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Article 1.

The Washington Institute

Ambassador Martin Indyk's Speech

May 8, 2013 -- Last July, President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry launched a vigorous effort to reach a final status agreement between Israelis and Palestinians. Now it is early May, we have passed the nine-month marker for these negotiations, and for the time being the talks have been suspended. Some have said this process is over. But that is not correct. As my little story testifies. As you all know well- in the Middle East, it's never over. Think back to the spring of 1975, the year the United States brokered the Sinai II agreement. In March of that year, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger set out to the region to broker a second disengagement agreement between Israel and Egypt. After ten days of shuttling back and forth between the parties, the Secretary of State suspended his efforts and returned to Washington empty handed. The President, President Ford, and the Secretary announced they would step back. Kissinger vented his frustration. Maybe a David Ben-Gurion or a Golda Meir could lead Israel to a peace agreement, he fumed, but never a Yitzhak Rabin! We learned a little later what a peacemaker Yitzhak Rabin could be. Everybody thought it was over. Of course, as we know now, everybody was wrong. A few months later the talks were restarted, and soon thereafter a deal was reached. What was true then is possibly true today: this process is always difficult, but it is never impossible.
But in certain ways, things were more difficult in the Kissinger days and in some ways, they were easier. For an audience that loves Middle East history, I think it is interesting to take stock of what has changed and what has stayed the same since Henry's time.
In some ways things are easier in the Israeli-Palestinian context today than in the past.

The international context for peacemaking is better today. The Cold War and fear that a conflict in the Middle East would trigger a nuclear superpower confrontation is no longer there. The region has not faced an all-out Arab-Israeli war in 40 years. Peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan have held today despite very difficult circumstances-two intifadas, conflicts with Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza, and of course the Arab Revolutions. Turmoil in the Mideast is bringing Israelis and Arab states closer together. Indeed, there is a virtual realignment taking place between the enemies of moderation on the one side and the proponents of moderation on the other that crossed the Arab Israeli divide. As Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has noted, "many Arab leaders today already realize that Israel is not their enemy, that peace with the Palestinians would turn our relations with them and with many Arab countries into open and thriving relationships."

In the Israeli-Palestinian domestic arena there is, in some ways, greater political realism than before. Back in Kissinger's day, Golda Meir said there was no such thing as a Palestinian people. Now a Likud prime minister says there has to be two states for two people. Back then, Yasser Arafat was committed to Israel's destruction. Today, his successor, Abu Mazen, is committed to living alongside Israel in peace.

The U.S.-Israel relationship has also changed in quite dramatic ways. Only those who know it from the inside - as I have had the privilege to do - can testify to how deep and strong are the ties that now bind our two nations. When President Obama speaks with justifiable pride about those bonds as "unbreakable" he means what he says. And he knows of what he speaks. Unlike the "reassessment" Kissinger did in the Ford

Administration, there is one significant difference: President Obama and Secretary Kerry would never suspend U.S.-Israel military relations as their predecessors did back then. Those military relations are too important to both our nations. However, in many respects, when it comes to peace negotiations, things have proven to be much harder today than in the 1970s. Kissinger faced Israelis and Egyptians who were coming off the painful 1973 war. I was an Australian student in Israel at the time. I remember well the sense of existential dread in the country brought on by the scope of Israeli casualties, and I remember also a willingness to consider withdrawals from Sinai that had previously been ruled out….[aside about Moshe Dayan]. Egypt also had a sense of urgency, generated by Sadat's belief that only peace with Israel could change Egypt's dire circumstances and only U.S. diplomacy could achieve that peace. Yet, where is this sense of urgency today? To be absolutely clear, I am not for a moment suggesting that violence is necessary to produce urgency and flexibility. That is abhorrent. We are very fortunate to have two leaders, in President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu, who are committed to achieving a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through peaceful means. But one problem that revealed itself in these past nine months is that the parties, although both showing flexibility in the negotiations, do not feel the pressing need to make the gut-wrenching compromises necessary to achieve peace. It is easier for the Palestinians to sign conventions and appeal to international bodies in their supposed pursuit of "justice" and their "rights," a process which by definition requires no compromise. It is easier for Israeli politicians to avoid tension in the governing coalition and for the Israeli people to

