.

From a force modernization and force generation standpoint, China's defense industries still have serious problems in aircraft engine design and manufacture. In turbine engines for armor vehicles and in naval propulsion systems as well, China still depends on foreign purchases. These all are impediments to modernizing military forces.

But the improvements in China's capacity to project force means that other countries in Asia will improve their own navies and air forces. That is already the case for Vietnam, the Philippines, Japan, and India. Invariably, this will fuel attempts to maintain parity in the military balance by other countries as well, which will respond to improvements in China's military reach and posture.

## Dangerous nuclear ambiguities

China's strategic arsenal is changing as well. The PLA Second Artillery Force no longer has only a handful of liquid-fueled ballistic missiles targeting the United States. Second Artillery reach, responsiveness, and nuclear strike capacity have expanded significantly and continues to grow. While Beijing repeatedly calls for dramatic cuts in U.S. and Russian nuclear forces, neither Washington nor Moscow can even agree on how many missiles are now in China's inventory. The Department of Defense thinks that "China's nuclear arsenal consists of approximately 55–65 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM)," supplemented by both liquid-fueled and road-mobile intermediate-range missiles.[8] The International Institute for Strategic Studies puts it at sixty-six ICBMs, and the Russians have an even higher figure.

There is even less clarity over how many nuclear weapons or warheads the PLA has. Estimates on this front vary from two hundred or so all the way up to nearly two thousand. In response, the U.S. Congress has required the U.S. Strategic Command to report on the disparities in estimates of the size of China's nuclear forces, on the tunnel networks that support the Second Artillery, and on "the capability of the United States to use conventional and nuclear forces to neutralize such tunnels and what is stored within such tunnels."[9] The final results of that study, however, are still pending.

Also, there is a problem with regard to China's intermediate nuclear forces. Russia and the United States agreed on reductions, but the Chinese are not part of that agreement. China is building so many missiles that Russia may need to approach the United States about withdrawing from the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

At the same time, it is not clear just how binding China's no-first-use policy may be on the PLA. It would be a mistake to reduce American forces to the level China would like—in the hun-

dreds—and then to find out that Beijing has two thousand warheads. If that were the case, any first use of nuclear weapons would benefit the PLA. The PLA's basic operational principles put a premium on the element of surprise, which in turn undermines the credibility of the no-first-use pledge.

This is new—and dangerous. Between the Americans and the Soviets there were "standing taboos" in nuclear security matters. Arrived at after years of defense talks and arms control negotiations, these tacit agreements formed a set of "red lines" that limited the likelihood of a nuclear war and also prevented the escalation of a conflict. Cold War era-scholar Desmond Ball and his coauthors summarized these taboos this way:

1. Avoid the use of deadly force against a nuclear adversary.

2. Avoid creating a situation where an opponent is forced to either escalate or face complete humiliation in international affairs.

3. Avoid direct military action in an adversary's vital territorial areas.

4. Avoid using forces against an adversary's ally or protectorate [here think China and Taiwan, the Philippines, South Korea, or Japan].

5. Avoid using military forces to alter the balance of power in an area that is status quo [think about China's anti-access (counter-intervention) strategies in the Western Pacific and South China Sea].

6. Avoid horizontal escalation [that is, if there is a crisis in one region, keep it focused there; do not escalate in another region, changing a localized or regional conflict into a global conflict].[10]

China, however, has never been part of that dialogue on nuclear weapons, and as a result isn't constrained by its legacy today. The U.S. must continue to pursue direct strategic confidence-building talks with the PLA to avoid potential nuclear escalation in a conflict. Such discussions also should include avoiding blinding an opponent by destroying his intelligence, surveillance, and warning assets. In other words, don't mess with the system of strategic warning of missile and nuclear crises. The Soviets were as serious as the United States about trying to avoid nuclear war and escalation. They believed discussions of these issues were useful and built both confidence and mutual understanding. The PLA, on the other hand, is absent from any talks on the matter, and has avoided invitation from the U.S. Strategic Command to engage in them.

## Eyes skyward

Congress already has passed legislation prohibiting NASA from spending money on cooperative programs with China in space. This was a reaction to China's cyber espionage and its 2010 destruction of its own satellite.

The worries are warranted. China has a variety of imagery, reconnaissance, communications, and weather satellites, and all of them can be used by the country's military. Indeed, there is almost no discernible separation between China's civil and military space programs. Space activities all have a heavy military orientation, and the PLA's DF-21D anti-ship ballistic missile, for example, will use these dual-use satellites for help in targeting. The General Armaments Department runs almost all astronaut training and space-related medical activities.[11] The China National Space Agency (created in 1993) may be the formal NASA equivalent, facilitating international agreements and cooperation, but it still operates in tandem with the PLA and is

involved in the defense industry.[12] The China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation, a state-owned company, specializes in tactical ballistic missiles, anti-ship missiles, land-attack cruise missiles, anti-satellite interceptors, and small tactical satellites. The China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation produces launch vehicles and large satellites. Both of these organizations operate closely together.

Some specialists advocate a "code of conduct" for activities in space that would help prevent certain destructive actions. Such a code, however, would likely be the first thing violated in the event of a conflict, given the PLA's doctrine on information warfare and counterspace activities. The Department of Defense should develop operationally responsive space capabilities and be prepared to substitute various forms of air-breathing platforms in the event of an attack on U.S. space assets. It also is wise to harden satellites against jamming and other forms of electromagnetic interference.

## A new domain for conflict

In a 2009 research report prepared for the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, the Northrop Grumman Corporation provided a case study of a multiday penetration into the computer systems of an American high-technology company and how the data acquired were transferred to an Internet protocol address in China.[13] The report also discussed the principal institutional and individual "actors" in Chinese computer network operations, as well as the characteristics of network exploitation activities that are frequently attributed to China. More recently, a report by Mandiant, a cybersecurity company, traced penetrations in the U.S. defense industry to a unit of the PLA.[14] Cyberwarfare is a strategic issue that the U.S. and Chinese defense establishment must address in some form of confidence-building and threat-reduction measures, along with nuclear doctrine and space warfare doctrine.

China is using computer espionage to support its military and civilian modernization goals. Two departments of the PLA—the General Staff Department's Third and Fourth Departments, respectively—are organized to systematically penetrate communications and computer systems, extract information, and exploit that information.[15] It is far faster, cheaper, and more efficient for the PLA to steal new technology than to devote vast amounts of time and money to develop it.

The 2009 report to Congress of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission cited a *Wall Street Journal* article noting that "intruders, probably operating from China, exfiltrated 'several terabytes of data related to design and electronics systems' of the F-35 Lightning II," one of the most advanced fighter planes under development.[16] In addition, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, and British Aerospace and Engineering reportedly all have experienced penetrations from hackers based in China in the past three years.[17]

The PLA's integrated network electronic warfare doctrine is Soviet radio-electronic combat doctrine on Chinese steroids. The PLA has added computer network operations and attacks on space systems to the Soviet doctrine to disrupt command-and-control systems as well as logistics and resupply systems. This INEW doctrine is fully integrated with space warfare designed to degrade an adversary's space-based sensor and communications systems. And it also includes provisions for precision strikes on U.S. bases, forces, and embarkation areas in the homeland. Most alarming, PLA strategy calls for such attacks to be executed at the very first phase of any conflict.

China has made significant progress in its military technology development by hacking and stealing trade secrets and military technology. Moreover, this cyber espionage goes after the same targets as traditional human espionage, helping the PLA modernize. The J-20 stealth fighter may not be the equal of the American F-22 Raptor, but Chinese spies have been working to get F-22 technology, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as technology for the E-2 Hawkeye naval AWACS aircraft.[18]

## Future danger

China cannot project military force around the globe in all the domains of war at this time. It is, however, a global force in space, missile, and nuclear matters and in the cyber realm. Its Navy and Air Force are growing in their ability to project power. Regionally, the PLA is powerful and makes some of its neighbors wary. Over the next decade it is likely that China's military will proceed to grow, the quality of the PLA's weapons and equipment will improve, and the PLA's orientation toward an increased capacity to support China's global interests will continue.

When Xi Jinping took over as general secretary of the Communist Party and chairman of the Central Military Commission in November 2012, his first address to the PLA was to the Second Artillery Force.[19] He made it clear that China intends to achieve great-power status, and the Second Artillery is a pillar for achieving that goal. Further, there are no signs that the confrontational approach Beijing has taken in the waters it claims in the western Pacific or its ultimate posture on Taiwan will change. More likely, as the PLA becomes more powerful, China will become more assertive and less willing to compromise.

There is ample room for improvement in cooperation and dialogue with China in a number of areas, from direct discussions about cyber warfare to issues related to nuclear stability. Nonetheless, between China and the United States, a deep incongruity exists between the level of economic and trade engagement and the military postures of each country. And while each government professes that its military posture is not aimed at the other, the countries' respective programs suggest otherwise. Thus, for the foreseeable future, the United States will have to continue to monitor developments in the PLA carefully, and continue hedging in its security posture to guard against an ascendant China.

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# Will China Refashion the Asian Maritime Order?

Rear Admiral Michael McDevitt, USN (ret.)

Over the past three years, China's activities in both the East China Sea (ECS) and the South China Sea (SCS) have, along with North Korea, become the most frequently addressed security issues in East Asia. The confrontations China has had with its neighbors have raised concerns throughout East Asia, as well as in the United States. Do these events provide a glimpse into the future? Are they indications of how a powerful China is going to act? Must the rest of Asia contemplate a future where China is going to be habitually assertive and unwilling to compromise in the pursuit of its interests? Beijing's behavior in the seas that have "China" in their name is an issue of direct concern to Washington because it challenges the central premise of U.S. policy in East Asia: that the United States is a stabilizing presence in the region.

## Lay of the land

Approximately 70 percent of China's eastern seaboard forms the western limit of the East China Sea (ECS) and coterminous Yellow Sea basin. The Ryukyu Chain is the East China Sea's eastern boundary. The East China Sea/Yellow Sea basin is essentially home waters for the navies of China, Japan, and both Koreas. As a result, it is a "local" training area for four—or, if one includes Taiwan, five—littoral navies. If we include the United States Seventh Fleet, these are waters where all parties routinely operate their navies. These waters are also of enormous economic import for China. Commercial traffic must traverse the East China Sea and/or Yellow Sea to reach six of China's 10 largest ports.

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The East China and Yellow seas served for several decades as the maritime buffer between "Red China" and Washington's offshore allies of South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. While U.S. strategic thinking no longer includes notions of containing Asian continental powers, China understands that historically these waters were the routes that the West crossed to attack it. Beijing considers them "near seas," and has embarked upon a military program to ensure that it can establish sea control over this "first island chain" maritime basin.

Beijing's behavior in the seas that have "China" in their name is an issue of direct concern to Washington because it challenges the central premise of U.S. policy in East Asia: that the United States is a stabilizing presence in the region.

The South China Sea (SCS) is another of China's near seas. It poses a complex policy problem for U.S. policymakers because of an overlapping set of issues. Sovereignty disputes in the SCS involve six countries: China, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei. China and Taiwan claim all of the islands, rocks, and shoals in the SCS.

Vietnam claims the Spratly and Paracel groups. Five of the countries (all but Brunei) occupy some of the islands with military or paramilitary forces. The SCS picture is further muddied because China also makes claims based on assertions of "historic waters" delimited by a vague, un-demarcated line on maps, known as the "U" shaped or "nine-dashed" line, which covers virtually the entire sea. This line is the cause of significant confusion, because Beijing has so far refused to define what it means legally, and because the line overlaps the legitimate EEZ and continental shelf claims of the other SCS coastal states. This state of affairs, and the attendant political uncertainty it generates, is a major disincentive for large international oil companies to invest in exploration and hydrocarbon extraction activity.

Despite genuine protestations of neutrality regarding sovereignty issues in the SCS, the United States has willingly become more deeply involved than ever before by encouraging a collaborative or multilateral solution that is at odds with Beijing's preferred bilateral approach. In a departure from past policy, in the summer of 2010 the Obama administration clearly began to signal, through a combination of diplomacy and enhanced military presence, that it does consider rule-based stability in the SCS to be an important U.S. national objective.

As a result, whether intended or not, Washington has made the SCS an implicit test case of its "post-rebalance" credibility as a stabilizing power in Asia. Starting with the 2010 ASEAN Regional Forum in Hanoi, Washington has become more involved, and as a result the United States now has strategic "skin in the SCS game."

## Flashpoint: The East China Sea

While the SCS has grown in importance for Washington, it is in the East China Sea where the stakes are much higher. This is the one area along the East Asian littoral where a shooting war with China is conceivable. Taiwan, which lies at the southern end of the East China Sea, has been a perennial flashpoint. Fortunately, cross-strait relations between Taipei and Beijing are probably as good today as they have ever been, and as a result the risk of conflict is very low. But, since China refuses to renounce the use of force against Taiwan, the possibility of a military crisis or even conflict cannot be completely ruled out.

More recently, the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, also in the southern portion of the ECS, have become a second potential source of direct Sino-U.S. conflict. In August 2012 the long-simmering dispute between China and Japan over sovereignty of these five small, inconsequential islands burst into open confrontation when the government of Japan effectively nationalized the islets by purchasing three of them from a private individual. This created a nationalist outburst from all three claimants—Taiwan (the Republic of China), the People's Republic of China, and Japan. The five uninhabited islands and three rocky reefs that constitute the island chain are currently under Japanese control, and for years have been routinely patrolled by the Japanese Coast Guard to keep Taiwanese and Chinese fishermen out of what Japan considers its territorial waters. Neither China nor Taiwan acknowledges Japanese sovereignty and have authored detailed position papers explaining why the islands should have been, but were not, returned to the Republic of China along with Taiwan at the end of World War II. The United States considered the Senkakus to be part of Okinawa prefecture, which was not returned to Japanese control until 1972.

The current confrontation between Japan and China has been going on for over a year now, and the public statements of both sides suggest no room for compromise on who has sovereignty. While Japan's decision to purchase the islands was intended to avoid a dispute with China by preventing them from falling into the hands on a far-right nationalist group led by the Mayor of Tokyo, the well-intentioned action has backfired. Beijing accuses Japan of changing the status quo, and has used that rationale to begin to patrol the waters around the islands as if they were Chinese territory. China is using its Coast Guard to demonstrate that sovereignty over the islands is in dispute, despite Tokyo's position that there is no territorial question—the islands are Japan's, period. So far Beijing, Taipei and Tokyo have successfully kept this dispute confined to diplomatic and maritime constabulary arenas, and avoided the direct involvement of naval warships. But the United States is keeping a close eye on developments because it considers the Senkakus to be under Japanese administrative control—though it takes no position regarding under whose sovereignty they ultimately will fall—and as a result the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty does apply should China attack Japanese forces around the islands or attempt to seize them, and potentially bring the U.S. into direct conflict with China.

While the South China Sea has grown in importance for Washington, it is in the East China Sea where the stakes are much higher. This is the one area along the East Asian littoral where a shooting war with China is conceivable.

At first glance, the disputes China has with the Philippines over Scarborough Shoal in the SCS appear similar to the situation in the ECS with Japan, because the U.S. is a treaty ally of the Philippines. Actually, however, the two situations are different. In the case of Scarborough Shoal, the Philippines did not have undisputed "administrative control" prior to the 2012 confrontation over the islet. Second, the U.S. is not directly involved in the Scarborough Shoal dispute because its mutual defense treaty with the Philippines does not obligate Washington to take sides over sovereignty questions. However, the treaty does include language related to attacks on "its [the Philippines'] armed forces, public vessels or aircraft in the Pacific."[1]

In the unlikely event that China were to attack a Philippine naval or coast guard ship, Washington therefore could find itself in a difficult position regarding its willingness to live up to treaty obligations and its perceived reliability as a security provider in East Asia.

## Keeping escalation under control?

So far, the PLA Navy has not played a direct role in the disputes in the East and South China Seas. They have remained an "over the horizon force," demonstrating presence through routine operations and transits in the East China Sea (ECS) and training, exercise and resupply missions to Chinese garrisons in the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea (SCS).

China is offering a choice. States that take actions directly challenging Chinese claims will be faced with demonstrations of Chinese power in all its various guises. If, however, states pursue moderate policies or actually acquiesce to Chinese claims, they will reap mutually beneficial economic and political rewards.

Beijing has opted to employ China's five civil maritime enforcement agencies (four of which have recently been combined into a Chinese Coast Guard) rather than the PLA Navy to enforce its claims. This has kept maritime confrontations at sea at the constabulary level in an apparent attempt to reduce the possibility of escalation. Furthermore, the protection of China's EEZs is the responsibility of China Maritime Surveillance (CMS), and fisheries law enforcement was the responsibility of Fisheries Law Enforcement Command (FLEC). While the PLA Navy has not been an active participant it has made certain that its nearby presence has been noted.

In mid-June 2011, China explored a more moderate approach to managing claims disputes in the South China Sea after it realized that its "hard-nosed" attitude was harming its broader foreign policy objectives, especially its ties with regional states. China's turn toward moderation did not last long, however. It unraveled during and after the standoff with the Philippines over Scarborough Shoal in April 2012. Since then, China has returned to its previous approach of taking unilateral action. While no one knows for certain why this reversal took place, in this author's judgment it was because the Chinese leadership concluded that such temperance made no appreciable difference in the behavior of the Philippines and Vietnam.[2] At the same time, growing tensions with Japan amid plans by Tokyo's governor to purchase three of the Senkaku Islands in the ECS may also have caused China's leadership to adopt a consistent approach toward China's maritime claims everywhere.

China scholar Bonnie Glaser captured China's return to assertiveness in a 2012 statement before a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing. She wrote:

> China's behavior in the South China Sea is deliberate and systematic: its actions are not the unintentional result of bureaucratic politics and poor coordination. In fact, the spate of actions by China in recent months suggests exemplary interagency coordination, civil-military control and harmonization of its political, economic and military objectives. The clear pattern of bullying and intimidation of the other claimants is evidence of a top leadership decision to escalate China's coercive diplomacy. This has implications not only for the Philippines and Vietnam, the primary targets of China's coercive efforts, but also has broader regional and global implications.[3]

In her statement, Glaser also pointed out that China's claims, policies, ambitions, behavior, and capabilities are significantly different from those of other claimants:

> Beijing refuses to engage in multilateral discussions on the territorial and maritime disputes in the region, preferring bilateral mechanisms where it can apply leverage over smaller, weaker parties. China rejects a role for the International Court of Justice (ICJ) or the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) in resolving the territorial and maritime disputes in the South China Sea. Although Beijing has agreed to eventually enter into negotiations to reach a Code of Conduct for the South China Sea, Chinese officials have recently stated that discussions can only take place "when conditions are ripe."[4]

In short, China is offering a choice. States that take actions directly challenging Chinese claims will be faced with demonstrations of Chinese power in all its various guises. If, however, states pursue moderate policies or actually acquiesce to Chinese claims, they will reap mutually beneficial economic and political rewards.[5]

Beijing, moreover, is undoubtedly pleased with how things have turned out since it has adopted this more aggressive posture. It has, for example, successfully changed the status quo in its favor in both Scarborough Shoal (contested with the Philippines) and the Senkakus (contested with Japan). It has also highlighted the split in ASEAN between those states that border China, where the People's Liberation Army (PLA) can walk or drive to the frontier, and those ASEAN states that have the advantage of water or distance to separate them from China. This split over what position to take on the SCS suggests that the leadership in Beijing could conclude that ASEAN is unlikely to ever become a cohesive anti-China bloc. In fact, that perception is reinforced by the actions of almost all of the ASEAN states today. Each works carefully to hedge its relationships between Beijing and Washington.

There is no question that Beijing has paid some political price for being assertive, in that it has facilitated greater U.S. involvement with the Philippines and Vietnam. But Beijing clearly believes it can manage these apprehensions because of the important trade and economic linkages it has with all of its neighbors. It also realizes that its neighbors are quite aware of the fact that China is always going to be a very powerful neighbor with a strong sense of grievance and a willingness to play "hardball" with weaker powers when it is crossed. In short, the Chinese leadership recognizes that these countries are always going to live in the shadow of China, and will ultimately have to come to terms with that reality. As a result, a significant change in its uncompromising view of sovereignty questions is not likely.

## Regional reactions

China's neighbors are increasingly jittery over these developments. For a number of years, Japan has been warily eyeing China's defense modernization, especially its large and growing submarine force and long-range conventionally tipped ballistic missiles, and has gradually shifted its focus south to the Ryukyu chain. The Senkaku confrontation has accelerated those efforts, which now include an increased defense budget as well as plans to develop a modestly sized marine corps-like capability trained to recapture small islands.

In the South China Sea, by contrast, the defense strategies and capabilities of Vietnam and the Philippines, as they relate to maritime disputes, are negligible when compared to the PLA Navy. While the Philippines are slowly trying to build

some maritime, off-shore defense capability, this will be a long-term process.

Vietnam, on the other hand, began an effort several years ago, largely supplied by Russia, to defend its maritime approaches and territory. U.S. assistance in organizing its command and control of its new capabilities would be useful, as would U.S.-supplied real-time surveillance of its maritime areas of interests. If Vietnamese plans all reach fruition, and the country is able to knit its new capabilities together and combine them with effective maritime surveillance, then in a few years Vietnam could have in place an effective way to deter a replay in the Spratlys of Beijing's seizure of the Paracel Islands in 1975. But today, it does not.

As a result, the dominant regional response to China's encroachment has been diplomatic and legal—and the Philippines has been on the front lines. On January 22, 2013, the Philippines officially notified China that it had instituted arbitral proceedings against China under Annex VII of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The legal challenge is focused primarily on China's claim to rights and jurisdiction in the maritime space inside the infamous nine-dash line on Chinese maps of the South China Sea.

The International Tribunal for Law of the Sea (ITLOS) in Hamburg, Germany, is preparing to conduct the proceedings. This is significant because even if China refuses to participate, as it has so far, the tribunal will go forward. Any finding it issues will be legally binding on both China and the Philippines. The issue of sovereignty will not be resolved because determinations of sovereignty are beyond the legal writ of UNCLOS. But the Philippines could achieve a major legal victory if the Tribunal rules that China cannot make claims to maritime space based on history and the nine-dash line.[6]

## A role for America

When it comes to the East China Sea; whether the situation is coercion against Taiwan or a flare-up over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, the U.S. faces the prospect of direct involvement either because of the implied defense obligation found in the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act or the defense treaty with Japan. U.S. policy statements have urged both sides to avoid any unilateral attempts to change the status quo that could trigger a spiral of escalation. Also, it has almost certainly taken advantage of private meetings with leaders in both Japan and China to consider carefully how dire the implications would be if China and Japan and possibly the United States became involved in conflict.

In the South China Sea the policy is clear:

> The United States has a national interest, as every country does, in the maintenance of peace and stability, respect for international law, freedom of navigation, unimpeded lawful commerce in the South China Sea. The United States does not take a position on competing territorial claims over land features, but we believe the nations of the region should work collaboratively together to resolve disputes without coercion, without intimidation, without threats.[7]

Beyond this policy statement, any further U.S. involvement is discretionary, and the range of options for a more active role for Washington is not infinite. Only four policy approaches seem possible. They could be generally divided into the categories below, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive:

### *Make the situation better.*

The United States could work to reduce the risk of conflict escalation. This could involve direct U.S. mediation—for example, active involvement in trying

to reconcile the competing claims of the Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia. By negotiating a resolution to these differences, the United States would set a positive example for subsequent resolution with China, make it easier for ASEAN to speak with one voice to China, and create useful legal precedents that could more broadly apply to other maritime disputes in East Asia.

### *Wash our hands of the entire problem.*

Washington could try to turn the SCS matter over to a regional power such as Indonesia, and indicate to Beijing that the Sino-U.S. relationship is more important to Washington, over the long run, than becoming involved in SCS territorial disputes. At the same time, Washington could make it clear that such a policy would not be offering a "green light" for Beijing to use force but is merely a statement of the obvious fact that United States has no important interests at stake so long as high seas freedoms are respected.

