



Greetings to the
American Committees on Foreign Relations
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NewsGroup No. 2249, June 11-13, 2015 Part 2

TO: Friends
FROM: Ken Jensen, Washington

•Thanks to *The American Interest*, *The Weekly Standard*, **Lee Smith**, **Harold Rhode**, **Paul Goble**, **Benny Avni**, and *World Affairs* for item contributions.

DIGESTER'S COMMENTS

The breaking news is that ACFR friend Radek Sikorski has been forced to resign as speaker of the Polish Sejm, a position he held since last year when he was forced out as foreign minister in the wake of a change of his party's leadership and the so-called "Waitergate" scandal. He and four ministers resigned for the good of the ruling party. Item 0 gives details as of Wednesday evening. My sources tell me that Poland is "abuzz" over this. Surely there will be more to come. In 2009, Sikorski met with member of the Nashville Committee for more than an hour at the foreign ministry in Warsaw. The committee was on an extensive study trip to Poland.

BREAKING NEWS

ITEM 0: ABC News/AP: Polish Officials Resign Over Eavesdropping Scandal
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SCROLL DOWN!!

ITEM 0a: ABC News/AP: Polish Officials Resign Over Eavesdropping Scandal

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/poland-charges-man-leak-secret-files-taping-probe-31657710>



WARSAW, Poland — Jun 10, 2015, 4:15 PM ET
By MONIKA SCISLOWSKA Associated Press

Four Polish government ministers and the parliamentary speaker resigned on Wednesday amid a revived 2014 scandal over secret recordings made of them and other officials.

In an unexpected political shake-up, the ministers of health, sports, the treasury and security, and parliamentary speaker Radek Sikorski, said they were stepping down for the good of the ruling Civic Platform party just four months before a general election. Four junior government officials also resigned in a major crisis for the pro-business party, which has been in power for almost eight years.

The party is under pressure after a surprise defeat last month in the presidential election of the incumbent — a former party member — which exposed growing dissatisfaction with Civic Platform policies.

Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz accepted Wednesday's resignations, her spokeswoman Malgorzata Kidawa-Blonska told The Associated Press. Kopacz will probably name replacements for the four ministers on Monday.

"As long as I am the prime minister, I will not allow for political games over the tapes during the electoral period," Kopacz said in announcing the resignations. "Today, on behalf of Civic Platform, I extend my heartfelt apologies" to party

supporters who for the past year "listened to the tapes with disgust, irritation."

The resignations were prompted by the illegal publication this week on Facebook of files from the still ongoing probe into the eavesdropping that raised questions about security procedures during sensitive investigations and about data protection. The publication released personal data and addresses of officials who were questioned in the probe to the public.

Sikorski, who was then the foreign minister, the four government ministers and others were secretly taped during private meetings in Warsaw restaurants in 2013 and 2014. The tapes were leaked to a weekly magazine and published, and Poles were angered that politicians, lobbyists and business people were debating political stratagems and deals while dining over baby lobster, paid for with taxpayers' money.

The interior minister at the time, Bartłomiej Sienkiewicz, lost his job over the scandal and then-Prime Minister Donald Tusk <<http://abcnews.go.com/topics/news/world/prime-minister-donald-tusk.htm>> suggested foreign intelligence services were involved, but there were no major repercussions at the time.

Sikorski on Wednesday said he was resigning in the interest of the party, and argued that it was the only political force in Poland <<http://abcnews.go.com/topics/news/poland.htm>> capable of preserving the nation's international standing. With a fast-growing economy, Poland is a major player in eastern Europe and a significant voice in the European Union <<http://abcnews.go.com/topics/business/european-union.htm>> . The scandal could potentially affect that position.

Many political analysts say that the entire case could undermine the ruling party's chances in the fall elections. Some say that the resignations came too late and were too few for electoral success.

An investigation into the illegal recordings is still underway and a visibly angry Kopacz said that this week's leak of the classified files was its only known result so far.

Kopacz has indicated she wants Prosecutor General Andrzej Seremet, who is overseeing the investigation, to be fired. She said the probe is slow-going and that she doesn't accept his report on why the classified files from the investigation were leaked. Seremet can only be removed by the president.

One man has been charged over the latest leak.

The four ministers who resigned are Health Minister Bartosz Arłukowicz, Sports

Minister Andrzej Biernat, Treasury Minister Włodzimierz Karpiński, and Jacek Cichocki, minister in charge of security.

ITEM 1a: WP: One year ago, Islamic State stepped into the global spotlight. Here's what has happened since.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2015/06/09/with-the-takeover-of-mosul-a-year-ago-the-islamic-state-shocked-the-world-heres-what-has-happened-since/>

By Swati Sharma June 10 at 8:58 AM



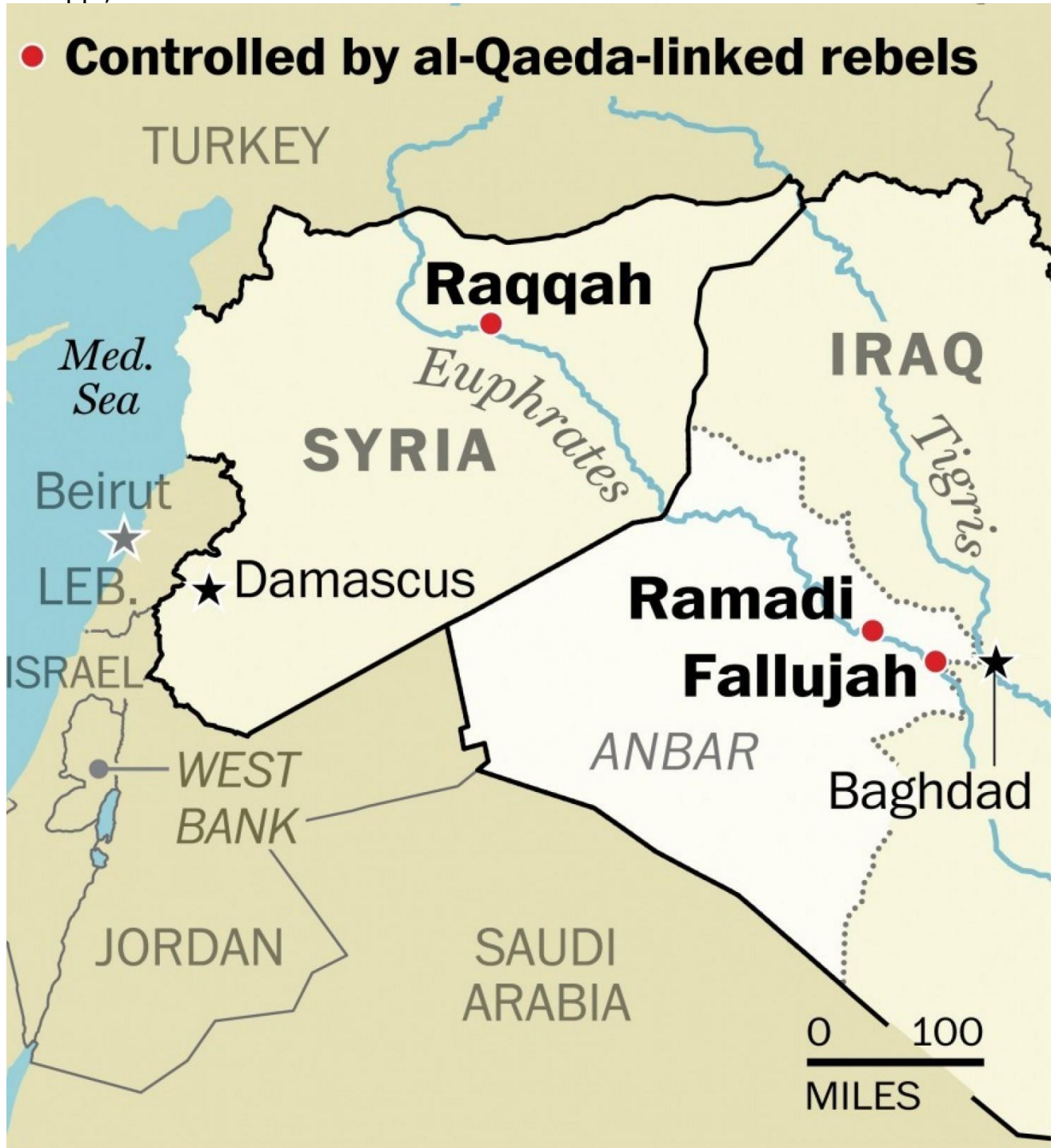
A pro-government Iraqi Shiite fighter holds an Islamic State group patch as he inspects a council building in the city of Baiji, north of Tikrit, in Salahaddin province on June 7. (Ahmad al-Rubaye/Agence France-Presse via Getty Images) Exactly one year ago, the world learned about the militant group known today as the Islamic State. The group — which is also known as ISIS and ISIL — had been in existence for months when al-Qaeda cut ties with it. Apparently, the Islamist State was too extreme even for the masterminds of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

The event that put the Islamic State on the map for many was the capture of the largest city in northern Iraq.

On June 10, 2014, Iraqi forces were run out of Mosul by the Islamic State in a surprise onslaught, forcing the world to face up to the potent threat posed by the

group.

In January, six months before the attack on Mosul: At the time, the Islamic State was still a part of al-Qaeda in Syria and Iraq, and the group had major operations in Raqqa, Mosul and Ramadi.



The Washington Post

A month later, the Islamic State was kicked out of Jabhat al-Nusra, the al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria. After the separation, the Islamic State took control of the Syrian city of Raqqa and the Iraqi city of Fallujah. Raqqa became the group's de facto capital.

[Read full story: The Islamic State was dumped by al-Qaeda a year ago. Look where it is now.]

Six months later came the capture of Mosul. Although the Islamic State had already asserted control over Fallujah and some other cities in Iraq, it was the group's seizure of Mosul that really caused the world to take it seriously.

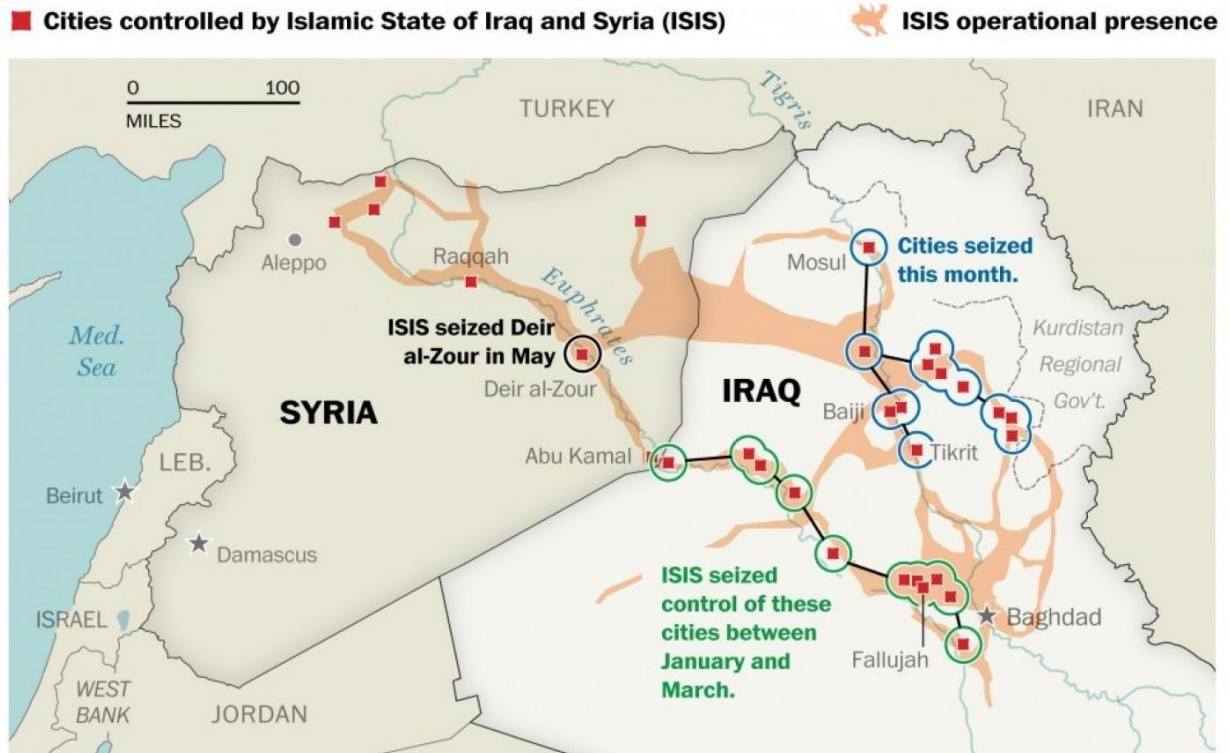
Mosul was not only one of Iraq's biggest cities but was also a "bigger and more important prize" than Fallujah, wrote The Post's Liz Sly, and it was "located at a strategically vital intersection on routes linking Iraq to Turkey and Syria."

The loss of Mosul also demonstrated the many weaknesses of Iraq's security forces and was a contributing factor to the downfall of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki following April 2014 parliamentary elections. Months after the city fell, Maliki stepped aside as the leader of Iraq.

This map, published last June, shows how sudden the rise of the Islamic State really was — the extremists had already captured a handful of cities east of Baghdad. By June, they had captured some major cities in the north, including Tikrit, the home town of Saddam Hussein.

ISIS on the march

As the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) continues to seize cities in Iraq — reports indicate a presence of ISIS fighters 60 miles north of Baghdad — here is a look at the radical group's strongholds and control over various cities.



Sources: The Institute for the Study of War, The Long War Journal



THE WASHINGTON POST

In August came the "potential act of genocide" against the Yazidis.

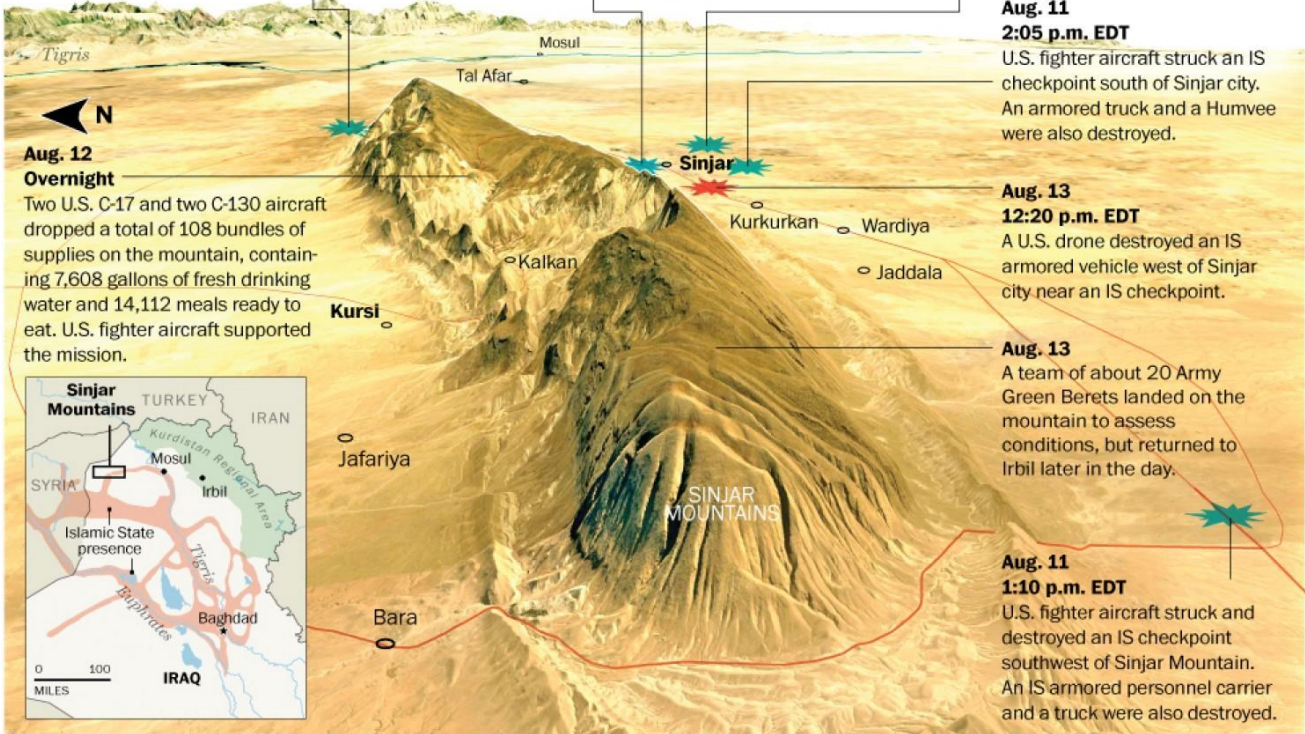
The Islamic State's brutal campaign against a group called the Yazidis pushed the United States and others to intervene against the Islamic State.

As the extremists advanced farther north in Iraq, the Yazidis, a minority group that lived in the Sinjar region, were forced to flee their homes. Some Yazidis were killed, but others were stranded on Mount Sinjar, dying of hunger and thirst. On Aug. 7, President Obama called the situation a "potential act of genocide" and said the United States and its allies would intervene militarily in Iraq.