maintain the current comfortable status quo. It is safe to say that if we the US are the only party that has a sense of urgency, these negotiations will not succeed. Kissinger also had the advantage of being able to pursue peace incrementally - what he labeled the "step-by-step" approach. He told me recently that he introduced that idea because, after the trauma of the Yom Kippur War, he believed Israeli society could not handle the big jump to a total withdrawal from Sinai. It took six years from war to peace on the Israeli-Egyptian front. On the Israeli-Palestinian front, the Oslo Accords provided for an interim process that was supposed to last five years. It has now been twenty years since Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat shook hands on the White House south lawn. Since then, thousands of Israelis and Palestinians have died and the interim process is now thoroughly stuck, with further redeployments and road maps turned into road kill along the way. An interim period that was designed to build trust has in fact exacerbated mistrust: suicide bombings, the second intifada, and continuous settlement growth have led many people on both sides to lose faith. This is why Secretary Kerry, with the full backing of President Obama, decided to try this time around for a conflict-ending agreement. There are other differences too. Egypt is a state with a five thousand year history, capable of living up to its commitments. The Palestinians are just now in the process of building their state and given the bitter experience of the second intifada and the consequences of the unilateral withdrawal from Gaza, Israelis don't trust them to live up to any of their commitments. Even now, after a serious U.S.-led endeavor to build credible Palestinian security services, after seven years of security cooperation that the IDF and the Shin Bet now highly appreciate, and Abu Mazen's

efforts to promote non-violence in the face of pressure from extremists, the fundamental mistrust remains. The geographic context is different too. The Sinai Peninsula is a 200 kilometer buffer zone between Israel and Egypt. Israelis and Palestinians live virtually on top of each other. Moreover, the geographic issues are at the heart of what it means to be a Palestinian or an Israeli. The core issues - land, refugees, Jerusalem - have defined both peoples for a very long time. It is part of their identity in a way that the Sinai desert was not. Now, as back in 1975, we face a breakdown in talks, with both sides trying to put the blame on the other party. The fact is both the Israelis and Palestinians missed opportunities, and took steps that undermined the process. We have spoken publicly about unhelpful Israeli steps that combined to undermine the negotiations. But it is important to be clear: We view steps the Palestinians took during the negotiations as unhelpful too. Signing accession letters to fifteen international treaties at the very moment when we were attempting to secure the release of the fourth tranche of prisoners was particularly counterproductive. And the final step that led to the suspension of the negotiations at the end of April was the announcement of a Fatah-Hamas reconciliation agreement while we were working intensively on an effort to extend the negotiations.

But it is much more important to focus on where we go from here. And it is critical that both sides now refrain from taking any steps that could lead to an escalation and dangerous spiral that could easily get out of control. Thus far since the negotiations been suspended they have both shown restraint and it is essential that this continue. We have also spoken about the impact of settlement activity. Just during the past

nine months of negotiations, tenders for building 4,800 units were announced and planning was advanced for another 8,000 units. It's true that most of the tendered units are slated to be built in areas that even Palestinian maps in the past have indicated would be part of Israel. Yet the planning units were largely outside that area in the West Bank. And from the Palestinian experience, there is no distinction between planning and building. Indeed, according to the Israeli Bureau of Census and Statistics, from 2012 to 2013 construction starts in West Bank settlements more than doubled. That's why Secretary Kerry believes it is essential to delineate the borders and establish the security arrangements in parallel with all the other permanent status issues. In that way, once a border is agreed each party would be free to build in its own state.

I also worry about a more subtle threat to the character of the Jewish state. Prime Minister Netanyahu himself has made clear, the fundamental purpose of these negotiations is to ensure that Israel remains a Jewish and democratic state. Not a de facto bi-national state. The settlement movement on the other hand may well drive Israel into an irreversible binational reality. If you care about Israel's future, as I know so many of you do and as I do, you should understand that rampant settlement activity - especially in the midst of negotiations - doesn't just undermine Palestinian trust in the purpose of the negotiations; it can undermine Israel's Jewish future. If this continues, it could mortally wound the idea of Israel as a Jewish state - and that would be a tragedy of historic proportions.

Public opinion was another element that we found very challenging over the past 9 months. Kissinger focused very little on this element, because while the Israelis and Egyptians

fought wars with each other, their societies were not physically intertwined. The peace between two states mediated by Dr. Kissinger was not psychologically difficult. Israelis and Palestinians by contrast are both physically intertwined and psychologically separated and terrorism and occupation have added to the trauma between the peoples, making everything harder. Consistently over the last decade polling on both sides reveals majority support for the two state solution. But as many of you know neither side believes the other side wants it and neither seems to understand the concerns of the other. For example, Palestinians don't comprehend the negative impact of their incitement on the attitudes of Israelis. When Palestinians who murdered Israeli women and children are greeted as "heroes" in celebration of their release, who can blame the Israeli public - parents who lost children, and children who lost parents - for feeling despair. On the other side, Palestinians feel that Israelis don't even see their suffering any more, thanks to the success of the security barrier and the security cooperation. One Palestinian negotiator told his Israeli counterparts in one of our sessions: "You just don't see us; we are like ghosts to you."