### *Take a much more assertive posture with China.*

The United States could take sides, especially by improving its own capabilities and other claimants' military postures. In so doing, it would adopt a posture clearly aimed at deterring Chinese attempts to coerce. This policy would risk turning the Sino-U.S. relationship into one of confrontation that would make East Asia less stable and force many countries in the region into difficult choices that might not be resolved in favor of the United States.

### *Enhance the status quo.*

While undertaking no change in official U.S. policy, Washington could become more explicit about its views. For example, the State Department could issue a White Paper that spelled out what the U.S. considers to be claims in the SCS that are beyond the writ of UNCLOS and general international law. Such a paper would address in very explicit terms what baselines are considered excessive, what islands or islets qualify for an EEZ, and what the United States means by "freedom of navigation." Even though the United States has not ratified UNCLOS, it can still read and interpret international maritime law.

There is no easy or quick resolution. China appears to be satisfied that its current approach in both the East China Sea and the South China Sea has strengthened its claims, assuaged nationalist sentiment at home and effectively created a "new normal." In this author's opinion, Beijing is unlikely to dramatically change its proactive approach to real or perceived challenges to what it considers its sovereign territory—even if the territory in question is an uninhabited islet or rock.

Over the past few years, the prominence of maritime-related confrontations between China and its neighbors has resulted in increased Sino-U.S. tension, because most of the countries that live in the shadow of China turn to the United States as their only practical way to counterbalance Beijing. Washington has been a willing party in this hedging dynamic because of its traditional strategic vision of itself as a regional stabilizer, because of treaty obligations to prevent or respond to aggression against its allies, and because Washington wants to be a major player in the economic life of East Asia.

As a result, disputes over the sovereignty of uninhabited islands between China and its neighbors—geographic features that the United States has no direct stake in—seem likely to be a persistent irritant in the relationship between China and the United States. These friction points are also symptoms of the larger strategic competition between China

and the United States—a competition for military access, political and economic influence, and for rules-based values that is playing out between Beijing and Washington in East Asia.




1. *Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of the Philippines*, August 30, 1951, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/phil001.asp.
2. From Beijing's perspective, despite a more moderate tone, the Philippines conducted very active and public diplomacy regarding its claims including pushing for proposals that China viewed as harming its claims at the East Asian Summit, attempting to persuade ASEAN in April 2012 to negotiate a code of conduct without China and seeking international attention and support during the standoff at Scarborough Shoal. Several Vietnamese actions in June 2012 probably strengthened the argument in China for a return to a more unilateral approach, including Vietnam's first patrol of the islands with advanced Su-27 Flanker fighter aircraft flying as low as 500m over disputed features and the National Assembly's passage of a Maritime Law that affirmed Vietnam's claims over the Paracels and Spratlys.
3. Bonnie Glaser, Statement before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, September 12, 2012, http://csis.org/testimony/beijing-emerging-power-south-china-sea.
4. Ibid.
5. This interpretation is based upon Robert Sutter and Chin-hao Huang, "China Muscles Opponents on South China Sea," CSIS Pacific Forum *Comparative Connections* 11, no. 2 (September 2012), 62-63.
6. Robert Beckman, "The Philippines v. China Case and the South China Sea Disputes," paper presented at the Asia Society/LKY PP Conference on the South China Sea: Central to Asia-Pacific Peace and Security, New York, March 13-15, 2013, http://cil.nus.edu.sg/programmes-and-activities/cil-members-activities/director-beckmans-paper-from-asia-society-conference-on-south-china-sea/.
7. Hillary Clinton, "Remarks with Indonesian Foreign Minister Raden Mohammad Marty Muliana Natalegawa," September 3, 2012, http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2012/09/197279.htm.

# China's Search for Footing in the Middle East

Jeffrey Payne

The past few years in the Middle East have been a wake-up call for China. For years, many analysts, both inside and outside the People's Republic, emphasized how China had used economic diplomacy and careful bilateral engagement to develop influence there. Yet the Arab Spring, the pressures of the current civil war in Syria, and ongoing relations with Iran have all highlighted the errors of China's approach.

At its core, the problem facing the People's Republic is that it has no comprehensive strategy for the region. Rather, its efforts are designed to gain market access and secure energy trade. As such, the region remains something of an enigma for Beijing.

For Washington, meanwhile, China's foray into the Middle East has been more a burden than a threat. But whereas relations between the United States and China are complicated by territorial disputes and the latter's provocative actions in the Asia-Pacific, the Middle East offers opportunities for future cooperation between the two countries.

## China's strategy (or lack thereof)

As is the case in Africa and South Asia, China's relations with Middle Eastern states are driven by its unending pursuit of core economic interests. Specifically, China seeks access to foreign markets to which it can export manufactured products and from where it can secure natural resources (primarily petroleum, natural gas, and certain base metals).

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Petroleum has emerged as the most important strategic aim in this regard. Rapid urban development has transformed the People's Republic into an oil glutton—one that must now import the majority of the oil it consumes. As a recent CSIS study notes, "China's energy shortfall is projected to grow rapidly, and the International Energy Agency estimates that by 2030 China will need to import 75 percent of its energy."[1] In the region, China's largest energy partner is Saudi Arabia, with other major suppliers in Oman, Iraq, and Kuwait. Qatar is China's Middle Eastern source of natural gas, and Iran serves as its main overseas source of iron ore.[2]

As is the case in Africa and South Asia, China's relations with Middle Eastern states are driven by its unending pursuit of core economic interests.

But China's involvement in the region is not merely about energy. The wave of urbanization sweeping across China, which demands a steady stream of resource imports, also creates an abundance of manufactured goods. The Middle East offers markets in which Chinese goods can gain footholds and the region's location offers a good distribution point for accessing Eastern European and African consumers.

These economic interests necessitate the development of good relations with the region's regimes. Saudi-Chinese relations have been strong, in part because of the sheer amount of petroleum the Kingdom sells to China, but also because close ties between the two helps the Saudi leadership prepare for the future of the energy trade while signaling to the United States that other suitors exist throughout the world. China, in turn, has mimicked its relations with Saudi Arabia in its dealings with the other Gulf kingdoms.

Trade between Iran and China—encompassing Iranian natural resources and Chinese consumer products and military equipment—has nurtured what is China's strongest relationship in the region. Commercial and infrastructure investment by Chinese firms, meanwhile, has increased the visibility of the People's Republic throughout the Levant and North Africa.

Taken as a whole, China's approach to the Middle East centers on dealing with all parties with the selling point of mutual development. Yet, as China's commercial and energy footprint has increased, it has become increasingly difficult for the People's Republic to remain removed from the region's myriad political and social conflicts.

Prior to 2011, analysts both in and outside the Middle East hesitantly applauded China's clever approach to the region. It had managed to remain largely aloof from regional disputes, while gaining great admiration from the masses there. But Beijing's efforts in the Middle East were no different than its approaches to other developing regions throughout the globe. It would build trust through diplomatic overtures and infrastructural investment in order to secure favorable trade conditions. All the while, China would emphasize how it was not an interfering power like those in the West, and was committed to peaceful development.

But China's economic diplomacy was not accompanied by the personnel and assets necessary to protect its investment. Maritime trade remains secured by the United States Navy, not the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN). Energy and commercial trade was predicated on the stability of the region's regimes. If relations were to suddenly change or if the region were to become unstable, China would lack the political resources to protect its interests.

This risk became reality in 2011. The outbreak of the Arab Spring rocked China more so than it did most other foreign players in the Middle East. For perhaps the first time, political conflict substantially threatened Chinese investment and plans.[3] The initial revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt did not substantially impact China, although the demise of established regimes in both places altered Beijing's calculations. If the wave of revolutions had ended in these two countries, then in all probability many would still be praising China's model of courting Middle East support. But other revolutionary movements emerged, and the regime of Muammar Qadhafi in Libya, which had strong ties to Beijing and where thousands of Chinese workers labored in the energy and infrastructure sectors, became the next to fall.

The conflict that eventually deposed Qadhafi required the removal of Chinese workers, but Beijing lacked the resource capacity to extract them. A single PLAN vessel arrived in the Mediterranean to oversee evacuations while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) contracted a fleet of private vessels to safely get Chinese citizens out of harm's way. Added to the shock of having to evacuate so many from what had been considered to be a stable regime was the financial loss suffered from having to abandon projects throughout Libya.

Beyond these factors, China chafed at how the international community involved itself in the revolution. The emergence of the rebellion against Qadhafi had created a humanitarian crisis. International players, namely France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, sought to diminish Qadhafi's ability to harm civilians by imposing a no-fly zone. China, also seeking to end the crisis and recognizing the wave of opposition against the Libyan regime, abstained from UN Resolution 1973. Without China's vote against the resolution, the United Nations authorized a no-fly zone. Resolution 1973 was designed to keep the Libyan population safe by denying use of the aerial domain to Qadhafi's forces, but the United Kingdom and France, with the support of the United States, used the resolution as justification to begin air strikes against Qadhafi assets. China viewed these air strikes as a violation of the resolution's intent, and felt that the West had manipulated Beijing's goodwill to gain legitimacy to remove an unpopular regime. Thus, the Libyan revolution ended up endangering thousands of Chinese citizens, costing Beijing millions of dollars, and increasing mistrust between China and the West.

The Libyan experience would be just the start of China's struggles with the Arab Spring revolutions, however. Another friend of the PRC, the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Damascus, also became destabilized by domestic unrest. Although Assad's Syria was not a substantial trading partner of Beijing's, it nonetheless was a political friend due to both countries' association with Iran. Furthermore, Syria's pariah status in the West had fostered sympathy for Assad among elements within China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its Central Party leadership. In short, friendship with Syria was seen in Beijing as an occasionally useful tool.

When protests there were met by a violent government crackdown, the initially peaceful Syrian opposition took up arms. More than two years later, the conflict between the government and the opposition has evolved into a full-fledged civil war. Due to humanitarian concerns, Western powers once again sponsored UN resolutions demanding the cessation of hostilities by the Assad regime. China joined with Russia to twice vote against these measures, in part because of political considerations. At home, the West's move against Syria was seen as yet another case in which a developing

country was being dominated. Adding to homegrown discomfort were the fresh wounds of the Libyan experience and China's relationship with Syria's main regional ally, Iran.

From the outset of the Arab Spring, China's leadership was concerned with the ideological and domestic influence that the Middle East's transformations could prompt within their own country.

Beijing's opposition created an immediate regional backlash. In particular, China's relations with two historically friendly Gulf kingdoms, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, became strained. Both countries, like other Sunni Gulf states, saw the Syrian civil war as a proxy battle with Shi'ite Iran. Assad's Alawite regime was seen as a bastion of Iranian influence, and the Sunni countries of the region naturally identified with the Sunni opposition to it.

Anger among the Gulf kingdoms against China's vetoes was not substantial enough to threaten trade relations, but the resulting diplomatic strain and confusion was further evidence that China operated in the Middle East without adequate awareness of regional political sensitivities. From the beginning of the Arab Spring, China had moved from one political problem to another. Other countries, particularly the United States, also were plagued by problems, but China differed because it was not accustomed to having to navigate such issues. Beijing's expertise in the region was insufficient to prepare it for the sectarian differences, religious disputes, and political crises that had suddenly sprung to the fore. This lack of expertise, in turn, eloquently highlighted the shortfalls of China's "economics first" policy.

## Domestic lessons

In some ways, however, the tumult of the Middle East served a useful purpose for Beijing. It allowed the PRC to "portray the unrest, chaos, and violence that have engulfed Arab Spring countries like Libya, Syria, and Egypt as vindicating its argument that an authoritative state is needed to maintain law and order in China."[4] Yet underpinning this opportunity was real concern. From the outset of the Arab Spring, China's leadership was concerned with the ideological and domestic influence that the Middle East's transformations could prompt within their own country. The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) monopoly on political power is built upon several key components—each of which had the potential to be undercut by the popular revolutions taking place in the Middle East. The narrative crafted by the CCP and central government authorities argues that China can never be a strong and prosperous society if it becomes divided by political interests, individualism, and liberalism. Furthermore, the country's march from poverty toward wealth is a hard transition that will inevitably isolate some, leave behind others, and require change from all. However, in the end, the burden shared will lead to a better society.

This narrative remains legitimate to most of the Chinese population, which can readily observe the effect of the CCP's leadership through new infrastructure, immensely modern cities, and greater international prestige. Yet, for a sizeable and ever-growing portion of Chinese society, the leadership of the CCP has squashed individual expression, political discourse, and opposing views. The dominant tale of modernity and wealth is apparent upon setting foot in any one of China's hundreds of cities, but those cities hide a still impoverished countryside, calamitous pollution, increased tensions between social classes, a plague of official corruption, and a mysterious

legal system. Thousands of protests occur throughout China and each passing year shows evidence of more people questioning the legitimacy of Beijing. The last thing Beijing wants layered upon an already complicated system of governance is evidence from abroad of an authoritarian regime being successfully overthrown by a populist movement.

Thus, from the first spark of the Arab Spring, Beijing has downplayed or repressed outright information about revolutionary movements. The pressures of the youth bulge throughout the Middle East, the lack of economic opportunity, the use of harsh repression, and other features of deposed or challenged governments are blocked from public discourse in China to every extent possible. Beijing does allow conversations about the revolutions, but primarily within the established official talking points—which emphasize the chaos created by the revolutions, and the inability of new governments to address the needs of the people.

Egypt's turmoil has provided China with a useful case in point. The chronic inability of Egypt, one of the Middle East's most strategically significant countries and the world's most populous Arab state, to overcome its internal divisions has afforded China's leadership an illustration of their claim that challenges to the CCP inevitably lead to chaos. The pressures of internal politics, in turn, are largely responsible for China's relative silence regarding the summer 2013 ouster of the Muslim Brotherhood-dominated government of President Mohamed Morsi, despite the fact that Morsi's regime enjoyed a positive relationship with Beijing.

Indeed, the longer the chaos of the Arab Spring lasts, the more empirical data Beijing has to bolster its legitimacy. Yet, while chaos in the Middle East serves a domestic political purpose, it does make relations with the region more complicated. Outreach continues as it always has, but within China's foreign policy community, new options are now being crafted.

## A new approach, and new opportunities

Since it was announced in early 2012, the Obama administration's strategic decision to rebalance toward Asia has prompted a great deal of analysis throughout the world. Debate within the United States has raged over whether the U.S. could substantially disentangle itself from the Middle East, while China and much of East Asia wondered if the policy was intended to strategically box in China's ambition. Yet while the "pivot," as it is colloquially called, has received considerable attention, a similar Chinese strategic concept has not. This approach, which emphasizes China's strategic options outside the Asia-Pacific, is known as the March West.

The March West concept, first articulated by Wang Jisi of Beijing University, is a logical construct given China's current geopolitical framework. China's rise has complicated relations with its East Asian neighbors on a host of issues. The remarkable economic growth of the past two decades increasingly relied upon energy and raw material resources from West Asia and Africa. Relations between the United States and China, the most important bilateral relationship in today's world, have soured due to disputes on numerous issues. The March West is designed to ease tensions and secure China's core economic interests.[5] Simply put, the strategy calls for China to focus greater attention and resources toward the regions to its West: South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

Dismissed by many as mere theoretical examination, March West has nonetheless gained currency within China's government structure, and key investments are being made throughout China's

foreign policy community to gain expertise in the regions deemed important by the strategy. To be sure, the concept is not intended as a replacement for China's strategic ambitions in East Asia. Rather, it argues that China's rise has positioned it as a nascent global power and that, in order to maintain its development, Beijing must concentrate on more than merely the East Asian neighborhood.[6]

Part of the reason for its resonance is that China's leadership has recognized its missteps and vulnerable position in the Middle East. China certainly cannot take on a global role like the United States, either now or in the near future. It has neither the capacity nor the desire to be a U.S.-style global influencer. On the other hand, China's current approach to the region is no longer sufficient. Instead of dealing individually with each country there, the People's Republic will conceptualize the region as a geopolitical zone. Doing so will allow the nation's leadership to better understand the forces that breed conflict and instability.

China is poised to become an ever-greater player in the Middle East. The difficulties of the past few years notwithstanding, China's need for the resources and markets of the region do not allow it to pull back.[7] China has no interest in replacing the United States as the main power in the Middle East, nor does it seek to challenge American interests throughout the region. But China's economic health is in part reliant on the Middle East, and it will act accordingly to secure core national interests.

When it comes to the Middle East, the United States enjoys a far stronger position than does China. As such, China's greater foray into the region is a rare opportunity to strengthen the Sino-American relationship and work with another major power on key issues of mutual importance. Unlike China, the United States has been intensely involved in Middle Eastern affairs for decades. The United States possesses alliances with key strategic countries, such as Israel, Jordan, and Bahrain. The U.S. Navy continuously patrols the Persian Gulf in order to ease regional tensions and guarantee the flow of Gulf oil. Additionally, the U.S. operates numerous military bases throughout the Gulf kingdoms. Finally, the United States has long been a key economic partner for most Middle Eastern regimes. This knowledge and experience is not present in China.

Therein lies the opportunity. The Middle East is of great strategic importance to both countries, and both share the common goal of increasing regional stability. Unlike the disputes that at times dominate the Sino-American relationship in East Asia, the Middle East offers numerous opportunities for cooperation.[8]

In the short term, both countries could make key investments in the health, infrastructure, and education of regional economies. Tunisia would be a logical location for such investments, as would Jordan and even Yemen. From a long-term perspective, China could be a valuable partner in helping to secure Sea-Lines-of-Communication (SLOC) in the Indian Ocean, as the United States' naval assets are perpetually needed in the Persian Gulf. Furthermore, U.S. and Chinese expertise could be focused toward long-term solutions for Yemen's water issues, Jordan's refugee crisis, or even intra-Iraq regional conflict. Simply put, China's presence in the Middle East offers significant benefits to both the United States and regional states, if handled cautiously and systematically.

This certainly does not mean that the U.S. and China will agree on every important issue in the region. The Syrian civil war and Iran's nuclear ambitions top the list of topics that will remain problems for cooperation between these two external powers in the short term. Yet the core interests of both countries require a semblance of stability in the Middle East.

## Adapting to new realities

The past few years have shaken China's approach to the Middle East. The loss of investment, the threat to its citizens, and the realization of how susceptible its foreign policy actually is to regional instability have all encouraged Beijing to look for alternatives to its traditional method of regional engagement. The development of the "March West" strategic concept reveals Beijing's willingness to invest in gaining expertise in the Middle East, and represents at least a tacit admission that its previous approach was insufficient.

China's vulnerability in the Middle East provides an opening by which the United States can further its own national objectives. Carefully nurturing bilateral engagement on matters relating to the region allows China to gain valuable insights, even as the U.S. steers it toward a more productive and responsible role.

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# Russia's Weakness, China's Gain

Stephen Blank

Since 2008, Russian foreign policy has emphasized improved ties to Asia. Russia aims to recover the status of a major indepenent Asian player that must be consulted or at least reckoned with concerning any major issue in global and/or regional affairs. Asia looms large in this regard; Moscow fully understands that because East Asia is the most dynamic sector of the global economy it must assume a high profile there to be acknowledged as a major economic and political actor. Russia also grasps that all of China's peripheries are also potentially very dangerous areas in world politics and that, in many cases (e.g., Korea), a breakdown in security threatens its vital interests.

A precondition for Russia achieving this objective of recovered great-power status is the redevelopment of the Russian Far East (RFE), particularly its energy and related industries and infrastructure. And here, Russia faces a real challenge. In the year 2000, President Vladimir Putin warned local audiences in the Far East that unless Russia put more effort into the region's development, they would end up speaking Korean, Japanese, or Chinese. Putin's warning left little to the imagination concerning Russian fears in regard to its Asiatic holdings—and who might step in if Russia faltered.[1]

Putin is not alone in his concerns. In 2002, the prestigious Council on Foreign and Defense Policy (SVOP) in Moscow admonished its elite audience that Siberia and the Russian Far East would inevitably become depopulated. It warned, too, that "one should not turn a blind eye to the risk of some Chinese-related dangers that could materialize within the next 10-15 years."[2] Meanwhile, Dmitri Trenin of the Moscow branch of the Carnegie Endowment was also telling readers that Siberia's development was Russia's civilizational challenge of the century, and that failure to master this problem could

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become Russia's most urgent challenge.[3] By 2006, however, Trenin had clearly become pessimistic about Moscow's chances for success, observing that Russia's eastern regions:

> …have been going through a deep crisis. The former model of their development is inapplicable; a new model is yet to be devised and implemented. Meanwhile, the vast region has been going through depopulation, deindustrialization, and general degradation. Russia's territorial integrity and national unity in the twenty-first century will not be decided by Chechnya. Rather it will depend on whether Moscow will find a way to perform the feat of dual integration of the Far East and Siberia, that is with the rest of Russia and with its Northeast Asian neighborhood. Eastern Russia is vulnerable. The quality of Moscow's statesmanship will be tested by whether it can rise up to the challenge in the East.[4]

These worries have remained a fixture in Moscow. During his turn as Russia's president, Dmitry Medvedev warned that if Russia fails to develop its Far East it could turn into a raw material base for more developed Asian countries (a trend that already seems to be well underway). "[U]nless we speed up our efforts," Medvedev noted, "we can lose everything."[5]

But rhetoric is one thing, action quite another. As Bobo Lo writes in his excellent study of Russo-Chinese relations,

> Although the Kremlin signed off in 2002 on a Strategy for the Social and Economic Development of Eastern Siberia and the Russian Far East, very little has been achieved. The region continues to be one of the most backward in Russia; the local economy is increasingly reliant on Chinese goods, services, and labor; and local out-migration shows little sign of reversing. For all the early promise under Putin, Moscow's policy towards the RFE is barely more effective than during the dismal Yeltsin years.[6]

## Russia's demons

The reasons for this sorry track record are easy to understand. Redeveloping the RFE poses several particular challenges to Moscow—ones which the Kremlin is ill-suited to meet. Russia, for example, must overcome years of misdirected and misconceived Soviet economic and other policies and of continuing misrule. It must reverse the continuing trend toward the depopulation of its Far East, in order to preserve its workforce there. And it must modernize its economy so that it can offer Asian consumers products they want or need besides energy and weapons.

Problems obtain on the resource front also. While the RFE is potentially a treasure trove of hydrocarbons, timber, minerals, including so called rare earths, there are severe challenges to its development and modernization, among them a harsh, unforgiving climate and topographical obstacles that make the extraction of minerals and hydrocarbons inordinately expensive.

But most of the other obstacles to development there are man-made, stemming from years of misrule, bad economic decisions, and systematic underinvestment.[7] Whereas in the late Soviet period the government invested 31 percent of GDP, since 2003 all Moscow has invested is 21.3 percent compared to China's 41 percent. And whereas the USSR built 700 kilometers of railways a year, the present government only built 60 of them in 2009.[8] Similarly the total length of paved roads in Russia in 2008 was less than it was in 1997, a sure sign of governance failure and the misallocation of resources.[9]

Consequently Russia has recovered more slowly from the 2008 economic crisis than did the other BRIC countries, Brazil, China, and India.[10] Since foreign direct investment in Russia is a fraction of the total for the other BRIC members (4.1 percent for 2007) that pace of recovery will probably not change anytime

soon.[11] Russia is reportedly about 20 years behind the developed countries in industrial technology, and produces 20 times fewer innovative technologies than does China and allocates considerably less money to research and development than China does.

## A stunted Asia strategy

Prime Minister Wen Jiabao of China, when visiting Russia in 2007, noted with satisfaction that Chinese-Russian trade in machinery products reached an annual level of $6.33 billion. Out of politeness, however, he refrained from adding that $6.1 billion of that sum involved Chinese machinery exports to Russia, leaving only $230 million of Russian machinery exports to China. Making matters worse, projections by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development for the year 2020 envisage not only China's gross domestic product as approximately four times larger than that of Russia, but with India ahead of Russia as well.[12]

Despite the widespread but misguided belief that Russia has laid the foundations of a genuine market economy, Russia's system actually represents the antithesis of one. Although there are markets and growth, there is neither an unconditional right to private property under law, nor any concept of a legally accountable political or state authority. Therefore it is taken for granted that the state, not private actors, must formulate and implement an action program for the RFE.