Latest developments

-  Aug. 13 bombing
-  Aug. 11 and 12 bombings

KURDISTAN REGIONAL AREA

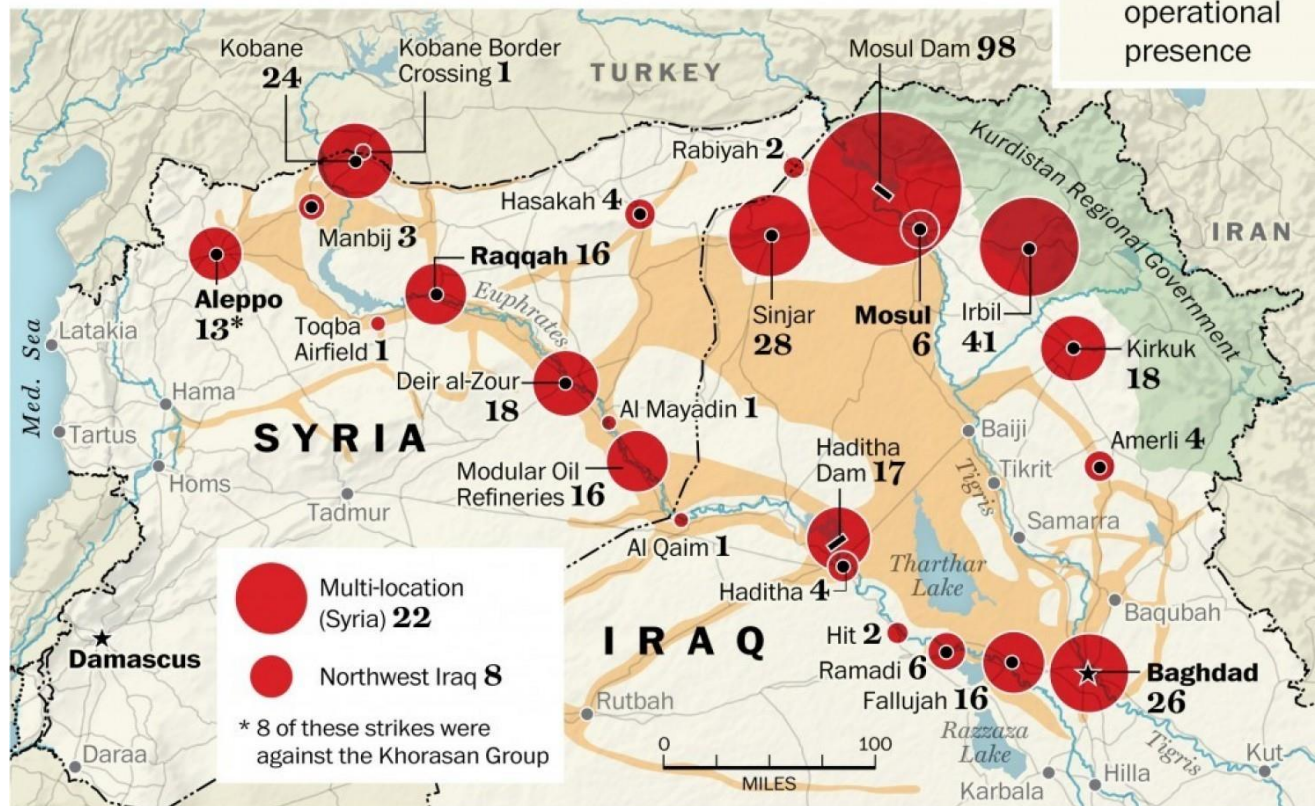


Here is a map and timeline of the U.S.-led airstrikes against the Islamic State: August — October: After the Yazidi crisis, U.S.-led airstrikes hit Islamic State strongholds.

Although the airstrikes targeted major battlegrounds, they didn't stop the flow of foreign fighters into Iraq and Syria. According to an article published in October:

More than 1,000 foreign fighters are streaming into Syria each month, a rate that has so far been unchanged by airstrikes against the Islamic State and efforts by other countries to stem the flow of departures.

U.S.-led airstrikes against the Islamic State, Aug. 8 to Oct. 8



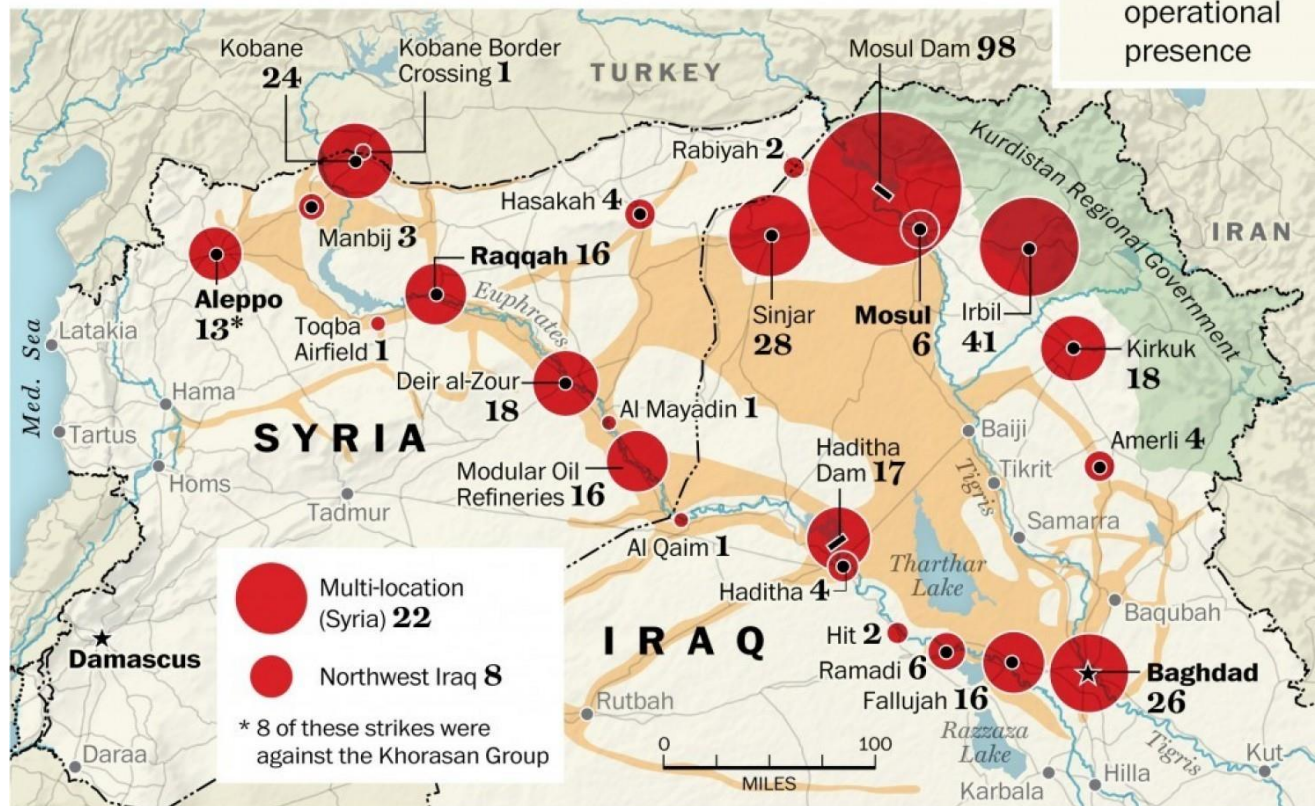
Sources: Pentagon, CENTCOM, The Institute for the Study of War, news reports

THE WASHINGTON POST

If you look closely, the U.S.-led airstrikes were heavily bombarding the Mosul Dam area. The aim was to combat a key Islamic State tactic: The group captures dams and water routes to cut off supplies to villages and "bolster their claim that they are building an actual state."

This map shows the dams the extremists controlled:

U.S.-led airstrikes against the Islamic State, Aug. 8 to Oct. 8



Sources: Pentagon, CENTCOM, The Institute for the Study of War, news reports

THE WASHINGTON POST

Today, the Islamic State no longer controls the Mosul Dam.

January: The Islamic State finally loses the Syrian border town of Kobane. After four months of intense clashes, the key town along Syria's border with Turkey was taken by Kurdish forces.



Sources: CENTCOM, The Institute for the Study of War, news reports The Washington Post

The loss was seen as a major blow to the extremists as it closed a key entry point to Turkey. It also was a key win for U.S. and Arab forces as "nearly 75 percent of 954 strikes in Syria by U.S. and Arab warplanes since September — the vast majority of them by the United States — have targeted the area in and around Kobane."

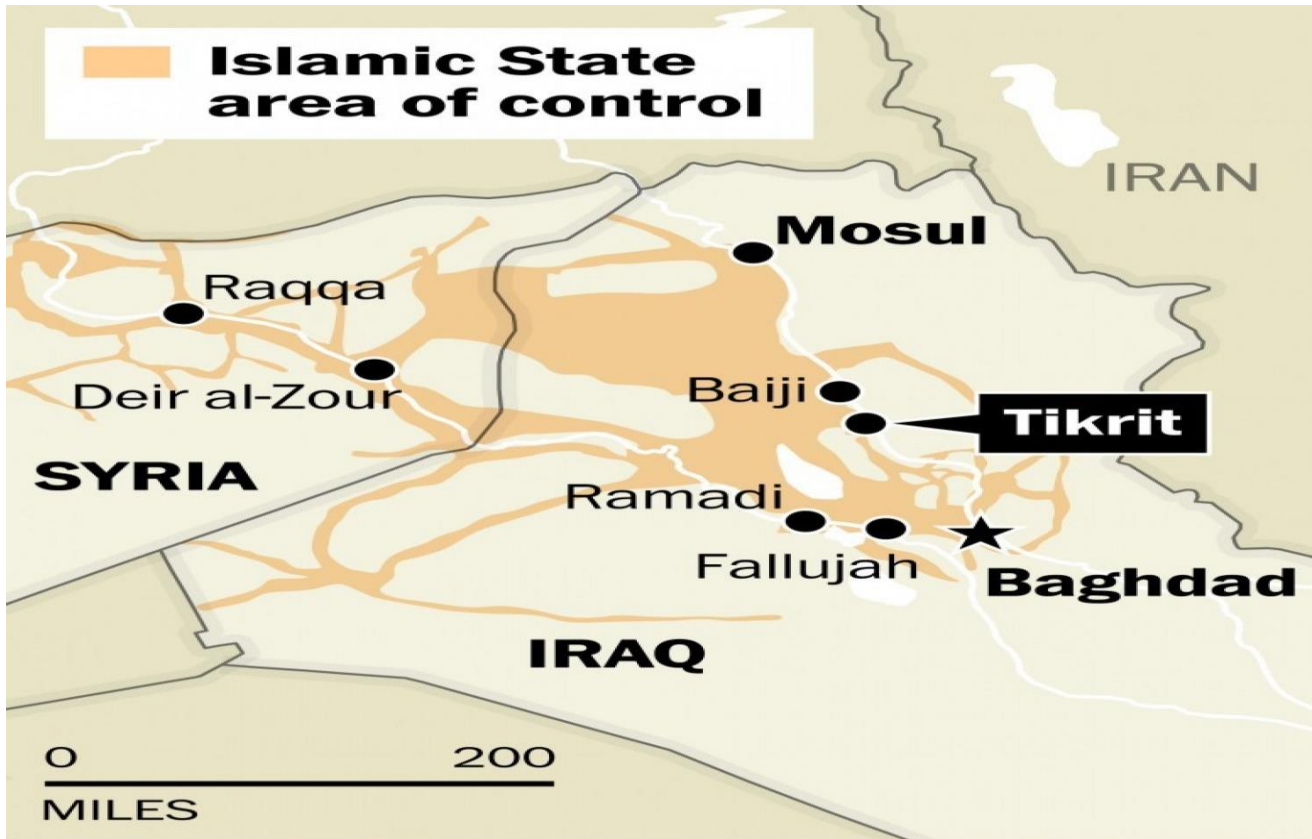
February: The militants are in danger of losing a major supply route.

A route connecting the militants' two major cities — Raqqa and Mosul — was in danger of getting cut by coalition strikes.

It is still unclear whether Kurdish forces were able to seize parts of the route, but the fighting along the supply line continues.

The map below shows the route and the extent of the population controlled by the Islamic State.

March: The Islamic State loses Tikrit.



Source: Institute for the Study of War
 THE WASHINGTON POST

After months of battles, the extremists finally lost a major city after U.S.-led airstrikes and Iranian-backed militias launched an initiative to reclaim the town, about 110 miles northwest of Baghdad.

This was the "first time that Iraqi security forces have wrested back a major population center from the militant group, boosting hopes for an offensive targeting the larger city of Mosul." Although Mosul is still in the hands of the militants, Tikrit appears to be under the control of the Iraqi government.

May: The Islamic State's disturbingly successful week.

After the extremists faced a series of setbacks, they claimed complete control of Ramadi in Iraq and Palmyra in Syria, showing both the "Iraqi army's weaknesses and the militant group's growing power."

Islamic State claims its Caliphate is growing

Areas outside of Syria and Iraq in which the Islamic State has declared a wilayat, or state, of the Caliphate.



Source: The Soufan Group

THE WASHINGTON POST

The Islamic State's growing caliphate

Despite continued clashes with opposition forces in Iraq and Syria, the Islamic State has increased its presence far beyond the region by affiliating with extremists in Libya, Boko Haram in Nigeria and factions in Saudi Arabia.

Although many groups have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, only a few have been accepted into its fold. The Islamic State is particular about whom to count as part of its network.

ITEM 2a: WP: Suicide bombers target Egypt's famed temple site at Luxor

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/suicide-bombers-target-egypts-famed-temple-site-at-luxor/2015/06/10/454aa76c-0a7e-43ef-ab9d-c48dfc6752de_story.html



By Erin Cunningham and Heba Habib June 10 at 1:53 PM

CAIRO — Militants with explosives battled Egyptian security forces outside the ancient Karnak temple in Luxor on Wednesday, striking one of Egypt's most famous tourist sites and raising fears over the potentially expanding reach of the country's Islamist insurgency.

Four Egyptians were injured in the attack, which unfolded near the temple complex after security forces opened fire on three militants, media reports said.

One attacker detonated his explosives just outside the temple — built during the age of the pharaohs — while another was injured and a third killed, Egypt's Interior Ministry said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. But it marked a significant escalation in attacks against the Egyptian government and the country's vital tourist revenue.

In response to the Luxor attack, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sissi ordered beefed-up security at key sites — including antiquities — across the country, according to the state-run MENA news agency.

A file photo dated 07 December 2010 shows tourists visiting the Temple of Karnak in Luxor, Egypt. Reports quoted Egyptian security officials as saying militants have attempted a suicide attack in Luxor's Karnak Temple. EPA/MOHAMMED OMAR (Mohammed Omar/EPA)
[Tourists trickle back to Egypt]

Militants spurred by the military's overthrow of the Muslim Brotherhood two years ago have waged a low-level insurgency.

Since 2013, hundreds of soldiers and policemen have been killed by roadside bomb blasts and drive-by shootings. Car bombs have detonated outside security buildings in several Egyptian provinces.

But so far the jihadists have largely avoided direct attacks on foreign visitors or tourist sites, claiming their fight is with the Egyptian state.

Tourism was a major driver of Egypt's economy prior to its Arab Spring uprising in 2011. Years of turmoil and street protests have sharply cut into tourist arrivals. Authorities have tried to revive the country's image as a tourist destination, but have faced setbacks.

In early 2014, a suicide bomber detonated explosives on a bus carrying foreign tourists in Taba, a popular beach and diving center on the Sinai peninsula near the Israeli border. That attack was claimed by the Sinai-based militant group Ansar Bayt al-Maqdes, which has since pledged allegiance to the Islamic State.

ITEM 3a: Svante Cornell: Erdogan's Approaching Downfall—and a Kurdish Revolution

<http://www.the-american-interest.com/2015/06/10/erdogans-approaching-downfall-and-a-kurdish-revolution/>

Turkey must find a way to manage what amounts to a Kurdish revolution. Will it attempt to meet the Kurds halfway, or take a nationalist turn?

On June 7, Turkey's President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, experienced his first electoral defeat—and a stinging one at that, his Justice and Development party (AKP) losing ten points and its majority in the parliament. This marks the end of Erdogan's aspirations to rule Turkey single-handedly under a new, presidential constitution. With this election, the country has avoided slipping into an Islamist-Putinesque strongman rule but still faces many serious challenges. The first is handling Erdogan's inexorable demise. Erdogan has little hope of reversing his slide, but he will not step aside easily. Turkey will also have to manage what was essentially a Kurdish revolution. The pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) more than doubled its support and will have a substantial presence in parliament. Will Turkey meet the Kurdish movement halfway and accommodate its demands,

or will it take a nationalist turn and push back against the Kurds, with potentially dire consequences?

In the six months that he served as President, Erdogan essentially conducted a test-run of an executive presidency, but without the constitutional mandate for it. He refused to stay out of the day-to-day politics as the Constitution demands, and he chaired cabinet meetings, as well as campaigning overtly for the AKP. Erdogan wagered everything on a presidential system; clearly, the people did not like what they saw, and he lost. His party no longer has a majority in parliament, and any coalition government, even if it includes the AKP, is certain to reduce his influence in day-to-day affairs, including foreign policy. For four years or more, he will be the President in a parliamentary system. A consummate politician, he may yet reinvent himself, but in all likelihood, all he can really be now is a spoiler. It should be noted that one of Erdogan's legacies is de-institutionalizing decision-making and concentrating it into his own, personal, informal power. Thus, Erdogan continues to have loyalists across the state bureaucracy, and at least for some time, he will be able to mobilize them to serve his goals.

Ironically, this downfall was his own doing. In early 2014, Erdogan faced a choice: remain Prime Minister, or seek the Presidency. His original plan, devised in 2010, had been to first change the constitution to a presidential system, then have himself elected President. But he spent 2011 consumed by health concerns, including what is assumed to be two cancer operations, and 2012 and 2013 were wasted in the intra-Islamic struggle with the Fethullah Gülen movement. The Gezi Park uprising of summer 2013 and the massive corruption allegations against his government later that year also prevented the launch of a new constitution—not least because parts of the AKP's own parliamentary group opposed a presidential system. Against this background, the safe option would have been to remain Prime Minister and seek a fourth term. True, AKP by-laws limited office-holders to three terms, but Erdogan could easily have changed them. He remained popular, and could simply have cited a need to respond to popular demands. Had he chosen this route, he would almost certainly have retained his majority, and thus remained Turkey's unchallenged strongman today. But power was not enough: he wanted absolute power.

In August 2014, Turks still gave him the benefit of the doubt: he managed to get elected President with 52 percent of the vote against two opposition candidates. (One of these was the young rising star of Turkish politics, HDP leader Selahattin Demirtaş, who managed to get 10 percent of the vote, a breakthrough for a Kurdish candidate.) But by this time Erdogan was losing touch with reality. From 2011 onward, he gradually lost the support of key constituencies. Over time, he alienated Turkey's liberal intelligentsia and descended into a deadly battle with the Gülen movement. Meanwhile, he parted ways with the more pragmatic and pro-European wing of his own party, led by former President Abdullah Gül, who publicly distanced himself from Erdogan's rhetoric. Eventually, he also alienated many core party stalwarts that helped create the AKP.

The straw that broke the camel's back was the Kurds. Erdogan had long courted

Kurdish voters; in retrospect, his gambit to open peace talks with the PKK was in great part an attempt to gain the Kurdish vote for his presidential ambitions. But events across the Middle East changed the playing field. The creation of a self-ruling Kurdish region in Syria boosted Kurdish aspirations in Turkey as well. In the presidential election, Erdogan failed to win the Kurdish southeast, but he came in a close second to the HDP candidate Selahattin Demirtaş, carrying almost 40 percent of the vote there. Then came the ISIS siege of Kobani. Erdogan refused to allow support for the beleaguered Kurds there, and this led to riots in southeastern Turkey that killed more than a hundred people. Only by bringing tanks onto the streets of Diyarbakir and appealing to PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan to calm tensions was Erdogan able to stabilize the situation.

Kobani convinced the Kurds of Turkey that Erdogan supported ISIS over Syria's Kurds and was willing to let them be slaughtered. While their allegations are likely exaggerated, there is considerable evidence—as a Bipartisan Policy Center report detailed—that Turkey has turned a blind eye to the rise of ISIS, seeing it as a lesser evil to both Bashar al-Assad's regime and to the Kurdish PYD. This was too much even for Turkey's more conservative, Islamist Kurds, who had supported the Islamist AKP over the secular, Kurdish nationalist HDP. Tribal chiefs brought their supporters for massive shows of support for the HDP, and on June 7 the electoral consequences were obvious. The AKP was basically wiped out in the southeast of Turkey, capturing just a sixth of the vote there.