Israelis don't seem to appreciate the highly negative impact on the Palestinian public of the IDF's demolition of Palestinian homes, or military operations in populated Palestinians towns that are supposed to be the sole security responsibility of the Palestinian Authority, or the perceived double standard applied to settlers involved in "price tag" attacks. Palestinians cannot imagine how offended and suspicious Israelis become when they call Jews only a religion and not a people. Israelis cannot understand why it took a Palestinian leader 65 years to acknowledge the enormity of the Holocaust; Palestinians

cannot understand why their leader should have been denigrated rather than applauded for now doing so. And the list goes on and on.

The upshot of these competing narratives, grievances and insensitivities is that they badly affected the environment for negotiations. While serious efforts were under way behind closed doors, we tried to get the leaders and their spokesmen to engage in synchronized positive messaging to their publics. Instead, Prime Minister Netanyahu was understandably infuriated by the outrageous claims of Saeb Erekat, the Palestinian chief negotiator no less, that the Prime Minister was plotting the assassination of the Palestinian president. And Abu Mazen was humiliated by false Israeli claims that he had agreed to increased settlement activity in return for the release of prisoners. So, why then in the face of all of this, do I believe that direct negotiations can still deliver peace? Because over the last nine months, behind the closed doors of the negotiating rooms, I've witnessed Israelis and Palestinians engaging in serious and intensive negotiations. I've seen Prime Minister Netanyahu straining against his deeply-held beliefs to find ways to meet Palestinian requirements. I've seen Abu Mazen ready to put his state's security in American hands to overcome Israeli distrust of Palestinian intentions. I have seen moments where both sides have been unwilling to walk in each other's shoes. But I have also witnessed moments of recognition by both sides of what is necessary. I have seen moments when both sides talked past each other without being able to recognize it. But I have also seen moments of genuine camaraderie and engagement in the negotiating room to find a settlement to these vexing challenges.

The reality is that aside from Camp David and Annapolis,

serious permanent status talks have been a rarity since the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993. For all of its flaws, this makes the past nine months important. In twenty rounds over the first six months, we managed to define clearly the gaps that separate the parties on all the core issues. And since then we have conducted intensive negotiations with the leaders and their teams to try to bridge those gaps. Under the leadership of General Allen, we have done unprecedented work to determine how best to meet Israel's security requirements in the context of a two state solution -- which Secretary Kerry has emphasized from Day One is absolutely essential to any meaningful resolution to this conflict. As a result we are all now better informed about what it will take to achieve a permanent status agreement. One thing that will never change and is as true today as it was during Kissinger's time is that peace is always worth pursuing, no matter how difficult the path. Indeed, until the very last minute it may seem impossible, as it did in Kissinger's day. The cynics and critics will sit on the sidelines and jeer. They will say I told you so. They are doing it already. They will even claim that the United States is disengaging from the world, even as we have been deeply engaged in this issue that matters so much to so many of our partners around the globe. But we will make no apologies for pursuing the goal of peace. Secretary Kerry certainly won't. And President Obama won't. To quote Secretary Kerry "the United States has a responsibility to lead, not to find the pessimism and negativity that's so easily prevalent in the world today." And the benefits are just too important to let go. For Palestinians: A sovereign state of their own. A dignified future. A just solution for the refugees. For Israelis: A more secure Jewish and democratic homeland. An opportunity to tap

into the potential for a strategic alliance and deep economic relations with its Arab neighbors. For all of us. For all of the children of Abraham. An opportunity for a more prosperous, peaceful, and secure future.

Whether we get there or not, however, ultimately comes down to leadership. After a five months pause, Kissinger was able to resume the negotiations with Rabin and Sadat and bring them to a successful Sinai II Disengagement Agreement because Rabin was eventually capable of overcoming his political constraints and Sadat was prepared to make positive gestures that made it possible for Rabin to do so. As Dr. Kissinger has noted, "The task of the leader is to get his people from where they are to where they have not been before."

Let's hope it won't take a five month pause this time. Let's hope that President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu are able to overcome the hurdles that now lie on that path back to the negotiating table. When they are ready, they will certainly find in Secretary Kerry and President Obama willing partners in the effort to try again - if they are prepared to do so in a serious way. The obvious truth is that neither Israelis nor Palestinians are going away. They must find a way to live together in peace, respecting each other, side-by-side, in two independent states. There is no other solution. The United States stands ready to assist in this task, to help the leaders take their peoples to where they have never been, but where they still dream of going.

Article 2.