Yet, since 1991, the state has repeatedly demonstrated its inability to fulfill these tasks, as Putin has recently revealed.[13] The RFE's deep-rooted problems can only be overcome by sustained, coherent, and rational economic policies—policies which are still not in evidence. For example, although timber exports from the RFE are vital, according to President Putin the government only has data on the quantity and quality of its forest industry for 19 percent of its forests.[14] Similarly this business is, like other sectors in the Far East, plagued by corruption and general lawlessness.[15]

Beyond these pathologies, there is yet another problem: scarce labor. As a recent report by the prestigious Valdai Club outlined,

> There is a general shortage of personnel, not just skilled employees. Two decades of population flight from the region and of the social marginalization of many of those who stayed hit the region hard. Hence the fond dreams of building dozens of new factories in the region are utopian by definition. One has to clearly understand that, for these dreams to be realized, the labor force would have to be imported. There are no domestic labor resources. The architects of ambitious projects prefer to overlook this issue for understandable reasons. Is regional public opinion prepared for the new industrialization of the Transbaikal region and the Russian Far East to be accomplished by Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Indian workers? At this point, it is unlikely.[16]

Given these problems it is hardly surprising that Russian authorities have acquiesced to at least some Chinese migration into the RFE. As a recent Chinese article argued, the RFE cannot afford to spurn Chinese labor and/or capital.[17] This is all the more true because the Russian government appears largely to have abandoned the effort to stimulate Russian migration from other parts of Russia to the RFE, having recognized the infeasiblity of such programs.[18] Yet fears of Chinese encroachment have led to protectionist attitudes among local officials in the RFE, and this, along with other variables, keeps the number of permanent Chinese settlers in the area low.[19]

## Already an economic powerhouse

But where China is lacking in manpower, it is making up for in economic prowess. Absent a competent government that can formulate and execute a coherent program, Russia must depend instead on foreign investment. And here, China constitutes a real threat, because a dearth of other investors has positioned Beijing as a would-be economic hegemon in its quest for energy and resources from Russia.[20] The real penetration and threat to Russian national interests and Russia's Asian policies is China's steady encroachment upon and acquisition of economic and political leverage in Russia's industries and raw material sectors, including energy.[21] Unless Russia can unlock Japanese and other investment in the RFE, the region will become essentially what Russians most fear, "a raw materials appendage to China." And, as suggested above, this process may already be underway.

Today, Russia seriously competes economically in Asia only in the exploration and exports of energy deposits, as well as arms sales to Asian countries like China, India, and Vietnam. Furthermore its quest for energy and other investment partnerships has not been very successful. Although there are signs of a thaw with Japan and Russian offers to Japanese firms in the RFE and Arctic, there are presently no large-scale Japanese investments in the energy field beyond Sakhalin and one should not expect any rapid developments here or in other sectors.[22] This is not just due to the longstanding impasse concerning the future status of the Kurile Islands annexed by the Soviet Union after 1945.

Japanese business, though it clearly wants to invest in Russia, is also very leery of investing in a market famous for being a high-cost production plaform with low levels of labor productivity and high rates of extortion, expropriation, corruption, criminality, kickbacks, etc. We see many examples of Japanese interst in investment in Russia; Gazprom, for example, has resumed discussions with Mitsui and Mitsubishi on new LNG projects, possibly Sakhalin-3,[23] while other firms (Marubeni-Itochu) are eyeing energy projects in the RFE. Yet for such projects to materialize, Russia must regain its credibility as a place where foreign energy investment is welcomed and reverse its proven record of mistreatment of foreign investors.[24] Unfortunately there is considerable skepticism in Japan about the extent to which these Siberian deposits can be explored, refined, exported, etc., given Russian domestic conditiions.[25]

Other impulses similarly remain unrequited. On the Korean peninsula, Russia's vision of a railroad connecting the Trans-Siberian Railroad with a trans-Korean railroad (TSR-TKR) has been in the works since the 1890s. Likewise, the dream of buildng a trans-Korean pipeine that would bring Russian gas to South Korea through the North, thereby enhancing Russia's status, has gone nowhere. While Russia is courting Southeast Asian investors, it is obvious that they cannot furnish the capital and technologies that Russia needs except in limited cases and to a limited degree.

Thus China remains by default the only major foreign investor with whom Russia has hitherto been able to make major deals in the RFE. A large-scale Chinese program for investing in the RFE already exists.[26] Russia has had to resume selling China advanced miliary technologies, not least to sustain Far Eastern defense industries as Middle Eastern markets have dried up since 2011. Here, strategic considerations and sectoral thinking has trumped rational economics and realpolitik, with potentially disastrous results. Indeed, some analysts already believe that China surpasses Russia as a conventional miltiary power.[27] In the economic sphere, too, there

are many tensions that belie the notion that Moscow-Beijing relations are better than ever. To wit, China has strived to oust Russia's economic presence from neighboring Mongolia.[28]

## Tactical commonality, strategic divergence

To be sure, there is much convergence of ideology between Moscow and Beijing against U.S. policy. But that identity exists only insofar as global issues are concerned. Moscow and Beijing are in lockstep on the inadvisability of intervention on behalf of democracy in Syria, on the dangers of Western missile defense, on the pernicious nature of democracy promotion, and myriad other strategic issues. But, below the surface, a subterranean rivalry simmers—and on no issue more than the Russian Far East.

Quite simply, Russia cannot compete with Chinese economic and financial power, and it is ever more apparent that China is the only foreign investor of any consequence in the RFE and Siberian projects; projects that are of great and growing importance to Russia. China today is steadily accumulating pressure points or points of leverage inside Russia's economy. This is only natural; it would be highly unusual if Beijing were to refrain from seeking, as it has elsewhere, to convert economic leverage into lasting political advantage in its relationship with Russia. That it has been able to do so, however, is a reflection of the pervasive misrule that has characterized Russia under Putin.

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# China's North Korea Problem—And Ours

Richard Weitz

It is understandable that the international community has looked to the People's Republic of China (PRC) to influence North Korea's policies and help end the protracted dispute over its nuclear program and threatening international behavior. After all, Beijing is Pyongyang's most important foreign diplomatic, economic, and security partner.

Through the Six-Party Talks and other diplomatic mechanisms, PRC policymakers have pushed what they see as an optimal outcome: for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to relinquish its nuclear weapons and moderate its other foreign and defense policies in return for security assurances, economic assistance, and diplomatic acceptance by the rest of the international community. Such a benign outcome, Chinese officials believe, would avoid the instability and adverse consequences that would accompany a precipitous regime change in Pyongyang: humanitarian emergencies, economic reconstruction, arms races, and military conflicts.

Yet, Beijing's willingness to pressure Pyongyang is constrained by a fundamental consideration. Unlike most policymakers in Seoul, Tokyo, or Washington, Chinese officials want to change North Korea's behavior, not its regime. Chinese officials remain more concerned about the potential collapse of the DPRK than about its government's intransigence on the nuclear issue or other questions.

Accordingly, the Chinese government has been willing to take only limited steps to achieve its objectives. These measures have included exerting some pressure (criticizing DPRK behavior and temporarily reducing economic assistance, for example). Mostly, however, the Chinese have aimed to entice Pyongyang through economic bribes and other inducements. Despite their frustrations with the Kim regime, PRC policymak-

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ers appear to have resigned themselves to dealing with it for now while hoping a more accommodating leadership will eventually emerge in Pyongyang.

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## Beijing's calculations

Chinese policymakers have long opposed North Korea's acquisition of nuclear weapons, if for no other reason than that its advent might induce South Korea, Japan, and even Taiwan to pursue their own nuclear forces, which under some contingencies might be used against Beijing as well as Pyongyang. Some Chinese, recalling their problems with Russia and Vietnam, worry that the DPRK might even threaten to use nuclear weapons against China in some future dispute. Decisionmakers in Beijing presumably also would like to avoid the negative reaction in Washington and other capitals if it became evident that Pyongyang had transferred materials and technologies originally provided by China to third countries.

China's leaders also fear that ostentatious displays of North Korea's improving missile and nuclear capabilities will further encourage the United States, Japan, Taiwan and other states to develop missile defenses—which, in turn, will weaken the effectiveness of Beijing's cherished ballistic missile arsenal. China's increasingly sophisticated missiles represent a core element of its national security strategy. To date, it has deployed over one thousand intermediate-range missiles within distance of Taiwan to deter, and if necessary punish, Taipei from pursuing policies objectionable to Beijing. In addition, PRC strategists see their strengthening missile capabilities as a decisive instrument in implementing China's anti-access/area-denial strategy against the United States. The Chinese military seeks the ability to target U.S. military forces, including aircraft carriers, which attempt to defend Taiwan or otherwise confront them. As a last resort, the PRC relies on its long-range strategic ballistic missiles to deter the United States from employing its own nuclear forces against China.

China's failure to rein in Pyongyang is leading the United States to move additional forces to East Asia, on both short-term exercises and long-term deployments. From Beijing's perspective, Pyongyang's nuclear detonations and missile launches are triggering an American military response that could threaten the PRC. As well, a strengthening of the U.S. military alliances in East Asia would also have the effect of enhancing their capacity to counter China.

## Devil in the details

For these reasons, China's actual policies regarding the DPRK are moving closer to that of the United States, but in certain important areas a major gap remains. The parties all agree that the best solution to the Korean crisis would be for the United States, South Korea, Japan, Russia, and China to offer the DPRK security guarantees, sanctions relief, humanitarian aid, and other positive inducements to renounce its nuclear weapons and missile programs. But the parties disagree over the best means by which to achieve this goal. In particular, the Beijing and Washington "clocks" are misaligned. China wants to avert actions that could risk the premature collapse of the DPRK regime, whereas U.S. officials are increasingly convinced of the need to end DPRK nuclear and missile testing before North Korea actually has the

capacity to carry out its threats to launch nuclear attacks against the United States.

North Korea's ability to produce nuclear weapons using its long-standing plutonium reprocessing and its newly unveiled uranium enrichment capacities, combined with continued progress on long-range ballistic missiles capable of reaching the continental United States, will soon expose Americans to the danger of nuclear missile strikes from the DPRK. If current trends continue, Pyongyang will soon be able to place a nuclear warhead on a functional intercontinental ballistic missile. Although the United States officially tolerates a mutual deterrence relationship with the PRC, along with Russia, such a relationship has always been out of the question with regard to North Korea.

This poses a serious strategic problem; if the United States were to be vulnerable to a North Korean nuclear strike, then the credibility of its extended deterrence guarantees to its Asian allies would be called into question. South Koreans and Japanese alike could legitimately doubt that the U.S. would defend them against a DPRK attack if North Korea could destroy Los Angeles in retaliation. They could, in turn, decide to acquire their own nuclear deterrent, whose use in response to an attack against them would be much more credible than that of a third party.

China's long-term strategy has been to encourage the DPRK to follow China's trajectory of the past few decades and adopt more moderate domestic and foreign policies. To this end, they have invited DPRK leaders on "study tours" of successful PRC economic reforms. Yet, if anything, North Korean leaders have moved further from China over the years. Whereas founding DPRK dictator Kim Il Sung was an ardent admirer of China and spent much time there, Kim Jong-il limited his time in the PRC until his last few years in power, when he was trying to secure Beijing's approval of the succession of his young son to power. And his heir, Kim Jong-un, has generally ignored China since taking power in December 2011.

At present, therefore, Chinese policymakers find themselves in an undesirable position. Since late 2008, Beijing has strived to revive the Six-Party Talks on Korean denuclearization, but the DPRK has refused to meet the conditions set by the United States and South Korea for their resumption.

The U.S. and other observers have seen securing Beijing's support as essential for influencing the DPRK, since the PRC is Pyongyang's most important foreign partner. Ironically, the advantages of sustaining this perception may have encouraged Beijing to moderate its pressure on Pyongyang in the past. A harder stance toward Pyongyang, policymakers in Beijing believe, might earn some American gratitude, but alienating the DPRK would risk undermining China's value in Washington with respect to North Korea.

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The U.S., for its part, has been newly vocal about its concerns over China's ties to the DPRK. Policymakers in Washington see North Korea as a test of whether we can achieve a new type of great power relationship with Beijing. Some believe that China tolerates DPRK provocations

and nuclear missile activities since they distract and disrupt U.S. diplomacy, which could be used against China. It allows China to look like a more responsible player, enhances Beijing's bargaining leverage on other issues with Washington, encourages other anti-American rogue states, and secures Western aid to the DPRK, reducing China's need to provide it and shoring up a Chinese ally.

China's long-term strategy has been to encourage the DPRK to follow China's trajectory of the past few decades and adopt more moderate domestic and foreign policies.

## What really worries China

In spite of their irritation with the DPRK, most Chinese officials appear more concerned about the potential collapse of the North Korean state than about its leader's intransigence on nuclear and missile questions. Despite the general unease about having such a young and inexperienced individual in charge of such a volatile regime, as well as the perception that Kim Jung-un is not as capable as his father and taking actions that run counter to Chinese interests, China has not sought to intervene in the DPRK's succession process. PRC policymakers have also consistently resisted military action, severe economic sanctions, and other developments that could threaten instability on the Korean peninsula. The Chinese government has been willing to take only limited steps to achieve its objectives. These measures have included exerting some pressure (criticizing DPRK behavior and temporarily reducing economic assistance), but mostly have aimed to entice Pyongyang through economic bribes and other inducements.

This is because PRC policymakers have found themselves constrained in the case of North Korea. Although they would prefer that Pyongyang refrain from provocative actions like missile testing, and would welcome denuclearization and a Korean peace agreement, they are not willing to impose substantial pressure on the DPRK for fear that it might collapse. Some have characterized this condition as a "mutual hostage situation," in which Beijing feels forced to continue to support North Korea despite, and increasingly due to, the North's destabilizing activities."[1]

Chinese concerns include the possibility that the DPRK's sudden demise would induce widespread economic disruptions in East Asia; generate large refugee flows across their borders; weaken China's influence in the Koreas by ending Beijing's unique status as an interlocutor with Pyongyang; allow the Pentagon to reallocate resources from potential Korean contingencies to those more directly concerning China (e.g., defending Taiwan or maintaining freedom of access to the East China Sea); redirect ROK investment flows from the PRC to North Korea, which would require a massive socioeconomic upgrading to reach ROK levels as part of reunification; and potentially remove a buffer separating China's borders from U.S. ground forces (i.e., should the U.S. Army redeploy into northern Korea). At worst, the DPRK's collapse could precipitate military conflict and civil strife on the peninsula—which, in turn, could spill across into Chinese territory or result in a unified Korea inheriting the DPRK's nuclear weapons and other war-making materiel.

At the same time, many Chinese have an outdated fear that a unified Korea will keep nuclear weapons or base U.S. troops, given the current affinity between South Korea and the United States. Some Chinese analysts have thus

been backing away from their concept of seeing the DPRK as a strategic buffer against the U.S. military and its Pacific allies. China is vulnerable to long-range strike systems in South Korea, Japan, and beyond. A unified Korea might retain an "over the horizon" U.S. security guarantee, but in the absence of a DPRK or any other kind of threat, a unified Korea would likely pursue a more balanced policy toward China and the U.S. than the current ROK, like the other East Asian countries.

## Simmering tensions with Seoul

Despite improving ties, China and South Korea remain divided by North Korean issues. South Koreans resent how, under the pretext of pursuing a policy of equivalence regarding the DPRK and the ROK, PRC officials have sided with Pyongyang in most bilateral disputes. Chinese officials have still refused to hold the DPRK to account for its provocations—including the March 2010 sinking of the *Cheonan*, its artillery barrage against Yeonpyeong Island in November 2010, or its continued work on its uranium enrichment program.

Tensions persist over their historical relationship as well. Chinese historians challenge Korean claims to the ancient Koguryo (Goguryeo) Kingdom (37 BC-AD 668) as an independent political entity, claiming that the Koguryo remained under the sovereignty of various Chinese dynasties. Koreans fear that China's interpretation reflects an offensive strategy either to gain Korean territory after reunification or to influence the character of the northern portion of a reunified Korea to protect its national interests. Conversely, the Chinese may fear that a reunited Korea could lay claim to ethnically or historically parts of China.

Beijing's treatment of North Korean refugees is another cause of bilateral tensions. Chinese officials may quietly allow defectors who take shelter in the South Korean embassy in Beijing or in ROK consulates in China to go to South Korea, but those captured elsewhere are typically sent back to the North, as required by Chinese laws and agreements with North Korea. Official PRC policy treats all North Koreans who enter Chinese territory without permission as economic migrants. A bilateral treaty obliges China to repatriate them to the DPRK. In 2012, the ROK and PRC foreign ministries engaged in a public spat over Chinese plans to repatriate dozens on DPRK refugees. South Korea eventually took the case to the UN Human Rights Council.[2] A more recent crisis between Beijing and Seoul was China's prolonged detention and alleged torture of Kim Young-hwan, a prominent South Korean democracy activist who has been helping North Koreans escape from the DPRK.[3]

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Bilateral strains likewise result from Seoul's acquiring longer-range ballistic missiles capable of hitting targets in parts of China as well as all of North Korea. The South Korean government is also purchasing advanced fighter planes, mostly likely Lockheed Martin's stealthy F-35. Chinese officials have responded to these developments by reinforcing their ties with Pyongyang; many Chinese still see the DPRK as a useful territorial buffer between China and the ROK-U.S. military bloc. They also consider DPRK provoca-

tions useful for diverting South Korean and American defense and diplomatic resources from concentrating on China. Moving China in a different direction might require a weakening of U.S.-ROK defense ties, perhaps under a future South Korean government less committed to widening the scope of bilateral relations. Only then is Beijing likely to feel more comfortable about siding with Seoul against Pyongyang.

Many in the Chinese government still do not believe that their country would be better off with a unified Korean Peninsula under Seoul's leadership rather than with the current division in which China suffers from being the closest ally of a troublesome and ungrateful rogue state.

Public surveys show that these tensions have adversely affected popular perceptions of the bilateral relationship, with Chinese and South Korean respondents expressing a less favorable opinion of the other. According to one poll, many more South Koreans see China, rather than Japan or another country, as the main security threat that would confront a reunified Korea.[4] According to another survey, whereas 67 percent of South Koreans favored strong U.S. international leadership, almost equal numbers disapproved of strong Chinese (or Russian) leadership in global affairs.[5] In addition to provocative DPRK behavior and growing economic and social ties between Americans and South Koreans, their rising fear of China's military power partly explains the resurgent popularity of the United States among South Koreans. In a recent poll, some 91 percent of the respondents saw China as threatening.[6] Although Chinese analysts still claim to believe that eliminating the North's nuclear weapons could be a possible accomplishment of renewed negotiations, many South Koreans doubt the North will ever abandon its nuclear arsenal, and so are contemplating how to coexist with a nuclear-armed North.

Despite their frustrations with Chinese policies, Seoul and Washington still hope Beijing will eventually offer greater help in reining in Pyongyang's provocations and nuclear program. They also hope that, at some point, Chinese policymakers will realize that the PRC would be better off aligning with South Korea and supporting reunification under Seoul's leadership, which would result in China's having a more stable and prosperous neighbor. But many in the Chinese government still do not believe that their country would be better off with a unified Korean Peninsula under Seoul's leadership rather than with the current division in which China suffers from being the closest ally of a troublesome and ungrateful rogue state.

For their part, Chinese officials have become alarmed by the strengthening of the ROK-U.S. alliance in recent years. They have been especially irritated by joint ROK-U.S. military exercises. Not only do they fear that the DPRK might escalate in response, but they also consider U.S. military activities a potential threat to eastern China.

## Beijing's double game

This desire to avoid antagonizing Pyongyang partly explains why Chinese authorities continue their controversial policy of forcefully repatriating political and religious refugees from the DPRK despite their inevitable execution or imprisonment. Official PRC policy treats all North Koreans who enter Chinese territory without permission as economic migrants. A bilateral treaty requires the PRC authorities to repatriate them to the DPRK, despite this provision being in violation of international law.

Fear of antagonizing North Korean leaders, along with a natural desire to avoid thinking about unpleasant outcomes, also explains why Chinese officials have declined U.S. government proposals to discuss how their two countries might respond to various DPRK collapse contingencies. Until recently, Chinese scholars were reluctant to even engage in Track II or other informal talks with foreigners about how the international community might respond to state failure in the DPRK for fear that the North Koreans would learn of the talks and respond provocatively. U.S. policymakers worry that, without such contingency planning, Chinese, U.S., and South Korean forces could inadvertently clash if they independently intervened in the DPRK following abrupt regime change there.[7] The persistence of the DPRK regime in its present form thus represents an enduring drain on Beijing's national interest, as well as a potential time bomb waiting to explode on China's doorstep.

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# A Moroccan Exception?

David Pollock

Alone among all Arab countries, Morocco has since early 2011 witnessed mass protests that resulted in the peaceful, democratic election of an Islamist party to head the government—followed by two years of calm. Impressive though often overlooked, this rare success story from the Arab Spring is occasionally invoked as a possible source of emulation by other Arab or predominantly Muslim states. In reality, however, Morocco's situation is so unusual that it probably cannot serve as a model for any other country, even among the other remaining Arab monarchies.

Yet Morocco's very exceptionalism, especially in a region marked by either violent instability or severe repression, or both, make it a special case worthy of significant attention and encouragement. Indeed Morocco, often neglected in the troubled aftermath of the Arab Spring, is actually among its most interesting countries—precisely because it is now so quiet, after a few months of massive demonstrations more than two years ago. The case for this is all the more convincing because of the country's objectively important attributes: a strategic location between the western Mediterranean and the North African Sahel; a relatively large population, approaching 35 million within the next year or two; and an all-too-singular penchant for close economic, political, and security relations with both Europe and the United States.

Two major factors largely explain this unique Moroccan phenomenon. First, the Islamist Party of Justice and Development (PJD) has pursued very moderate—one is tempted to say extremely moderate—policies in power, whether in domestic or foreign affairs. Second, and certainly not by coincidence, this overture to popular protest and political Islam has actually improved the capacity of King Mohammed VI to rule the

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country quietly and effectively, from behind the scenes.

## How an Islamic party took some power, and kept it (so far)

In response to the large-scale protests named after their starting date of February 20, 2011, King Muhammad VI moved with alacrity to offer a program of reforms. A new constitution, with some symbolic limits on his power, was approved by referendum in June 2011. For example, the king is no longer explicitly termed "sacred," and he is now legally obligated to appoint someone from the political party with a plurality in parliament to the post of prime minister.

More practically, parliamentary elections in November of that year gave the prime ministry and the lead government coalition role, for the first time, to a formerly opposition and avowedly Islamist party, the Justice and Development Party (PJD). Although turnout in both plebiscites was not very high—around 50 percent by official estimates, less than half that by some unofficial ones—they helped restore a sense of legitimacy and progress to Moroccan political life. Despite the accelerating turmoil in many other Arab states, Morocco largely calmed down.

In large part this was because the PJD, while gaining unprecedented political power as an opposition Islamist party and thus defusing popular protests, subsequently pursued a noticeably modest agenda—thus avoiding the wrath either of the street or of the elite. On the one hand, as one of its Cabinet ministers told the author privately earlier this year, "It is not our job to Islamize Moroccan society—because it is already Muslim." And on the other hand, he said, "We are not here to work against His Majesty." When I pressed him on why corruption cases against some of the country's elite were not moving forward, the telling reply was, "Well, we prefer simply to turn over a new page instead."

Other safety valves helped keep Morocco on an even keel as well. The new constitution and accompanying regulations also afforded unprecedented official recognition to the country's Amazigh (Berber) culture and language. Around half of Morocco's people claim some connection to that ethnic identity, and it remains a very strong presence in the Rif and the Atlas mountainous regions of the country. A recent visit to Rabat revealed, startlingly, some street signs in the unique alphabet devised for that language and a television channel broadcasting all day only in its several distinct dialects, with Arabic subtitles for the uninitiated. In part as a result, the Mouvement Populaire party, which mainly represents the Rif Berbers, remains a staunch supporter of the current government.