Conversely, the big winner of the 2015 election was the pro-Kurdish HDP, which ran on a platform that sought to attract liberal and leftist Turks as well as its Kurdish base. The HDP swept the southeast, but managed to exceed all expectations and capture a full 13 percent of the vote. If the HDP had failed to clear the 10 percent threshold (which, ironically, was designed specifically to keep Kurdish parties out of parliament), then almost all the seats it won in the southeast would have gone to the AKP, the only other party to have a presence there. That could have handed Erdogan the supermajority he needed to enact a new constitution. Aware of this, and for tactical reasons, hundreds of thousands of Turkish voters determined to deny Erdogan that prize voted for the HDP. This probably amounted to a quarter of the party's vote.

Thus, going forward, Turkey will face political instability in Ankara while dealing with an assertive and emboldened Kurdish movement. Indeed, the HDP will now use its newly found support to demand answers to the questions it has been raising for several years: What is the Turkish state willing to give the Kurds on the issues that matter most to them: decentralization, education in the mother tongue, and the definition of citizenship, currently tied to the concept of "Turkishness" (whereas the HDP seeks a bi-national re-arrangement of the country)?

The AKP deserves credit for lifting the taboo on discussions of the Kurdish issue, and for gradually liberating language laws, among other things. Yet in the several years that negotiations between the AKP and the PKK have been ongoing, the government has failed to publicly (and allegedly even in negotiations) provide concrete proposals for compromises to meet Kurdish demands. This has led the

HDP to conclude that Erdogan has simply been stringing the Kurdish movement along. Yet until now, Erdogan and the AKP could lay claim to represent the many Kurds who voted for it. But now, the HDP enjoys the near-total backing of Turkey's Kurds, and it is therefore unlikely to accept the current state of affairs much longer. Its leaders will certainly raise their demands in the incoming parliament. Meanwhile, the first challenge for this parliament will be to form a government. A coalition excluding the AKP is unlikely, because it would have to include two polar opposites: the Kurdish nationalist HDP and the Turkish nationalist MHP. As for the AKP, it could form a government with either of the two, or with the center-left Republican People's Party. Thus, the AKP faces the choice of partnering with fundamentally different political movements.

A year ago, an AKP-HDP coalition would have seemed likely—but that was before Kobani and Erdogan's sharp nationalist turn. It should be noted that in recent months, a rift opened between Erdogan and the AKP government on the Kurdish peace talks: Erdogan criticized them, while the government appeared determined to continue. Thus, an AKP-HDP coalition glued together by the prospect of a real peace deal is conceivable, but only if the AKP is able to sideline Erdogan from the party. This is a possibility in the longer term, and would be good for Turkish stability. However, most of the AKP parliamentarians are still personally loyal to Erdogan. That is likely to change over time—Erdogan is already described as a liability to the party—but that process will probably take months rather than weeks.

The alternative is a coalition with the right-wing MHP. On paper, this coalition makes the most sense: the AKP and MHP share a similar base, the difference being largely the diverging emphasis between religion and Turkish nationalism. Once Erdogan let the military back in from the cold to fight his rivals in the Gülen movement, he moved in an increasingly nationalist direction. It may thus be more natural for the AKP, especially if Erdogan initially remains informally in charge of the party, to make common cause with the MHP and the military to check and roll back Kurdish nationalism. That, in turn, could prove very dangerous: the riots over Kobani showed just how much of a tinderbox southeastern Turkey is.

The third and final option might seem the most unlikely: an AKP coalition with its very antithesis, the secularist CHP, once created by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. This appears the favorite option of Turkey's business community. However, it is difficult to see the denominators that could provide a base for a lasting governing coalition. Such an arrangement, like all options on the table, runs the risk of being short-lived; bets are already on regarding how long it will take until early elections are held.

The conventional wisdom is that the Turkish military has been sidelined from politics, but lately, it has reared its head on the Kurdish issue in a public way unseen since the 1990s. The General Staff in August 2014 publicly expressed its displeasure over the peace process; in the case of Kobani, it vociferously resisted any assistance to the beleaguered Kurds. This augured what Halil Karaveli called an "anti-Kurdish alliance of Erdogan and the generals." Throughout modern Turkish history, the military has tended to fill any vacuum left by politicians; the

crumbling of the AKP's single-party government could generate exactly that type of vacuum. No one should be surprised if, behind the scenes, the military gradually begins to take on a stronger role, particularly concerning foreign and security policy, and especially the Kurdish issue. Such a role, indeed, might complicate any prospects of an arrangement with the HDP.

Turkey has escaped the prospect of dictatorship, but it will still have to pay the price for Erdogan's polarizing politics, which have exacerbated ethnic, sectarian and ideological divisions in society. The President himself has been cut down to size, but it remains to be seen how the dynamics between Erdogan and his party develop. Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu was largely sidelined during the electoral campaign; it remains to be seen if he will be able and willing to challenge Erdogan and pull the AKP out from under his shadow. With international markets already concerned about Turkey's highly leveraged and fragile economy, Turkish leaders will have to tread carefully to avoid political and financial instability. The question is whether they are up to the task.

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ITEM 4a: Steven A. Cook: Turkey Comes Undone

<http://www.the-american-interest.com/2015/06/10/turkey-comes-undone/>

Why Turkish voters' rejection of the AKP will likely lead to a period of political paralysis and instability.

Turks can be forgiven for the party they threw themselves late Sunday, stretching into Monday morning. They voted in droves in what was widely regarded as the most important general election in more than a decade and dealt the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) a significant blow. After garnering nearly 50 percent of the vote in the 2011 parliamentary elections, the AKP ceded about 9 percentage points to a combination of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and the People's Democratic Party (HDP), a new Kurdish-based group that will enter the Grand National Assembly for the first time. The AKP's result translates into a loss of either 68 or 69 seats (officials results have yet to be released), meaning that the party will need to find a coalition partner if it wants to continue governing—something it has never had to do. It is true that the AKP still commands the largest number of votes by a significant percentage, but it no longer seems so invincible. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the central figure in Turkish politics, who made the elections about himself and his ambition to transform Turkey from a hybrid parliamentary-presidential system to a purely presidential system is no doubt diminished by the result. Erdogan, who once rode to power on a broad coalition of liberals, the pious, Kurds, big business, and average Turks, is now a deeply polarizing figure for many. The joy at Erdogan's comeuppance was unmistakable in the dizzying pace of tweets, retweets, favorites, and likes as the

results became clear.

Yet all the schadenfreude and celebrating should not get in the way of what is actually happening in Turkey. Rather than democracy returning to Turkey as many hope, the country is likely entering a period of political paralysis, instability, and uncertainty. This does not mean instability akin to Syria, Iraq, or Yemen, but rather similar to the years before the AKP came to power, when unstable coalition governments often at war with each other marked Turkish politics in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Erdogan and the AKP have been in power for such a long time that it is easy to lose sight of that unhappy decade. During that era, as politicians tried to outmaneuver each other and pursue their own interests, Turkey's economy performed poorly; the military had its way, engineering the ouster of the country's first experiment with an Islamist-led government in 1997; and Turkey lagged well behind the places its elites fancifully considered to be peers—Greece, Portugal, and Spain. It was not a pretty picture. In March 2001, President Ahmet Necdet Sezer and Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit helped precipitate a wrenching financial crisis after a rather nasty and very public spat about the slow pace of anti-corruption investigations and reforms. The implication was that Ecevit was dragging his feet because close associates were implicated. The ensuing panic, especially in the banking sector, resulted in a steep devaluation of the lira and a sharp spike in interest rates that brought economic activity to a virtual halt. The problem was made worse given the general lack of confidence that Ecevit, who led a three-party coalition, could take appropriate action to fix the economy. It was because of the economic pain inflicted on Turks as a result of this episode, along with the endless allegations of corruption in high places and military meddling in what seemed like every sphere of public life, that many Turks rejoiced in November 2002 when the upstart AKP, which had only been founded 15 months earlier, won 34.3 percent of the vote and 363 seats in parliament. The hope that the stability of single-party rule would bring a respite from the cruel antics of venal politicians and arrogant military officers was vindicated in a decade of economic growth and development—though the political environment hardly improved under the AKP, especially in the past five years.

No doubt Turkey is a much different country today than it was in the 1990s. Under the weight of the economic crisis, Ecevit relented and grudgingly accepted IMF-sponsored reforms that stabilized the economy and set it on a path of growth that Turks enjoyed and from which the AKP has benefited. For all of the ways Turkey has changed and for all Turks have learned in the past decade, Sunday's election outcome threatens the stability that AKP's success wrought. It may very well be that the leaders of the MHP, the HDP, and the Republican People's Party—the party of Ataturk, commonly known as the CHP—are posturing when they publicly declare that they have no intention of joining a coalition with the AKP. Yet there is a distinct possibility of new elections in 45 days because no party is able to form a coalition government. There are significant risks to all the parties from a new round of elections, but given current political dynamics it is hard to rule out snap

elections and political paralysis.

There are, indeed, few combinations of parties that make political sense. Nevermind that AKP officials accused the HDP leader, Selahattin Demirtas, of having ties to terrorists and engaged in slurs against homosexuals. (The HDP fielded Turkey's first openly gay candidate.) Demirtas has ruled out a coalition with the AKP because it would damage his credibility at a moment when he has successfully reached out to Turkish liberals. A center-right/center-left coalition consisting of the AKP and the CHP makes sense math-wise, but it is unlikely given the bad blood between the parties. The CHP, which was unable to capitalize on anti-AKP sentiment and lost three (or four) seats, has become less of a party in recent years and more of a front consisting of competing factions that agree on only one issue—their profound and abiding distaste for Erdogan. A minority government seems equally unlikely given the fact that the nationalists of the MHP would have a hard time cohabitating with the Kurdish-based HDP.

This leaves an AKP-MHP coalition, which makes sense to the extent that the parties have overlapping constituencies and have worked together previously, notably on their joint effort to lift the ban on headscarves at public universities in 2008. This makes Devlet Bahçeli, the leader of the MHP, the strongest man in Turkish politics today. If the AKP wants to form a government, it needs the MHP. Like everything in politics, the solution to a problem in one arena creates problems in another. One of the primary reasons for the AKP's slide—besides Erdogan's behavior—was the inability to manage the competing demands of Turkish nationalists and the Kurds. Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu seemed to want to build support within the Kurdish community through an on-again, off-again peace process with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a terrorist organization that has been fighting the Turkish state since 1984. Erdogan objected, understanding that in the local elections of April 2014 the only people who gained at the AKP's expense were the nationalists of the MHP, though they did not actually win anything. As a result, the President chose to tack heavily toward his nationalist flank. This was clear as early as last summer, when the Turks did nothing to help the Kurds of the besieged town of Kobani when the forces of the self-declared Islamic State pounded it relentlessly. In response to the Turkish government's inaction, Kurds rioted in the streets of Istanbul. Erdogan's tough campaign rhetoric about Demirtas and the HDP only further alienated the large numbers of Kurds. Having gotten little return on his nationalist investment, Erdogan is now confronting a Bahçeli who will likely hold the AKP to its hardline position on the Kurds as a condition for a coalition, continuing the polarization of the political arena and raising the prospect of renewed PKK violence.

It is quite likely that, even if the AKP had won a parliamentary majority on Sunday, Turkey would have come undone anyway. The political and economic stability that the party provided over the course of three election cycles was ending under the weight of a party that had been subordinated to Erdogan's unbounded ambition. A presidential system would almost certainly have divided Turkish society further and set the stage for instability in the inevitable power vacuum that would emerge after Erdogan left office. To the great satisfaction of

many Turks, the AKP was thwarted at the ballot box, precluding that particular scenario (at least for the moment), but setting the country up for an entirely different but no less vexing kind of instability. It may not be democracy, but—and this tells us just how bad things had gotten for so many Turks under Erdogan—they seem to be willing to embrace it.

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ITEM 401a: WSJ: U.S. Strategy in Lebanon Stirs Fears. Critics say Washington's funding cut for a program in Lebanon to develop alternative Shiite political voices to Hezbollah is an effort to appease Iran

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-strategy-in-lebanon-stirs-fears-1433886517?KEYWORDS=Jay+Solomon>



People in Nabatiyeh, Lebanon, holding images of Syria's president watch Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah on a screen during his televised speech last month commemorating the 15th anniversary of Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon. PHOTO: ALI HASHISHO/REUTERS

By JAY SOLOMON

June 9, 2015 5:48 p.m. ET

AMMAN, Jordan—The U.S. cut funding for a civil society program in Lebanon that seeks to develop alternative Shiite political voices to Hezbollah, the powerful

Iranian-backed militia and political party.

The group that received the U.S. support and critics said that the Obama administration was curtailing its efforts to counter Hezbollah to avoid confronting Shiite Iran, with which it is negotiating to conclude a historic nuclear accord this month.

These people say the funding cut imperils a program that underpinned criticism in Lebanon of Hezbollah's growing role in supporting President Bashar al-Assad in Syria's civil war.

"We are more immediately worried about the message this sends to Shia communities, in Lebanon and the region, about their options for the future," said Lokman Slim, director of Hayya Bina, the organization that lost the funding.

State Department officials denied pulling U.S. support for the development of alternative Shiite voices in Lebanon, saying the program wasn't succeeding in its objectives. They said the administration still funds other programs run by Hayya Bina, including one that teaches English to Lebanese Shiite women.

"The U.S. continues to support groups and individuals who share our goal of a democratic, peaceful, pluralistic, and prosperous Lebanon," said Edgar Vasquez, a State Department spokesman.

But the U.S. move feeds into an alarmed narrative held by many Arab leaders who say that U.S. and Iranian interests appear increasingly aligned—at their expense. Both Washington and Tehran are fighting Islamic State forces in Iraq and Syria, with U.S. conducting airstrikes against the militants, but notably not against Mr. Assad's Iran-backed regime.

Hezbollah, which the U.S. classifies as a terror organization, receives extensive funding and arms from Iran. It has deployed 10,000 soldiers in Syria to back Mr. Assad's forces and counter Islamic State, U.S. officials estimate.

Saudi Arabia's leadership, which supports the exiled leader of Yemen, was concerned when the U.S. last month met secretly with the Iran-backed Houthi rebels there that caused him to flee.

Most significantly, the Obama administration is seeking to conclude a deal with Iran by June 30 to curb its nuclear program in exchange for a lifting of international sanctions.

Some pro-democracy activists in Washington also voiced concern that cutting Hayya Bina's funding will send a message that the U.S. is tacitly accepting Hezbollah in an effort to appease Iran.

“At best, the decision shows poor political judgment,” said Firas Maksad, director of Global Policy Advisors, a Washington-based consulting firm focused on the Middle East. “Coming on the heels of an expected deal with Iran, it is bound to generate much speculation about possible ulterior motives.”

The U.S. government has continued to pressure Hezbollah financially, including teaming with Saudi Arabia in recent months to jointly sanction some of its leaders. “Disrupting Hezbollah’s far-reaching terrorist and military capabilities remains a top priority for the U.S. government,” Mr. Vasquez said.

But the Obama administration has also cooperated with Lebanese institutions—including the armed forces and an intelligence agency—that are considered close to Hezbollah and combating Islamic State and Nusra Front, an al Qaeda-affiliated militia in Syria.

The program in question was budgeted to receive \$640,000 between June 2013 and December 2015, according to Hayya Bina. The funding was halted this spring, \$200,000 short of the total amount, though the group continues to receive a smaller amount of U.S. funding for the other programs, as it has since 2007.

Two years before, in 2005, a popular uprising, sparked by the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, drove Syrian forces out of Lebanon. U.S. officials believed at the time the uprising would weaken Hezbollah and Iran in Lebanon since both were close Assad allies. Instead, Hezbollah strengthened itself politically and militarily, U.S. and Arab officials say.

The Hayya Bina program in question was funded through the International Republican Institute, which promotes democracy overseas. It sought to support diverse Shiite voices through workshops, publications and public opinion polling. But in April, the institute notified Hayya Bina that the Obama administration was terminating its support for that program.

The State Department “requests that all activities intended [to] foster an independent moderate Shiite voice be ceased immediately and indefinitely,” said the April 10 letter to Mr. Slim, according to a copy seen by The Wall Street Journal. “Hayya Bina...must eliminate funding for any of the above referenced activities.”

Mr. Slim and other Hayya Bina officials said the State Department expressed no reservations about their program’s effectiveness and that the loss forced them to scramble for new funding.

“As Hayya Bina continues to receive State Department support for other projects, we believe the action taken regarding these objectives reflects reservations over

the nature of the programming, rather than our organizational integrity," said Inga Schei, the group's program director.

Hezbollah has voiced growing criticism of Shiite political leaders and organizations in Lebanon opposed to the militia's role in supporting Mr. Assad.

Hezbollah's leader, Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah, has publicly branded some of his Shiite political opponents as "Shia of the American Embassy," in recent speeches, as well as "traitors" and "idiots."

Mr. Slim said he has been one of those Shiite leaders singled out by Mr. Nasrallah.

"None of us will change our beliefs," Mr. Nasrallah said in a late May speech, according to the pro-Hezbollah newspaper, Al Akhbar. "From now on, we won't remain silent [in the face of criticism]; we will accommodate no one. This is an existential battle."

ITEM 402a: Burak Bekdil: The would-be sultan's existential war

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/the-would-be-sultans-existential-war.aspx?pageID=449&nID=83724&NewsCatID=398>

BURAK BEKDİL

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About four months ago, Robert Ellis, a prominent commentator on Turkish affairs, opened his op-ed with a forceful reminder: "The gripping drama 'Der Untergang' (Downfall), Oliver Hirschbiegel's film from 2004, deals with the last days of the Third Reich in Adolf Hitler's Berlin bunker. Now there are indications of the same kind of drama in Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's opulent new palace in Ankara, where he shows signs of increasing paranoia," ("Erdoğan and the Bunker Syndrome," Front Page Magazine, Feb. 12, 2015.) On Sunday, the protagonist in that article was no doubt the unhappiest man in this grey city of 5 million souls.

During someone else's election campaign, President Erdoğan toured the country from one rally to another and asked the Turks to grant him 400 deputies – who would then rewrite the constitution to pave the way for his elected sultanate. Instead, the Turks gave him 258, 142 fewer than what he asked for.

He and his minions wanted to steal another party's votes, which apparently backfired. Now they are unhappy because around 95 percent of votes have parliamentary representation. They do not hide that they would have been happier if the elected men had failed to make their way into parliament, hoping instead that their failed yes men had gotten there to hail the sultan. Too bad they didn't think of amending the election law so as to introduce a new national threshold for parties to enter parliament: 30 percent! With 41 percent of the vote, they could

have now enjoyed 100 percent of the seats in parliament.