Bloomberg

U.S. Officials: Blame Palestinians,

Too

Jeffrey Goldberg

May 8, 2014 -- Last week, the dean of Israeli newspaper columnists, Nahum Barnea, reported that senior American officials are placing almost all the blame for the collapse of the Middle East peace process on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Barnea quotes one unnamed official who argues that the Netanyahu government's settlement policy fatally undermined the John Kerry-led negotiations. "What they told me is the closest thing to an official American version of what happened," Barnea wrote. Well, that was last week. This week, perhaps in reaction to the reaction to Barnea's article, American officials I spoke to were careful to apportion blame in a way that was slightly more evenhanded (to borrow a loaded term from the annals of American peacemaking). There is no doubt that the underlying message is the same: The Netanyahu government's settlement program, in the officials' view, is the original sin committed in the nine-month process (the original sin of the Middle East conflict is located elsewhere). But officials I spoke to said that they are peeved -- a word one of them actually used -- at Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas for, in essence, checking out of the peace process as early as February. One key moment in this drama came in March, when Abbas, at his own request, met U.S. President Barack Obama at the White House and heard Obama present a set of fairly dramatic American-inspired proposals (some of which had to do, apparently, with the future borders of the Palestinian state). Obama told Abbas in a direct way that he would be awaiting his response to the proposals. "I want

you to get back to me soon," Obama said, according to officials. But a response never came. American officials I spoke to likened Abbas's lack of response to the decision made 14 years ago by Abbas's predecessor, Yasser Arafat, to leave the Camp David peace talks without even countering an Israeli proposal for Palestinian statehood. Abbas angered American officials twice more in the late stages of the current peace process. First when he announced a decision to seek membership in 15 international conventions. And again when -- to the surprise of the U.S. -- he announced a reconciliation between his Fatah movement, which rules the West Bank, and the Muslim Brotherhood's Hamas movement in Gaza. U.S. officials told me that while Netanyahu failed the test of seriousness at various moments in the process, Abbas is guilty of the same crime. Nevertheless, American officials have been sympathetic to Abbas's underlying predicament. Barnea, in his article, quotes one American official as saying, "The Palestinians don't believe that Israel really intends to let them found a state when, at the same time, it is building settlements on the territory meant for that state. We're talking about the announcement of 14,000 housing units, no less. Only now, after talks blew up, did we learn that this is also about expropriating land on a large scale."

The current peace process finds itself in a ditch in large part because the two leaders, Netanyahu and Abbas, can't abide each other. According to officials, Abbas sometimes refers to Netanyahu as "that man," and Netanyahu, borrowing an expression he learned from Vice President Joe Biden, has told American negotiators that he's "not going to nail himself to a cross" on behalf of Abbas, who he believes is uninterested in and incapable of reaching a final deal.

One observation I was surprised to hear from Obama administration officials these past couple of days concerns Netanyahu's own willingness to continue down the Kerry-designed negotiations path. Despite his reputation, they said, they're convinced Netanyahu is gripped by a sense that time is not on Israel's side. If Israel does not find a way to end the occupation of most of the West Bank, its democracy will be imperiled. This understanding is one not shared by some members of Netanyahu's own governing coalition, and American officials have privately expressed sympathy for his political predicament. So why are American officials telling me this now? In part because I happened to ask for an update. But mainly because they fear that Netanyahu, who is given to deep suspicion about the Obama administration's motives, will be tipped over the edge by reports like those from Barnea, and statements by the likes of Kerry that Israel is in danger of becoming an apartheid state. From the administration's perspective, the peace process is not dead yet. Kerry, who is almost pathologically optimistic, has likened the current breakdown to a water break in a marathon. Obama is said to be more pessimistic than Kerry, but even he, I'm told, has not given up entirely. Right now, it's hard to see a way forward. Abbas will only come back to negotiations if Israel imposes a three-month freeze on settlement construction, something that Netanyahu almost surely will not give him. Even more than that, Abbas wants to see a map of what his state will look like. The Israelis, people in Jerusalem tell me, are loath to offer a map so early in negotiations, because it would represent an enormous concession. What is needed now, more than continued American leadership, is a pair of leaders who are willing to risk their political survival for the peace process.

That is what U.S. officials believe we don't currently have.

Jeffrey Goldberg is a columnist for Bloomberg View writing about the Middle East, U.S. foreign policy and national affairs. He is the author of "Prisoners: A Story of Friendship and Terror" and a winner of the National Magazine Award for reporting.

Article 3.

National Review Online

What Drives Vladimir Putin?

Victor Davis Hanson

May 8, 2014 -- Vladimir Putin's Russia is a disaster of a declining population, corruption, authoritarianism, a warped economy, and a high rate of alcoholism. Why, then, would Putin want to ruin additional territory in Crimea and Ukraine the way that he has wrecked most of Russia?

Doesn't Russia have enough land for its diminishing population? Are there not enough minerals, timber, gas, and oil for Putin's kleptocrats?

In the modern age, especially since Karl Marx, we rationalize the causes of wars as understandable fights over real things, like access to ports, oil fields, good farmland, and the like. Yet in the last 2,500 years of Western history, nations have just as often invaded and attacked each other for intangibles. The historian Thucydides wrote that the classical Athenians had won and kept their empire mostly out of "fear, honor, and self-interest." Maybe that was why most battles in ancient Greece broke out over rocky and mountainous borderlands.