Additional steps were promised, and a few delivered. In early 2013, for example, the king endorsed and sent to parliament recommendations for limited judicial reforms. These incremental steps have proven successful; over the past two years, large-scale protests have not recurred. Although it possesses none of the oil or gas riches of its Gulf Arab counterparts, Morocco nevertheless appears to have found a formula for stability through gradual reform.

As of this writing, it appears that a new phase in this uneven process is getting underway. The PJD-led parliamentary coalition is in trouble, having lost one of its key components, the venerable Istiqlal party. The PJD must now either find a new coalition partner, or call a new election. One local daily, *Akhbar al-Youm*, put it succinctly in early September: "There are many indications that the fall of the government is only a matter of time." But after weeks of cliffhanger back-room negotiations, the PJD found

a new coalition partner, and is therefore hanging on to its governing role. Behind the scenes, however, the maneuvering to replace it continues.

A signal if not major cause of this still possible transition were the divergent official Moroccan reactions to the July 3 military takeover in faraway Egypt, which ousted the Muslim Brotherhood government of Mohamed Morsi from power. The palace publicly welcomed this dramatic turnabout, but the PJD lamented it.

But, unlike the case in Cairo or in many other regional capitals, whatever lies ahead is almost certain to be peaceful. If the PJD government falls and then is voted out of power, this will be the first time ever, anywhere, that an Islamist party was democratically elected and then democratically replaced. And if the PJD manages to hang on with a different coalition, or is re-elected after dissolving parliament, it will still not be the real power in Morocco.

## King and company

In practice, whatever the fate of the PJD, the Moroccan monarchy remains supreme so far. Even under the new constitution, the king retains the right to dismiss the parliament at will, and maintains control over the country's large and powerful military and security establishment. It is still against the law to insult the king; and some critical journalists, NGO activists, and demonstrators continue to be silenced, arrested, or beaten, even in the past two years. In addition, the royal establishment and entourage as a whole—or *makhzen*, as it is termed by Moroccans—keeps a substantial measure of control or at least influence over many of the major levers of the Moroccan economy: phosphate and other mining, real estate, banking, insurance, foreign trade, transport, and more.

On a more personal level, King Muhammad VI still seems quite popular—more so than any single political party or other leader, according to the few available polls on the subject—especially among the nearly half of Moroccans who remain rural or illiterate. Besides the recent reforms and the promise of more, he continues to enjoy the aura of the changes he introduced in the first years after his accession to power in 1999, which softened the autocratic legacy of his father, Hassan II. As part of those measures, he dismissed the veteran, widely-feared interior minister Driss Basri; created a reconciliation and restitution mechanism for released political prisoners; and presided over a controversial but ultimately popular liberalization of the *moudawwana*, or Islamic personal status code.

One other key component of the king's authority is his reputation for remaining above the fray, except on extraordinary occasions. He often appears in public and in the media, but usually only for brief, carefully scripted ceremonial or charitable events. He rarely travels far abroad, perhaps because his health has not been perfect, though he is only fifty years old. And he very seldom meets U.S. or other Western officials, delegating almost all such contacts to his advisors.

Those advisors are extraordinarily powerful, though their role is largely private and informal. For example, the PJD, which nominally runs the government, almost always accepts their ultimate authority even on Islamic issues or Morocco's ongoing tolerance for tourists' behavior. Right now, the innermost circle of palace advisors is reputed to include Fouad al-Himma, Yassine Mansouri, and Rushdie Chribi. A second circle is said to include Yasser Zenagui, Mounir Majdi, and the perennially-influential Andre Azoulay. As always, however, a crucial feature of this arrangement is that all these names are subject to change without notice.

Through this many-layered and deliberately mysterious system, the king has not one but several institutional adjuncts (or buffers, or scapegoats, as circumstances suggest) that help him play his Olympian part. Approximately as in Jordan, the closest analogue and the only other non-oil-rich Arab monarchy left today, the king remains firmly in control of key controversial issues and levers of power, while an elected parliament approves Cabinet ministers who share some responsibility for domestic policy.

Beneath this surface tranquility, however, a hard-line Islamic opposition movement simmers. It is unlikely to overturn Morocco's hard-won if halting steps forward any time soon, but it could ultimately pose a serious long-term challenge. Understanding its nature, scope, and severity necessitates a closer look.

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## Islamists in the wings

While the PJD represents Morocco's moderate-loyalist version of Islamic politics, its fundamentalist, genuinely opposition version is centered in the *al-Adl wal-Ihsan* ("Justice and Charity") movement, which was led by the charismatic Sufi preacher Sheikh Abdelsalam Yassine from the late 1970s until his death last December. Like Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood under Mubarak, this is a not-fully legal yet tolerated organization, with a disciplined, ideologically coherent and secretive core plus a significant degree of popular sympathy. It is opposed in principle to the existing regime, but willing to coexist with the crown until circumstances allow the group to move openly against it. Estimates of *al-Adl wal-Ihsan*'s adherents range very widely, from 100,000-200,000 up to a million. This membership figure was the one issue two of its leaders explicitly refused to address in a lengthy interview with the author in Rabat in mid-February, citing "security reasons."

More surprising was their expansiveness and evident close personal familiarity with like-minded movements now vying for power, sometimes violently, in Egypt and Tunisia, where one of these Moroccan Islamist leaders had recently traveled. He saw nothing undemocratic at all about the behavior of those movements once in power. Ironically, he complained about the Salafists, because they give fundamentalism a bad name among the typically tolerant and nonviolent Moroccans.

The same lengthy interview produced some revealing exchanges about *al-Adl wal-Ihsan*'s political program. Regarding democracy, its spokesman told me that "in principle, it contradicts Islam, which assigns sovereignty to Allah, not to the people. But in practice, we can introduce Islam gradually, as the people prefer." I asked if this meant the gradual application of *sharia* (Islamic law). "Why are you so obsessed with things like cutting off the hands of thieves?" he parried in return. "And why do you care so much about petty thieves, when the king of Morocco, or the king of Saudi Arabia, are the biggest thieves in the whole country?!" When I asked if that meant he would cut off the king's hands if he could, I got no answer at all.

I encountered less evasiveness in response to more prosaic questions about the movement's attitude toward the Moroccan government as a whole. The governing PJD party, while nominally Islamic, was dismissed out of hand as a sellout to the existing, corrupt system. As for the monarchy, and its possible transformation into something more like

a European constitutional monarchy in which the king (or queen) reigns but does not rule, the senior spokesman for *al-Adl wal-Ihsan* said this: "We do not use the slogan 'the people want to bring down the regime.' But we want a totally different kind of regime, one in which the king has no real power at all, neither political nor economic nor religious. You can call that new regime by whatever name you like."

Today *al-Adl wal-Ihsan* is working to recover its strength, not only from the loss of Sheikh Yassine but also from its decision to break entirely with other, liberal elements of the Moroccan opposition with which it had aligned in the massive street protests of the February 20 Movement in 2011. Both developments have almost certainly diminished the Islamist movement's support base over the past year. Nor does it benefit much from foreign funding; the oil-rich Gulf Arab governments prefer to support not Islamists but the incumbent, a fellow monarch on the throne. As a result, *al-Adl wal-Ihsan* is lying low, not compromising its revolutionary principles while digging in for the long haul.

## Mostly quiet on the western front

Again unlike most other countries in the vast Middle East and North Africa region, Morocco enjoys a relatively quiet and modest foreign policy agenda. It has a vestigial territorial dispute with Spain—which is located just a few miles across the Strait of Gibraltar, from Tangiers to Algeciras—over the two Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Mellila on Morocco's Mediterranean coast. But both countries seem quite content to keep this issue on the back burner, leaving the status quo indefinitely intact. Illustrative of the king's desire to cultivate good ties with Spain was his pardon this summer of a convicted Spanish pedophile, which resulted in short-lived protests in Morocco over the affair, which was dubbed "Danielgate," but with no lasting political repercussions.

Rabat is also concerned about the potential cross-border implications of instability and *jihadi* terrorism in neighboring Mauritania and nearby Mali, or other countries of the Sahel. Here again, however, Morocco is generally careful to insulate itself from this dangerous quagmire, by the simple expedients of tight border controls and of avoiding direct entanglement in external adventures.

More serious is the perennially tense relationship between Morocco and Algeria, its major neighbor to the east. The long border between them is mostly closed, and the two spar diplomatically over almost every imaginable issue. The key dispute concerns the Western Sahara, about which more in a moment. Yet even here, these two neighbors manage to avoid outright conflict. The problem is therefore not any direct costs, but the considerable opportunity costs of forfeited bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, tourism, and especially in counterterrorism and related security matters. As of this writing, there are new rumors of upcoming meetings between Moroccan and Algerian officials, but the recent record of such attempts at rapprochement or diplomatic progress, regrettably, does not offer major grounds for optimism.

Much the same can be said of Morocco's number-one foreign policy issue: the fate of the Western Sahara. This large but largely empty desert territory just to Morocco's west, a former Spanish colony on the horn of the Atlantic Ocean, was absorbed by the kingdom in a peaceful "Green March" across the border when Spain abruptly pulled out in 1975, in the wake of its own democratic revolution. Ever since, however, a guerrilla movement called the Polisario has contested Morocco's claim to that territory, seeking an independent state of its own instead. The Polisario is headquartered and supported

inside Algeria at a remote base in Tindouf, while Morocco maintains de facto jurisdiction throughout the former Western Sahara—including its only sizable city and now the provincial capital, Layoune.

Beneath the surface tranquility, a hard-line Islamic opposition movement simmers. It is unlikely to overturn Morocco's hard-won if halting steps forward any time soon, but it could ultimately pose a serious long-term challenge.

Decades of UN diplomacy have failed, perhaps not surprisingly, to produce a final diplomatic settlement of this dispute. Yet while highly symbolic, and therefore intractable, for both Morocco and Algeria, in practice neither country appears ready to challenge the status quo. As a result, the dispute is essentially dormant, with Moroccan rule in the territory secure albeit not universally recognized. Inside Morocco, the annexation enjoys across-the-board political support, even if local security measures in Layoune and its environs are occasionally heavy-handed. The main effects of Rabat's sole significant foreign policy conflict, in short, are felt in the continuing political estrangement between Morocco and the Polisario's uncompromising patron, Algeria.

Further afield, Morocco looks not to its immediate neighbors but just across the Mediterranean, to Europe, as its major foreign economic lifeline. In part because of Europe's own economic stagnation over the past several years, Morocco's economy has grown only slowly—and there are few signs of any immediate improvement on the horizon. This prospect poses significant challenges for all the interested parties, although an acute economic crisis in Morocco itself appears unlikely. In part this is due to the infusion of loans, grants, and investment from the oil-rich GCC Arab states, who understandably see in Morocco a safe haven for funds and a like-minded monarchy deserving of such support.

At the same time, the Moroccan establishment is also looking increasingly to the U.S., as a diplomatic and security partner of very long standing, stretching all the way back to the earliest years of American independence. In recent years, Washington has taken several steps to upgrade this historic relationship. The U.S. awarded Morocco the status of "Major Non-NATO Ally," a largely honorary yet coveted designation reserved for selected friends, with potentially positive implications for such things as arms sales or other forms of security cooperation. The State Department initiated a "strategic dialogue" with Morocco, again a largely honorary step but one that reinforces existing understandings, and could expand upon them as changing circumstances suggest. And, on a more practical plane, the U.S. has approved a Millennium Challenge Account economic and social bilateral partnership for Morocco, one worth hundreds of millions of dollars in joint development, good governance, and civil society projects.

Each of these steps, taken individually, is admittedly rather small. Taken together, however, they represent a significant and useful enhancement of bilateral relations. They also signal a welcome recognition that Morocco's role as an anchor of stability, friendship and moderation in the region must not be taken for granted.

## Policy implications for America

Morocco's unusual formula of real if modest reform eclipsing a grassroots Islamist opposition movement spells stability without stagnation. For the United States, this means one less worry in a time of great uncertainty almost everywhere else in the region. For this reason alone, Morocco deserves greater atten-

tion and encouragement. And while Morocco's model cannot simply be replicated anywhere else, it suggests some lessons that might be adapted in other Arab monarchies.

Morocco's stability is also noteworthy for its alignment with an extraordinarily effective record on counterterrorism. Over the past decade, the country has suffered fewer than one terrorist incident annually, on average, and none in the past year. As al-Qaeda offshoots spread around the Maghreb and the Sahel today, the United States can count on strong Moroccan support in confronting them. But moving to the next level of regional cooperation would require rapprochement with Algeria, long estranged over Morocco's 1975 annexation of the former Spanish colony of Western Sahara. Even if that issue is not ripe for resolution, U.S. efforts to nudge these two neighbors toward greater practical cooperation would pay security dividends for all three parties.

In the near term, one other noteworthy arena for increased bilateral cooperation lies in the economic sphere. In trade, investment, energy and mineral development, tourism, and diverse other sectors, there is considerable untapped potential for Moroccan-American collaboration. Similarly promising are the signs of growing joint efforts in the cultural and educational domains, from academic exchanges to publications, performances, museum exhibitions, English-language teaching, and more.

In all of these areas, Morocco's progress at home can be matched with continuing advancement in U.S.-Moroccan relations. Ideally, this would also underpin an improving American position in North Africa as a whole. But as the Moroccan example itself suggests, the best way forward in this hugely uncertain environment may well be to take one small positive step at a time.

# Into the Abyss in Mali

Laura Grossman

Largely away from the public eye, the Malian government and its Tuareg population have been locked in a cycle of conflict for decades. In the aftermath of the global war on terror these rebellions and unmet agreements set the stage for a new kind of conflict.

Enter the Islamists. Pressing their advantage over both Tuareg groups and the collapsed government in Bamako, several groups connected to al-Qaeda took control of parts of northern Mali in 2012. In just a few months, the international community watched a localized conflict become a global threat. The events in Mali clearly illustrate how unresolved local grievances can metastasize into global headaches and eventually nightmares, putting civilians at risk and halting development.

## Atomization… and the seeds of strife

Geographically isolated from Bamako, the Tuaregs in the north have received little consideration from the government. Part of the Berber ethnic group, the Tuareg population is spread across several countries in North and West Africa. There are an estimated 1.8 to 2.3 million Tuaregs across the region, with the largest concentration living in Mali and Niger.[1] Mali's three northern regions—Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal—contain only 10 percent of the population while accounting for two-thirds of the country's land mass.[2]

Prior to independence, French colonists played into the Tuaregs' notion of separateness through a "divide and rule" strategy. Mali and Niger were among France's least important and least commercially viable colonies, and as a result little investment was made there, especially for long-term projects or growth. At independence in 1960, Mali was one of the poorest countries in Africa.

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The Tuaregs were severely tested by drought and famine in the 1970s and 1980s. Fueling their animosity, the Malian government used the drought to collect international aid which, once collected, was not shared with the Tuareg population; instead it was siphoned off into private pockets in Bamako.[3] The increased pressure on the Tuareg community contributed to a general weakening of the group's hierarchical and traditional life. The droughts caused large numbers of Tuaregs to seek refuge in neighboring countries, "especially Libya, where thousands of them became members of President Muammar al-Qadhafi's Islamic Legion."[4] These refugees would return home in the late 1980s, following Qadhafi's dismantlement of the paramilitary force.

In its takeover, the MNLA was aided by a number of other regional groups, including al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), *Ansar Dine*, and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA). But while these groups supported the MNLA against the government in Bamako, they had their own objectives.

In the past half-century, the Tuaregs have staged several rebellions seeking greater autonomy from the south. A number of factors have contributed to the repeated Tuareg uprisings. Chiefly, political exclusion from decision-making in Bamako and a lack of government interest and investment in the north have been cited as a factor.[5] Additionally, some have cited the region's harsh climate, rugged terrain, and ensuing resource scarcity as underlying issues.[6] Since the early 1990s, a series of peace agreements have been brokered between the Malian government and Tuareg groups. However, many of the concessions made in the agreements went unmet, thus perpetuating the cycle of violence that continues to plague the region.[7]

After the fall of the regime of Muammar Qadhafi in Libya, large numbers of trained and armed Tuareg soldiers, previously in his employ, returned to northern Mali in support of the burgeoning rebellion. It is not clear exactly how many soldiers came, but reports put the number between two and four thousand.[8] In October 2011, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), a Tuareg rebel group, was formed aiming to create an independent state in northern Mali.[9] The term "Azawad" comes from the Berber word "Azawagh," which refers to the river basin extending across northeastern Mali, western Niger, and southern Algeria. Since its inception, the MNLA has been a secular group singularly striving for independence from Bamako.

## The Tuareg uprising

From the start, the MNLA was more organized and prepared than previous Tuareg groups. On October 2011, a number of Tuareg leaders and fighters came together at the Zakak base to discuss strategies and goals. Underscoring the meeting was the need for the group to move beyond the divisions and infighting that paralyzed their previous rebellions.[10] At the meeting, a ruling council, military leadership, and other administrative bodies were formed, thus making up the MNLA, with Bilal Ag Cherif chosen as the group's leader. The group has since appeared to strive to represent all of the people who live in the region. The MNLA notes on its website that it comprises a variety of fighters and tribes from across northern Mali's rebel groups of the past, fighters from Libya, members of the Tuareg, Songhai, Peul, and Moor groups, as well as defected soldiers and officers from the Malian army.[11] The MNLA also included a new generation of Tuaregs

with Internet and social media expertise to help the group get its message across.

The MNLA kicked off its rebellion in mid-January 2012, attacking a military base and barracks in Menaka, in the Gao region of Mali.[12] The following day, January 17, the group attacked Aguelhoc and Tessalit in the Kidal region.[13] Fighting continued between government forces and the MNLA across the north in the months that followed in a revolt that seemed more organized and prepared than those of the past.

Then, in March, a coup conducted by Malian army Captain Amadou Sanogo and his Green Berets contributed to a perfect storm of events. Frustrated by what they perceived as a lack of support from their government to fight the renewed Tuareg rebellion, Sanogo and his men deposed democratically-elected President Amadou Toumani Toure. Upon taking power, the Green Berets established the National Council for the Recovery of Democracy and the Restoration of the State (CNRDRE). The group suspended Mali's constitution and dissolved its institutions, promising to restore civilian rule. Within days, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the UN, and much of the international community condemned the coup, and in some cases ceased their operations in Mali. ECOWAS suspended Mali from its membership and imposed sanctions against CNRDRE on March 29.

While Sanogo's coup was successful from a purely operational standpoint, it did not increase the Malian government's support of its troops stationed in the north. In fact, the disintegration of the government weakened an already-trembling army. Taking advantage of the political upheaval in Bamako, the MNLA pressed its advantage. On April 2nd, the MNLA seized major cities in the north including Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu. Days later, the group announced a ceasefire, claiming that they had enough land to form their own state of Azawad.[14] The country was thus effectively split in two, with Bamako in control in the south and the rebels holding the north.

As *Ansar Dine* took control of northern Mali, the group increasingly began to push a radical interpretation of Islam on residents.

## Flies in the ointment

In its takeover, the MNLA was aided by a number of other regional groups, including al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), *Ansar Dine*, and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA). While these groups supported the MNLA against the government in Bamako, they had their own objectives.

Formerly known as the Group Salafiste Pour la Predication et Combat (GSPC), AQIM has its roots in the Algerian civil war of the 1990s. In 2004, the group rebranded itself as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, changing its focus from the near enemy (Algeria) to the far enemy (the West, particularly the United States and Israel), and increasingly began to target foreigners in its North African operations. In Mali, the group took advantage of the country's sparsely-populated northern regions where the government's reach is limited. In the Sahara, AQIM is a hybrid: part criminal network, part smuggling outfit and part Islamist insurgency.

AQIM-related *Ansar Dine* (Defenders of the Faith) was formed in October 2011 and expanded its reach and power in northern Mali throughout 2012. It is a product of a schism among the Tuareg leadership, formed as a result of its founder, Iyad Ag Ghaly, being passed over for the post of leader of the MNLA. Ag Ghaly subsequently founded *Ansar Dine* with the aim of creating an Islamic state in northern Mali. As of January

2013, the group was estimated to have around 1,500 fighters.[15]

The Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA) is a West Africa-based, militant Islamist organization allied with *Ansar Dine* and possessing ties to AQIM.[16] The group's first public statement was on December 12, 2011, when it released a video of three European aid workers it had abducted in Western Algeria on October 23, 2011. Shortly after its inception, MUJWA reportedly made an agreement with both *Ansar Dine* and AQIM to pursue a common goal of spreading their beliefs across the region.[17] The group appears to target West Africa more than its compatriots. It is largely black African Muslim, rather than of Arab descent, and identifies itself as "an alliance between native Arab, Tuareg and Black African tribes and various *muhajirin* ("immigrants," i.e., foreign *jihadists*) from North and West Africa."[18] The group appears to fund itself through kidnapping activities.

The 2012 coup in Bamako and the Tuareg rebellion gave these groups an opening to gain a significant foothold in the Mali's north. As its affiliate groups swept across northern Mali with the MNLA, members of AQIM reportedly accompanied the fighters. In April 2012, there were reports that AQIM fighters Abou Zeid, Mokhtar Belmokhtar, and Yahya Abou Al-Hammam were in Timbuktu meeting with *Ansar Dine* leader Iyad Ag Ghaly, who was holding the city at the time with AQIM support.[19]

## No room for compromise

The results were not long in coming. On May 26, 2012, the MNLA and *Ansar Dine* agreed to merge to form an Islamist state.[20] In the agreement, the pair outlined their intent to impose a non-rigorous form of *sharia* law in the new state.[21] This harmony did not last long, however; in less than a week, the two groups clashed over the degree to which *sharia* would be enforced.

One month later, Ansar Dine pushed the MNLA out of Timbuktu and Kidal. *Ansar Dine* also helped its ally, the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa, push the MNLA out of Gao. Shortly thereafter, Ansar Dine announced that it had control of all three cities.

As *Ansar Dine* took control of northern Mali, the group increasingly began to push a radical interpretation of Islam on residents. On July 10, 2012, *Ansar Dine* destroyed two tombs at Timbuktu's ancient Djingareyber mud mosque, a major tourist attraction, angering the city's residents and drawing international condemnation.[22] The Islamist group banned alcohol, smoking, Friday visits to cemeteries, watching soccer, and required women to wear veils in public.[23] It whipped and beat those who did not adhere to its strict interpretation of *sharia* law.[24] The group was also blamed for orchestrating the deadly stoning of a couple it believed had had children out of wedlock, although Ag Ghaly denied the accusation.[25]

Meanwhile, in Gao, MUJWA similarly imposed a draconian interpretation of *sharia* law on Malians. Harsh punishments have proliferated against those believed guilty of an assortment of crimes, real and imagined—whether they be theft or merely media coverage of protests critical of MUJWA. The group has also trained its sights on Malian culture; as of the end of 2012, 16 mausoleums listed as World Heritage Sites had been destroyed.[26]

Nor were these elements alone. As Islamist groups took over northern Mali, numerous reports indicated that foreign fighters were flowing into the region to participate in the new order. The exact numbers of foreign militants in Mali

is hard to determine, but reports have noted the presence of Pakistani *jihadists* in Timbuktu and foreign fighters from Algeria and Western Sahara in Gao.[27] Militants from Egypt, Tunisia, and Sudan have also been identified.[28]

But while the Islamists were successful at taking power and physically keeping control of the north, they proved unable to provide residents with basic services and support. The events in the north spurred many northerners to flee the region. Nearly 450,000 have been displaced by the fighting to date. This, in turn, created a human capital vacuum as skilled workers fled the violence. Reports indicate that in cities like Kidal, basic services like water, electricity, and telephone run intermittently, in some places even down to one night a week.[29]

## Pushing back

By the fall of 2012, the international community was solidifying its response to the events transpiring in Mali. The increasing presence and power of Islamists raised Mali's position on the international stage. In December 2012, the UN Security Council approved plans for an African-led intervention force. However, the UN resolution noted that before troops could be deployed, Mali must takes steps toward stabilizing its government, continue peace talks and ensure that its military is properly trained and equipped.