Still in shock, their intellectual trolls claim that Turks voted the way they did "because the imperialists intervened at the ballot boxes." They ridicule themselves even more cruelly than before while "the other" Turkey, in amazement, ponders whether to mock them or pity them. One "brightly yellow" newspaper said the election results were a plot by a union of neo-Crusaders who wanted to stop Mr. Erdoğan's soon-to-come conquest of Jerusalem.

On June 7, Turkey had 56.6 million registered voters. Of those, only 18.8 million (41 percent) voted for the party the "bipartisan" President Erdoğan fiercely supported during the party's election campaign, which means that there are 37.8 million (more than twice as many as pro-Erdoğan) Turkish voters who think the opposite.

Or 37.8 million Turks who were pawns in a plot staged by a union of neo-Crusaders. Using the typical Erdoğan et al. jargon, the numbers must spell an apocalyptic message: 59 percent of Turks are plotters, coup-lovers, terrorists, traitors and Zionists. And, in this calculation, according to some Muslim clerics who do not hide that they worship Mr. Erdoğan, 59 percent of Turkey is not Muslim – since Muslims should not vote for anyone other than Mr. Erdoğan (or whichever party he points to).

Too bad, Mr Erdoğan's worst enemy today is what he has too passionately advocated for 13 years to intimidate his opponents: the nation's will in mere percentages and numbers of seats in parliament. For the first time in 13 years, his party is in the minority. Naturally, he is off the air for the first time in several years, and probably speechless, trying to digest defeat and make a hero's comeback. He is the lone would-be sultan in a too-expensive and too-spacious Ankara palace. The next few years will see his existential war against real, quasi-real and phantom-like enemies.

Like someone observed recently from across the ocean: "Mr. Erdoğan is trying to drive a porcelain bus with gold-rimmed wheels." After last Sunday's elections that bus is on the road again minus its bumpers, hood, a couple of doors and windows, trunk and quarter panel – not to mention a leaking fuel tank.

June/10/2015

ITEM 403a: Benny Avni: ISIS is booming everywhere America's left a void
<http://nypost.com/2015/06/10/isis-is-booming-everywhere-americas-left-a-void/>

June 10, 2015 | 7:53pm

It's gaining ground in Iraq, where it's closing in on Baghdad. It's solidifying ownership of more than half of Syria. And on Tuesday, ISIS captured a

strategically located power plant in Sirte, Libya, and is closing in on the country's oil fields.

Yup, the Islamic State marches on, conquering territory and imposing harsh "comply or off-with-your-head" laws over vast populations in the Mideast and Africa. And America? Even though President Obama's marked ISIS as our Enemy No. 1, Washington has done little more than yawn.

"We don't yet have a complete strategy," Obama said in Germany over the weekend, speaking of progress in his year-old vow to "degrade and destroy" ISIS. Victims of ISIS will have to wait until the commander in chief of the world's former sole superpower completes devising a strategy. How long will it take? Please have some "strategic patience," pleads John Kirby, the new State Department spokesman.

So don't hold your breath, world. The cavalry may be coming, but first America must end our little power nap.

This lack of ISIS strategy isn't because, as Obama said, our Iraqi allies can't get their act together. It isn't, as he insinuated, because the military brass hasn't given him good war plans.

In reality, Obama does have a strategy. Early on he'd detected a desire among Americans to shrink our global footprint. He ran on a promise to do just that, won and made it his life mission to "end wars."

Several current presidential candidates are trying to cash in on that same public sentiment. Rand Paul pushes the Republican Party in that direction. Bernie Sanders wants Democrats to double down on Obama's all-butter-no-guns sentiment.

And Hillary Clinton? Well, can anyone confidently tell? She's an American hawk — when she's not a dove. And vice versa.

Obama's strategy went beyond simply "ending" those wars that dominated his predecessor's tenure. Remember, 70 years after World War II ended, tens of thousands of American troops remain stationed in Germany and Japan. Six decades after the end of the Korean War, American GIs still secure the 38th parallel against Pyongyang's aggression.

By contrast, Obama simply hightailed it out of Iraq and, but for heavy political pushback, would have done the same in Afghanistan. He devised a "war is ended, we're outta here" strategy.

In Libya, Obama outdid himself — this time "ending" his own war. Reluctantly, and pushed by the Europeans to intervene in a battle to overthrow the odious Moammar Khadafy, America contributed air power and intel to help Libyans realize their dreams of freedom.

According to former Defense Secretary Robert Gates, Hillary was among those who pushed Obama into that war. She even took credit for the administration's success in liberating Libya, though she may yet argue at one point soon that she, like Gates, thought it was a mistake.

But the mistake wasn't that we helped Arabs overthrow a long-ruling anti-American tyrant. It was that we got involved, and then immediately waved goodbye, violating Colin Powell's old rule, "You break it, you own it."

With no American presence in, or even slight curiosity about, post-Khadafy Libya, it became chaotic. Local gangs of all stripes fought over territory and formed at least two competing governments.

Leaderless Libyans, in other words, mixed the perfect ground for ISIS to stake its black flag in.

So did Iraqi Sunnis after America left them to their own devices in 2011. And so did Syrians when we drew a "red line" for Bashar al-Assad, and then turned color blind.

For the world, America's detachment from global affairs is growing more disastrous by the day. ISIS is just the symptom. Powers from Iran and al Qaeda to China and Russia rush to fill in all those empty spaces we leave behind.

At one point Americans will awaken and realize that such voids are our problem, too. That will happen when an enemy hits us badly or, preferably, before that — when a presidential candidate makes the case for reversing America's strategy in the last six years.

You know that strategy. It's the one that's incomplete — by design.

ITEM 404a: Eli Lake: The Rise and Fall of America's Favorite Iraqi Sheik

<http://www.bloombergvew.com/articles/2015-06-11/the-rise-and-fall-of-america-s-favorite-iraqi-sheik>

8 JUN 11, 2015 6:00 AM EDT

There was a time, not long ago, when Sheik Ahmad Abu-Risha al-Rishawi was the face of a revolution. Known as the Awakening, it was a movement of Sunni Arab tribes to drive al-Qaeda from the western provinces of Iraq. Sheik Ahmad was one of the leaders and founders of this coalition along with his brother, who was assassinated in 2007.

Today Sheik Ahmad is rarely in his native Anbar province. He spends an increasing amount of time, according to other tribal leaders and people with whom he still communicates, in Dubai and other Arab capitals outside Iraq. In his home country, Sheik Ahmad lacks the stature and respect -- according to other tribal sheiks and former U.S. officials -- to lead any kind of coalition against the successor organization of al-Qaeda, the Islamic State.

The fate of Sheik Ahmad illustrates how serious a challenge President Barack Obama now faces, as he sends more military advisers to Iraq to try to win back Ramadi, the city that fell this month to the Islamic State.

For nearly a year now, the U.S. has committed to training and equipping the tribal forces that had success in 2007 and 2008 against the Islamic State's predecessor, al-Qaeda in Iraq. But in 2015, many of the tribal leaders that risked their security to fight al-Qaeda back then have either been killed or are in internal exile. Those that remain in Anbar Province have largely been cowed into supporting the Islamic

State.

The jihadist group has become so confident in its campaign in recent weeks that it shares photos of staged events with tribal leaders pledging fealty on Facebook. If Obama is going to have any success in taking back Ramadi and defeating the Islamic State, he will need to find a new Sheik Ahmad, because the old one is in no condition to lead another revolution.

Last month, Sheik Abdulrazzaq al-Dulaym, one of the leaders of the the powerful Dulaym tribe that has members in Iraq and Syria, told a small group in Washington that Sheik Ahmad's political coalition had failed in Anbar. "My visit is not to talk about abu-Risha, but the man has lost his popularity," he said. Sheik Wissam al-Hardan, an Anbari leader I interviewed in February in Baghdad, accused Sheik Ahmad of trying to undermine the fight against al Qaeda through his own incompetence. "He has no influence today," he told me.

Even Peter Mansoor, a retired colonel who served as executive officer to General David Petraeus during the surge in Iraq in 2007 and 2008, acknowledged that Sheik Ahmad and his tribe lack the influence they held during the counter-insurgency campaign.

"The founders of the awakening had a lot of influence on the tribal movements up until the time the United States departed Iraq in 2011," he told me. "Once the Maliki administration turned on them, the power really devolved again to the tribes that had always been more important."

Mansoor said the U.S. should still treat Sheik Ahmad with respect. "Sheik Ahmad al-Rishawi is still a good friend of the United States and quite frankly the United States should have met with him if only to thank him and his tribe for siding with us," Mansoor told me. "But unfortunately, he can not bring together 40 tribes against the Islamic State the way they could before." (Efforts to contact Sheik Ahmad for this column were not successful.)

Despite Ahmad's falling stature in Iraq, he has nonetheless advocated for the tribes in Washington. In January, he led a group of sheiks in Washington and tried to get high level meetings. At the time he wasn't able to meet with White House officials, but he did talk by phone with former president George W. Bush.

There was a time when Ahmad could get a meeting with anyone he wanted in Washington. Nearly every major U.S. political figure visiting Iraq in 2007 and 2008 flew out to Anbar to meet with the man leading the revolution against al Qaeda. Obama himself even met with Ahmad in 2008 when he visited Iraq while still a senator.

But the sheik's fortunes began to decline after the last U.S. troops withdrew from

Iraq in 2011. Many of the Anbari fighters, known as the Sons of Iraq, were never paid by the Iraqi government, then led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. What's more, Sheik Ahmad told me in 2012 that his contacts with the U.S. government stopped after the last troops pulled out. The sheik still publicly aligned himself with Maliki and the central government, even though that government was failing to provide basic security in western Iraq.

These failures by the Baghdad government created the conditions for the Islamic State's take over of Anbar. According to research from Craig Whiteside, a professor at the Naval War College and a former U.S. Army officer who worked with tribes in Iraq, al-Qaeda and later the Islamic State continued a campaign to assassinate tribal leaders even in 2009 and 2010, when the group was widely considered to be finished.

Whiteside told me that in this period, many leaders of what was then called al-Qaeda in Iraq began to meet quietly with tribal leaders to identify the sheiks that might switch their allegiances and those that would need to be eliminated.

The jihadists also learned from mistakes made in the past. No longer did they kill tribal leaders at random. "The Islamic State is smart about who they assassinate," Sterling Jensen, a former U.S. army translator who served in Anbar at the beginning of the surge, told me. "Since the Islamic State has informants from most all tribes, they figure out who are the ones who worked closely with the Americans and are working with the Iraqi government to undermine their capabilities. They target these leaders. They might try to blackmail them, but they will also assassinate them if they think they will get more out of it that way."

That killing campaign has also made it much more difficult for the U.S. to now try to recruit a new tribal militiamen to fight the Islamic State. Whiteside's own research estimated that 1,233 tribal fighters were killed by al-Qaeda in Iraq between 2010 and the end of 2013.

There are no good statistics for how many tribal fighters have been killed since 2014, but there is evidence that the campaign has continued. One leader, who is still in Anbar and asked that his name not be used, told me: "The assassination campaign hasn't stopped since 2005. When they have the opportunity, they assassinate. The campaign intensified since June last year when they took Mosul and now in Anbar after they've taken Ramadi. It makes tribal leaders easier targets, so they flee."

In this context it's not surprising that Sheik Ahmad doesn't live in Anbar anymore. The fighters he once led against al-Qaeda are either dead or have likely made their peace with the Islamic State. The man who once liberated Anbar from al-Qaeda is a cautionary tale, a warning to any sheik foolish enough to align with the Americans.

ITEM 5a: Lee Smith: UN: U.S. Failed to Report Iran's Violations of Sanctions

http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/un-us-failed-report-irans-violations-sanctions_968277.html?nopager=1

8:01 PM, JUN 9, 2015

A UN panel says that the White House and other Western governments have neglected to report Iranian violations of the sanctions regime.

“The current situation with reporting could reflect a general reduction of procurement activities by the Iranian side or a political decision by some member states to refrain from reporting to avoid a possible negative impact on ongoing negotiations” between Iran and the P5+1, the UN panel said in its June 1 report, and made public today.

“This is a clear political decision not to publicize these examples of sanctions evasion in order to ensure that public reporting on this doesn’t in any way jeopardize the talks or harden congressional resolve,” executive director of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies Mark Dubowitz told Bloomberg Business. “The Obama administration has bent over backwards to try and whitewash Iranian violations both on the nuclear side and also on the sanction-busting side.”

A possibility raised in an AP piece this afternoon is that the White House has put itself in a position where it has no choice but to look the other way. As Matt Lee and Bradley Klapper report, it will be very difficult for the White House to disentangle the nuclear-related sanctions on Iran from other sanctions, like those related to terrorism, or ballistic missile research. The Iranian Central Bank, as the article explains, may prove the most glaring example of the administration's dilemma.

The bank underpins Iran's entire economy, and for years the U.S. avoided hitting it with sanctions, fearing such action would spread financial instability and spike oil prices. By late 2011, with Iran's nuclear program advancing rapidly, Obama and Congress did order penalties, declaring the bank a "primary money laundering concern" and linking its activity to ballistic missile research, terror financing and support for Syrian President Bashar Assad.

The effects were far-reaching. Petroleum exports fell by 60 percent, Iran suffered runaway inflation, cash reserves dried up and industrial output in several sectors plummeted. And Iran agreed to talk about its nuclear program with the United States and five other world powers.

Now that the nuclear agreement is so close, Iran wants these sanctions lifted. And

it is unclear how the United States and other Western powers could feasibly provide the economic benefits they've promised without easing conditions on the central bank.

Counter to the White House's demurrals, eliminating the non-nuclear related sanctions would provide an enormous windfall for the clerical regime in Tehran and its regional allies, including Hezbollah and Iraqi Shiite terrorist groups with American blood on their hands.

ITEM 6a: WSJ: Spy Virus Linked to Israel Targeted Hotels Used for Iran Nuclear Talks. Cybersecurity firm Kaspersky Lab finds three hotels that hosted Iran talks were targeted by a virus believed used by Israeli spies
<http://www.wsj.com/articles/spy-virus-linked-to-israel-targeted-hotels-used-for-iran-nuclear-talks-1433937601>

By ADAM ENTOUS And DANNY YADRON

Updated June 10, 2015 1:27 p.m. ET

When a leading cybersecurity firm discovered it had been hacked last year by a virus widely believed to be used by Israeli spies, it wanted to know who else was on the hit list.

The Moscow-based firm, Kaspersky Lab ZAO, checked millions of computers worldwide and three luxury European hotels popped up. The other hotels tested—thousands in all—were clean.

Researchers at the firm weren't sure what to make of the results. Then they realized what the three hotels had in common. Each was infiltrated by the virus before hosting high-stakes negotiations between Iran and world powers over curtailing Tehran's nuclear program.

The spyware, the firm has now concluded, was an improved version of Duqu, a virus first identified by cybersecurity experts in 2011, according to a Kaspersky report and outside security experts. Current and former U.S. officials and many cybersecurity experts say they believe Duqu was designed to carry out Israel's most sensitive intelligence-collection operations.

Senior U.S. officials learned Israel was spying on the nuclear talks in 2014, a finding first reported by The Wall Street Journal in March. Officials at the time offered few details about Israel's tactics.

Kaspersky's findings, disclosed publicly in a report on Wednesday, shed new light on the use of a stealthy virus in the spying efforts. The revelations also could provide what may be the first concrete evidence that the nuclear negotiations were targeted and by whom.

No intelligence-collection effort is a higher priority for Israel's spy agencies than Iran, including the closed-door talks which have entered a final stage. Israeli leaders say the emerging deal could allow Iran to continue working toward building nuclear weapons, something Iran denies it is trying to do.

Kaspersky, in keeping with its policy, doesn't identify Israel by name as the country responsible for the hacks. But researchers at the company indicate that they suspect an Israeli connection in subtle ways.

For example, the version of the company's report viewed by the Journal before its release was titled "The Duqu Bet." Bet is the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Kaspersky revised the title in the final version of the report released Wednesday, removing the "Bet" reference.

Researchers at the company acknowledge that many questions remain unanswered about how the virus was used and what information may have been stolen. Among the possibilities, the researchers say, the intruders might have been able to eavesdrop on conversations and steal electronic files by commandeering the hotel systems that connect to computers, phones, elevators and alarms, allowing them to turn them on and off at will to collect information.

Israeli officials have denied spying on the U.S. or other allies, although they acknowledge conducting close surveillance on Iranians generally. Israeli officials declined to comment specifically on the allegations relating to the Duqu virus and the hotel intrusions.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is reviewing the Kaspersky analysis and hasn't independently confirmed the firm's conclusions, according to people familiar with the discussions. U.S. officials, though, said they weren't surprised to learn about the reported intrusions at the hotels used for the nuclear talks.

A senior congressional aide briefed on the matter said Kaspersky's findings were credible.

"We take this seriously," the aide said.

Kaspersky, which protects hundreds of millions of computers from intruders, didn't realize its own computers were compromised for more than six months after the 2014 breach. Hackers and intelligence agencies have long targeted security companies, given the valuable information they can learn about the Internet's defenses.

Costin Raiu, director of the global research and analysis team at Kaspersky, said the attackers first targeted a Kaspersky employee in a satellite office in the Asia Pacific region, likely through email that contained an attachment in which the virus

was hidden.

By opening the attachment, the employee inadvertently would have allowed the virus to infect his computer through what Kaspersky believes was a hacking tool called a “zero day exploit.” Such tools take advantage of previously unknown security holes—giving software companies no opportunity to prevent hackers from sneaking in through them. Kaspersky says the hackers used up to two more “zero day exploits” to work further into Kaspersky’s system.

That alone, Kaspersky and outside experts say, offers evidence of the hackers’ sophistication. These kinds of tools are expensive to create and are guaranteed to work only the first time they are used. After that, companies can build up digital antibodies through software patches.

Security researchers such as Kaspersky’s Mr. Raiu often strive not just to find hackers, but also to find links between breaches through digital detective work. It is a mix of computer science, instinct and luck. In this case, Mr. Raiu saw links between this new virus and Duqu.

U.S. intelligence agencies view Duqu infections as Israeli spy operations, former U.S. officials said. While the new virus bore no overt links to Israel, it was so complex and borrowed so heavily from Duqu that it “could not have been created by anyone without access to the original Duqu source code,” Kaspersky writes in its report.

To check his conclusions, Mr. Raiu a few weeks ago emailed his findings to a friend, Boldizsár Bencsáth, a researcher at Budapest University of Technology and Economics’ Laboratory of Cryptography and System Security. Mr. Bencsáth in 2011 helped discover the original Duqu virus.

“They look extremely similar,” Mr. Bencsáth said in an interview Tuesday. He estimated a team of 10 people would take more than two years to build such a clean copycat, unless they were the original author.

In the early spring, Kaspersky found itself on the other side of the digital intrusions it investigates.

A Kaspersky employee in Moscow discovered the virus while testing a new security program on a company computer he assumed was bug-free.