Possession of these largely worthless corridors did not add to the material riches of the Spartans, Thebans, or Athenians. But dying for such victories did wonders for their national pride and collective sense of self. Why did the Argentine dictatorship invade the British Falkland Islands in 1982? The great Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges dismissed the entire Argentine–British dispute over the isolated, windswept rocks as a pathetic fight between "two bald men over a comb." Taking the "Malvinas" apparently was critical to restoring the Argentine dictatorship's lost pride. In contrast, the descendants of Lord Nelson were not about to allow a few peacock generals to insult the honor of the British Royal Navy.

Doesn't China have enough land without starting a beef with Japan over the uninhabited Senkaku Islands? While there may be some oil in the vicinity, apparently both sides see these desolate mountainous islets as symbols of more important issues of national prestige and will. Lose the Senkaku Islands and what larger island goes next?

Saddam Hussein had enough land without invading Iran in 1980. But his impoverished Iraqis grew terrified of revolutionary Shiite Iran and he lashed out. Iraq also had enough oil without taking Kuwait in 1990. But occupying it made Iraqis proud at home and feared in the Middle East neighborhood. The Obama administration has tried to psychoanalyze Putin as lashing out because of weakness. Or he is supposedly an unruly kid cutting up at the back of the classroom. Or he is acting out a tough-guy "shtick," as President Obama put it.

Maybe. But it would be wiser to review the historical causes of war, especially why conflicts break out. Aggressors often attack their weaker neighbors to restore a sense of pride. They

calibrate self-interest not so much in getting more stuff as winning greater honor, feeling safer, and instilling more fear. Bullies such as imperial Persia, Napoleonic France, imperial Germany, Hitler's Third Reich, and Stalin's Soviet Union did not really believe that their peoples would starve without annexing someone else's lands. Despite their pretexts, these empires all privately knew that they had sufficient living space. These autocracies acted out emotionally satisfying ideas such as crushing an upstart weak Greece, or extending French culture across Europe, or reminding European states that the proud German Volk was as superior as it was underappreciated, or reassuring Russians that the New Soviet Man was at last safe, respected, and feared abroad. Just as important, history's aggressors embraced their fears and sense of honor because they thought they could get away with doing so scot-free — given the perceived loss of deterrence.

Putin, like Hitler in 1939, may be weak in geostrategic terms. But as long as he does not provoke an American and European collective response, he can assume that Russia is far stronger than any one of his next targets.

Like Hitler, Putin does not know exactly which future aggressive act will prompt an American and European reaction. But until then, he is willing to continue gambling that he can restore some more of the lost empire of the czars and commissars — and with it more Russian honor, influence, and pride — without consequences.

If history is any guide, these emotions are driving Putin to grab things that are not his. Putin acts now because in the era of failed reset diplomacy and recent empty American deadlines, red lines, and step-over lines, he feels the old U.S. deterrent is absent or dormant. And he will keep up his aggression until he

senses that the increasing risks no longer warrant the diminishing returns of absorbing his neighbors.
We should stop trying to psychoanalyze Putin, arguing that he is really weak or is an adolescent showing off his machismo — much less that he has legitimate grievances.
Instead, Putin believes that the more he grabs from others, the prouder his otherwise-downtrodden citizens will become, the more respect they will earn abroad, and the less likely others will fool with him.
Until that is no longer true, Putin will continue.

Victor Davis Hanson is a classicist and historian at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and the author, most recently, of The Savior Generals.

Article 4.

The Washington Post

Obama needs to lead with feeling

Fareed Zakaria

In foreign policy, there is one quick way into the history books: Make a major mistake. Lyndon Johnson and George W. Bush can be sure that, no matter what else is said of them, their decisions leading to military intervention and war will be long discussed. The second path — a big success — is less certain. Richard Nixon's opening to China was quickly seen as historic. But Harry Truman's many bold decisions — containment, NATO, the Marshall Plan — were not lauded as such at the time.
President Obama has not made a major mistake. He has done a

skillful job steering the United States out of the muddy waters he inherited — Iraq, Afghanistan — and resisted plunging the country into another major conflict. But Obama has been less skillful at the constructive aspects of foreign policy, of building up an edifice of achievements. He still has time to fix this.

The critics claim that the world is now in disarray and that geopolitics has returned with a vengeance — witness Ukraine. But the reality is, as Princeton's John Ikenberry has often pointed out, that the American-led world order, built after World War II, continues to endure seven decades after its creation. It has outlasted challenges from Soviet Russia, Maoist China and, most recently, radical Islam. The Economist magazine this week tallies the 150 largest countries. Ninety-nine of them lean or lean strongly toward the United States; 21 lean against. Washington has about 60 treaty allies. China has one. Russia is not a rising global power seeking to overturn the liberal world order. It is a declining power, terrified that the few countries that still cluster around it are moving inexorably away.