The rebels, meanwhile, continued to dig themselves into the north. Islamic fighters reportedly stole millions of dollars' worth of construction equipment from companies that had been working in the region. They dug tunnels, constructed roads and electrical networks, allowing them to traverse the rugged terrain more easily. Locals in the north reported in December that Islamist fighters were modifying vehicles to hold weaponry, fortifying roads, and digging trenches.[30]

Taking the lead in the international response, French Minister of Defense Jean-Yves Le Drian announced in October that France was planning to launch a military intervention in the coming weeks.[31] As part of their preparations, the European nation was already sending surveillance drones to the area.

Racing to protect themselves, Ansar Dine signed an agreement in December 2012 in Algiers with the MNLA to "reject terrorism and work together towards securing the areas they control."[32] The two groups also condemned the UN's approval of an African-led mission into northern Mali. However, the agreement was short-lived, when *Ansar Dine* suspended the cease-fire in early January claiming that the government was preparing for war. Aggressively, *Ansar Dine* seized control of the strategic town of Konna on January 10, just 435 miles from Bamako along the narrow waist of Mali that separates its north and south.[33] The moves prompted the French to respond with their own forces.

On January 11, the UN Security Council called on member states to assist Mali's defense and security forces.[34] The same day, French Prime Minister François Hollande announced that France had begun deploying troops to Mali to aid its army's efforts against the Islamists using a combination of air and ground strikes.[35] With French support, the Malian army regained control of Konna that same day.

Shortly after the French began their foray into Mali, the country's interim president, Dioncounda Traore, spoke to Malian soldiers, stating firmly, "Mali is at war… because Malian women and men are not inclined to renounce liberty, democracy, their territorial integrity, or the republican and secular form of the country."[36] His statement illustrated the government's aim to regain control of all of Mali. It also highlighted that the conflict was occurring on several levels simultaneously. On one level were

the Islamist groups forcing their ideals and way of life on Malian civilians; on another, groups of Malians were seeking to break away from the nation entirely.

French and Malian troops continued retaking northern cities and towns in the following weeks. Pushing the Islamists from Mali's northern cities did not entirely quell the violence, prompting them instead to begin a guerrilla war. Upon retaking Gao, the French-led forces found themselves conducting counterinsurgency measures, similar to those needed in Afghanistan and Iraq as the Islamists mounted a counter attack in February.

Reacting to the French intervention, *Ansar Dine* stated that the move would have "consequences for French citizens in the Muslim world."[37] In early February, *jihadists* staged suicide bombings and a military offensive in Gao. Prior to the French incursion, *jihadist* groups had enough time to embed themselves in the communities and the wider geography of the region. Following the suicide attacks, French and African forces mounted an extensive operation to clear out Gao, conducting house-to-house searches. There have been subsequent suicide attacks launched by Islamist fighters trying to hang on in the region.

The counterinsurgency in Gao was preceded by the January attack on the In Amenas gas facility in Algeria. AQIM offshoot leader Mokhtar Belmoktar and his group conducted the deadly attack. In a video, Belmoktar claimed that the attack was conducted to punish the West for its intervention in Mali.[38] Belmokhtar had previously been active in northern Mali.

In the following months, French and African forces continued mop-up operations uncovering the depth and breadth of *jihadist* activities and capabilities. In March, French forces seized a large arms cache in northern Mali including heavy weapons, suicide belts and equipment to manufacture improvised explosive devices. One search uncovered a bomb-making factory that the Islamists had abandoned.

Furthering the idea that the Islamists were not wanted in northern communities, reports indicate that residents of Gao have provided information and assistance to French and Malian troops on the *jihadists* and their weapons caches.[39] Pushed out of power by both *Ansar Dine* and MUJWA, the MNLA cooperated with the French, even though they are still battling the Malian government. Regional analysts have noted that northern Malians did not want to live in an Islamic state.[40]

In mid-March, France announced that it would be putting forth a resolution at the UN for a peacekeeping force to be deployed to Mali to replace French and African soldiers. The announcement came as France indicated that it would begin withdrawing its troops in April.

As the French and Malian forces pushed both Tuareg rebels and the Islamists, the MNLA began to splinter. Influential Tuareg tribal chief Intalla Ag Attaher withdrew his support for the MNLA in May 2013, leaving the organization to lead the High Council of Azawad.[41] The new organization was launched to negotiate peace with the government in Bamako, in contrast with the MNLA, which was still demanding independence.

As the MNLA splintered, the work and care its leaders had taken to coalesce before beginning the insurgency fell by the wayside. By working with the Islamists, it had undercut its legitimacy among the population. However, it is worth noting that the MNLA cooperated with French forces to drive away Islamist forces.[42]

As French forces, with the assistance of Malian forces, retook cities and villages across the north, plans began to form for Mali's next steps. The international community began calling for dem-

ocratic elections to replace Mali's interim government that had been formed after the coup. The United Nations Security Council reiterated the call for democratic elections in Resolution 2085, which came out in December 2012. Within days of the coup, several states and organizations halted aid to Mali. Much of that aid could only be restored after an elected government was in place.

At the end of June, the UN Security Council agreed that the African-led support mission in Mali would be folded into a UN peacekeeping force. MINUSMA, the UN force, was stood up on July 1st with the aim of supporting the implementation of the peace agreement and securing elections.

## A rocky road to stability

Beyond physically ridding the region of Islamist fighters, Mali needed a legitimate government. Even in the best circumstances, orchestrating an election in an underdeveloped country with poor infrastructure is a feat. Throw in the thousands of refugees, groups of violent Islamist fighters, and a localized rebellion, pushing forward with elections could have presented Mali with a greater liability.

About two weeks ahead of the July elections, campaigning began. The contest pitted 28 candidates representing varying groups from across Mali. Given the divisions, it was expected that scheduled runoff elections would take place. Among the candidates were several seasoned Malian politicians.

Held on July 28 and August 11, the first and second rounds of Mali's presidential elections went smoothly and received a surprisingly high voter participation rate. Former Prime Minister Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, known as IBK, won the presidency after his rival Soumaila Cissé conceded the election on August 13th. Running under the banner "for the honor of Mali," IBK played to Malian voters who were humiliated by the need to invite France to keep their country in one piece.[43]

Yet elections are just one hurdle toward long-term stability. The Malian government will only survive and prosper if it can come to a pragmatic solution to its ongoing issues with its Tuareg population and exercise continued vigilance against violent Islamists.

Challenges abound. The MNLA has splintered as the group fell into an old and familiar pattern of internal infighting in the aftermath of the Islamist takeover. The MNLA may have doomed itself by trying to work with *Ansar Dine* and MUJWA to fight the government in Bamako, thereby losing credibility in the eyes of many Malians. With a new government in Bamako, the group's perceived ties with the Islamists may hinder it and its cause at the negotiating table. However, the cyclical nature of the violence in the north may yet work in the MNLA's favor.

Pursuant to earlier negotiations, once in office IBK and his administration have 60 days to engage in talks with the Tuaregs. While the government can take advantage of the perception that the MNLA's actions paved the way for the Islamist takeover, it is not the wisest course of action for the long term. The Malian government and the Tuaregs need to come to a real and pragmatic solution. There need to be measurable steps that both sides can take to build confidence in each other and increase the odds that peace will break out for the long term.

In addition to building a country that is more inclusive to Tuaregs and protected from violent Islamists, there needs to be greater economic and social development in the north. Without positive change and growth, it is likely that another Tuareg rebellion will occur. And next time, the Islamists will likely be more prepared.

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# Tunisia's Turnaround

Olivier Guitta

Tunisia is like no other country in the Arab world. Its GDP per capita, at $9,400, is one of the highest on the African continent, which is all the more remarkable considering that it has almost no natural resources to exploit. The IMF and the World Bank, among others, regularly praise Tunisia for its successful economic model. Indeed, no Arab state has been able to do better on the economic and social fronts with so little means.

But all that was before the 2011 Jasmine Revolution that unseated dictator Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali. The subsequent assumption of power by the Muslim Brotherhood, through the *Ennahda* party, in October of that year, put Tunisia on a totally different trajectory.

## Before Ben Ali's fall

In order to truly grasp the changes that have been wrought since *Ennahda*'s accession to power, it is necessary to understand how things stood in Tunisia pre-2011.

With regard to education, Tunisia ranked at the head of the class. As of 2008, the country's adult literacy rate stood at 96 percent, and the schooling of children aged 6 to 12 exceeded 99 percent.[1] This impressive achievement was the product of a free education policy for children aged 6 to 14 that had been put in place by the Tunisian government following the country's independence in 1956.[2] The investment was made early on, and as much as 30 percent of the nation's budget was historically directed to the Education Ministry.[3] In turn, one of the major steps taken by the ministry was to alter textbooks by removing the rigid view of Islam that had previously permeated school manuals—and which was very much the norm elsewhere in the region.[4]

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In turn, Tunisia's Educational Reform Law, passed in 1991, decreed education to be compulsory for both sexes up until the age of 16.[5] Mohamed Charfi, who served as Minister of Education from 1989 to 1994, sought to establish a clear distinction between the study of religion on the one hand and the study of the rights and duties of citizenship—civics—on the other. The Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education described Charfi as "the great hero,"[6] who inculcated the concept of tolerance within the younger generation of Tunisians. Charfi's educational reforms were groundbreaking. For example, article 65 of the 1991 Education Reform Law stated: "The primary goal of the education system is to prepare students for a life that leaves no room for any discrimination or segregation based on sex, social class, race or religion."[7]

Throughout Tunisian history, there has been the desire on the part of conservative Islamist groups to restructure family law according to *sharia*—a desire which, post-2011, is fast resurfacing.

Passages and authors preaching intolerance were removed from school curricula (and in some cases, from circulation in general). Charfi revised numerous schoolbooks as well. For example, a 9th-grade textbook called upon students to "break the cycle of hostility and reckless tendency to plunge into violence… try to hear the other voice, even if it comes from a minority, because this is the voice of dialogue that will one day allow us to replace conflict with mutual understanding and respect."[8] The study of science was also introduced—including the theories of Darwin and the Big Bang concept of the universe's creation. Both are considered to be heretical elsewhere in the Muslim world.

Tunisia's liberalism extended to women's rights. The status of women in Tunisian society has been protected since 1956 pursuant to Bourguiba's Code of Personal Status, which abolished polygamy, articulated the legal right of women to ask for divorce, and established a minimum age for marriage and the required consent of both spouses. Women were granted the right to vote in 1957, and were empowered by the 1959 constitution to seek elected office. Article 6 articulates the equal rights of male and female citizens, and requires them to "remain faithful to human values which constitute the common heritage of peoples attached to human dignity, justice and liberty."[9] A fund was created for divorced women and their children, supplemented by a system of family allowances and legal aid. This empowerment of women shows in the fact that girls now represent the majority (59.5 percent[10]) of university students and women now account for 51 percent of the teaching staff.[11] Women's employment had been consistently on the rise as well.

In this context, liberal Tunisians fear *Ennahda*'s "doublespeak" on matters of gender equality.[12] They are concerned that the status of women will slowly, if indirectly, be eroded through "inaction" regarding the conservative elements of Tunisian society.[13]

Absence of trust in *Ennahda* is widespread among secular women as well, and for good reason. Though the state retains a veneer of relative liberalism regarding gender equality, the formal stance on the status of women is now somewhat ambiguous under the *Ennahda*-led government. Furthermore, throughout Tunisian history, there has been the desire on the part of conservative Islamist groups to restructure family law according to *sharia*—a desire which, post-2011, is fast resurfacing.

The results have not been long in coming. For instance, in April 2013,

the headmaster of the Manzel Bouzelfa secondary school, near Hamamet, was brutally attacked by a dozen Salafists because of the dismissal of a veiled student. Authorities did not investigate the crime, and have adopted a lenient attitude towards Salafist violence writ large. The veil has emerged as a major point of contention between Islamists and secular Tunisians. Historically, women had been banned from wearing the veil in state offices and educational institutions pursuant to a 1981 edict. The general ban was lifted in January 2011, but after extended debate the prohibition of the face veil (*niqab*) in classrooms was preserved. This did not sit well with Salafists, prompting violence on campuses, in particular at Manouba University, Tunis; at Sousse University, at Ibn Charaf University and at the Preparatory School for Literary Studies.

Manouba University suffered the highest number of incidents, which prompted classes to be suspended. Following the refusal of two female students to remove their *niqab* during examinations in November 2011, a Salafist sit-in occupied Manouba University from late November 2011 to late January 2012, preventing all other students from attending class. At one point, the black al-Qaeda flag was even seen flying over the Manouba campus.

The faculty board refused to permit the wearing of the *niqab* on the grounds it would interfere with matters of security and pedagogy, subsequently requesting the intervention of the Ministry of Higher Education to evacuate the Salafists from the building. The request was refused by the Minister of Higher Education, Moncef Ben Salem, who regarded the sit-in as an "internal affair." Only after accusations of inaction were leveled did the Ministry of Interior intervene.[14]

But that was not all. In April 2012, the Dean of the Arts Faculty, Habib Kazdaghli, was charged with assault. He was accused of slapping two veiled women who wore *niqabs* to class in defiance of the ban. He was acquitted in May 2013, and the two students were given two- and four-month suspended jail sentences for violating the *niqab* ban. Of the six students wearing the *niqab*, two recently returned to the university unveiled. But Kazdaghli fast became a hate-figure for conservative Islamists.

Evidence of Wahhabi penetration in the wake of *Ennahda*'s rise to power is growing.

*Ansar al-Shariah*, the main *jihadist* outfit in the country, slandered Kazdaghli over Facebook, describing him as "an agent for the Mossad"[15]—a label that is tantamount to "a death sentence" in Tunisia.[16] A Salafist "blacklist" posted on Facebook displayed a photo of Kazdaghli under one of Chokri Belaid—a prominent secular political opponent who was assassinated in February 2013.[17]

Interestingly enough, Kazdaghli blames the oil-rich Gulf States for the current situation, in particular their support for the Salafists that have been tasked with spreading Wahhabism. The royal rulers of Saudi Arabia and Qatar regard Tunisian secularism as a serious threat to their Wahhabi ideals.[18]

Evidence of Wahhabi penetration in the wake of *Ennahda*'s rise to power is growing. Salafists, for example, have attempted to take over the largest mosque in Tunis, the Zituna, and turn it into a Wahhabi powerhouse. Also, Sufi shrines and other holy places along with tombs have been destroyed, and there have been efforts to stop the flow of non-Muslim tourists in Tunisia and replace them with Muslim visitors.

The relationship of *Ennahda* to the Salafists is worryingly ambiguous, vacillating between "laissez-faire" and "open disapproval."[19] *Ennahda*'s hidden

agenda is, by all accounts, the Islamization of the state. Ahmed Ibrahim, former secretary of the *Ettajdid* party, has explained that *Ennahda* engages in a "double-discourse," speaking of propagating democracy and gender equality to placate Western onlookers, while espousing more fundamentalist Islamist ideals to its internal audience.[20]

When it happened, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the main terrorist organization in the region, framed the Tunisian uprising against Ben Ali as part of a wider battle "against the Jews and Christians" and encouraged Tunisians to seize the opportunity to spread "jihad."

## A worrying turnaround

The debate over the constitution reveals much about the fracture in Tunisian society and how Islamists are trying to impose *sharia* law. If they succeed in getting any aspects of *sharia* onto the books, then their leader, Rachid Ghannouchi, will be able to advance his extreme agenda more easily. Ghannouchi is on record as saying that he wants to set up an Islamic republic in Tunisia where the law would be inspired by *sharia* and secularism would be wiped out.[21] The larger *Ennahda* Party, meanwhile, appears primarily driven by the desire to maximize electoral appeal and satisfy its base. In fact, it is estimated that among the group's militants, 50 percent sympathize with the Salafists.[22]

Foreign observers have taken notice. Human Rights Watch, for example, has been very critical of the situation in Tunisia since *Ennahda* took over.[23] In particular, the human rights watchdog has made note of the violence propagated by the party's militias against political opponents and its disruption of opposition political rallies.[24] Secular forces are fighting back and, in the ensuing struggle, *Ennahda*'s true face has been revealed. On July 13, 2013, its leader in Parliament, Sahbi Atig, threatened opponents with death. That threat was made real when, twelve days later, political opponent Mohamed Brahmi was murdered by Islamists.

Also, in the central Tunisian city of Sidi Bouzid, where Salafists more or less control the streets, hotels and bars have been ransacked because they sell alcohol. Many businesses have been forced to close as a result. Physical violence against professors, journalists, intellectuals, artists, political leaders has multiplied. Female teachers have been threatened with rape. Even more worrisome than the Salafist violence and threats is the fact that the government refuses to take action against them.

## A terrorist beacon

Before Ben Ali's fall, Tunisia had witnessed a few notable acts of terrorism. For example, in 1995, Islamists from Algeria had attacked a Tunisian border post, killing six. In 2002, al-Qaeda detonated a suicide truck bomb outside the synagogue in the town of Djerba, killing 21 persons, mostly German tourists. In December 2006 and January 2007, fighting erupted between security forces and a group of armed *jihadists* in the country's south, resulting in two deaths. Fighting resumed a few days later, this time 20 miles away from Tunis, leading to some 25 deaths. In response, the regime instituted a harsh clampdown on Islamist sympathizers, and approximately 1,000 individuals were arrested.

But in the main, this unrest was far less than that evident in other countries in the region. Ben Ali knew better than anyone that the prosperity of Tunisia rested on the security issue. In fact, more than anything else, security is paramount to maintaining foreign investment and the tourism industry. At that time, the popula-

tion did not feel threats related to terrorism because of a strong security state and swift responses to any terror acts.

All of this changed in early 2011, however. When it happened, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the main terrorist organization in the region, framed the Tunisian uprising against Ben Ali as part of a wider battle "against the Jews and Christians" and encouraged Tunisians to seize the opportunity to spread "jihad."[25] With the fall of Ben Ali, AQIM's presence in Tunisia became more visible. This, in turn, has led to an increased flow of arms through, and within, Tunisia, particularly in the provinces that border Algeria.

In December 2012, the AQIM-affiliated *Uqba ibn Nafi Brigade* was set up in Tunisia to provide initial *jihadi* training before sending fighters on to "real" AQIM camps in Algeria and Libya. That month, two Tunisian soldiers were killed and at least 20 wounded by IEDs planted by the Brigade in the Jebal Chambi region, as the army conducted an operation to clear the area of terrorists. Violence even spread to the border areas with Algeria, and the February 20, 2013, assault against an Algerian army base at Khenchela was suspected of being the work of the Brigade. This has strengthened speculation that AQIM is predominantly using Tunisia for recruiting and training, while focusing on combat operations elsewhere, such as Algeria and Mali.

Nonetheless, the main *jihadist* outfit in the country remains *Ansar al-Sharia* (AST), a loose offshoot of AQIM. Abu Iyadh, its leader, was previously the co-leader of the Tunisian Combating Group in Afghanistan, which was behind the murder of Afghan Northern Alliance commander Ahmad Shah Massoud on September 9, 2001. AST was also behind the demonstrations against an anti-Muslim movie that escalated to the attack on the U.S. embassy in Tunis in September 2012, an assault that killed four.

According to the International Crisis Group, there are about 50,000 Salafists now in Tunisia, and 2,000 of them went to Syria to fight alongside al-Qaeda's affiliate there, *Jabhat al-Nusra*.[26] But Abu Iyadh has called for his followers to stay in Tunisia and fight the *jihad* at home. He has also stated: "Our youth who have won in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria will not hesitate to sacrifice themselves to defend their religion." A call relayed by AQIM highlighted that the group does not want to "leave Tunisia in the hands of the seculars."[27]

In light of this, the findings of a poll conducted in August 2013 by Tunisie Sondage are not surprising.[28] It revealed that 65 percent of Tunisians consider the terrorist threat to be high, and 74 percent blame it on *Ennahda*'s lenient policy toward *jihadists*. And indeed, for a long time, *Ennahda* had a very close relationship with the Salafists, at least until recently.

> Recent demonstrations have had the salutary effect of pushing the Islamists to step down and embrace a "national dialogue" with members of the opposition.

The results have been striking. According to Alaya Allani, professor of contemporary history at the University of Manouba in Tunis and a specialist in political Islam, the number of *jihadists* in Tunisia has surged from just 800 a year ago, and now stands anywhere between 3,000 and 4,000.[29] This increase is due mostly to the fact that *Ennahda* has willingly left control of dozens of mosques to the *jihadists*, who were then able to recruit extensively.

## A change for the better?

From any angle, Tunisia has been worse off since the *Ennahda* party came to power. The economic situa-

tion has clearly deteriorated, women's rights and democracy have eroded, violence is spreading, and Tunisian society is polarized as never before. Adding to that volatile mix is an acute political crisis and terrorism; the cocktail is indeed explosive.

In light of these failures, the recent anti-*Ennahda* demonstrations that have shaken the country should not have come as a surprise. They have had the salutary effect of pushing the Islamists to step down and embrace a "national dialogue" with members of the opposition, as first had been proposed by the Tunisian General Labor Union and other leading civil society actors.

The agreement has created provisions for the appointment of an independent, technocratic caretaker government by the end of October. In the meantime, negotiations for a future election date and the finalization of a new Constitution will carry on, with no certainty of success.

While Tunisia enters another phase in its post-"Arab Spring" reconstruction, it remains to be seen if an all-out alliance could work in spite of major, and irreconcilable, domestic differences.

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# Fear and Loathing in the Sinai

Emily Dyer

Just weeks after overthrowing President Mohamed Morsi in July 2013, the Egyptian military launched a campaign against "violence and terrorism" in the country, featuring a large-scale crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood. Some 1,000 Egyptians protesting Morsi's ouster at the hands of the Egyptian armed forces were killed and thousands more injured. Today, the Muslim Brotherhood's leadership has either fled the country or been thrown into jail, and the recently-banned group is looking defeated and desperate. Nevertheless, given the Egyptian military's violent measures, it is likely that many Muslim Brotherhood supporters will turn to violence to achieve their political aims. Egypt's Coptic Christian minorities are already feeling the full force of the recent violence; more than 30 churches were set afire in the months that have followed the military "coup."

Another front has opened as well. Frustrated Islamists are flocking to the North Sinai to establish a base among *jihadist* groups already operating there, dramatically expanding the threat of terrorism against the Egyptian state. While the military launched its largest crackdown against the terrorist threat in August, the threat remains real.

## A security vortex

Over the past two-and-a-half years, the largely ungoverned North Sinai has become an attractive base from which those opposed to the Egyptian government can operate. In early 2011, at the beginning of the revolution that would ultimately topple strongman Hosni Mubarak, the assets—and strength—of the country's police were allocated elsewhere,[1] leaving a security vacuum in the desert region. Instability

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followed; attacks against police stations (and retaliatory police actions) rose in number, while general lawlessness and criminality proliferated.