Rather than try to kick the hackers out, the company set up a special team to monitor the virus in action to figure out how it worked and what it was designed to do.

The way the virus operated took the team by surprise. It jumped from one system

to another, slowly attacking an increasing number of computers. The virus sought to cover its tracks, abandoning machines the attackers deemed of no additional interest, while leaving a small file that would allow them to return later.

Mr. Raiu said the company had been bracing for cyber intrusions but didn't expect anything this sophisticated. The attackers moved slowly through Kaspersky's systems to avoid attracting attention. Mr. Raiu concluded that they probably valued stealth more than anything else.

The company dubbed the new-and-improved virus Duqu 2.0.

In a written statement with the report that was reviewed by the Journal, Kaspersky said it didn't expect the incident to make customers more vulnerable to hackers.

"Kaspersky Lab is confident that its clients and partners are safe and that there is no impact on the company's products, technologies and services," it said.

The company ran tests to determine if any of its 270,000 corporate clients worldwide had been infected. Kaspersky's list of corporate clients includes big energy companies, European banks and thousands of hotels.

It found infections on a limited number of clients in Western Europe, Asia and the Middle East. None of Kaspersky's clients in the U.S. were targeted. A targeted cyberattack against a hotel struck researchers as unusual but not unprecedented.

The first hotel with Duqu 2.0 on its computers piqued Mr. Raiu's interest right away, in light of the revelations he read in the Journal about Israeli spying efforts, he said. The hotel, he said, was a well-known venue for the nuclear negotiations. But he wasn't sure if it was an isolated case.

Soon thereafter, Kaspersky found the same virus at a second luxury hotel. Initially, Mr. Raiu didn't see a connection between the hotel and the nuclear talks. Then, a couple of weeks after the discovery of the second hotel, he learned that the nuclear negotiations would take place there. His team was "shocked," Mr. Raiu recalled. In both cases, the hotels were infected about two to three weeks before the negotiators convened.

Kaspersky provided information about Duqu 2.0 to one of its partners, which did its own round of tests. That search turned up a third infected hotel which hosted the nuclear talks. Mr. Raiu said the third hotel was discovered last but appeared to have been infected first, sometime in 2014. Kaspersky declined to identify the three hotels.

Hotels that served as venues for the talks include: the Beau-Rivage Palace in

Lausanne, Switzerland, the Intercontinental in Geneva, the Palais Coburg in Vienna, the Hotel President Wilson in Geneva, the Hotel Bayerischer Hof in Munich and Royal Plaza Montreux in Montreux, Switzerland.

A Beau-Rivage spokeswoman said the hotel was unaware of being hacked. A manager on duty at the Intercontinental said he also was unaware of such an incident.

The management team at the Royal Plaza said: "Our internal policy doesn't allow us to deliver any information."

The others didn't respond to requests for comment.

In addition to the three hotels reported to have been hacked, the virus was found in computers at a site used to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. Some world leaders had attended events there.

A former U.S. intelligence official said it was common for Israel and other countries to target such international gatherings.

"The only thing that's unusual now is you hear about it," the official said.

Mr. Raiu said Kaspersky doesn't know what was stolen from the three hotels or from the other venues. He said the virus was packed with more than 100 discrete "modules" that would have enabled the attackers to commandeer infected computers.

One module was designed to compress video feeds, possibly from hotel surveillance cameras. Other modules targeted communications, from phones to Wi-Fi networks. The attackers would know who was connected to the infected systems, allowing them to eavesdrop on conversations and steal electronic files. The virus could also enable them to operate two-way microphones in hotel elevators, computers and alarm systems. In addition, the hackers appeared to penetrate front-desk computers. That could have allowed them to figure out the room numbers of specific delegation members.

The virus also automatically deposited smaller reconnaissance files on the computers it passed through, ensuring the attackers can monitor them and exploit the contents of those computers at a later date.

ITEM 7a: WSJ: Iran Nuclear Talks in 'Pretty Tough' Stage, U.S. Official Says

The official said 'we all expected that things would get more difficult' in trying to seal a final deal before June 30

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/iran-nuclear-talks-in-pretty-tough-stage-u-s-official-says-1433965397>

By LAURENCE NORMAN in Brussels and JAY SOLOMON in Washington

June 10, 2015 3:43 p.m. ET

Nuclear negotiations between Iran and six international powers are going through a "pretty tough" stage, but everyone is focused on sealing a deal by the June 30 deadline, a senior U.S. administration official said Wednesday.

The official said "we all expected that things would get more difficult before we would break through again" to reach a final nuclear deal but "everyone in the room is focused on 30th of June."

"It doesn't help any of us to delay difficult decisions. They don't get easier with time," the person said.

Iran and the six powers — the U.S., the U.K., France, Germany, Russia and China — reached a framework nuclear deal on April 2 and are now trying to complete a fleshed-out full agreement.

The agreement aims to block off Iran's path to nuclear weapons in exchange for lifting tight international sanctions on the country.

The official said that with just under three weeks left to hit the deadline the two sides aren't yet down to the final two or three issues to be resolved, and declined to discuss which issues are causing the most trouble in the diplomacy.

The person said nuclear experts are back in Vienna this week and would likely stay through the end of the month now. They will be joined by senior officials for much of that time.

The U.S. official said it would be "essential" to any agreement to allow proper monitoring, including clearly defined access to all suspect sites in Iran.

"That's something that is critical for the administration," the official said.

Some senior Iranian officials have said they won't allow inspections of military sites under a nuclear deal. However, Iran has committed to permitting U.N. atomic agency inspectors so-called "managed access" to the country under a final deal.

On another key issue--Iran taking specific steps to shed light on its past nuclear work that Western officials believe was aimed at developing nuclear weapons know-how--the official said there was progress.

"We have a solution. We are working through the details on that," the official said.

In a possible point of contention with Iran, the senior U.S. official said the administration will seek to block Tehran from using nine recently acquired Airbus jets.

The U.S. Treasury sanctioned Iran's Mahan Air for its alleged role in moving weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Assad regime in Syria. But the airline was able to purchase the planes last month, using an Iraqi airline as a middleman.

The U.S. official said the administration had the tail numbers of the nine airplanes and would seek to block their use at international airports. "We will try to disrupt this action," the official said.

The official said the U.S. would continue to "vigorously" enforce all ongoing sanctions on Iran.

The official also said that U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, who broke his leg in a bicycle accident during recent talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif in Switzerland, would be able to rejoin the negotiations whenever he was needed.

The timing of his return to the talks "won't have to do with this injury but rather will be driven by what makes sense and when makes sense," the person said.

ITEM 701a: AP: US finds peeling back the Iran sanctions onion no easy task

<http://bigstory.ap.org/urn:publicid:ap.org:62f2c97dcb544f129196047f34a081c0>

By BRADLEY KLAPPER and MATTHEW LEE

Jun. 10, 2015 6:26 AM EDT

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama administration may have to backtrack on its promise that it will suspend only nuclear-related economic sanctions on Iran as part of an emerging nuclear agreement, officials and others involved in the process tell The Associated Press.

The problem derives from what was once a strong point of the broad U.S. sanctions effort that many credit with bringing Iran to the negotiating table in the first place.

Administration officials vehemently reject that any backtracking is taking place, but they are lumping sanctions together differently from the way members of Congress and critics of the negotiations separate them.

Under the sanctions developed over decades, hundreds of companies and individuals have been penalized not only for their role in the country's nuclear

program but also for ballistic missile research, terrorism, human rights violations and money laundering.

Now the administration is wending its way through that briar patch of interwoven economic sanctions.

The penalties are significant. Sanctioned foreign governments, companies or individuals are generally barred from doing business with U.S. citizens and businesses, or with foreign entities operating in the American financial system. The restrictions are usually accompanied by asset and property freezes as well as visa bans.

Negotiators hope to conclude a final nuclear deal by June 30. According to a framework reached in April, the U.S. will be required to lift sanctions that are related to Iran's nuclear program but could leave others in place. President Barack Obama can suspend almost all U.S. measures against Iran, though only Congress can revoke them permanently.

"Iran knows that our array of sanctions focused on its efforts to support terrorism and destabilize the region will continue after any nuclear agreement," Treasury Secretary Jack Lew told a gathering of American Jews in a weekend speech. U.S. officials will "aggressively target the finances of Iranian-backed terrorist groups and the Iranian entities that support them," he said, including the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah and Iran's Quds Force.

But that's easier said than done.

The Treasury Department's sanctions point man, Adam Szubin, has been tasked with sorting out the mess, according to U.S. officials, though no clear plan has yet been finalized.

Officials say the administration can meet its obligations because of how it interprets nuclear sanctions.

For example, they say measures designed to stop Iran from acquiring ballistic missiles are nuclear-related because they were imposed to push Iran into the negotiations. Also, they say sanctions that may appear non-nuclear are often undergirded by previous actions conceived as efforts to stop Iran's nuclear program.

The officials who provided information for this story spoke only on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak publicly on the private discussions.

After years of negotiations, U.S. officials believe a deal is within reach that for a

decade would keep Iran at least a year from being able to build a nuclear weapon.

In return the U.S. would grant billions of dollars in relief from sanctions that have crippled Iran's economy. But the whole package risks unraveling if the U.S. cannot provide the relief without scrapping sanctions unrelated to Iran's nuclear program.

Administration officials say they're examining a range of options that include suspending both nuclear and some non-nuclear sanctions, a step that would face substantial opposition in Congress and elsewhere. Under one scenario, the U.S. could end non-nuclear restrictions on some entities, then slap them back on for another reason. But Iran could then plausibly accuse the U.S. of cheating on its commitments.

Obama has spoken about Iran potentially recouping up to \$150 billion in assets trapped overseas. The process for how that would take place is still being worked through, said officials.

The Iranian Central Bank may prove the most glaring example of the administration's dilemma, and officials acknowledge there is no way to give Iran the sanctions relief justified by its compliance without significantly easing restrictions on the institution.

The bank underpins Iran's entire economy, and for years the U.S. avoided hitting it with sanctions, fearing such action would spread financial instability and spike oil prices. By late 2011, with Iran's nuclear program advancing rapidly, Obama and Congress did order penalties, declaring the bank a "primary money laundering concern" and linking its activity to ballistic missile research, terror financing and support for Syrian President Bashar Assad.

The effects were far-reaching. Petroleum exports fell by 60 percent, Iran suffered runaway inflation, cash reserves dried up and industrial output in several sectors plummeted. And Iran agreed to talk about its nuclear program with the United States and five other world powers.

Now that the nuclear agreement is so close, Iran wants these sanctions lifted. The administration officials say all sanctions on the bank are nuclear-related.

Lew told the Jewish conference in New York that a nuclear accord would include the suspension of all "secondary" oil, trade and banking restrictions — those that apply to U.S. and non-U.S. banks, as well as foreign governments.

Many of these measures overlap with American sanctions tied to Iran's nuclear program, and that has officials considering new sanctions to keep certain Iranian institutions under pressure.

Eliminating the secondary sanctions across the board could have wide-ranging implications, making it easier for Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps and its police, intelligence services and paramilitary groups to do business.

That possibility has Iran's rivals in the region, including Israel and the Sunni monarchies of the Middle East, gravely worried.

"I share their concern," Gen. Martin Dempsey, the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, said Tuesday in Jerusalem.

"If the deal is reached and results in sanctions relief, which results in more economic power and more purchasing power for the Iranian regime, it's my expectation that it's not all going to flow into the economy to improve the lot of the average Iranian citizen," he said. "I think they will invest in their surrogates. I think they will invest in additional military capability."

The Revolutionary Guard is under U.S. sanctions because of its proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. But because the U.S. views the Corps as so pernicious, the administration is considering new measures to help block it from meddling in the internal conflicts of Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen.

Of the 24 Iranian banks currently under U.S. sanctions, only one — Bank Saderat, cited for terrorism links — is subject to clear non-nuclear sanctions. The rest are designated because of nuclear and ballistic missile related financing, while several are believed to be controlled by the Revolutionary Guard.

Will they be cleared for business with the world? U.S. officials still can't say one way or another. Congress, too, hasn't received a list of banks and institutions that would be released from sanctions under the deal.

If the United States cannot deliver on its promises, it could take the blame for a collapse of the yearslong negotiations toward a nuclear deal, putting the world — in the words of Obama and other U.S. officials — on a path toward military confrontation. At the same time, an Iran unburdened by sanctions could redouble efforts toward nuclear weapons capacity, while international unity and the global sanctions architecture on Tehran frayed.

ITEM 702a: Daily Mail: Obama's former defense intelligence chief savages nuke negotiations with 'clear and present danger' Iran as 'wishful thinking'

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3118652/Obama-s-former-intelligence-director-savages-nuke-negotiations-clear-present-danger-Iran-wishful-thinking.html>

Retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn was director of the Defense Intelligence Agency

until August 2014

He testified Wednesday in a congressional hearing that the administration doesn't have 'a permanent fix but merely a placeholder' for the Iran crisis
Flynn said the notion that the U.S. can 'snap back' sanctions on Tehran if it breaks an agreement is 'fiction'

Warned that 'Iran's nuclear program has significant – and not fully disclosed – military dimensions'

Obama administration has less than three weeks to finalize a nuclear agreement that would pare back Iran's ability to build a nuclear weapon

By DAVID MARTOSKO, US POLITICAL EDITOR FOR DAILYMAIL.COM

PUBLISHED: 11:27 EST, 10 June 2015 | UPDATED: 12:17 EST, 10 June 2015

President Barack Obama's former military intelligence chief shredded the White House's plan for a nuclear agreement with Iran on Wednesday, telling a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Capitol Hill that the administration's approach amounts to 'wishful thinking.'

Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, who led the Defense Intelligence Agency until last August, devoted 20 paragraphs of his opening statement to a blow-by-blow attack on the framework deal with Tehran, which is scheduled to be finalized by June 30.

It 'suffers from severe deficiencies,' Flynn said, alleging that the plan's central plank – trusting Iran's mullahs will abandon their nuclear ambitions after a ten year cooling-off period, is 'wishful thinking.'

'Iran has every intention to build a nuclear weapon,' he argued, adding that 'it is clear that the nuclear deal is not a permanent fix but merely a placeholder.'

TRUST ME -- IT'LL WORK: President Barack Obama maintains that it's possible to hold Iran to the terms of an agreement designed to tamp down the Islamic republic's nuclear ambitions

Flynn questioned the Obama administration's unwillingness to challenge Tehran's separate but parallel ballistic-missile program aimed at building 'preparedness to weaponize a missile for nuclear delivery.'

Iran's arsenal is already 'of high quality and growing,' he told lawmakers. 'Even today, their missiles cover most all of the Middle East, and the next generation will include ICBMs capable of attacking the American homeland.'

And 'Tehran already has the largest inventory of ballistic missiles in the Middle East.'

The question of how to approach Iran's growing missile program took on new significance on Wednesday when the Associated Press reported that the U.S. is considering suspending sanctions against banks and companies that participate in it.

That would be a major departure from assurances given repeatedly by the White House, which has consistently said it would only lift nuclear-related sanctions as part of a deal – leaving other economic sanctions regimes in place.

But now, based on interviews with unnamed officials, the AP reports that the Obama administration wants to reclassify sanctions on companies involved with ballistic missile production so that they're considered part of the nuclear framework.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the AP's Wednesday morning bombshell.

Administration officials have said on at least a dozen occasions that any suspended sanctions could be quickly restored if Iran violates the terms of a deal.

Flynn insisted on Wednesday that it's not so.

'The notion of "snap back" sanctions is fiction,' he said. 'The Iranian regime is already more economically stable than it was in November of 2013, while the international sanctions coalition that brought Tehran to the table in the first place is showing serious signs of strain.'

'It's unreasonable to believe that under these conditions we will be able to put the "Regime Sanctions Team" back together again.'

Flynn told Congress that any agreement the administration inks with Iran will be subject to a wide range of unknowns, since international inspectors are slated to only have "managed access" to nuclear facilities, and only with significant prior notification.'

Iran's nuclear program already 'has significant – and not fully disclosed – military dimensions,' he said. 'The intelligence community does not have complete "eyes on" the totality of the Iranian nuclear program, nor can it guarantee that we have identified all of Iran's nuclear facilities and processes.'

California Rep. Ed Royce, the Republican subcommittee chairman who convened Wednesday's hearing, said that there are too many question marks hanging in the air as the International Atomic Energy Agency has been frozen out of most areas in Tehran's nuclear facilities.

'How close is Iran to achieving a nuclear warhead?' Royce asked.

'Iran continues to stonewall the IAEA on key questions – including missile warhead design – that its inspectors began pressing for over three and a half years ago. We just don't know.'

ITEM 8a: Sohrab Ahmari: The New Cold War's Arctic Front. Putin is militarizing one of the world's coldest, most remote regions.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-new-cold-wars-arctic-front-1433872323>

By SOHRAB AHMARI

June 9, 2015 1:52 p.m. ET

Helsinki

G-7 leaders gathering in Bavaria on Monday vowed to extend sanctions if Russia doesn't dial back its aggression against Ukraine. Previous sanctions haven't deterred Kremlin land-grabs, and the question now isn't if Russian President Vladimir Putin will strike again but whom he'll target next. Mr. Putin considers

Europe's eastern periphery, stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, part of Russia's imperial inheritance.

Yet in recent years the Russian leader has also turned his attention northward, to the Arctic, militarizing one of the world's coldest, most remote regions. Here in Finland, one of eight Arctic states, the Russian menace next door looms large.

"That is a tough nut to crack, to know exactly what the Russians want," newly appointed Finnish Foreign Minister Timo Soini says. "But I'm sure they know. Because they are masters of chess, and if something is on the loose they will take it"—a variation on the old proverb that "a Cossack will take whatever is not fixed to the ground."

There is much that "is not fixed to the ground" already in the Arctic, and more every year. Climate change is transforming the High North. By 2030, the Northern Sea Route (NSR) from the Kara Strait to the Pacific will have nine weeks of open water, according to the U.S. Navy, up from two in 2012. The NSR is a 35% to 60% shorter passage between European ports and East Asia than the Suez or Panama routes, according to the Arctic Council. The Northwest Passage, which connects the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans via the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, will have five weeks of open water by 2030, up from zero in 2012. It represents a 25% shorter passage between Rotterdam and Seattle than non-Arctic routes, according to a NATO Parliamentary Assembly study published in March. As with other claims about the climate, these aren't universally accepted prognostications.

These changes have implications not just for trade but also for the ability to exploit the vast energy resources beneath the Arctic. Energy fields in the region have to date produced some 40 billion barrels of oil and 1,100 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates the region also holds 13% of the world's undiscovered conventional oil, a third of the world's undiscovered conventional gas and a fifth of the world's undiscovered natural-gas liquids.

No wonder Moscow has been racing to reopen old Soviet bases on its territory across the Arctic and develop new ones. Mr. Putin wants by the end of 2015 to have 14 operational airfields in the Arctic, according to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and he has increased Russia's special-forces presence in the region by 30%.