Part of Obama's problem is that he has made grand pronouncements on issues where he would not use American power forcefully, Syria and the Arab Spring being the clearest examples. Speech became the substitute for action — hence the charge of fecklessness. And on the issues where the United States has been engaged — Ukraine, Asia — his statements have been strangely muted. In his speech to European leaders on Ukraine, Obama struck most of the right notes but also offered caveats about not acting militarily. It is difficult to stir the world into action, and into following the United States, if the president is telling you what he would not do rather than

what he would do.

But the broader problem is that critics want the moral and political satisfaction of a great global struggle. We all accuse Vladimir Putin of Cold War nostalgia, but Washington's elites — politicians and intellectuals — miss the old days as well. They wish for the world in which the United States was utterly dominant over its friends, its foes were to be shunned entirely and the challenges were stark, moral and vital. Today's world is messy and complicated. China is one of our biggest trading partners and our looming geopolitical rival. Russia is a surly spoiler, but it has a globalized middle class and has created ties in Europe. New regional players such as Turkey and Brazil have minds of their own and will not be easily bossed.

What we need is a set of sophisticated strategies to strengthen the existing global system but also keep the major powers in it. With Ukraine, it is vital that Obama rally the world against Russia's violation of borders and norms. And yet, the only long-term solution to Ukraine has to involve Russia. Without Moscow's buy-in, Ukraine cannot be stable and successful — as is now evident. (The country needs $17 billion to get through its immediate crisis. Would it not make sense to try to split that bill with Moscow?) Obama's strategy of putting pressure on Moscow, using targeted sanctions and rallying support in Europe is the right one — and might even be showing some signs of paying off.

Similarly with China, the challenge is to provide the assurances that other Asian countries want but also to make sure that the "pivot" does not turn into a containment strategy against the world's second-largest economic and military power. That would make for a Cold War in Asia that no Asian country wants and one that would not serve U.S. interests,

either.
Obama's restraint has served him well in avoiding errors. But it has also produced a strangely minimalist approach to his constructive foreign policy. From the Asia pivot to new trade deals to Russian sanctions, Obama has put forward an agenda that is ambitious and important, but he approaches it cautiously, as if his heart is not in it, seemingly pulled along by events rather than shaping them. Once more, with feeling, Mr. President!

Article 5.

The National Interest

Iran Needs to Get Realistic About Enrichment

Robert Einhorn

May 9, 2014 -- Negotiations between the P5+1 countries, the European Union, and Iran will resume in Vienna on May 14 aimed at achieving a comprehensive agreement on the Iran nuclear issue. With a little more than two months remaining before the six-month interim agreement expires, the negotiators have their work cut out for them.
By all accounts, the talks on the comprehensive deal that began in February have been serious and highly substantive. Both sides have given every indication that they are determined to reach agreement by the July 20 expiration.
So far, negotiations have taken the form of detailed exchanges of views in conceptual terms. At the upcoming round, the parties will start putting proposed texts of an agreement on the table and the process of reconciling positions will begin.

Discussions to date have produced some narrowing of differences, most notably on the disposition of Iran's Arak reactor, which the Iranians say is intended for the production of medical isotopes but is optimized for the production of plutonium. Reacting to P5+1 concerns about the intended use of the Arak reactor, Ali-Akbar Salehi, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, recently said the reactor's design could be modified to significantly reduce the amount of plutonium produced. The modification would presumably involve the use of enriched uranium fuel rather than natural uranium fuel and a reduction of the reactor's power level. While differences apparently remain on the necessary design changes, positions have begun to converge.

But on several other critical issues, the EU/P5+1 and Iran remain far apart. Nowhere is the gap greater than on the size and composition of the uranium enrichment program that Iran would be allowed to possess under the comprehensive agreement. To lengthen the time it would take Iran to break out of an agreement and produce enough weapons-grade uranium for a single nuclear weapon, the EU/P5+1 would like to see a major reduction in the number of Iranian centrifuges and the amount of enriched uranium stockpiled in Iran. Tehran says it wants to expand its current enrichment capacity substantially. In a recent press interview, Salehi said that, in addition to the roughly 19,000 centrifuges currently installed, Iran will need to build an additional 30,000 in order to produce fuel for the Bushehr power reactor, which Iran bought from Russia and for which the Russians are currently supplying the enriched fuel. Moreover, Salehi asserted that Iran would need to produce fuel for "other Bushehrs in the works," and suggested that fueling such power reactors would require the Natanz enrichment

facility to operate with 50,000 centrifuges that are fifteen times more efficient than Iran's first-generation centrifuges that are now operating.