So did the number of Islamist radicals in the area. Throughout the past two years, the security vacuum in the Sinai has progressively been filled by *jihadist* radicals, who in turn have carried out further attacks against Egypt's security apparatus in an attempt to take control of the streets. Al-Qaeda and affiliated groups have sought out North Sinai as a safe haven within which to stockpile weapons in order to carry out attacks throughout Egypt and across the border at Israel. A swath of *jihadist* groups with alleged ties to al-Qaeda (among them *Takfir wal-Hijra*, *Salafia El Jihadiya*, *Tawhid wal-Jihad*, and *Shura Mojahadin*) likewise made a comeback.[2] Around this time, al-Qaeda formed a new franchise, al-Qaeda in the Sinai Peninsula (AQSP), as an umbrella group for many of the existing *jihadist* groups based in the North Sinai.[3]

The North Sinai security vacuum widened further following the second Egyptian revolutionary wave that toppled the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi from the presidency on July 3, 2013. The acute civil unrest and political instability that followed, coupled with the Egyptian military's perceived preoccupation with securing further control in Cairo, left the North Sinai open to another, greater surge in terrorist activity. The rate of terrorist attacks against security forces in the area—from bombing police stations and border security checkpoints to kidnapping military personnel—rose to two to five attacks per day, largely in the 40-kilometer area between El-Arish and Sheikh Zowayed. According to one Bedouin tribesman from Sheikh Zowayed, almost immediately following Morsi's ouster, he began seeing "armed groups using guns and open fire towards the army and policemen."[4]

Furthermore, the ouster of the Muslim Brotherhood and its Islamist agenda provided al-Qaeda and its affiliates with the necessary call-to-arms to wage violent *jihad* against those they perceived to be attacking Islam. *Jihadist* leaders who had previously stayed out of accepting a political position, issued *fatwas* as a result of Morsi's ouster, adding to the repeated calls by al-Qaeda's *emir*, Ayman al-Zawahiri, for *jihad* as a means of securing *sharia* law in Egypt. Messages posted on *jihadist* forums on July 3 called on Salafists in Egypt to prepare by collecting weapons and training for *jihad* while hiding in the North Sinai. Egyptian Islamist Mohamed al-Zawahiri (Ayman's brother) allegedly warned that, if Morsi were not reinstated as president, his al-Qaeda-affiliated group *Salafia el Jihadiya* (also known as the *Salafi Jihad Movement*) would take up arms, as well as calling for the establishment of a sharia-based government and religious police force in Egypt.[5]

As a result of al-Qaeda's call for violent *jihad*, new groups such as "The Legitimacy Brigades," and battle-hardened *jihadists* from Syria and Afghanistan, have crossed the border into the North Sinai looking for a safe haven to consolidate their forces. Their sights are set on the lawless Sinai and potentially beyond, to Sub-Saharan Africa. Locals estimate a presence of some 1,000 armed Islamist militants based in the North Sinai, the majority of whom they believe to be connected to al-Qaeda.[6] Morsi's ouster has emboldened these groups to establish the North Sinai as a base upon which not only to conduct attacks but also to enforce control of the streets. Militants who had previously disappeared into the mountains immediately after committing attacks are now flying Islamist flags and pictures of Morsi above occupied government buildings.[7]

The link between the Muslim Brotherhood and *jihadist* groups in the

North Sinai, moreover, has proved to be more than just symbolic. Mohamed al-Zawahiri's *Salafia El Jihadiya* can be traced back to leading Muslim Brotherhood member Sayyid Qutb, whose books have served as the intellectual backbone of the movement for a return to a pure form of Islam through the reinstatement of *sharia* and an Islamic caliphate. *Tawhid wal-Jihad* and *Takfir wal-Hijra* have both been reported to have ties to the Muslim Brotherhood.[8] Most recently, Brotherhood leader Mohammed al-Beltagui warned that "what is happening in the Sinai will stop the second President Morsi returns" to office, sparking speculation as to his and the wider Muslim Brotherhood's involvement with the attacks as a means of blackmail through chaos.[9]

Despite the Egyptian military's attempt to tighten its grip on militant activity in the region following Morsi's ouster, it has had little visible success in weakening or containing the threat. In mid-July, the Egyptian army moved two additional infantry battalions to the Sinai border with Gaza, and began launching nightly attacks against armed militants in the area. In the months that followed, however, terrorist attacks have only grown in number and severity. For example, militants have broadened their targets from Egyptian security forces and police stations in North Sinai to leading political figures in Cairo. And in August, the three key players behind Morsi's downfall—General al-Sisi, Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim, and then-Vice President Mohamed ElBaradei—were targeted in a foiled terrorist plot.

## A vanishing Bedouin buffer

One of the main reasons behind the Egyptian military's failure to contain the terrorist threat in the region to date is its tumultuous relationship with the most importance source of local intelligence and information: the North Sinai's network of Bedouin tribal leaders.

Relations between the Egyptian military and the North Sinai's Bedouin tribal communities are not in the best of shape. Mohannad Sabry, a journalist and author living in North Sinai, explains that ties between the two have "definitely been deteriorating for the last couple of months," to the point where only a few Bedouin tribal leaders have remained faithful providers of information to the military.[10]

Over the past two-and-a-half years, the largely ungoverned North Sinai has become an attractive base from which those opposed to the Egyptian government can operate.

This represents a major step backwards for the historically troubled relationship. The return of the Sinai Peninsula from Israeli control in April 1982 brought with it further marginalization and neglect of the estimated 200,000 Bedouins in the region. The perception that some Bedouin "yearned for the days of Israeli occupation" built up a mutual distrust that still exists today.[11] Nevertheless, tribal endorsement of—and cooperation with—the Egyptian military was briefly revived following the 2011 revolution. The collaboration was pragmatic, "based on hopes that the revolution would bring prosperity would bring justice to Sinai."[12] As a result, Bedouin tribes agreed to provide Egypt's then-ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF)—and later the Muslim Brotherhood government—with the information needed to crack down on terrorism in the North Sinai, based upon an understanding that they would start to see improvements made by the authorities to their quality of life.[13]

These contributions helped provide a modicum of stability to the troubled

region, with Bedouin leaders mediating in different crises (including the kidnapping of tourists, attacks on police stations and, more recently, the kidnapping of seven soldiers in May 2013), to significant effect.[14] Furthermore, tribal leaders were crucial in destroying a significant proportion of the human trafficking networks operating in the North Sinai, the profits of which help to fund terrorist activity in the region.

Throughout the past two years, the security vacuum in the Sinai has progressively been filled by *jihadist* radicals, who in turn have carried out further attacks against Egypt's security apparatus in an attempt to take control of the streets.

Despite their cooperation, however, the Bedouins were left waiting. "The development never came," Sabry says, "the justice never came, the promises of the military and the new government turned out to be empty promises that weren't fulfilled."[15] On top of this, the Egyptian military's attempted crackdown on armed groups operating in the North Sinai, "did not differentiate between militants, criminals and normal citizens" and resulted in Bedouins being targeted in the military raids alongside terrorists.[16]

Mutual resentment and suspicion, followed by a breakdown in cooperation between the Egyptian government and the Bedouins, has led to a weakened military intelligence network, preventing the Egyptian armed forces from effectively completing a full-fledged crackdown on militancy in the North Sinai. The feeling among the Bedouin community was that they were not prepared to "go about snitching about people in [their] neighborhood" for nothing in return, and that a crackdown as a result of Bedouin information would harm rather than benefit the Bedouin tribes.[17]

That does not mean that the Bedouins have completely thrown in their lot with the Islamists, however. Despite claims of Bedouin tribes hosting militants and supporting their activities in the region, the reality is that the two groups belong to completely distinct traditions and ideologies, and operate in largely separate networks.[18] In establishing a base in the North Sinai, Islamist militants have encroached upon the authority of the Bedouin tribesmen who previously controlled a far greater portion of the land.

Yet the Egyptian government's treatment of the Bedouins has meant that they have come to share—albeit for different reasons—a common enemy with the *jihadist* groups operating in the region. This is manifesting itself not only in a lack of cooperating with Egypt's military, but also a growing overlap in activities and relations between militants and the Bedouins.

Al-Qaeda, for example, has exploited Bedouin grievances in pursuit of its own goals, namely the abolition of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and an introduction of *sharia* law in the Sinai. It has called for an end to discrimination against the Bedouin population, leading many Bedouins to see the group's ideological pursuit of an Islamic caliphate as an attractive alternative to their current way of life.[19] This, together with an increasing prevalence of Islamic courts in the Sinai, has resulted in a heightened level of Bedouin participation in Islamic justice practices. The traditional justice system operated by Bedouin tribes is seen as expensive and corruptible, and many Bedouins are deeply skeptical of the formal state justice system. Moreover, the activities of the extremist Islamist groups have moved more mainstream Islamists to seek cooperation with the Bedouins as a form of mutual security, with "Islamification" of the Sinai justice system a side effect.[20]

## The enemy of my enemy

One point of common grievance is Egypt's relationship with Israel. *Ansar Jerusalem*, a militant Islamist faction active in the Sinai, released a statement in August 2013 claiming that the Egyptian army "no longer defends the borders of the country and fights its enemies; instead, the army's mission has become to protect the borders of the Jews and achieve American and Zionist interests."[21] This view is significant, since the Sinai plays host to a pipeline straddling the peninsula and supplying gas to Israel and Jordan. The pipeline is now facing an increasing threat from militants, having been attacked some six times so far since the beginning of the year. (And due to the Egyptian government's refusal to pay Bedouin leaders to guard the pipeline, it remains vulnerable to further disruptions.)[22]

According to Egyptian intelligence officials, Bedouin tribal leaders are now collaborating with militant groups in drugs, human trafficking and arms operations—the profits from which are thought to be channeled toward terrorist activities. Tribal members are also believed to be using their "familiarity with vast expanse of land to provide refuge and training camps for terrorists."[23] Following the spike in attacks in the North Sinai from July 2013, for example, Bedouin arms dealers sympathetic to the militants launched shoulder-fired Stinger anti-aircraft missiles at Egyptian military aircraft and personnel.[24]

North Sinai's long-standing smuggling networks have naturally drawn terrorist groups as well. Bedouins involved in arms smuggling operate in networks that are almost impenetrable, snaking through wild mountain terrain and via the Red Sea on small fishing boats from the Sudan.[25] The Libyan revolution resulted in Muammar Qadhafi's stockpiled weapons falling into the hands of smuggling networks in southern Libya, with everything from small arms to anti-tank weapons ending up in the North Sinai. According to one Bedouin tribesman, "it's easy to get these weapons" in the region, with the several figures running the smuggling networks well known to everyone in El-Arish and Sheikh Zowayed; "all you have to do is bring your money."[26] As a result, terrorist groups along the peninsula have virtually unlimited access to buying and stockpiling the arms and ammunition for future attacks.[27]

This flow of weapons into the region is largely what has established North Sinai as a corridor for further onward proliferation in the region, including into the Gaza Strip. Arms transfers take place across Egypt's southern borders as well as transfers by land along the northern coastal area. As a result, the usual flow of weapons and fighters smuggled from Egypt to Gaza has been reversed, with Salafists fleeing attacks and setting up camp in the North Sinai.

Despite the Muslim Brotherhood's long hatred of Israel and its anti-Jewish demagoguery, Morsi's ouster made Israeli authorities understandably nervous. This was due in part to the increased lawlessness and threat of militancy emanating from the North Sinai, but also because of the newly-severed political bonds that had been—due to Morsi's need to maintain a stable relationship with Israel—holding the Muslim Brotherhood back from acting upon its anti-Israel convictions.

While specific groups are rarely named as responsible for the attacks in El-Arish, Sheikh Zowayed, and Rafah, a significant proportion of arrests in the North Sinai have been of Palestinian militants. This indicates an increased level of terrorist activity among Gaza-based groups operating in the North Sinai, among them the *Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem*, an al-Qaeda-linked group formed after the 2011 Egyptian revolution and dedicated to targeting Israeli civilians.[28]

The most likely—and vulnerable—Israeli target is the southern city of Eilat, at the northern tip of the Red Sea. Israel closed its airport in Eilat on August 8 as a result of a security threat (possible rocket attacks) from the North Sinai. *Ansar Jerusalem* and other *jihadist* terrorist groups in the North Sinai view cross-border attacks as a way to highlight the weakness of the Egyptian military, draw Israel into a cross-border response, and expose Egyptian-Israeli cooperation in order to weaken the legitimacy of both sides. *The Mujahideen Shura Council* has claimed responsibility for a number of attacks as well, including an explosion targeting workers constructing the Israeli security fence along the Gaza-Sinai border in June 2012, and rocket and mortar attacks fired from the Sinai toward Eilat in August 2013.[29]

One of the main reasons behind the Egyptian military's failure to contain the terrorist threat in the region to date is its tumultuous relationship with the most importance source of local intelligence and information: the North Sinai's network of Bedouin tribal leaders.

## Unintended consequences

The worsening security situation in the Sinai appears to be pulling the Egyptian army closer to Israel. Israel, for example, has shown flexibility toward the limits of Egyptian military forces allowed in the Sinai, as spelled out in the 1979 peace treaty. Israel has allowed Egypt to deal with the terrorist threat in the Sinai by moving additional forces—two infantry battalions—into the peninsula. While there is a possibility of the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel being downgraded in order to provide Egypt with greater flexibility in its security measures, this is unlikely since Israeli officials have reiterated the importance of protecting the existence of the treaty for their own security. Instead, Israel took matters into its own hands in intercepting a rocket fired from the Sinai at Eilat for the first time in August 2013.[30] This intervention displayed a willingness not only from Israel to wade into the fight if necessary, but also from Egypt to permit Israel to do so in close proximity to its border.

But while Israel's task is more clear-cut, that of the Egyptian military is both daunting and complex. The new Egyptian government faces the task of clearing the region of unknown, armed *jihadists*. Despite an increased presence of the Egyptian military along the peninsula, terrorist activity has risen. And more instability is in store; the Muslim Brotherhood, shut out of the new government in Cairo, is likely to be pushed even further from participating in Egypt's transition to democracy, resulting in further violence, both in Egypt and in the North Sinai.

The Egyptian armed forces have no chance of clearing the area of militants without the access to sufficient intelligence and information (about training camps, individuals and groups) possessed by the Bedouins. Yet, given the military's rapidly deteriorating relationship with the North Sinai's tribal community, it will require a change of course in Cairo toward Bedouin demands to effectuate renewed cooperation. Unless that happens, the few remaining tribal leaders still showing cooperative spirit will inevitably join their brethren in cutting ties with the Egyptian government. This, coupled with the budding relations now visible between the tribes and militant groups, will pose an even broader challenge to the security of Egypt—and of Israel—than exists currently.

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# Libya Beyond Benghazi

Aaron Y. Zelin

Although the NATO-led effort to help Libya's rebels overthrow the regime of Muammar Qadhafi was altruistic, it has had a number of unintended consequences. These include the opening of a weapons bazaar that has stretched to Mali, the Sinai, Syria and elsewhere; the rise of militias; and a weak central government that cannot control its periphery. Another unintended consequence of the post-Qadhafi vacuum has been the resurrection of a *jihadi* movement in Libya—a threat that had previously been defanged.

Currently, the *jihadi* trend in Libya possesses a local, regional and transnational component. And while a large portion of Libya's violence is unrelated to radical Islam—based as it is on the militias that are the legacy of the Qadhafi regime, and on local, economic, or political grievances[1]—*jihadi* activity nonetheless represents a defining aspect of Libya's contemporary political scene.

## The local context

Even as the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) put down its arms after the war and joined the country's political process, new *jihadi* groups began to emerge.[2] The premier one has been *Katibat Ansar al-Sharia* in Benghazi, which first announced itself in February 2012 and is led by Muhammad al-Zahawi, who had previously been an inmate of Qadhafi's infamous Abu Salim prison.[3] The organization has since changed its name to *Ansar al-Sharia* in Libya (ASL) to try and signify that it is a national movement. Though most of its activities are still confined to Benghazi, they have expanded in recent months—highlighting that the group is beginning to gain some traction in Libyan society.[4]

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ASL has loose ties to several smaller Salafi-jihadi *katibas* (battalions) in Libya, including the shadowy *Ansar al-Sharia in Darnah* (ASD), led by former Guantánamo Bay inmate Abu Sufyan bin Qumu. However, there is not much public record on Qumu's activities in the past two years, and it is unclear if he is even still in Darnah or hiding out in the mountains. There are no known direct ties between ASD and ASL, though.[5] ASL does have ties to other battalions, however, including Katibat Abu 'Ubaydah al-Jarah, and Saraya Raf Allah al-Sahati. Many of these *katibas* were among those that participated in ASL's first "annual conference" on June 6, 2012.[6] Based on photos from the event, as many as a thousand individuals attended. At that time, it was believed that ASL only had about a few hundred members.[7] Currently, the group has expanded, and at its second annual conference in late June 2013, there were around two thousand people present, though ASL claimed that 12,000 came.

On the regional level, the involvement of Libyans can be seen in the unfolding civil war in Syria. There, fighters of Libyan origin are now involved in both the provision of weapons and in training, highlighting the regional ramifications of Libya's *jihad*.

ASL has grown in popularity primarily because of its focus on *da'wa* (missionary activities). While many analysts view *jihadism* only through the prism of violence, this misses the influence that independent *jihadi* religious scholars have over the course of Islamist politics. Since the excesses of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and al Qaeda in Iraq last decade, *Minbar al-Tawhid wal-Jihad* (the Pulpit of Monotheism and Jihad)—a library of *jihadi* primary source material founded by Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, who is currently imprisoned in Jordan—has attempted to steer the *jihadi* community to a more "pure" form of holy war. To do this, Maqdisi established a *sharia* committee of like-minded scholars in 2009, who provide fatwas answering questions on a range of topics from the mundane to the political.[8]

One of the main critiques Maqdisi presents, and hopes to create a course correction within the jihadi movement about, is his differentiation between the idea of *qital al-nikayya* (fighting to hurt or damage the enemy) and *qital al-tamkin* (fighting to consolidate one's power). He expounds on this in his 2004 book *Waqafat ma' Thamrat al-Jihad* (Stances on the Fruit of Jihad), in which he argues the former provides only short-term tactical victories, whereas the latter provides a framework for consolidating an Islamic state. In this way, Maqdisi highlights the importance of planning, organization, education, as well as *da'wa* activities.

The formation of Ansar al-Sharia in Libya is likely a logical product of the implementation of Maqdisi's ideas. Indeed, one of ASL's most potent methods for advancing its agenda has been through the group's social services programs. This has helped it to cultivate followers and a broader appeal than its *jihadi* counterparts, laying the groundwork for a future Islamic state.

One of the most successful projects that ASL has undertaken is a vigorous anti-drug campaign carried out in cooperation with the Rehab Clinic at the Psychiatric Hospital of Benghazi, the Ahli Club (soccer), Libya Company (Telecom and Technology), and the Technical Company. This suggests that there is buy-in for ASL's ideas at a town level. It also highlights the goodwill and positive role some see in ASL for Libyan society. Additionally, ASL has been involved in cleaning roads, religious lectures, competitions for children, security patrols, and opening medical clinics and religious schools.

But while *da'wa* has been the organization's main focus, ASL has also become a moral arbiter of Libyan society, taking part in both *hisba* (enjoining right and forbidding wrong; usually connotes vigilante activities) and *jihad*.[9] Al-Zahawi has admitted that his group was involved in the demolition of Sufi shrines and places of worship.[10] Further, ASL stormed the European School in Benghazi and took books on the human body, which in ASL's view were "pornographic" and contrary to Islam.[11] There is also a video where members of Ansar al-Sharia in Sirte meted out punishment via flogging.[12]

Beyond threats to local stability and actors, the most well-known act of *jihad* for ASL is its purported involvement in the September 11, 2012, attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi. While there was no formal claim of responsibility, the language used in the initial statement from ASL's spokesman Hani al-Mansuri suggests that some individuals in the group were part of the attack.[13] Moreover, the ideological language used and posting of content unrelated to Libya on ASL's official Facebook page suggest an affinity with al-Qaeda's broader worldview.

As ASL has grown, it has been able to expand its scope beyond Benghazi. Since the spring of 2013, there have been signs of the movement becoming more national. On March 19, ASL's leaders had a meeting with the Ubari tribe, which is located in southern Libya.[14] Two months later, ASL coordinated its first event outside of Benghazi in Tripoli as part of its anti-drug campaign lecture series.[15] More recently, on June 28th, ASL announced the creation of a new branch in Sirte and August 6, ASL created a new branch in Ajdabiya.[16] All of this points to the fact that the group is expanding in both capacity and influence.

## Libya's *jihad* looks east

On the regional level, the involvement of Libyans can be seen in the unfolding civil war in Syria. There, fighters of Libyan origin are now involved in both the provision of weapons and in training, highlighting the regional ramifications of Libya's *jihad*. To date, Libya's leaders have adopted a *laissez-faire* attitude toward this phenomenon. For instance, in February 2012, the head of Libyan foreign affairs, Ashour Bin Khayal, told the *Financial Times*, "Actually we cannot stop anyone from going to Syria. People want to go and fight with the Syrians; no one is going prevent them. Officially we don't have this stance but we cannot control the desire of the people."[17]

The threat emanating from Libya at a local, regional, and international level is very real, but it should not be overstated. However, Libya promises to remain a challenge, because militia actors and radical elements are stronger than the central government.

One of the worst-kept secrets locally is the large amount of weapons that Libyans have sent to Syria via Benghazi and Misrata through Lebanon and Turkey.[18] In addition, similar to the Iraq *jihad*, Libya has become a transfer point for fighters in the Maghreb headed to Syria. News reports and *jihadi* sources alike suggest that some of these individuals have attended training camps in Misrata, Benghazi, the desert area near Hon, and the Green Mountains in the east prior to heading off for the fight in Syria.[19]

Even more worrisome is what will happen to the Libyan foreign fighters when they come home after fighting in Syria. Many Libyan alumni of the 1980s' anti-Soviet *jihad* came home to overthrow the Qadhafi regime and install an Islamic state. They of course failed, but we could well see a repeat of this phenomenon today. And unlike in the 1990s,

Libya now is a weak state where much of its territory is not truly controlled by the central government.

In the past decade, Libyans have consistently been among the nationalities that have sent fighters to *jihads* abroad. For example, in October 2007, coalition forces in Iraq captured records in a raid near Sinjar along the Iraqi-Syrian border that contained a list of foreign fighters that joined al-Qaeda in Iraq between August 2006 and August 2007.[20] In all, Libyan fighters were estimated to constitute 18.8 percent of foreign fighters in Iraq, second only to Saudi Arabia's 41 percent.[21] As for the current conflict in Syria, based on a personal archive collected via primary and secondary sources, more than 400 Libyans have gone to fight in Syria to date.[22] Not all among this group are *jihadis*, but in the past year most have been affiliated with *Jabhat al-Nusra* or other *jihadi* outfits. And of these, more than 100 have died in combat.[23]

## A new stomping ground for al-Qaeda?

There are signs that the Bin Laden network is erecting a presence in Libya as well. Most recently, in August 2012, the Library of Congress published an unclassified report about the growing presence of al-Qaeda cells in Libya.[24] This marks a long-term goal of the group; a number of now deceased military commanders, as well as the group's current leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, have all planned to create a base for *jihad* in Libya. Yet much of the report provides circumstantial evidence, assertions, and hearsay; more information is needed regarding the nature of al-Qaeda's presence in Libya in order to assess its true strength.

A better way to piece together the nature of AQ's presence and aims in Libya is via the media releases of al-Qaeda central (AQC) and its regional franchise, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Prior to the anti-Qadhafi uprising, AQIM had never released any statements focusing specifically on Libya.[25] Since then, however, the group has issued statements warning Libyans not to trust NATO, appealing to Libyans to become involved in *jihadist* activities, and calling for the creation of an Islamic state and the establishment of *sharia*. So far, however, it has not put forth specific objectives or an agenda for action in Libya.

What it has done is made a point of emphasizing, praising, and congratulating Libyans for overthrowing Muammar Qadhafi. The organization's statements repeatedly referred to Libyans as the "descendants" and "grandsons" of the anti-colonial leader 'Umar al-Mukhtar, attempting to link the organization to Libyan nationalist narratives.[26]

The most recent message from AQC or AQIM on Libya came in September 2012, when AQIM lauded the attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi and encouraged more such actions from the *mujahidin* in the region.[27] The lack of messaging since highlights that although *jihadis* find Libya important, it is dwarfed by issues like Syria or Egypt. This may be a product of necessity; AQIM has kept a low profile in southern Libya after elements of the organization were ejected from Northern Mali following the French invasion there earlier this year.

But absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. The lack of state control and the inherent secrecy of an organization like AQIM make it difficult to know its location and capabilities. That said, it is likely that the organization has begun to use its foothold in Libya as a new base to recruit, train, and plan attacks.[28]

At this point, there is no indication that groups like AQIM are planning attacks in the West, despite their rhetoric to that effect. Yet—given the organization's capabilities, and its continued

fealty to AQC—it is not inconceivable that it would do so in the future, if the opportunity presented itself.

## Vigilance needed

The threat emanating from Libya at a local, regional, and international level is very real, but it should not be overstated. Today, most *jihadis* are focused on Syria's civil war. In the future, they may turn their attention to Egypt as well, in light of the ouster of President Mohamed Morsi and his Muslim Brotherhood–dominated government this summer. But Libya promises to remain a challenge, because militia actors and radical elements are stronger than the central government.