"In the Arctic area they have twofold objectives," says a senior official at the Finnish Defense Ministry. "To secure the Northern Sea Route and [exploit] the energy-resources potential. And they are increasing their ability to surveil that part of the world, to refurbish their abilities for the air force and the Northern Fleet. They are exercising their ability to move their airborne troops from the central part of Russia to the north."

The Russian buildup in the region is made worse by the fact that Moscow makes no effort to be a good neighbor. The Kremlin's propensity for holding unannounced exercises in the region can only be a deliberate attempt to provoke. The senior official voices the concern that the Kremlin might use yet another such drill "as deployment for a real operation"—which is considerably less paranoid than it sounds given Mr. Putin's record.

Russian warplanes have violated Finnish airspace as recently as August, and pro-Kremlin media have also launched a systematic propaganda campaign against Finland. "They are writing things about us and our defense forces that are not from this world," says the senior official, such as the yarn that the Finnish government removes children from ethnic-Russian Finnish families for adoption by gay couples in the U.S.

Another Defense Ministry official says that he finds it hard to view as spontaneous "one of their pro-Putin demonstrations with crowds shouting 'Thank you, Putin! You gave us Crimea. Now give us Poland and Finland.'"

Despite such developments, the possibility of conflict here might seem distant for now. But it poses troubling questions about the West's readiness in the Arctic-security race. So far there has been plenty of Allied strategizing, including a 2013 White House paper on Arctic strategy heavy on climate-change alarmism but offering little by way of real mobilization. Russia still has the world's largest fleet of icebreakers, many of them nuclear-powered. Washington, by contrast, fields just one heavy icebreaker, the Coast Guard's aging Polar Star.

For the Finns, the Kremlin menace raises another touchy issue: their nonmembership in NATO. The April election that sent Mr. Soini to the Foreign Ministry and the centrist Juha Sipilä into the premiership relegated Alexander Stubb, an uncommonly pro-NATO Finnish prime minister, to the Finance Ministry in the new government. Mr. Soini, who leads the right-wing populist True Finns party, has denounced Mr. Stubb in the past as a "radical market liberal NATO hawk." But now in government, Mr. Soini strikes more nuanced notes that belie his party's anti-Atlanticist reputation.

"If we think that the paradigm [in the region] is going to be changed," he says, "there is no hesitation that we will do it," meaning join NATO. He adds: "Whatever the system or situation in Russia we have to cope, and we have some experience with them. And they also respect us. They know our history. . . . We want to be independent and free."

Mr. Ahmari is a Journal editorial-page writer based in London.

ITEM 9a: WSJ: Russia to Maintain Sanctions Against the West, Officials Say. Group of Seven leaders had said they are considering taking further

action against Russia

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-to-maintain-sanctions-against-the-west-officials-say-1433943635>



Sergei Ivanov, right, the Kremlin's chief of staff, at the World Russian Press Congress. Mr. Ivanov said it was 'pretty logical to assume that Moscow will extend its counter-sanctions.' PHOTO: ZUMA PRESS

By ANDREY OSTROUKH

June 10, 2015 9:40 a.m. ET

MOSCOW—Russia will keep sanctions against the West in place and may even expand the penalties if the political tensions of the Cold War nature deepen, officials said Wednesday.

The sanctions came in the spotlight again over the weekend when leaders of the Group of Seven considered taking further action to punish Russia for its support of rebels in eastern Ukraine. Russia, which has been saying it was preparing to live under sanctions for several years, pledged to retaliate to the Western move.

Sergei Ivanov, chief of staff of the Presidential Executive Office, said it was "pretty logical to assume that Moscow will extend its counter-sanctions."

In response to list of individuals who are prohibited from entering U.S. and the

European Union along with substantial constraints for Russian borrowers, Moscow banned food imports from the countries that sanctioned Russia. Russia's import ban, which was imposed in August, had an adverse impact on foreign producers but had also spurred consumer inflation to nearly 17% this year and has visibly changed assortment in stores.

The statement made by Mr. Ivanov, who was put on the U.S. sanction list last year, was confirmed by Economy Minister Alexei Ulyukayev, who said that Russia would mirror extension of sanctions if the West decides to keep penalties for longer, Russian news agencies reported.

Speaking to reporters in Milan, Mr. Ulyukayev said that sanctions only pose additional problems. Given that the sanctions have hit EU businesses, he said he doubts that the West will impose harsher sanctions against Moscow.

President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday on his visit to Italy that he hopes that sanctions-related restrictions will be lifted sooner or later as they hurt Russia's cooperation with other countries.

But Russia, which banned nearly 90 EU officials from entering the country last month, may also consider some retaliation. A source close to Russia's foreign ministry told Interfax on Monday that Russia always responds to sanctions and won't "turn the other cheek" to let the West hit it.

ITEM 10a: Paul Goble: Russian Blogger with Close Ties to FSB Says Russians Must Prepare for Major War

<http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/06/russian-blogger-with-close-ties-to-fsb.html>

Wednesday, June 10, 2015

Staunton, June 10 –Picking up on the increasingly alarmist rhetoric of Kremlin outlets about the possibility of war, a Urals blogger who openly flaunts his ties with the FSB yesterday posted three commentaries in which he said that Russians must prepare for a major war with the West, according to Kseniya Kirillova.

Sergey Kolyasnikov, who presents himself as a super patriot had in the past limited himself to statements that "there may be a real war or there may not be," but yesterday he shifted his tone and pointedly called on the Russian people to prepare for a major war with the Western powers (nr2.ru/blogs/Ksenija_Kirillova/Rossiya-spolzla-v-yadernuyu-isteriyu-98625.html).

In the first, Kolyasnikov said that "the only variant which the US and Europe consider acceptable for Russia and us is destruction. Any rejection of this

means war. Thus, there will be war." In the second, he said that the West had long been preparing for war and that "the population of Russia must massively prepare for one." And in the third, he wrote that "the next factor which has returned to our reality will become the atomic bomb."

There are all kinds of things on the Internet, Kirillova notes, but there are four reasons for taking Kolyasnikov's words more seriously than most: he "doesn't conceal his links with the FSB;" his denunciations have led to criminal cases; he has appeared at Kremlin-sponsored conferences in recent weeks; and as, the Novy Region-2 commentator says, any Russian who puts out something which the authorities don't like would suffer for it.

Some may be inclined to view Kolyasnikov's remarks as an indication that at least one "hurrah patriot" has escaped the control of the Kremlin and is "seeking to organize 'a patriotic Mайдan' in Russia, Kirillova suggests, but she dismisses this because of the prominent place Kolyasnikov has been given in RISI meetings and the like.

That still does not mean that the Urals blogger's words should be taken entirely at face value, she continues. There are three obvious alternative explanations for them. First, they could be intended to "create in the eyes of Western analysts the illusion of 'a patriotic opposition which Putin 'can hardly restrain'" and that "'without him, things would be still worse.'"

Second, Kolyasnikov's words could be intended to justify in the minds of the Russian population further deprivations and "any worsening of the economic situation." If the country faces war, Russians will accept shortages far more willingly than if it were the case that it does not.

And third, they could be intended to set the stage for intensifying the repression of the population and for presenting that intensification as being "'at the demand of the people.'" Such actions could be directed not only against the opposition but at officials, Vladimir Putin excepted of course.

But putting out such messages is extremely dangerous. The FSB and the other siloviki may be able to arrest a Koyasnikov or others like them, but these institutions are unlikely to be able to cope "with the hundreds and thousands of people who they have succeeded in zombifying" by such messages in the course of Russia's war against Ukraine.

One very much wonders, Kirillova says, whether those backing the issuance of such messages understand that "hatred and fear are irrational forces" which are easy to provoke but difficult to "'drive back into the bottle.'" But however that may be, it is clearly the case that "under the pretext of a non-existent threat, Russia directly inspired by the authorities is descending into a hell,

the depth of which it is even now very difficult to imagine.”

ITEM 1001a: Petro Poroshenko: We’re Making Steady Progress in Ukraine, Despite Putin. A crackdown on corruption is boosting investment and growth, even as we contend with Russian aggression.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/were-making-steady-progress-in-ukraine-despite-putin-1433978351>



TAKING A STAND: A man marks the anniversary of the Revolution of Dignity on the Maidan earlier this year.

June 10, 2015 7:19 p.m. ET

When I became president of Ukraine a year ago this month, Crimea had been annexed, the country was standing on the brink of war and—after more than 20 years of Soviet-style governance, endemic corruption, cronyism and inefficient policy—our economy was sliding into decay.

Now, another revolution is under way. The struggle this time is just as vital as during the 2013-14 pro-democracy Revolution of Dignity on the Maidan in our capital city of Kiev. It has the potential to move Ukraine closer to the European future that the majority of its citizens want. We have already made great progress.

A year ago Ukraine was weak, with only 5,000 troops defending the country, making it an easy target of aggression. Today, more than 50,000 troops are fighting Russian-backed forces in Donbas, while the number of military servicemen has grown to 250,000.

We had a notorious traffic-police force, widely despised and ridiculed for corruption and abuse of power. At the beginning of next month, as a pilot program in reforming law-enforcement agencies, we will launch a new patrol police based on a similar force that has been effective in Georgia.

Before the revolution, we were almost fully dependent on gas imports from Russia. Today, by the diversification of supplies, we have reduced the consumption of Russian gas to 19.9 billion cubic meters from 28.1 billion cubic meters since 2014 and the Russian share of our gas imports to 37% from 90%. We have adopted legislation that establishes transparent rules on the industry.

Our citizens once had limited influence over public policies, often due to questionable election practices and the lack of democratic freedoms. Today, following free, fair and internationally praised elections, the Ukrainian leadership is transparent and accountable as never before. The newly formed National Reforms Council brings the president, government and coalition leaders to one table with leaders of civil society to discuss the most urgent reforms and ensure their implementation.

The Anti-Corruption Strategy for 2015-17 was developed in cooperation with the corruption watchdog Transparency International Ukraine. Most of the recruiting to public offices is now held openly. And we have implemented the ProZorro e-procurement system, which is based on transparency throughout the bidding and procurement process. It is designed to root out corrupt schemes and expected to save about 20% on procurement costs this year.

At the heart of this fight against corruption and inefficiency are hundreds of Ukrainians who would never have imagined working in a public sector that was once almost entirely made up of Soviet-era bureaucrats, many of whom were ineffective. Over the past year, 2,702 former officials have been convicted of corruption.

At the ministerial level, our current team includes many leading professionals, including Finance Minister Natalie Jaresko, a Harvard graduate and former investment banker. I suspect that in terms of efficiency our team would meet the standard of any European government. And with an average age of just 44, we have possibly the youngest government Europe has ever seen.

Alongside our ministers are many young people who have come to us from leading foreign and domestic companies and universities to join in our battle to overhaul

our country. Many of these young reformers have found their place in the presidential administration, where 40% of our staff is made up of new faces. We have increased the efficiency of the state apparatus and are projected to cut expenses by around \$50 million in 2015.

Realizing the importance of a transparent and fair judiciary, we are working toward limiting immunity for judges, and considering the dismissal of 300 judges. Legislation has now been passed to set new rules for judicial nominations.

The latest International Monetary Fund mission to Ukraine has recognized our efforts. The IMF stated that we have achieved “good implementation” of our agreed-to reform program. There are signs now of economic stabilization, and the IMF expects our gross domestic product to grow by 2% and the unemployment rate to shrink by 0.5 percentage points in 2016. According to the BDO International Business Compass, Ukraine has increased its investment competitiveness for small- and medium-size companies by 20 percentage points during 2014, despite the crisis.

We have shown the world the true face of our nation, one that fights for European values and defends European security on its frontiers. We have been adhering to the obligations of the Minsk accords, and we will keep standing for a peaceful resolution in Donbas.

Now we want to focus on building the country of our dreams—free, democratic and economically developed, with our territorial integrity restored. But we will need the support of the international community to help defend against our aggressor. Just last week, rebels backed by Russian troops attacked Ukrainian positions in the city of Maryinka with tanks and other heavy weaponry in brutal violation of the Minsk agreements.

Regardless of the serious challenges ahead, I am certain my country will succeed. I am honored to work with a highly professional team of reformers who care deeply about this country. I am lucky to have people who would do anything for the good of Ukraine. And we are grateful we have true friends around the world to help us find the strength during these difficult times to make the best of our country.

Mr. Poroshenko is the president of Ukraine.

ITEM 1002a: Jeffrey Gedmin: In Macedonia and the Balkans, Russia Throws Down the Gauntlet. Does the U.S. have a plan?

http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/macedonia-and-balkans-russia-throws-down-gauntlet_969309.html?nopager=1

11:45 AM, JUN 11, 2015

A Kiev-based Ukrainian friend, after meeting a delegation of young Russians, emails me: "totally terrible, young Russian diplomats. Manipulation, propaganda, gloating over victory in Eastern Ukraine, this new generation even worse than before. We will have big trouble with Russia for a very long time."

That's what many Macedonians are thinking about Moscow and the Balkans. I'm here as part of a strategy group chaired by Macedonian Defense Minister Zoran Jolevski, a former Ambassador to the U.S. who also served as his country's chief negotiator in the "naming dispute" with Greece. More about this in a moment.

At first blush, Macedonia is lovely and lively. On a June summer night, the pedestrian streets of Skopje are jammed with young people, the capitol's copious cafés packed. The atmosphere reminds me of Thessaloniki -- the capital of Greek Macedonia -- on the other side of the Greek border. Except that while the Greek economy keeps sinking, the Macedonians have now, after Ireland, the fastest growing economy in Europe. The otherwise bitterly feuding center-right government and socialist opposition both support joining NATO and the EU. "It's not ideology that matters in this neighborhood," says one senior official, "it's survival."

Indeed. Bismarck mused, two and half decades before the start of World War I, that "one day the great European War will come out of some damned foolish thing in the Balkans." On 28 June 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife Sophie were were shot dead in Sarajevo, an assassination whose political objective was to split off Austria-Hungary's South Slav provinces. Hostilities soon began between Austria-Hungary and the Kingdom of Serbia, which then quickly led to that great European War. There has certainly been no end to the intrigues, treachery and violence. Borders were redrawn after World War I, and again after the Second World War (Hitler had promised the Balkans peace and "the greatest future conceivable"). And after the relative calm for Yugoslavia in the Cold War years, in the 1990s the region was being torn up again, this time by Serbian strong man Slobodan Milosevic.

In 2001, Macedonia managed to elude civil war after armed insurgents -- the "Albanian National Liberation Army" -- began attacking the country's security forces (twenty five percent of the Macedonian population is ethnic Albanian). Which does not mean that internal tranquility has been for ever assured. Last month, there was a thirty-hour gun battle between police and ethnic Albanian militants in the northern border town of Kumanovo. More than three dozen were wounded, eight police officers dead. Fourteen from the militant's cell were killed, with another 44 captured.

It's recent domestic political battles, though, that have rocked this tiny, land locked nation. (Macedonia has a population of 2.1 million and borders Kosovo,

Albania, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria). The opposition has accused the country's leadership of wide-spread wire tapping of judges and journalists and other government officials. Two senior government officials have resigned, investigations are ongoing, and Macedonia's Prime Minister has called for new elections by April. Meanwhile, a Balkan intrigue: how did recordings of surreptitiously monitored conversations come into the hands of the opposition? While the government believes it's the work of a foreign intelligence service intent on destabilising the country, no one in the government can agree whether it's the work of Greece -- which remains fixated and furious that Skopje lays claim to the treasured name Macedonia-- Bulgaria, Albania, Kosovo. Or Russia.

Here at first blush all this sounds a little like, to borrow from Neville Chamberlain, quarrels in faraway countries between people of whom we know very little. They are those who will surely reach for another quote from Bismarck who also said, "the whole of the Balkans is not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian soldier."

But not so fast. Russia threw down the gauntlet last fall, publicly declaring that further expansion of NATO into the Balkans would be seen by the Kremlin as a provocation. Ukrainians found out that even modest steps toward EU accession are unacceptable for Moscow. Georgia was invaded by Russia in 2008 for the country's sin of wanting democracy and Euro-Atlantic integration.

It's hard not to see that all of this is part of a larger project. By use of espionage and energy dependence, cyber terrorism and propaganda, support for extremist parties, diplomatic bullying -- and war when necessary -- Russia is busy (again) splitting Europe in two. From the Baltics to the Balkans, the democratic and strategic gains of the 1990s are being challenged by the Kremlin. Europe whole and free? Not exactly yet.

The United States needs a robust, multifaceted new Europe strategy, of which continued NATO enlargement -- for Macedonia included -- must be a part. Keeping NATO enlargement moving forward is an overhead cost for peace and security in this part of the world. If we fail to make the investment, we'll have big trouble with Russia for a very long time.

Jeffrey Gedmin is a senior fellow at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, a senior advisor at Blue Star Strategies, and co-director, the Transatlantic Renewal Project.

ITEM 11a: WSJ: France Says Evidence Suggests Russians Posing as Islamists Hacked Broadcaster. Investigations raise new questions about the motive of the April attack on TV headquarters

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/france-says-evidence-suggests-russians-posing-as-islamists-hacked-broadcaster-1433955381>

By SAM SCHECHNER
June 10, 2015 12:56 p.m. ET

PARIS—French investigators suspect that a well-known group of Russian hackers posing as Islamic State militants were behind an April attack that crippled a French-language TV broadcaster, raising new questions about the motives for an intrusion that had initially appeared aimed at spreading terrorist propaganda.

A group calling itself “CyberCaliphate” took control of computer systems at the Paris headquarters of TV5Monde on April 8, posting messages in support of Islamic State to the broadcaster’s social media accounts, and blacking out the company’s global TV channels for several hours, in what some analysts had said could be a dangerous new display of the militant group’s cyberattack prowess.

Investigators now think the true hackers were just misdirecting.

Evidence uncovered in the two months since the attack points to the Russian hacker group dubbed APT28, or Pawn Storm, a spokeswoman for the Paris prosecutor’s office said Wednesday. While the investigation is ongoing, IP addresses used to host a CyberCaliphate website linked to the attack, and other techniques used by the hackers match those deployed in the Russian group’s previous attacks, she said.

“We’re focusing on the Russian angle,” the spokeswoman said, adding that there is currently “no evidence for the theory” of a connection to Islamic State.

French investigators’ turn toward Russia comes amid a broader wave of sophisticated attacks against government and security targets that some experts say appear to be backed by the Russian government.

While the Russian government denies involvement in hacking, reports from U.S. cybersecurity firms allege circumstantial evidence of government sponsorship of hacker groups—including the group French investigators are now probing in the TV5Monde attack.

“All of our attribution tends to suggest this is an organization that is focused on furthering the objectives or gathering intelligence that is of use to the Russian government,” said Richard Turner, the president for Europe, Middle East and Africa at FireEye Inc., which says it has independently verified that the attackers made use of infrastructure linked to APT28, and had seen signs the group was looking at TV5Monde as early as February. “The evidence points to a nation-state,” Mr. Turner said.