An enrichment capacity that large—indeed, an enrichment capacity greater than a few thousand first-generation centrifuges—would give Iran an unacceptably rapid breakout capability. If Tehran's position at the negotiating table is a reflection of Salehi's public remarks, it is a show-stopper, and Iran must know that.

Iran doesn't need a large enrichment capacity in the near or medium term to pursue a technically sound, sensibly paced, and successful civil nuclear-energy program. It can achieve its civil nuclear goals with a much more limited capability consistent with the requirements of a deal acceptable to the EU/P5+1.

Under the kind of agreement that may be negotiable, Iran could have sufficient enrichment capability to fuel the few research reactors it plans to build to produce medical isotopes, test fuel assemblies, and conduct nuclear research. To meet its electricity-generation needs, it could continue to buy nuclear power reactors and enriched uranium to fuel those reactors from Russia and possibly other foreign vendors. And it could benefit from collaboration with the P5+1 and other advanced nuclear energy countries in the design, construction, and fueling of modern research and power reactors.

If Iran is serious about having an advanced civil nuclear program in the long run, it makes little sense either to operate large numbers of obsolete first-generation centrifuges or to compete with much more experienced and lower-cost foreign enrichment operations in an effort to provide fuel for its power reactors (which require many times more fuel and enrichment

capacity than research reactors). A wiser strategy is to use a relatively small number of its current centrifuges to meet near-term research-reactor requirements, rely on more cost-effective foreign suppliers to address the much greater enriched-uranium needs of its power reactors (as countries like Japan do), and make progress toward a more advanced civil nuclear program in the future through domestic research and development and collaboration with Russia and the West. Such a strategy would enable Iran to reach a comprehensive agreement that would fulfill its leaders' main declared goals—lifting the nuclear-related sanctions that are devastating its economy and ensuring its ability to pursue a civil nuclear-energy program, including by maintaining an enrichment capability.

If Iran elects not to adopt this approach to pursuing civil nuclear energy—and instead insists on an overly ambitious, inefficient, and expensive approach not justified by realistic civil nuclear requirements but consistent with a desire to have a rapid breakout capability—it will not only ensure a stalemate in the negotiations but raise serious questions in the international community about its motivations.

It is not clear at this stage whether Tehran's current demand for an oversized enrichment capacity is a bargaining tactic or an indication of what it will insist on. But if Iran wants an agreement, it will need to adopt a more realistic—and indeed, from Iran's own perspective, a more promising—approach to its civil nuclear plans.

Given the significant number of complicated issues to be resolved—not least the phasing of sanctions-easing steps—it will take a herculean effort by the negotiators to finish by July 20. Still, if Iran comes to the conclusion very soon that its near-

and medium-term uranium enrichment needs are modest, an agreement by then may be possible.

If Iran does not go along with the kind of limited enrichment capacity the P5+1 have in mind, there will be no comprehensive agreement by July 20, and the most likely result will be a decision to proceed with an extension or a revised interim deal, perhaps for another six months.

Another interim arrangement would not be in Iran's interest. Contrary to what some foreign and domestic critics of the Obama Administration predicted, the interim deal reached last November did not result in the unraveling of the sanctions regime against Iran. Companies and governments around the world have been eager to speak to Iranians about doing business, but they have been exceedingly cautious about cutting new deals until a comprehensive agreement is reached and sanctions are removed. As a result, the Iranians have learned that the path to economic recovery—and to meeting the expectations of the Iranian public that have been elevated by the interim deal—requires a comprehensive agreement.

The United States would clearly prefer to reach a comprehensive deal before July 20. The sooner the interim agreement's freeze on Iran's nuclear program is replaced by a long-term agreement that substantially scales back that program and lengthens Iran's potential breakout time, the better. But Washington is in a much stronger position than Tehran to continue the negotiations for another six months, if necessary.

Iran can achieve its declared goals in the negotiations—the lifting of sanctions and the preservation of a civil nuclear-energy program. It may even be able to reach an agreement that supports those goals before the interim deal expires. But

first, it must adopt a more realistic position on the enrichment issue.

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Article 6.

AL Monitor

Netanyahu stalls on reconciliation with Turkey

Arad Nir

May 8, 2014 -- For several long weeks, the draft of a reconciliation agreement with Turkey has been sitting on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's desk, waiting for his signature. The draft was agreed on by the Israeli and Turkish negotiating teams in the last round of talks that took place in Jerusalem in February 2014. Netanyahu had defined the rehabilitation of relations with Ankara as a top Israeli interest, and has instructed his team accordingly. The team had reached an agreement with the Turks after four years of negotiations. However, Netanyahu still has not signed it, finding it hard to overcome his distrust of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Before the local Turkish elections on March 30, Netanyahu clung to the appraisal by his Foreign Ministry that Erdogan would lose much of his popular support. It turned out that

these assessments were only wishful thinking. Israel failed to correctly estimate Erdogan's political clout when the prime minister was advised not to sign the agreement before the elections, so as not to be viewed as helping Erdogan flaunt the reconciliation as a personal victory in his campaign.