As such, Libyan *jihadism* is a phenomenon that should be continually monitored. If it is not, the country could easily become another base of operations for al-Qaeda and its affiliates in their war on the West, and on others in the Muslim world that disagree with their objectives.

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# Toward Strategic Landpower

Lieutenant General Charles T. Cleveland &
Lieutenant Colonel Stuart L. Farris

The Chief of Staff of the Army's creation of the Strategic Landpower Task Force harkens back to the development of AirLand Battle Doctrine in the early 1980s. The Vietnam War broke the Army, and there was growing concern that the American military would be quickly overwhelmed by the numerically superior forces of the Soviet Union in the event of a major conventional war. The authors of AirLand Battle recognized that an attrition-based strategy could not succeed against the Soviet military.[1] A new way of thinking was required.

This new way of thinking was based upon the recognition of the interdependence of land and air forces, working closely together to simultaneously attack and destroy enemy forces not just in the main battle area, but throughout the depth of an extended battlefield. The conduct of synchronized and relentless offensive action throughout the close, deep, and rear areas would, in theory, simultaneously disrupt the enemy's maneuver formations, logistics, and command and control capabilities to the extent that their superior numbers would be effectively neutralized piecemeal and rendered irrelevant.[2] Operationalizing this concept required an overhaul of Doctrine, Organizations, Train-

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ing, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, and Facilities (known by its acronym, DOTML-PF). This revamp resulted in the M1 tank, Bradley Fighting Vehicle, Apache and Blackhawk Helicopters, Paladin howitzer, F-16 and F-18 fighter aircraft, the creation of the Combat Training Centers, and the creation and institution of an Army doctrine and culture that emphasized de-centralized command and control and small unit initiative, enabled by mission orders and a clear understanding of the higher commander's intent.

The record of AirLand Battle in prosecuting traditional warfare and combined arms maneuver speaks for itself. Its application contributed to the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union, which could not sustain the costs associated with trying to keep up with the qualitative military advantage of the United States.

The record of AirLand Battle in prosecuting traditional warfare and combined arms maneuver speaks for itself. Its application contributed to the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union, which could not sustain the costs associated with trying to keep up with the qualitative military advantage of the United States. It further resulted in the rapid removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait in 1991, and the rapid defeat of the Iraqi military and Saddam Hussein regime twelve years later, in 2003. No one should be surprised that thinking 21st century enemies recognize our asymmetric advantage in conducting combined arms maneuver, and have therefore sought to turn our strength into weakness. Nor should anyone be surprised that our enemies pursue their own asymmetric advantage through unconventional, irregular, and hybrid approaches to conflict and testing American resolve. As we have learned in Iraq and Afghanistan, while AirLand Battle remains a highly valid strategic concept for prosecuting a war against traditional military threats, we still lack a coherent and comprehensive framework for dealing with the irregular and hybrid enemies we face now—and will continue to face for the foreseeable future. New and creative ways of thinking are required.

## Navigating the new battlefield

Today the Army must consider the possibility that military success in modern "wars among the people"[3] will require ever increasing interdependence among the military services and interagency partners. It will also require that the Army develop a new set of DOTML-PF solutions for operating in an emerging domain of warfare, referred to by Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) as the Human Domain. USSOCOM defines this area as "the totality of the physical, cultural, and social environments that influence human behavior to the extent that success of any military strategy, operation, or tactical action depends on the application of unique capabilities that are designed to fight and win population-centric conflicts." This idea is sure to be controversial, but it is worthy of serious debate and discussion.

Military professionals have long acknowledged that war is fundamentally a human enterprise. And yes, all wars are "population-centric" to varying degrees. Unlike the traditional paradigm of warfare, in which the military object is the destruction of enemy battalions, divisions, and corps, in the paradigm of irregular warfare the security objective is the population itself. This requires forces, both military and non-military, with not only the ability to destroy populations, but—more critically—to first understand them within the context of

the operational environment, and then to take meaningful action to effectively influence human behavior toward a desired outcome. In other words, for military force to be of utility in the most likely forms of conflict we are to face, we must have military forces capable of succeeding, in conjunction with non-military forces, in the Human Domain.

The logic for a more complete study of the Human Domain is compelling. The kinds of war most analysts forecast—sometimes called "war amongst the people," other times "hybrid warfare" or "complex contingencies"—place a premium on pursuing comprehensive engagement and wider and more constructive partnerships.[4] The strategic environment, meanwhile, is characterized by an increasingly populated, urbanized, and interconnected world. Furthermore, if we acknowledge that we went into Afghanistan and Iraq with insufficient knowledge and understanding of cultural dynamics, and if we believe future military success in the most likely forms of conflict will require a deep understanding of foreign languages and cultures and the human factors involved in a given conflict, then recognizing a Human Domain becomes a critical organizing and resourcing concept for supporting national security missions.

Seeing the facts of our strategic situation as they are should compel the Army to organize, educate, train, equip, and provide forces for operating in the Human Domain as we already do in the land, air, maritime, space, and cyber domains. New DOTML-PF solutions were required to enable Airland Battle and American dominance in the Air and Land Domains. Similarly, the Army must analyze and develop new DOTML-PF solutions for providing forces to ambassadors and Geographic Combatant Commanders capable of navigating, operating, and prevailing within that most complex and unpredictable of all environments, the Human Domain. AirLand Battle recognized the fully integrated nature of the Air and Land domains in order to ensure success in conducting combined arms maneuver against traditional threats. Now is the time to similarly recognize, develop, and combine Human Domain competencies with our traditional Land Domain competencies. Doing so will provide senior decision makers with the range of options correctly aligned with the strategic realities they face.

The recognition and ability to effectively operate in the Human Domain becomes even more critical given current defense fiscal constraints. We are entering an uncertain strategic security environment paradoxically framed by diminishing defense resources and an increasing number and variety of potential threats. These threats are well documented and may emanate from state actors such as Iran and North Korea, from al-Qaeda and its associated franchises, from the continued export and spread of ideological extremism to Africa, from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, from the proliferation of advanced military and cyber-attack technologies, and from the resurgence of great powers competing for increased regional and global influence.[5] How does the United States prepare and posture itself to deal with such a myriad of potential threats in an emerging era of domestic fiscal austerity?

Today the Army must consider the possibility that military success in modern "wars among the people" will require ever increasing interdependence among the military services and interagency partners.

## Building capacity

Clearly, the United States must look beyond our own inherent capabilities and seek to form long-term, durable security

relationships abroad. In essence, America's land forces should look to develop a "global landpower network." This network consists of allies, expeditionary global and regional partners, and host nation forces. It could ultimately include non-military "forces" and even friendly non-state actors that have a direct relationship to success in wars among the people in places like Libya or Syria. The network can be bound together by the common interests of peace, regional stability, and global prosperity—very useful in shaping, as well as deterring, and winning.

Military professionals have long acknowledged that war is fundamentally a human enterprise. All wars are "population-centric" to varying degrees.

To be clear, this network is not intended to simply do the bidding on behalf of America's defense and security interests. This is not about outsourcing our global security responsibilities to witting or unwitting actors. Rather, it is designed to generate and provide strategic options to senior defense officials and policymakers, both domestically and abroad, who can work together to determine who should lead regional security and stability efforts and how and where military capabilities can best be integrated and applied from across the network to support the successful achievement of a desired outcome on land. These decisions can be better informed by strategists, planners, and commanders with regional expertise who are organized, trained, and educated to operate in the Human Domain. Potentially, the more established, capable, and competent this network is perceived by real or potential adversaries, the less likely they will be willing, or perhaps more importantly able, to take actions resulting in an intolerable change to a regional or global status quo.

Conceivably, the global landpower network would occupy the strategic "high ground" and retain a globally distributed position of advantage that effectively deters significant adversary misbehavior. If deterrence fails, or if the situation merits other effects, the network might provide flexible options to senior defense officials and policymakers for further coercing, containing, disrupting, defeating, and/or imposing long-term costs on enemies across the threat spectrum, from traditional nation-state to irregular or hybrid.

## Strategic victory

Today, AirLand Battle remains a valid and viable concept and doctrine for conducting combined arms maneuver warfare against traditional military threats. However, if there is one lesson the Army has learned (or re-learned) in the past twelve years of war, it is this: the application of military force in its current form has limited utility when fighting modern wars among the people. "Combat power" in the form of superior weapons systems, cutting-edge technology, and disproportionate force ratios may enable tactical success on the ground, but does not guarantee strategic victory. That requires a wider understanding of "forces" both military and non-military. Strategic victory also requires a more complete understanding of the Human Domain.

Looking to the future, the Army should have the foresight and the courage to adapt its structures and prepare its soldiers for operating in the Human Domain, supported by a coherent strategy that knits together the proper joint, interagency, and international partners through a global landpower network. The changes required are largely cognitive and cultural in nature. The solutions lie mainly in investing in people

and ideas, not platforms. Recognizing a Human Domain of warfare, analyzing and producing the associated DOTML-PF outputs, and working to create and continually evolve a global landpower network is only a proposed first step. However, it will require significant investment in critical thinking, and a willingness to change. And therein lies perhaps the most significant challenge.

When a superpower decides it must achieve a desired outcome on land, the Commander in Chief should have the appropriate tools and options ready and able to get the job done. Land forces designed to prevail in the Human Domain and dominate in the Land Domain, combined with senior decision-makers enabled by a global landpower network, will help ensure that the necessary options are available when results matter and America must employ land forces to prevent, shape, and win across the spectrum of conflict.

Having the options capable of achieving such victory is ultimately what "strategic landpower" is all about.

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# PERSPECTIVE

## Power and Principle
### An Interview with Ambassador Paula Dobriansky

Ambassador Paula J. Dobriansky is currently a Senior Fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. A specialist in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, as well as political-military affairs, she served in key roles as a diplomat and policymaker in the administrations of five presidents, both Democrat and Republican. Most recently, from 2001 to 2009, she served as Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs in the George W. Bush administration. In September, she spoke with *Journal* Editor Ilan Berman about the state of U.S.-Russian relations, American strategic priorities in the Middle East, and the contours of the U.S. pivot to Asia.

*The much-trumpeted "reset" of relations with Russia that was a centerpiece of the Obama administration's foreign policy in its first term has fallen on hard times. On an array of issues—from Syria to missile defense to the case of NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden—Moscow and Washington increasingly appear to be on divergent paths. Can and should the "reset" be salvaged? What are the real, long-term common interests shared by the U.S. and Russia?*

The United States and Russia are on different sides in a number of ongoing regional conflicts, notably the civil war in Syria. Moscow also continues to oppose any U.S. missile defense deployments and seeks to drive a wedge between the U.S. and its allies in Europe and Asia. Indeed, these days, anti-Americanism seems to be the major organizing principle of Russian foreign policy. This reality makes it unlikely that the "reset" can be salvaged. As to whether it should be salvaged, I don't think so. The "reset" policy was conceived of by the Obama administration with the goal of improving U.S.-Russia relations, but not necessarily in ways that would be beneficial to America's long-term interests. In fact, this policy came at a steep cost. There were unilateral concessions made by the U.S., particularly with respect to ballistic missile defense and numerous symbolic gestures to propitiate Putin's desire for international legitimacy. In response,

the Russian government continued to pursue anti-American policies, while waging a brutal domestic crackdown.

To be sure, Washington and Moscow do share common interests that could provide the basis for a long-term understanding. These include combating terrorism, handling threats posed by radical Islam, and managing the rise of Chinese economic and military power. Unfortunately, it appears that Moscow either does not perceive these matters in the same light as Washington or is simply not pursuing a foreign policy that is guided by these long-term strategic considerations. For example, Russia has effectively abandoned any kind of traditional triangular diplomacy and is fulsomely cooperating with China on a multitude of issues. It also appears that Moscow is interested in fostering instability in the Middle East, both to hurt American interests and to push up world oil prices, a development that increases Russia's hard currency earnings.

*On Putin's watch, pluralism and political freedoms in Russia have eroded considerably. What does the accelerating authoritarian drift now visible in Russia mean for the country's future, and for its relationship with the West?*

Fundamental freedoms are eroding due to a phenomenon best described as "Putinism"—the centralization of power under Vladimir Putin across many sectors of Russian society. Authoritarian trends are unlikely to subside so long as Putin remains the dominant figure in Russian politics. Even if Putin leaves the scene, prospects for democracy in Russia are uncertain. In contrast to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, democracy never took hold in its fullest form in Russia during periods of close partnership between Russia and the West.

The presidential elections in 2018, however, might provide an opportunity for change. Recent demonstrations suggest that discontent with the Putin regime is growing. The Russian middle class, which initially benefited from the regime's economic policies, is now demonstrating against the lack of political reform and rampant corruption. More protests are likely in the period prior to the elections. Putin's crackdown, and the resulting instability, will continue to put a significant strain on Russia's relationship with the West. In addition, Putin is likely to continue using anti-Americanism in an effort to whip up Russian jingoism and anti-foreign sentiments, so as to buttress his own legitimacy.

*The outbreak of the Arab Spring in December 2011 was greeted with euphoria by many in the West, who believed that it heralded an era of democracy and pluralism. But the years since have seen the rise of illiberal forces throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Is there still hope for democracy in the Arab world, or is Islamism the future there?*

Democracy is an evolutionary process. It's not about an election or two. Despite its liberal traditions, even in the United States it took democracy a long period of time to take root. While the current prospects for democracy in the Middle East and North Africa look bleak, there are a number of reasons to be optimistic about its long-term future there. People throughout the region are showing that they are willing to take to the streets to hold their governments accountable. A steady U.S. policy that works with both military and opposition forces could help democratic institutions develop over a long period. This model has succeeded in several countries. In Indonesia, the world's

largest Muslim country, the military was in control but grassroots movements brought about significant change over many years. Elections occurred only after democratic institutions had become rooted in the society.

Illiberal forces are a serious factor in the challenges and ideological clashes currently afoot. But the same was true in other regions that consolidated democracy against tremendous odds. The people of the Middle East will not ultimately allow their governments to deprive them of their basic freedoms and rights.

*The Obama administration has long grappled with its approach to human rights and humanitarian intervention. Some have championed the idea of "responsibility to protect," and advocated an activist, interventionist role for the U.S. Others have taken a more cautious approach to foreign entanglements such as Syria. What is the proper balance here?*

The promotion of human rights is integral to U.S. foreign policy. There is no cookie-cutter approach; each situation calls for a different mix of idealism and realism. But there are guidelines that generally hold true. First, it is more effective to work closely with organizations and individuals on the ground. Otherwise, the United States risks intervening to plant a model that does not resonate with the history, culture and traditions of a particular country. Second, U.S. policy has proven far more effective when it commits to long-term efforts. Band-aid approaches can perhaps prevent atrocities, but they are less effective in promoting durable democratic institutions that can protect human rights and deliver lasting economic growth. Finally, it is advantageous to work with allies and neighboring countries.

One of the Obama administration's biggest mistakes in Syria was its failure to pursue a decisive policy early in the conflict, at a time when Middle Eastern countries were soliciting U.S. assistance. Instead, the Administration pursued resolutions at the UN even when Russia and China had made it clear that they would veto any significant steps. President Obama's equivocation undermined U.S. credibility and sent a signal to tyrants in other parts of the globe that the United States will waver in holding rogue regimes accountable. Even now, there remains broad regional support for U.S. intervention. Secretary of State John Kerry struck the right note when he warned that the risks of "armchair isolationism" outweigh the costs of intervention. The Obama administration should think beyond a limited strike, however, and move decisively to remove the Assad regime. As long as Assad remains in power, the bloodshed will continue to spread across the region.

*Over the past two years, the United States has pursued a "pivot" to Asia as its primary geographic and geopolitical area of focus. What are the strategic challenges confronting the Obama administration in the Far East, and how can it best navigate them?*

The "pivot" was not a new policy and the term "pivot" made little sense in light of the significant time and resources that the Bush administration had devoted to Asia. Even before the Bush administration, the United States had already invested a great deal in Asia—politically, economically, and militarily.

The greatest threats in the region today emanate from China, which is pursuing an ambitious program of military modernization. Beijing is complicit in a variety of regional problems. Chinese backing, for example, allows the North Korean regime to repress its own people and blackmail the world with its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Washington can best navigate these challenges by solidifying and expanding alliances in the region. In this regard, our key Asian allies, which include South Korea, Japan, Australia and Taiwan but also such countries as the Philippines and Indonesia, all of which are concerned about China's growing military and diplomatic saber rattling, should be actively engaged.

Even states with long histories of problematic relations with the West are now calling for American leadership in countering the rise of China. A graphic example is the change that is occurring in Burma, where the regime pursued an about-face to ensure that it did not succumb to China's stranglehold. Unfortunately, the Administration's Syrian policy, which has featured vacillation and has undermined American credibility, is bound to have some negative repercussions for our standing in Asia.

# DISPATCHES

## Some Quiet Humanitarian Diplomacy on Syria

Nir Boms

JERUSALEM—In its meeting this past May, the World Health Organization adopted a resolution condemning the "deterioration of the health conditions of the Syrian population in the occupied Golan as a result of the suppressive practices of the Israeli occupation." The resolution, a brainchild of the Syrian and Palestinian delegates, joined sundry other attempts to condemn Israel in the international and UN-related institutions.

Interestingly enough, this condemnation came just as yet another group of wounded Syrians had crossed the Syrian-Israeli border to be treated in a military hospital that was set up for that precise purpose in the Golan. As of this writing, over 100 injured Syrians—some of them as young as four years of age—have crossed the common border between the two countries seeking humanitarian assistance. The medical services available on the Israeli side of the Golan have become sufficiently well known that one of the recent injured, suffering from a bullet wound to the chest, arrived with a detailed doctor's note in Arabic pinned to his shirt.

Lending a hand to the Syrians has not been limited to the military-medical channel. Israeli NGOs have been engaged in humanitarian work from the beginning of the Syrian civil war in March 2011, operating, at times under the auspices of a non-Israeli organization, in Jordan, Turkey and elsewhere. Via this vehicle, hundreds of tons of equipment (including medical aid, clothing, baby food, tents and sanitary utensils) have found their way to refugee communities inside and outside Syria. Recently, for example, a number of prominent Jewish NGOs—such as the Joint Jewish Distribution Committee and the Jewish Coalition for Disaster Relief—joined a public campaign to help the children in Jordan's Zaatari refugee camp, which is currently home to over 150,000 Syrian refugees. This work, which has not sought publicity for a number of good reasons,

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offers an interesting prism through which to view some of the events taking place in the region—and provides a glimmer of hope for a different future.

At the official level, of course, Israel faces a starker choice. While it has avoided taking a position in the Syrian conflict, the Israeli government finds itself on the horns of several strategic dilemmas. On the one hand, it does not seek to play a role in what many see as a war between two evils—the Assad regime and Iran, and al-Qaeda and assorted Islamist forces. On the other, Jerusalem cannot ignore the immediate danger that advanced or non-conventional weapons could leave the Syrian arsenal and end up in the wrong hands. Then there are the regional effects; the conflict, having already spilled into Lebanon and become a quagmire, can easily leak across the Israeli border as well, a scenario that has been discussed by a number of Israeli officials.

So, how does investing millions on medical care for Syrians fit into the equation? In a very interesting way.

The first batch of injured Syrians arrived without planning. A local IDF commander spotted several bleeding Syrians and decided to act first and seek approval later. The approval was ultimately granted, and more wounded crossed the border as the battles intensified on the Syrian Golan in the beginning of 2013. The military track was not taking place in a vacuum, however; already in the beginning of 2012, a number of groups in Israel had called publicly for a certain degree of humanitarian intervention. Speaking at a public rally in Tel Aviv in March 2012, civic leaders said that as Israelis and human beings they cannot sit idly by and watch these atrocities from afar. A collection of clothing and other items for the refugees emerged from that call to arms. A number of Israeli NGOs have joined the cause since, saying that saving lives, a Jewish value, is sacred and lies beyond politics. These calls to action have taken shape in a number of ways, and 900 tons of Israeli aid has been distributed to Syrian refugees thus far, mostly without publicity.

Therein lies the logic of this work. When a Syrian rebel, whether a mother or a father, encounters an "enemy" lending a hand, it is a confusing moment. I have personally seen the looks in the eyes of those Syrians who realized that help is coming from the least expected source. This is not an easy encounter, but it is a unique one that enables a rare dialogue that has not taken place to date. While Israelis and Palestinians have been speaking for over 30 years, Israelis and Syrians have never really "met." Paradoxically, Syria's tragedy has at long last afforded the chance to begin that conversation.

The conflict that has taken the lives of over 100,000, left over 6 million refugees and shattered Syria is still far from its end. The devastation is beyond what most can even begin to grasp, and the help being offered is far from sufficient. Although the Israeli effort is significant in its own right, it still pales in comparison to the work being done by countries like Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The Israeli dimension, however, is not just about the quantity of aid being provided. It is also a message of compassion, and of hope, that perhaps one day, one of the young Syrians whose life was saved might have a chance to see this region differently.

# Show of FARCe

Anne Phillips

BOGOTÁ—This summer, I had the opportunity to visit a Colombian Army base situated a few miles west of the Venezuelan border. One of the brigades stationed there had just lost 14 soldiers during an ambush by an estimated 50 members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (better known by their acronym, FARC). Those soldiers who were not killed during the initial firefight were taken prisoner for a few hours, and then executed.

After a brief tour of the base, the major escorting me offered to treat me to a soda at the *casino* (officers' mess). There, I had the opportunity to speak at length with some military personnel about the extraordinary "show-of-force" that had just been put on by the FARC—one all the more significant because the group's leaders were supposedly in the midst of negotiating a peace deal with the Colombian government. Though the Colombian government rejected the FARC's request for a cease-fire when peace talks commenced, recent FARC attacks (such as the summer assault mentioned above) suggest that the group still wants to be perceived as being on the offensive.

So, is progress being made in Colombia's latest peace process? The military officers with whom I spoke simply answered: *"¿Quien sabe?"* Who knows?

Indeed, the situation is far from clear. During the first months after the peace talks commenced in Havana last November 2012, the Colombian press was flush with optimism: that the Colombian government and the FARC had agreed upon six points of debate and would not stray from those; that Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos had vowed an agreement would be signed by November (the deadline for politicians—including Santos—to formally announce their candidacies); that Santos was rumored to be a possible candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize should an agreement be signed; and that the first point of discussion, "land reform," was "agreed upon," although the details weren't entirely clear.

This optimistic spin certainly helps advance Bogotá's efforts to get a peace deal signed in time for the launch of Santos' re-election campaign. And perhaps Colombians don't want to read articles which would suggest that these talks will fail, as all others before them have. Further, reporting about the dangers of negotiating with terrorists is difficult if calling the FARC a terrorist organization is now considered inaccurate, inflammatory, or at the very least, politically incorrect.

The FARC, in turn, has capitalized on the unwillingness of the Colombian press to malign them. The group's negotiators regularly give interviews and speeches, spewing propaganda. During the recent strikes by farmers which paralyzed parts of the country, the FARC forced rural peasants to march and paid young boys $10 apiece to attack police and destroy private property in one of the largest poor neighborhoods in Bogotá. None of this made it into the country's major newspapers.

Colombian politicians who oppose rushing into a peace agreement "at any price" have not publicly expressed their opinions—the exception being former President

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Álvaro Uribe and his supporters, who have promptly been labeled "enemies of peace" for airing their misgivings.

All that being said, it bears exploring what a signed agreement in Colombia might actually reap.

First and foremost, significant concessions would be made to the FARC. To get an idea of what that could entail, the following are just some of the FARC's demands:

- Impunity, at least for the FARC negotiators themselves. (The negotiators might be willing to let their rank-and-file go to jail for human rights violations and/or war crimes as long as members of the armed forces are prosecuted and found guilty of such crimes as well. The FARC's position is that the Colombian state is itself a "terrorist organization" and that its "military arm" has committed atrocities which cannot go unpunished);

- The abolition of the Colombian Congress in favor of a National Assembly, modeled after Venezuela's;

- Protection from extradition to the United States on kidnapping and drug-related charges;

- Government-funded personal security guards for FARC leaders (since they will probably be targets for revenge killings, especially if the "transitional justice system" put in place does not punish them to the extent their victims see fit);

- Bilateral disarmament overseen only by other *Latin* American countries. (This demand, if met, would certainly clear out a few desks at the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá.)