Russian officials weren’t immediately available for comment on Wednesday.

During April's attack against TV5Monde, hackers posted messages making threats against French military personnel and indicating that they were retaliating against French attacks on Islamic State. But it remains unclear why Russian hackers would target TV5Monde.

Indirectly owned by the governments of France and other French-speaking countries, the company broadcasts original news programming as well as shows from the French-speaking world. While the company's channels are available in 200 countries, including Russia, the company in 2013 reported a razor-thin profit of just €23,000 on revenue of €28.6 million.

"We're asking ourselves why the Russians would attack us," said Yves Bigot, the chief executive of TV5Monde, who said he has been briefed by officials on the investigation. "We don't have the slightest idea."

In the past, APT28 has targeted organizations like the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization, government officials and agencies in Eastern Europe, as well as security companies and journalists for intelligence, security firms say. But the group has not previously been known to mount attacks that impersonate hacktivist or terrorist groups, nor inflict damage on targets.

While the attack caused damage valued at more than €5 million to TV5Monde, according to Mr. Bigot, it is unclear why sophisticated hackers did not go further. Mr. Bigot says the investigation has revealed that the hackers did not appear to have tried to broadcast over the company's TV channels, nor did they appear to have stolen information.

FireEye's Mr. Turner says that the TV5Monde attack could have helped the hackers test their capabilities to penetrate TV stations. "If part of the objective is to demonstrate capability, it is just like parading tanks through Red Square."

ITEM 12a: Bill Gertz: FBI Alert Reveals 'Groups' Behind OPM Hack. President says cyber attack threat 'accelerating'

<http://freebeacon.com/national-security/fbi-alert-reveals-groups-behind-opm-hack/>

June 10, 2015 5:00 am

The FBI has disclosed that multiple hacker groups carried out the cyber attack that compromised the records of 4 million government workers in the networks of the Office of Personnel Management.

"The FBI has obtained information regarding cyber actors who have compromised and stolen sensitive business information and personally identifiable information (PII)," states a Flash alert dated June 5. "Information obtained from victims

indicates that PII was a priority target.”

Security analysts familiar with the OPM breach, disclosed in a notice last week, said two groups of Chinese state-sponsored hackers appear to be behind the cyber attacks, including one linked to the Chinese military that has been dubbed “Deep Panda.”

Deep Panda is a highly sophisticated Chinese military hacker unit that has been gathering data on millions of Americans. The group was linked in the past to the hacking of the health care provider Anthem that compromised the personal data of some 80 million customers.

The FBI did not directly link its warning to the OPM hacking. But it said cyber investigators have “high confidence” about the threat posed by the cyber attackers based on its investigation into the data breach.

According to the alert, the stolen personal data “has been used in other instances to target or otherwise facilitate various malicious activities such as financial fraud though the FBI is not aware of such activity by these groups.”

The groups were not identified by name or by country.

However, the alert revealed that the software used by the hackers is called Sakula, which security analysts say was the Root Access Tool, or RAT, that was used by the Chinese in both the OPM and Anthem hacks.

Sakula software employs stolen, signed security certificates to gain unauthorized network access and analysts said the use of that technique requires cyber sophistication that is not known to be used outside of nation-state cyber forces.

The software allows remote users to gain computer network administrator access, which permits the theft of large amounts of data.

The FBI warned in the notice that any entity that discovers the Sakula malware and other signatures should seek cyber security assistance and notify the FBI.

“Any activity related to these groups detected on a network should be considered an indication of a compromise requiring extensive mitigation and contact with law enforcement,” the notice said.

The groups involved were observed “across a variety of intrusions leveraging a diverse selection of tools and techniques to attempt to gain initial access to a victim including using credentials acquired during previous intrusions.”

President Obama was asked after the G-7 summit in Germany on Tuesday about

the Chinese role in the OPM cyber attacks and declined to name Beijing as the perpetrator.

"We haven't publicly unveiled who we think may have engaged in these cyber attacks," Obama said. "But I can tell you that we have known for a long time that there are significant vulnerabilities and that these vulnerabilities are going to accelerate as time goes by, both in systems within government and within the private sector."

Obama said part of the problem is "very old systems" used in government computer networks.

"And we discovered this new breach in OPM precisely because we've initiated this process of inventorying and upgrading these old systems to address existing vulnerabilities," he said.

"[W]e're going to have to keep on doing it, because both state and non-state actors are sending everything they've got at trying to breach these systems," the president said.

"In some cases, it's non-state actors who are engaging in criminal activity and potential theft," Obama said. "In the case of state actors, they're probing for intelligence or, in some cases, trying to bring down systems in pursuit of their various foreign policy objectives. In either case, we're going to have to be much more aggressive, much more attentive than we have been."

The problem of cyber attacks is "going to accelerate," he said. "And that means that we have to be as nimble, as aggressive, and as well-resourced as those who are trying to break into these systems."

The administration has rejected calls by senior U.S. security officials to engage in more aggressive, offensive cyber retaliation against states such as China as a way to develop cyber deterrence.

The president and his advisers are said to fear that offensive cyber attacks will lead to a major conflict. Supporters of taking more aggressive responses to hacking have said demonstrations of U.S. cyber retaliatory strikes will deter future attacks.

The administration has favored using law enforcement and diplomatic policies to deal with the problem.

One private sector cyber security specialist familiar with the OPM hack said that in addition to the government's personnel database, other major cyber attacks believed to be carried out by Chinese hackers include clandestine intrusions into

the networks of a major telecommunications company and a major aviation industry firm.

The hackers' use of several domain names in the OPM hacking also are similar to domains used by Chinese cyber attackers in the past. The domains were identified as OPMsecurity.org and opm-learning.org.

Another signature linking the OPM hack to China was the hackers' use of a program called Mimikatz that is used to gain high-level remote access to networks.

"Mimikatz is a classic of Deep Panda" in terms of tactics, techniques, and procedures, said a security analyst familiar with details of the attack. "This allows the actors to dump password hashes, perform pass the hash and 'golden ticket' attacks in the victim environment."

The private security company CrowdStrike first identified Deep Panda and has called the group among the most sophisticated state-sponsored hackers.

China's main military intelligence service that has been linked to cyber attacks is the Third Department of the General Staff, or 3PLA, which conducts cyber warfare.

ITEM 13a: Gordon Chang: China and US Cyber Security

<http://worldaffairsjournal.org/blog/gordon-g-chang/china-and-us-cyber-security>

9 June 2015

From December through April, hackers exfiltrated personal data on almost 4.2 million US federal employees and contractors.

The attacks, on the network of the Office of Personnel Management, appear to be an attempt, as the Washington Post reported, to build a database on Americans, especially those in sensitive positions. This conclusion looks correct: the same party that carried out the OPM hacks may be behind attacks last year on the health insurers Anthem and Premera Blue Cross.

The Post quotes US government officials, speaking anonymously, blaming the Chinese. Rich Barger of ThreatConnect, a Virginia-based cyber security firm, believes the culprit is China's Ministry of State Security.

Not everyone agrees—Robert Knake of the Council on Foreign Relations, for instance, doubts China's involvement—but other state actors do not appear to have the ability to process the volume of data taken, and the data from the OPM, Anthem, and Premera attacks have not shown up on black markets, so run-of-the-mill criminals are probably not responsible. For the moment at least, the perpetrator looks to be the Chinese government or military.

China's probable involvement vexes Washington. The indictment of five Chinese military officers last May for cyber theft was the Obama administration's way of warning Beijing. The hope was that the Chinese would get the message that American capabilities were so good that we could trace individual attacks to specific terminals and individuals, but Beijing's leaders decided to ignore the implied warning.

Then Beijing turned down American attempts to work out boundaries on spying. Last October, for instance, Secretary of State John Kerry hosted his Chinese counterpart, State Councilor Yang Jiechi, at his home in Boston, but during that meeting a defiant Yang told Kerry that his government would not resume cyber talks with Washington because of "mistaken US practices."

The Obama administration has, despite everything, not given up on a cooperative solution. "There is no reason that it has to devolve into conflict if the dialogue can continue and the relationship can be improved," said State Department spokesman John Kirby last week.

With the annual US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue session set in Washington later this month and a state visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping coming up in September, there are plenty of opportunities for the Obama administration to send a message. The question is whether it will be the right one.

Xi's government has asked for an invitation to address a joint session of Congress, which would be the first by the head of a Communist state. This will probably not happen, but Xi will still get full honors on the South Lawn of the White House. In view of Beijing's recent broad-based attack on international norms—widespread spying, significant interference on freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, increasingly predatory attacks on foreign business—such public shows of respect will probably only feed China's inflated sense of self-importance.

Instead, the administration should be imposing costs on China. It's not possible to put a price on national security, which was compromised by the attack on the Office of Personnel Management and, in all probability, other agencies. We can, however, price attacks on US companies.

The Blair-Huntsman Commission, which issued its report in May 2013 on the theft of intellectual property, estimated that the annual revenue lost by our businesses is about equal to US exports to Asia. If that relationship still holds, America's loss was around \$480 billion last year. Most of the theft was probably committed by China, which could be responsible for as much as 90 percent of our country's loss by cyber means.

Any imposition of sanctions on China—the Blair-Huntsman Commission recommended tariffs on Chinese goods as a last-ditch effort—will hurt everyone concerned, but we are long past the point where substantive measures will be cost-free.

Yet there is one act that will be symbolic, effective, and without damage to the US: refusing to honor the head of a one-party state that each day, over the phone lines and through satellite relays, attacks American computer networks with obviously malign intentions. Under the circumstances, it is the least we can do.

ITEM 14a: Edward Snowden: The World Says No to Surveillance

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/05/opinion/edward-snowden-the-world-says-no-to-surveillance.html>

JUNE 4, 2015

MOSCOW — TWO years ago today, three journalists and I worked nervously in a Hong Kong hotel room, waiting to see how the world would react to the revelation that the National Security Agency had been making records of nearly every phone call in the United States. In the days that followed, those journalists and others published documents revealing that democratic governments had been monitoring the private activities of ordinary citizens who had done nothing wrong.

Within days, the United States government responded by bringing charges against me under World War I-era espionage laws. The journalists were advised by lawyers that they risked arrest or subpoena if they returned to the United States. Politicians raced to condemn our efforts as un-American, even treasonous.

Privately, there were moments when I worried that we might have put our privileged lives at risk for nothing — that the public would react with indifference, or practiced cynicism, to the revelations.

Never have I been so grateful to have been so wrong.

Two years on, the difference is profound. In a single month, the N.S.A.'s invasive call-tracking program was declared unlawful by the courts and disowned by Congress. After a White House-appointed oversight board investigation found that this program had not stopped a single terrorist attack, even the president who once defended its propriety and criticized its disclosure has now ordered it terminated.

This is the power of an informed public.

Ending the mass surveillance of private phone calls under the Patriot Act is a historic victory for the rights of every citizen, but it is only the latest product of a

change in global awareness. Since 2013, institutions across Europe have ruled similar laws and operations illegal and imposed new restrictions on future activities. The United Nations declared mass surveillance an unambiguous violation of human rights. In Latin America, the efforts of citizens in Brazil led to the Marco Civil, an Internet Bill of Rights. Recognizing the critical role of informed citizens in correcting the excesses of government, the Council of Europe called for new laws to protect whistle-blowers.

Beyond the frontiers of law, progress has come even more quickly. Technologists have worked tirelessly to re-engineer the security of the devices that surround us, along with the language of the Internet itself. Secret flaws in critical infrastructure that had been exploited by governments to facilitate mass surveillance have been detected and corrected. Basic technical safeguards such as encryption — once considered esoteric and unnecessary — are now enabled by default in the products of pioneering companies like Apple, ensuring that even if your phone is stolen, your private life remains private. Such structural technological changes can ensure access to basic privacies beyond borders, insulating ordinary citizens from the arbitrary passage of anti-privacy laws, such as those now descending upon Russia.

Though we have come a long way, the right to privacy — the foundation of the freedoms enshrined in the United States Bill of Rights — remains under threat. Some of the world's most popular online services have been enlisted as partners in the N.S.A.'s mass surveillance programs, and technology companies are being pressured by governments around the world to work against their customers rather than for them. Billions of cellphone location records are still being intercepted without regard for the guilt or innocence of those affected. We have learned that our government intentionally weakens the fundamental security of the Internet with "back doors" that transform private lives into open books. Metadata revealing the personal associations and interests of ordinary Internet users is still being intercepted and monitored on a scale unprecedented in history: As you read this online, the United States government makes a note.

Spymasters in Australia, Canada and France have exploited recent tragedies to seek intrusive new powers despite evidence such programs would not have prevented attacks. Prime Minister David Cameron of Britain recently mused, "Do we want to allow a means of communication between people which we cannot read?" He soon found his answer, proclaiming that "for too long, we have been a passively tolerant society, saying to our citizens: As long as you obey the law, we will leave you alone."

At the turning of the millennium, few imagined that citizens of developed democracies would soon be required to defend the concept of an open society against their own leaders.

Yet the balance of power is beginning to shift. We are witnessing the emergence of

a post-terror generation, one that rejects a worldview defined by a singular tragedy. For the first time since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, we see the outline of a politics that turns away from reaction and fear in favor of resilience and reason. With each court victory, with every change in the law, we demonstrate facts are more convincing than fear. As a society, we rediscover that the value of a right is not in what it hides, but in what it protects.

Edward J. Snowden, a former Central Intelligence Agency officer and National Security Agency contractor, is a director of the Freedom of the Press Foundation.

ITEM 1401a: Spiegel International: The Worm Turns: Virus Hunter Kaspersky Becomes the Hunted

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/israel-thought-to-be-behind-new-malware-found-by-kaspersky-a-1037960.html>

By Matthias Gebauer and Marcel Rosenbach



Eugene Kaspersky, CEO of Kaspersky Lab, has had to admit that there was a successful cyber attack on his company's own system.

The Russian IT security firm Kaspersky Lab has discovered a new, powerful cyber weapon, apparently a successor to the notorious Duqu software. But this time the virus hunter itself is a target. Now experts are scrambling to identify who's behind it.

For the employees of the Russian firm Kaspersky Lab, tracking down computer viruses, worms and Trojans and rendering them harmless is all in a day's work. But they recently discovered a particularly sophisticated cyber attack on several of the company's own networks. The infection had gone undetected for months.

Company officials believe the attack began when a Kaspersky employee in one of the company's offices in the Asia-Pacific region was sent a targeted, seemingly

innocuous email with malware hidden in the attachment, which then became lodged in the firm's systems and expanded from there. The malware was apparently only discovered during internal security tests "this spring." The attack on Kaspersky Lab shows "how quickly the arms race with cyber weapons is escalating," states a 45-page report on the incident by the company, which was made available to SPIEGEL in advance of its release. The exact reason for the attack is "not yet clear" to Kaspersky analysts, but the intruders were apparently interested mainly in subjects like future technologies, secure operating systems and the latest Kaspersky studies on so-called "advanced persistent threats," or APTs. The Kaspersky employees also classified the spy software used against the company as an APT.

Next-Generation Malware

Analysts at Kaspersky's Moscow headquarters had already been familiar with important features of the malware that was being used against them. They believe it is a modernized and redeveloped version of the Duqu cyber weapon, which made international headlines in 2011. The cyber weapons system that has now been discovered has a modular structure and seems to build on the earlier Duqu platform.

In fact, says Vitaly Kamluk, Kaspersky's principal security researcher and a key member of the team that analyzed the new virus, some of the software passages and methods are "very similar or almost identical" to Duqu. The company is now referring to the electronic intruder as "Duqu 2.0." "We have concluded that it is the same attacker," says Kamluk.

When asked who they believe could be behind the software, Kaspersky officials are typically vague -- which is the typical attitude shown by international IT security vendors when it comes to the question of attribution. The modular Duqu arsenal is "extremely complex and very, very expensive," says Kamluk. "Cyber criminals are not behind this. We are probably dealing with nation-state attackers." As is often the case in the difficult search for the true originators of cyber attacks, which technology can easily cover up, the targets themselves could provide the best clues about who may have perpetrated the attack.

The originators of Duqu had a "high interest in geopolitical affairs," says the Kaspersky analyst. Iran's nuclear program was also a target of this latest wave of attacks, as it was with the preceding Duqu virus.

"They surpass any other APT attackers -- no one has reached this level of competence before," says Kamluk. "In our view the attackers even surpass Equation Group. This brings the threat to a whole new level."

A US-Israeli Role?

As Kamluk explains, several of the new infections with Duqu 2.0 took place in 2014 and 2015 in connection with the "P5+1" talks -- the diplomatic negotiations underway since 2006 between Great Britain, the United States, China, France, Russia and Germany, aimed at reaching an agreement with Iran over its nuclear program. Kaspersky says it apparently detected traces of Duqu 2.0 in three of the P5+1 meeting locations, which constantly changed.

Some of the secret meetings of delegations during the time in question took place in the Austrian capital Vienna and in Lausanne, Switzerland, usually in hotels. To "protect our customers and the ongoing investigations," Kaspersky is unwilling to reveal exactly which meeting sites the virus had infected. The political director of the Foreign Ministry represented Germany at the working groups, while Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier attended the more important meetings.

Without discussing technical background information or mentioning Duqu, the Wall Street Journal had already reported in March on spying at the P5+1 talks. Quoting anonymous senior sources in the US government, the paper assigned the blame to Israeli intelligence, but Israeli politicians sharply denied the accusation.

Kaspersky analysts identified another source of infection with Duqu 2.0 in connection with the celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp Auschwitz II-Birkenau. The guests at the main commemorative event in late January included German President Joachim Gauck, French President François Hollande, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and other national leaders.

In 2011, Kaspersky analysts found a few oddities in the program code for the previous version of Duqu, which confirmed the suspicions. These suggested that the code's authors were from a country in the GMT + 2 time zone, and that they worked noticeably less on Fridays and not at all on Saturdays, which corresponds to the Israeli work week, in which the Sabbath begins on Friday.

Most striking, though, is that Duqu had major similarities to the computer worm Stuxnet, discovered in 2010. Various international IT experts were therefore sure that there had to be at least a close connection between the creators of the two cyber weapons. And Stuxnet, which manipulated control units at the Iranian uranium enrichment facility in Natanz and caused irreparable damage to a large number of centrifuges, was a joint US-Israeli project.

The Damage is Done

But according to Kaspersky, almost all of the timestamps in the new version have been manipulated so as to create a red herring. In addition, it contains an offensive reference to a known Chinese hacker, which the Russians also believe is

a deliberate attempt to mislead. Still, says Kamluk, the attackers made small errors buried deep inside the individual modules. For example, the original timestamps still appear.