About a month after Erdogan once again proved that he is Turkey's incontestable ruler, the Turkish prime minister made his appearance on Charlie Rose's show April 28. When asked to address the issue of reconciliation with Israel, Erdogan composed a clear message of reconciliation — in contrast to the behavior we have become accustomed to, ever since relations between the two nations began to deteriorate at the time of the Cast Lead military operation. Erdogan's body language and phrasing transmitted serenity and good will when he addressed the issue of normalization with Israel. The irascibility and lordliness that had characterized his statements in the past were gone.

We can detect his intent here and also a message in the way in which his words were composed. This was the first time that Erdogan did not demand that Israel end its Gaza siege, as he has ever since the State of Israel postponed its apology for the killings on the Mavi Marmara and the related compensation payment. This time, Erdogan used the phrase "regulate the transfer of humanitarian aid to Gaza." This was precisely what had been decided at the beginning of the negotiations between Netanyahu's envoy Joseph Chiechanover and the representative of Erdogan, Ambassador Ozdem Sanberk, with the assistance of then-Strategic Affairs Minister Moshe Ya'alon. The understanding at the time was designed to avert the publication of the details of the UN's Palmer Committee Report (the UN committee looking into

the Marmara affair), the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador from Ankara and the downgrading of diplomatic relations. The response in the prime minister's office to Erdogan's conciliatory words was extremely frosty. Diplomatic sources who wished to remain nameless only emphasized that there is no agreement yet.

Anonymous sources in Ankara were surprised at Jerusalem's cold shoulder and responded with a level of impatience and frustration, saying, "Times have changed; the Middle East has changed. Now we share the same interests and everything is agreed. We want to look ahead to the future. The ball is in Netanyahu's court and the moment he decides to sign the agreement, we will be able to move forward. If you'll want to do this with us, excellent. If not — we will understand that." They refused to explain further.

In his interview on US television, Erdogan warmly thanked President Barack Obama for convincing Netanyahu to apologize to the Turkish nation over the killings on the Marmara, a step that set in motion the reconciliation process between the two countries. He emphasized that the diplomatic normalization process was expected to reach its successful conclusion within days or weeks, when the two countries exchange ambassadors. But he added a small caveat: "I hope that another black cat doesn't pass in front of us." It seems to me that even the simultaneous interpreter had to hide a grin when she translated "black cat." And there's the rub! Netanyahu delays signing the agreement because he has already endured Erdogan's scathing tongue-lashings. Netanyahu is concerned over Erdogan's reaction once the black cat wakes up from hibernation — in other words, when differences of opinion between the two states once again

resurface. And no one doubts that this moment will come.
A diplomatic source in Jerusalem commented, “True, last time we were sure that we had a done deal and only a few days later, Erdogan announced in an election assembly that he would not reconcile with Israel until we commit in writing to removing the blockade and revoking our closure policy on Gaza. Not only is this condition not right, it is patently impossible.” He added, “This statement caused the prime minister to take a few steps backward, to re-examine the details of the agreement and reconsider his options.”
After becoming embittered by blatant verbal attacks, Netanyahu wants guarantees that the Turkish prime minister will not resume his tongue-lashing against him or against the State of Israel. The diplomatic sources in Jerusalem recognize that this is a complex and problematic request, and emphasize, “There is no intention to offending Erdogan, but to ensure that he does not attempt to dishonor the State of Israel again.” The discussion of Netanyahu’s request is not being conducted by the negotiating teams but by other channels, apparently with US mediation.
On May 1, Israel’s Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman visited Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. When asked about the reconciliation with Turkey, Liberman used the same language as Erdogan and declared that the reconciliation process would end within days or weeks. This declaration comes from the same Liberman who for four years had been one of the most vociferous opponents of apologizing.
At this point, a mechanism must be found to quickly calm Netanyahu’s worries, create trust between him and Erdogan and allow him to approve the agreement that will finally put a political end to the Marmara tragedy. In three months' time,

Erdogan will run again in the elections to be held Aug. 10. This time, he will ask the Turks to elect him president. Turkey is already preoccupied by this campaign and its broad implications, and it seems that Erdogan will get his way.
As stated, since Netanyahu has defined reconciliation with Turkey as a supreme national interest, it behooves him to hurry to complete the process so Israel will pay the agreed compensation, Turkey will void all legal processes against Israel and IDF soldiers, ambassadors will be exchanged and relations between the states will finally normalize.

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