Unless the FARC negotiators are bluffing, it is unlikely that they will sign anything that doesn't address at least some of these demands.

Second, while some FARC fronts will demobilize, the most well-financed ones almost certainly won't. The drug and illegal mining trades are far too lucrative. Uniforms will be shed, names will be changed, and the forced recruitment of minors, murder, extortions and kidnappings will continue.

Third, those guerrillas who do in fact participate in a mass demobilization will most likely overwhelm the Government's under-funded Disarm, Demobilize, Reintegration (DDR) program to the point where most demobilized FARC members will end up dropping out, unable to cope financially, psychologically or otherwise. As did many of the demobilized members of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) paramilitary group in the 1990s, many demobilized FARC guerillas will return to the life they know by starting new illegal armed groups. The result could very well be an overall uptick in violent crime.

But the FARC negotiators won't be the only winners. President Santos will almost certainly be re-elected. He might even win the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts. And the former guerrillas who run for office as members of the FARC's *Union Patriotica* party will have a new, more resistant form of jungle rot with which to contend: Colombian politics. No doubt they will rise to the task, with the enthusiastic support of the Cuban and Venezuelan regimes.

# Book Reviews

## Clear and Present Danger

Asaf Romirowsky

Matthew Levitt, *Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013), 426 pp. $32.95.

In the Fall of 2002, as the Bush administration was focused overwhelmingly on pursuing al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in response to the September 11 attacks, no less senior an official than then-Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage suggested that the attention of the United States might actually be misplaced. "Hezbollah may be the 'A team' of terrorism," Armitage told a conference in Washington at the time. "Maybe al-Qaeda is actually the 'B team.'"

Armitage's assessment, it turns out, was well-deserved. The Shi'ite militia sustained by Iran and supported by Syria has become a terrorist powerhouse since its inception in Lebanon in 1982. Over the past three decades, it has transformed itself into a sophisticated international army of mercenaries while exporting Iran's revolutionary Islamist ideology abroad and claiming political hegemony in southern Lebanon. It likewise has mastered the art of media warfare, utilizing social media and a dedicated television station, *Al-Manar* (literally, "the beacon"), to spread its corrosive ideological message throughout the Arab world, and beyond. And while Coalition operations over the past decade have eroded at least some of al-Qaeda's capabilities (although exactly how much is a matter of some dispute), Hezbollah has reclaimed international notoriety as a terrorist actor *par excellence*.

No one understands this better than Matthew Levitt, author of *Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God*. Levitt, a senior fellow and director of the Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence at the Washington

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Institute for Near East Policy, previously served as the deputy assistant secretary for intelligence and analysis at the U.S. Treasury Department, and before that as a counterterrorism analyst for the FBI. He now puts this extensive professional know-how to good use in his analysis of the terror group.

Levitt's exhaustive study successfully breaks down the organization's intricate web of activities, both in and out of the Middle East. His know-how of the Washington Beltway and the intelligence agencies that populate it allows Levitt to cogently and compellingly make the case that the group poses a truly worldwide threat. Indeed, one of Hezbollah's key strengths is its comprehensive mapping of the militia's vast international network, and the companies, industries, charities and cutouts it has used over the years to further its *jihadist* objectives.

Undergirding Levitt's analysis is a holistic, bird's-eye view of one of the world's most notorious—and capable—terrorist organizations. As he explains, "Hezbollah should be judged by the totality of its actions. It cannot be forgiven its criminal, terrorist, or militant pursuits simply because at the same time it also engages in political or humanitarian ones." This constitutes a biting criticism of Western policy to date, which is all too often at pains to differentiate between the military and political "wings" of Hezbollah—and to punish the former while engaging the latter.

Hezbollah's leaders have helped fuel this policy confusion, insisting on the group's innocence. "We have not carried out operations anywhere in the world," Hezbollah's Secretary General, Hassan Nasrallah, maintained back in 2003. And at first blush, the picture is indeed confusing; unlike al-Qaeda, Hezbollah operates as a legitimate political party in the Lebanese parliament, as well as the de facto overlord of southern Lebanon, where it is in charge of a variety of social services.

But Levitt demystifies this dichotomy. In page after page, he lays out convincingly—via exhaustive documentation of the group's myriad plots and schemes—that Hezbollah's criminal and terrorist activities cannot be divorced from the larger political whole, and that its "resistance" activities are terrorism, pure and simple.

Hezbollah, however, isn't just a terrorist group; it is also a geopolitical actor. Its month-long war with Israel in the summer of 2006 demonstrated significant military capabilities far beyond the norm for a typical terrorist group, while its global reach—cultivated by operators like Imad Fayez Mughniyeh, the group's shadowy former military chief, who was killed by Israel in Damascus in February of 2008—has made it the bane of law enforcement agencies the world over. Yet perhaps Hezbollah's most important role is how it factors into the larger international standoff taking place with its chief sponsor, the Islamic Republic of Iran. Levitt writes, "Hezbollah's role in Iran's shadow war, along with its own interest in targeting senior Israeli officials, has cast the group as a dangerous terrorist network capable of operating everywhere from Europe to Africa and Asia to the Americas."

The threat that Hezbollah poses, Levitt warns, is very real—and it is growing. "As tensions continue to mount over Iran's nuclear program, Hezbollah's strategic relationship with Iran—the role it has already played in Tehran's shadow war with the West—gives officials worldwide ample cause of alarm." Therein lies what is perhaps *Hezbollah's* most trenchant message; with the danger of a nuclear Iran looming ever larger on the horizon, Levitt's book is a timely reminder of how dangerous and widespread the genie of Hezbollah truly is, and why there needs to be a concerted global effort to get it back into the bottle.

# Islam's Implosion

Adam Lovinger

DAVID P. GOLDMAN, *How Civilizations Die (And Why Islam is Dying Too)* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2011), 256 pp. $27.95.

Bold and insightful new lenses by which to view the world emerge infrequently. Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*, coming as it did on the heels of the Cold War, was one such monumental work. It posited that the age of ideological conflict was coming to an end with the triumph of political and economic liberalism over other ideological alternatives. Samuel Huntington's subsequent oeuvre, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the Modern World*, was a partial riposte to Fukuyama's vision of triumphant Hegelian liberalism. It suggested that, far from an end of history, a new era of self-confident cultures and civilizations, having melted loose from the frozen geopolitical tundra of the Cold War, are now "returning to history." With the work's heavy emphasis on Islam's historic faultlines with the West, this explanatory lens garnered renewed interest following the September 11, 2001, terror attacks and the ensuing Global War on Terror, and remains very much alive to this day.

David Goldman's contribution to the discourse, *How Civilizations Die (and Why Islam is Dying too)*, could very well be a third such seminal work. While the others received relatively mild rebukes for their characterization of non-Western cultures and civilizations, Goldman's work charges ahead full speed, aware but indifferent to the usual, prescribed blinders of political correctness—particularly the question of why some religions are better protected against the sterilizing headwinds of modernity than others.

In fact, Goldman's is a contribution that in many ways surpasses the work of both Fukuyama and Huntington, because of its unsparing and unsentimental focus on the very seeds that produce the strategic character of great civilizations, and which ultimately govern their success or failure. In response to Fukuyama, for example, Goldman finds that while Western liberalism may be the most compelling global ideological alternative; those holding such views, namely Western liberals, increasingly find themselves a dying breed. Ideology can only sustain itself with ideologues, after all, and Goldman makes a convincing case that enlightened cultures collapse and fade into history if those holding such culture dear fail to reproduce.

Goldman judiciously catalogs this cruel irony—the triumph of an ideology, followed by the demographic implosion of the heirs to it. His response to Huntington's vision is that, while different civilizations rest upon faultlines that clash with others, if their progeny lose cultural and religious confidence they will come to view their lives as increasingly meaningless and fail to have children. This is a phenomenon that is now on display across every country in Europe, including Russia, and much of the Far East, particularly China and Japan.

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Most striking, however, is that this phenomenon is taking place in the Muslim world as well. Contrary to conventional wisdom, which views the Muslim world as an unshakable reservoir of faith and youthful vitality, Goldman cites convincing demographic data that suggests Islam, as a civilization, is undergoing an unprecedented fertility drop-off.

This is of monumental importance, because clashing with other civilizations requires reservoirs of spine-stiffening belief; geriatric civilizations may have a hard enough time preventing themselves from collapsing from within. Yet Goldman finds that core elements of Muslim theology—namely pagan, pre-Islamic practices that found their way into the text of the *Qur'an*—have made it incapable of making the adaptations necessary to survive.

Based upon copious data judiciously gathered, Goldman posits that the civilizational collapse of Islam is happening in real time, with the sharpest fertility drop-off in recorded history occurring in Iran, where Iranian women in their twenties who grew up with five or six siblings will bear only one or two children in their lifetimes. Indeed, in Goldman's assessment, by 2050 the belt of Muslim countries from Morocco to Iran will become as gray as depopulating Europe, and the Islamic world will have the same proportion of dependent elderly as the industrial world, but with one tenth the economic productivity.

But Islam is not alone in its civilizational struggle for survival. Much of the Western world accompanies Islam in what he terms "the Fourth Great Extinction," with even developed countries in Europe and Japan, as well as less developed Russia and China, graying and depopulating at record rates. Yet, in contrast to Islam, which may be theologically constricted in its options to survive, Christianity, in Goldman's analysis, while grievously crippled, retains enough theological flexibility to carry on.

The potential strategic consequences of civilizational collapse over the present century are touched upon lightly in Goldman's analysis, and this is where more work on the subject would be welcome. Yet several trenchant observations suggest what may be in store: "a man or nation at the brink of death does not have a 'rational self-interest,'" "nothing is more dangerous than a civilization that has only just discovered it is dying," and "across epochs and cultures, blood has flown in inverse proportion to the hope of victory."

While directed foremost at the decline of Islam, all such observations suggest that the greatest challenge facing the United States in the 21st century may well be managing the increasingly rapid civilizational decline of others, a process that promises to end with a whimper but which, in the interim (and particularly with the Islamic Republic of Iran's headlong pursuit of nuclear weaponry) may in its downward course shake the very foundations of world order.

# Asia's Freedom Trail

Lawrence J. Haas

MELANIE KIRKPATRICK, *Escape From North Korea: The Untold Story of Asia's Underground Railroad* (New York: Encounter Books, 2012), 376 pp. $25.99.

It is an iconic image, a symbol of all that's harsh and cruel and backwards about the "Hermit Kingdom." At night, above the 38th Parallel in Asia, a photograph from the sky shows a country of 24 million people in almost complete darkness, save a small light from the capital of Pyongyang.

This is North Korea, the world's last bastion of ultra-Stalinism, a land of heart-wrenching poverty and starvation, fear and suspicion, enslavement and brainwashing. You can't read about it without shaking your head in bewilderment that, in our so-called modern world, such a place still exists.

In 2010, Barbara Demick's *Nothing to Envy* painted a portrait of life in North Korea, a place of little electricity or running water, where starvation has produced a generation of stunted growth, bloated stomachs, and flaky skin; where children wander the streets to beg and people survive on rats, mice, frogs, sparrows, dandelions, weeds, and even the undigested corn that they pick from the feces of farm animals; and where a computer, a Bible, or a free thought can land someone in a harsh prison or before a firing squad.

In 2012, Blaine Harden's *Escape From Camp 14* brought us the astonishing story of Shin Dong-Hyuk, who was born in one of North Korea's harshest political prisons and is its only known escapee; who viewed his mother as a competitor for food and who watched her and his brother's execution; and who knew nothing of civilized society until he fled to China and then South Korea and the United States.

Now, we come to Melanie Kirkpatrick's 2012 work, *Escape from North Korea*. It is also a compelling portrait, but less about life on the inside (though we learn plenty more about that) than about an organized, international, humanitarian effort to empower more North Koreans to flee.

Kirkpatrick served as deputy editor of the *Wall Street Journal's* editorial page and is now a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, and she brings a journalist's literary touch and a researcher's doggedness to Asia's "new underground railroad"—one that's every bit as dangerous as the underground railroad of America's antebellum era that guided southern slaves to freedom in the north.

Hers is an optimistic story, for Kirkpatrick makes a compelling case that, as in Eastern Europe before the Soviet crack-up, the global communications revolution will make it increasingly hard for North Korea's Kim family to prevent its people from obtaining news from abroad, from learning that its cultish leaders have fed them a pack of lies about themselves and the glory of their country, from seeing that almost everyone across the world

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lives far better than they do, from communicating surreptitiously with their neighbors, and, ultimately, from demanding freedom at home.

"This is a book about personal courage and the quest for liberty," Kirkpatrick opens in stirring fashion. "These qualities are embodied in the North Koreans who dare to escape from their slave-state of a nation to the neighboring, but unwelcoming, country of China. They are embodied, too, in Christian missionaries and other humanitarian workers who help the North Korean runaways flee China and reach sanctuary in free countries. They travel along a secret route known as the new underground railroad."

On Kirkpatrick's tour of this "secret route" (which begins with dangerous river crossings to northeast China and usually runs through Southeast Asia and ultimately to South Korea or the West), we meet the Christian leaders and missionaries, the rescuers in China and the funders in America, and the activists and officials who have helped focus public attention on the humanitarian disaster at hand. (We learn, as well, of South Korean and U.S. policies over the years that have stood in the way.)

We meet Tim Peters, a Christian worker from Michigan and "probably the best known rescuer" of North Korean escapees living in China. Peters founded Helping Hands Korea, which shelters North Korean escapees in China, and he has helped create a network of Christians who facilitate their further escape from China.

We meet Phillip Buck, a pastor from Seattle who "guided more than one hundred North Koreans out of China" before the Chinese arrested him in 2005, deported him a year later, and barred him from returning. We meet Mike Kim, a founder of Crossing Borders, an Illinois-based Christian group that provides long-term sheltering for North Koreans in China. We meet Steven Kim (no apparent relation to Mike), a Long Island businessman who helped escapees in China before his arrest in 2007 and now runs a nonprofit to rescue North Korean women who escape to China but are then sold as "brides" for Chinese men.

We meet Mary and Jim, a pseudonymous retired couple from the Midwest that helped shelter the "most vulnerable subgroup of the North Korean humanitarian crisis in China": the abandoned children of North Korean "brides" and their Chinese husbands. Their mothers have been sent back to North Korea or have escaped China, and their fathers lack the means to care for them or the interest in doing so. In China, these children live in a harsh legal limbo, unable to attend school or get medical care.

We meet "Mr. Jung," a pseudonymous rescuer who focuses on bringing home the remaining 500 or more South Korean prisoners of war (from the Korean War of the early 1950s, that is)—and who, after his 2002 arrest in China and eight-year prison term, altered his looks so that he could return to this work.

These efforts, and those of many others, are incredibly dangerous. China searches for escapees and returns them to the North, where they face prison, harsh labor, or execution. It relies on tips from people who live near the Sino-Korean border to raid shelters and round up escapees. It allows North Korean agents to operate in the area so they can infiltrate shelters and kidnap rescuers and escapees. And it has reduced the number of Christian workers in China by jailing, harassing, or expelling them.

Rescuer successes seem trivial in numerical terms; just 24,000 of North Korea's 24 million have made it to South Korea or the West. But, day by day, rescuers and escapees are planting the seeds of monumental change to come in a land that, until very recently, modernity had all but forgotten.

They smuggle radios, flash drives, DVDs, CDs, videos, and Bibles into the North, opening the eyes and stirring the emotions of those still there. They send balloons of information and food to targeted areas of the North, pipe in independent radio programming from Seoul, and publish a web magazine whose information comes from covert reporters in the North. Escapees secretly speak by phone to relatives in North Korea, educating them about a life of freedom and smuggling them money so that they can make the journey safely through the river and border crossings where escapees often must bribe guards with cash.

Over time, these efforts to topple the Kim family will bear fruit. And when the regime falls, its borders collapse, and its people either flee or stay behind for the hard work of uniting North and South, no one with a heart will mourn the end of a brutality that has claimed all too many lives for nearly three-quarters of a century.

# Islamist Winter

Elan Journo

ANDREW C. MCCARTHY, *Spring Fever: The Illusion of Islamic Democracy* (New York: Encounter, 2013), 184 pp. $17.99.

Early on, the conventional view on the so-called "Arab Spring" was euphoric. In a nutshell, it was that the upheavals herald the triumph of freedom. Two-plus years on, however, Islamist groups have gained considerable political power—an ascendancy ominous not only for those subjugated under *sharia*, but also for American and Israeli security. Searching for silver linings on a darkening horizon, some point to Turkey: here is a regime widely feted as proof that Islamist rule is compatible with political freedom, after all.

Andrew McCarthy roundly refutes that view in *Spring Fever*. Recep Tayyep Erdogan's regime, he contends, serves as a case study of what to expect of ascendant Islamists in the Middle East: more oppression, and more hostility toward the West. "The trend-lines are unmistakable," he writes, "the trajectory of change more certain than its pace."

Turkey's Islamization hinges on the way Erdogan, like his Islamist brothers-in-arms, exploits the West's uncritical embrace of "democracy." McCarthy reports how, four years before his party assumed power, Erdogan explained that "democracy is just the train we board to reach our destination." The ploy: feign an interest in freedom, then once in power shift toward Islamist rule.

Erdogan's incrementalist campaign aims to remake Turkey's institutions. He prioritized Islamic over secular education, encouraging greater enrollment in religious academies, and seeded the universities and government posts with Islamists. With religious mores—notably public displays of piety and the subservience of women—becoming the new normal, women withdrew from the workforce in droves. The rate at which women are murdered (including "honor killings") has rocketed upward by 1,400 percent. For women aged 15 to 44, "gender-based violence" is now the leading cause of death (far outstripping cancer, traffic accidents, war, and malaria).

Erdogan also replaced some 40 percent of Turkey's 9,000 incumbent judges with loyalists who embrace the Islamist agenda of his Justice and Development Party (known by its Turkish acronym, AKP). And, openly subverting rule of law, he selectively refuses to enforce uncongenial judicial rulings. Critics of the regime have found that freedom of speech is largely a mirage. Challenge the regime's authoritarian control, and you risk being intimidated, detained, framed, and jailed. Last year, Ankara earned the horrifying distinction of having imprisoned more journalists than any other country (more than Iran, more than China). (When an Istanbul park became the epicenter for nationwide protests this summer, the major news outlets were conspicuously silent. And in the brutal crackdown on

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the crowds, the regime's authoritarian essence was on full display.)

It is in Turkey's foreign policy that McCarthy discerns a stark "transition from the Western to the Islamic sphere." Ankara once cultivated strong economic bonds and military cooperation with Israel. That relationship has frayed. Under the ironically labeled "Zero Problems with Neighbors" policy, Erdogan's regime has befriended Hezbollah, embraced Iran's *jihadist* leadership, and openly supported Tehran's nuclear program (even resisting attempts to impose UN sanctions against it). A particular favorite is the Palestinian *jihadist* group Hamas. "I don't see Hamas as a terrorist organization," Erdogan insists. "Hamas is a political party." In 2010, the "Gaza Freedom Flotilla," aiming to breach Israel's blockade of Gaza, sailed with Ankara's blessing. Erdogan has hosted Hamas leaders as visiting dignitaries, and Turkey has bankrolled the group to the tune of $300 million. Erdogan has taken his country "from NATO ally to terror sponsor."

There are, to be sure, marked differences between Turkey and Egypt, a particular focus of the book, but the Islamists in both countries are working from the same playbook:

- Profess anodyne goals initially, then gradually ratchet up to full-bore Islamist objectives? Check. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood began by promising to contest fewer than 50 percent of the parliamentary seats—then contested nearly 80 percent; it promised not to field a presidential candidate—but eventually did so and handily installed a dyed-in-the-wool Islamist, Mohamed Morsi. Morsi had campaigned to ensure that Egypt's fundamental law would reflect "the sharia, then the sharia, and finally, the sharia."

- Roll out enforcement of sharia norms in daily life? Check. During Ramadan, a religious edict was announced prohibiting Egyptians from eating during daylight hours.

- Openly turn away from America, Israel, the West to embrace the *jihadist* agenda? Check. The Brotherhood's Supreme Guide issued a call for *jihad* until "the filth of the Zionists" is cleansed and "Muslim rule throughout our beloved Palestine" is imposed.

McCarthy carefully delimits the scope of his predictive analysis. The Islamization of Turkey was slowed by the military, the designated guardian of the country's explicitly secular character. Egypt, by contrast, has never undergone an enforced secularization campaign, nor is the military's role predictable. (Having published the book well before the ouster of Morsi at the hands of the Egyptian military, presumably McCarthy would regard the ensuing pro-Morsi demonstrations as evidence of an enduring, potent constituency for Islamist rule.)

The significance of McCarthy's argument is broader than the rise of Islamists in Turkey, post-Mubarak Egypt, and elsewhere. The very notion of "Islamic democracy," he argues, is a dangerous misconception—one that the West fuels and Islamists exploit. Western leaders and intellectuals, he maintains, have failed (some refuse) to grasp the nature and popularity of the Islamist movement, and by advocating for "democracy" in the Middle East have encouraged and materially enabled forces hostile to the West.

Islamists, McCarthy ably explains, should be defined not by their tactics but by their animating goal of enforcing rule under the supreme dictates of sharia. Some adopt violent, terrorist means, others the genteel Western forms of political campaigning and advocacy,

but their objectives are identical. And McCarthy plausibly contends that in the culture of the Muslim Middle East, obedience to political authority and the totalitarian interpretation of Islam are both well within the mainstream.

McCarthy holds that culture shapes politics and law, and that elections merely reflect popular sentiment. The authentic, Western idea of "democracy," in McCarthy's view, is gutted of its substantive meaning when applied to Islamic politics. More than "just elections and constitution-writing," democracy should be understood as a "shorthand description of a culture based on freedom." But Islamists, he complains, view "democracy" as a "mere vehicle, a procedural path of least resistance" toward a theocratic society bereft of individual freedoms. So, when a culture has been methodically inculcated with the teachings of Islamic totalitarianism by the likes of the Muslim Brotherhood—when many in the culture have been taught to equate secular government with impiety, and when individual rights are unknown, and controversial speech is deemed blasphemous—what other result could possibly be expected at the ballot box?

The culture-comes-first argument is cogent, but McCarthy's redefinition of "democracy" as identical with the culture of a free society is unconvincing. Perhaps colloquial usage agrees with him, and certainly "democracy" evokes upbeat connotations, but America's founders would be aghast. They knew, from historical evidence and careful reflection, that the essence of democracy is mob rule, and that a government dedicated to protecting individual rights must never submit individual liberties to a popular vote. Unfortunately, recent American policy has arguably encouraged Islamists to embrace the actual meaning of democracy. President George W. Bush told reporters in 2004 that if Iraq, post-Saddam Hussein, were to vote in an Islamist government, he would be disappointed, but "democracy is democracy," adding, "If that's what the people choose, that's what the people choose." McCarthy's point would be better served by framing the issue in clearer terms.

"Where Bush airbrushed Islamic supremacists, Obama embraces them," writes McCarthy, and he goes on to expose how President Obama has whitewashed and abetted the Muslim Brotherhood-backed regime that emerged post-Mubarak. But in view of the book's core argument, McCarthy is incongruously lenient toward Bush. When it was crucial to name precisely the nature and goals of the enemy, President Bush proffered designations (evil-doers, hijackers of a great religion, etc.) that deliberately obscured the identity of the Islamist movement, piling confusion upon the public's ignorance. And, considering Bush's signature policy of spreading democracy, it is hard to imagine a figure who did more to prepare the ground for the "spring fever" self-delusion, the view that McCarthy so skillfully demolishes in this book. The reluctance to reach a more critical verdict is a peculiar omission in an otherwise trenchant analysis.

Hard-headed and richly detailed, *Spring Fever* lays bare the facts and trend-lines behind the chilling ascendancy of Islamists.

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