Kaspersky Lab has now issued an internal memo to employees about the incident and has also enlisted the support of Russian and British security agencies and notified Microsoft. As in the first Duqu wave, this time the attackers used new and previously unknown weaknesses in Windows computers known as "zero day exploits."

Identifying who exactly is behind the attack is almost irrelevant to Kaspersky, whose reputation is likely to suffer as a result of the development. "One of the most difficult things an IT security company can do is admit that there was a successful cyber attack on its own systems, reads the company's report on the incident. Nevertheless, management did not hesitate in publicizing the incident, says Kamluk, not least because Kaspersky had already identified other affected parties in Western states, Asia and the Middle East.

Translated from the German by Christopher Sultan

ITEM 15a: Dan Blumenthal, Michael Mazza: A New Diplomacy to Stem Chinese Expansion. The time for choosing sides in Southeast Asia has come.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/a-new-diplomacy-to-stem-chinese-expansion-1433952079>

By DANIEL BLUMENTHAL And MICHAEL MAZZA

June 10, 2015 12:01 p.m. ET

China's aggression is pushing the South China Sea to a boiling point. Beijing's massive island-building project is militarizing the territorial disputes, changing the territorial status quo and shifting the region's balance of power. The U.S. response has been reactive, rhetorical and confused.

To stop and reverse Chinese expansion, the U.S. needs a bold and comprehensive strategy. So far, Washington's approach has consisted of strong remonstrations that call upon China to respect "norms," exercises of military power in the South China Sea to protect these norms, and the shoring up of alliances and partnerships in Asia.

Missing is a clear explanation of U.S. interests and a diplomatic approach that defends them. Washington doesn't just have an interest in maintaining respect for abstract norms. It has a vital interest in keeping the South China Sea an open maritime commons free of Chinese coercion, as well as in stopping Beijing's changes to the territorial status quo.

To date Washington has played a behind-the-scenes diplomatic role, encouraging

the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to take the lead in managing maritime tensions.

This approach has outlived its usefulness. For one thing, only five of Asean's 10 states are parties to the disputes (Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam all make claims to physical features; Indonesia's exclusive economic zone overlaps with China's "nine-dash line"). Asean also has had little success in recent years acting in a united manner: Members still argue among themselves over maritime territory; meanwhile China actively sows divisions within the institution. And Washington has no assurance that Asean's efforts will result in a solution that is in line with U.S. interests.

Thus the U.S. needs to play a far more active role in addressing the territorial disputes. A new diplomacy should have three prongs.

First, the U.S., in coordination with allied maritime powers such as Australia, Japan and the Philippines, should delineate what features in the South China Sea it considers to be islands warranting 12-nautical-mile territorial zones, and what features cannot legitimately be claimed as sovereign territory. The allies should make clear what areas of the sea they consider to be high seas, regardless of who ultimately controls the territories, and their militaries should regularly operate in those waters.

Second, the U.S. should lead a new diplomatic process to secure an agreement on the peaceful use of resources in disputed waters and develop clear rules guiding the conduct of claimants in disputed waters, including regulations on land-reclamation construction activities, ultimately leading to a resolution of territorial disputes.

At present, China is the primary obstacle to such a process. It has slow-rolled negotiations with Asean over a code of conduct and insists on bilateral rather than multilateral negotiations over territorial claims.

A new U.S.-led diplomatic process should encourage Chinese engagement, but should not depend on Chinese participation. If China chooses to boycott talks, the U.S. should lead an effort by its Southeast claimant partners to decide on territorial delineation and the proper use of resources in the seas.

This diplomacy would imbue with a political purpose the displays of U.S. and allied force. U.S. military power should be used to enhance Southeast Asian capabilities, to keep the South China Sea an international waterway, to counter Chinese territorial encroachment and to give allies and friends the security and space to develop economically and politically.

This strategy may not reverse China's already completed land reclamation, but it

will render those new Chinese islets indefensible and Chinese sovereignty over them unrecognized internationally. Beijing can choose to enter into a negotiating process over territorial disposition or see disputes resolved without its input. Either way, the U.S. will work with its East Asian friends and allies to demarcate territorial boundaries and gain agreement on how the seas will be used. It will use its power in support of these agreements.

This course of action is not without risk. Beijing will be angered by U.S. "meddling." It could opt for confrontation, but bullies rarely pick fights they can't win.

For their part, Southeast Asians prefer a nonconfrontational approach and may be initially discomfited by the U.S. adopting a leading role in finding solutions to territorial disputes. But Beijing has already upended the status quo in the South China Sea. Without action, Washington's Asian friends will see their territorial holdings eroded and the broader balance of power shift in China's favor.

Received wisdom is that Southeast Asians do not want to choose sides between China and the U.S. That may have once been true, but China is forcing its neighbors' hands. The time for choosing has come.

The U.S. can present the Southeast Asians with an alternative to Chinese hegemony. It must do so before yet another regional competitor threatens the peaceful order Washington and its allies have built with blood and treasure.

Mr. Blumenthal is the director of Asian Studies at the American Enterprise Institute, where Mr. Mazza is a research fellow.

ITEM 16a: Daniel Henninger: Bye, Bye, American History. Professors and historians urged opposition to the College Board's new curriculum for teaching AP U.S. History.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/bye-bye-american-history-1433978690>

June 10, 2015 7:24 p.m. ET

The memory hole, a creation of George Orwell's novel "Nineteen Eighty-Four," was a mechanism for separating a society's disapproved ideas from its dominant ideas. The unfavored ideas disappeared, Orwell wrote, "on a current of warm air" into furnaces.

In the U.S., the memory-sorting machine may be the College Board's final revision of the Advanced Placement examination for U.S. history, to be released later this summer.

The people responsible for the new AP curriculum really, really hate it when anyone says what they are doing to U.S. history is tendentious and destructive. In

April, the nine authors of the “curriculum framework” published a relatively brief open letter to rebut “uninformed criticisms” of the revision.

Last week, 56 professors and historians published a petition on the website of the National Association of Scholars, urging opposition to the College Board’s framework. Pushback against the new AP U.S. history curriculum has also emerged in Texas, Colorado, Tennessee, Nebraska, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Georgia.

To one liberal newspaper columnist, doubts about the goodness of the new U.S. history curriculum are “claptrap.” New York magazine said a committee vote in Oklahoma’s legislature to defund AP history teaching sounded like something from “The Colbert Report.”

Up to now, the College Board itself has said nothing publicly. Asked Wednesday about the dispute, the board emailed this statement: “The AP U.S. History Course and Exam Development Committee is now reviewing the thoughtful feedback it received, and later this summer we will announce a new edition of the AP U.S. History course framework. This new edition will clarify and encourage a balanced approach to the teaching of American history, while remaining faithful to the requirements that colleges and universities set for academic credit.” In short, wait for our revision of the revision.

That said, the board’s website includes statements of support, not least from the 14,000-member American Historical Association, whose members’ advocacy is presumably based on a reading of the existing text of the curriculum. Nothing would more benefit this controversy than if every parent, high-school student and state legislator in the U.S. did indeed read through all 130 pages of the proposed framework for AP U.S. History. The link is here on the College Board’s website: <https://advancesinap.collegeboard.org/english-history-and-social-science/us-history>. Click on the .pdf download titled “AP U.S. History Course and Exam Description.”

The AP history framework is organized into concepts, codings and even Roman numerals. They explain:

“This coding helps teachers make thematic connections across the chronology of the concept outline. The codes are as follows: ID—Identity; WXT—Work, exchange, and technology; PEO—Peopling; POL—Politics and power; WOR—America in the world; ENV—Environment and geography—physical and human; CUL—Ideas, beliefs, and culture.”

An example: “Native peoples and Africans in the Americas strove to maintain their political and cultural autonomy in the face of European challenges to their independence and core beliefs. (ID-4) (POL-1) (CUL-1) (ENV-2).”

Or: "Explain how arguments about market capitalism, the growth of corporate power, and government policies influenced economic policies from the late 18th century through the early 20th century. 3.2.II, 4.2.II, 5.1.II, 6.1.I, 6.1.II, 7.1.II, 7.2.II."

And inevitably: "Students should be able to explain how various identities, cultures, and values have been preserved or changed in different contexts of U.S. history, with special attention given to the formation of gender, class, racial, and ethnic identities. Students should be able to explain how these subidentities have interacted with each other and with larger conceptions of American national identity."

Let's cut to the chase. The notion that this revision, in the works for seven years, is just disinterested pedagogy is, well, claptrap. In the 1980s, Lynne Cheney, as chairwoman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, threw down the gauntlet over the leftward, even Marxist, class-obsessed drift of American historiography. She lost.

At one point the curriculum's authors say: "Debate and disagreement are central to the discipline of history, and thus to AP U.S. History as well." This statement is phenomenally disingenuous. From Key Concept 1.3: "Many Europeans developed a belief in white superiority to justify their subjugation of Africans and American Indians, using several different rationales." Pity the high-school or college student who puts up a hand to contest that anymore. They don't. They know the Orwellian option now is to stay down.

Comedian Jerry Seinfeld got attention this week for saying he understood why other comics such as Chris Rock have stopped performing on campuses beset by political correctness, trigger warnings and "microaggressions." He said young people cry "racism," "sexism" or "prejudice" without any idea of what they're talking about.

How did that happen? It happened because weak school administrators and academics empowered tireless activists who forced all of American history and life through the four prisms of class, gender, ethnicity and identity. What emerged at the other end was one idea—guilt. I exist, therefore I must be guilty. Of something.

The College Board promises that what it produces next month will be "balanced." We await the event.

ITEM 17a: D.G. Hart: The World Ike Wrought. With help from pastors like Abraham Vereide, 1930s business opposition to the New Deal blossomed into 1950s Christian nationalism.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-world-ike-wrought-1433891576>

June 9, 2015 7:12 p.m. ET

America was founded in 1776, but it was only in 1953, with the inauguration of Dwight David Eisenhower as the 34th president, that it became a Christian nation. Such is Kevin M. Kruse's thesis and, after reading "One Nation Under God," it makes perfect sense.

For almost a generation, historians have turned to the so-called religious right to explain contemporary rhetoric about Christian America. Mr. Kruse, a professor of history at Princeton, looks beyond recent debates and even the Reagan-era efforts of social conservatives such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson to return the country to its more devout roots. He locates the first overt assertions of Christian nationalism in the now faded but once vigorous network of postwar Protestants, both in the mainline denominations and in the emerging born-again organizations.

Hardly any of the names in Mr. Kruse's narrative will be familiar, even to ardent churchgoers. Among them are James W. Fifield, a Los Angeles Congregationalist minister who in 1935 started Spiritual Mobilization. This organization opposed the New Deal as a perversion of Christianity and proposed instead free enterprise as most compatible with the Bible's emphasis on personal initiative and responsibility. Another important figure in the promotion of what Mr. Kruse calls "Christian libertarianism" was Abraham Vereide. He was a Methodist pastor in Seattle who organized prayer meetings for politicians, which over the decades blossomed into the National Prayer Breakfasts at which presidents now feel compelled to speak (if not always pray). Vereide received support for his meetings from Sen. Frank Carlson, a Kansas Republican and Baptist layman, who convinced Conrad Hilton to host the first presidential one, in January 1953, at his Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. With help from pastors like Fifield and Vereide, 1930s business opposition to the New Deal blossomed into 1950s Christian nationalism.

ONE NATION UNDER GOD

By Kevin M. Kruse

Basic, 352 pages, \$29.99

In 1954, Ralph Flanders, a Vermont Republican senator from a Congregationalist background, revived the 19th-century campaign for a constitutional amendment to recognize "the authority and law of Jesus Christ, Saviour and Ruler of nations." It failed again. But House Democrat Louis C. Rabaut, a Roman Catholic from Detroit, was more successful with a bill to include "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. Ten years later, Long Island Republican Rep. Frank Becker, a Roman Catholic, introduced a constitutional amendment that would make organized prayer and Bible reading in public schools legal and in doing so rebuke the Supreme Court justices who had declared such piety unconstitutional in *Engel v. Vitale* in 1962. His effort was unsuccessful, but that did not stop Illinois Sen. Everett Dirksen, the

Republican minority leader with ties to the Reformed Church of America, from sponsoring another amendment designed to create space for prayer in public institutions. It also failed—51 to 33. While Mr. Kruse isn't wholly successful in using these congressional efforts as a bridge from Christian libertarianism to 1950s civil religion, his narrative does persuasively document the Christian aspects of postwar American exceptionalism.

Billy Graham, unsurprisingly, plays a key role in the "invention" of Christian America. The man whom George H.W. Bush dubbed "America's pastor" was happy and active to bless the overt Christianity of the presidencies of Eisenhower and Richard M. Nixon. Before his inauguration, Eisenhower confided to Graham his belief that he had been "elected . . . to help lead this country spiritually." With advice from the evangelical preacher, Eisenhower used his inauguration to provide such leadership. The day began with a service at the National Presbyterian Church. Eisenhower himself prayed after taking his oath for "Almighty God" to make "full and complete our dedication to the service of the people in this throng." In his inaugural address, he insisted that Americans "who are free must proclaim anew our faith." Less than two weeks later, Eisenhower became the first president to be baptized while in office, and four days after that he was the guest of honor at the first National Prayer Breakfast.

Eisenhower's vice president, Richard Nixon, intensified such religious patriotism in 1969 at his own inauguration. A Religious Observance Committee coordinated worship services across the nation to set a spiritual tone for the transfer of power. On the day itself, the White House had a service that included clergy from five different faiths, and the swearing-in ceremonies had five additional clergymen participating, including Billy Graham, who reasserted the slogans of Eisenhower's America: "We recognize on this historic occasion that we are 'a nation under God.'" Nixon himself in his address urged that "to a crisis of the spirit" the nation needed "an answer of the spirit." He soon participated in his first National Prayer Breakfast, but he did Eisenhower one better, sponsoring regular Sunday-morning worship services at the White House. Nixon's piety, of course, looked hollow—if not cynical—once Watergate scandalized the nation and confirmed what critics had suspected. But Christian nationalism was so firm that it was easy for politicians and preachers associated with the religious right to resurrect it to fight moral permissiveness at home and godless Communism abroad.

"One Nation Under God" is an important and convincing reminder that the roots of Christian America were cultivated well before the era of the religious right. What it fails to do is to supply much evidence of the subtitle's claim that "Corporate America Invented Christian America." Mr. Kruse amply demonstrates that pastors, politicians and the American people were remarkably effective on their own as inventors of Christian America. In fact, the religious nationalism of the 1950s has "become so deeply lodged in American political culture" that every president since Nixon has invoked pious patriotism to secure either God's blessing or popular

support (or both).

Mr. Hart teaches history at Hillsdale College and is the author of "From Billy Graham to Sarah Palin: Evangelicalism and the Betrayal of American Conservatism."

ITEM 18a: Benjamin Balint: The Cave and the Classroom. It's not easy teaching philosophy in Indonesia, where the first founding principle of the constitution requires the belief in one God.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-cave-and-the-classroom-1433978548>

June 10, 2015 7:22 p.m. ET

One afternoon last year, I returned home from a "great books" seminar that I taught to Palestinian students at Bard College's liberal-arts program at Al Quds University in Jerusalem. I mentioned to a friend that the classroom discussion on Plato's "Republic" had been interrupted by a militant rally staged outside our building by students from the Islamic Jihad faction shouting into loudspeakers. "Back from Syracuse?" he asked.

The quip referred to Plato's failed attempt to put philosophy into practice. At the behest of a former pupil, the Athenian philosopher twice consented to travel to Syracuse to educate its ruler, Dionysius the Younger. "Ashamed lest I appear to myself as a pure theorist, unwilling to touch any practical task," as Plato wrote in a letter, he decided that he could not pass up the chance to show the usefulness of his teachings. In the end, Dionysius' taste for tyranny proved stronger than his appetite for the pursuit of truth. After escaping arrest, a much chastened Plato returned from Syracuse to the Academy in Athens.

Carlos Fraenkel, a student of medieval Jewish and Islamic philosophy who now teaches at McGill University in Montreal, similarly decided to test his conviction that philosophy can be put to use outside of the walls of the academy. Between 2006 and 2011, he taught philosophy to students in a variety of countries and cultures: to undergraduates at Al Quds University; graduate students at Alauddin State Islamic University in Indonesia; conflicted Hasidic Jews in New York City; high-school students in northeast Brazil; and Native Americans on a Mohawk reservation on the U.S.-Canadian border.

TEACHING PLATO IN PALESTINE

By Carlos Fraenkel

Princeton, 221 pages, \$27.95

Mr. Fraenkel's discerning account of these experiences shapes what he calls an "intellectual travelogue." The tour opens with an attempt to reclaim for his Muslim students thinkers from their own tradition who interpreted Islam in philosophical terms. He leads them through discussions of Abu Bakr al-Razi, a polymath born in

the ninth century who referred to Socrates as "my Imam," and of al-Farabi, the 10th-century Islamic philosopher who, by reconciling reason and revelation, granted validity to other faiths.

Like Plato, Mr. Fraenkel soon enough encounters the effects of political intimidation and the fears of free thinking. He co-teaches his seminar at Al Quds with the university president, Sari Nusseibeh, long vilified as a traitor for forging contacts with Israelis. Mr. Nusseibeh had been assaulted by masked Palestinian students in 1987 at Birzeit University on the West Bank moments after finishing a lecture on liberalism and tolerance. "So it's not surprising that I never see him without his bodyguards," Mr. Fraenkel writes. "They inspect the classroom before he comes in and guard the door during class."

When Mr. Fraenkel, who describes himself an atheist, challenges students in Indonesia to ponder whether Islam is compatible with pluralism and democracy, he comes up against the limits on free inquiry in a country where the first of five founding principles of the constitution requires the belief in one God and where religious scholars impose a monolithic understanding of Islam. "The paradox," an Indonesian academic tells him, "is that only Western universities provide the intellectual freedom to study the rich and dynamic Islamic tradition in all its manifestations."

In a chapter titled "Spinoza in Shtreimels," Mr. Fraenkel confronts a different kind of fear. Borrowing a phrase from the historian Yirmiyahu Yovel, he calls the ultra-Orthodox students of his clandestine seminar, conducted in a lounge in SoHo, "modern-day Marranos of reason: God-fearing Jews in public, freethinkers in secret." Together they read the heretical Jewish philosopher Spinoza and the 11th-century Muslim thinker al-Ghazali, both of whom suffered a crisis of faith. Here philosophy represents a theological threat more than a political one. "From the point of view of our community," one of his students says, "studying these books is much worse than having an extramarital affairs or going to a prostitute. That's weakness of the flesh, but here our souls are on the line."

In Brazil, where a 2008 law mandates the incorporation of philosophy into the public-school curriculum, Mr. Fraenkel's students prove eager to apply ideas of social justice to their own deeply unjust society. The members of the Mohawk community he teaches are also keen to use insights into self-determination and private property to inform their efforts to heal their own fractures and reclaim lost land.

Many of the classroom conversations, Mr. Fraenkel concedes, remain inconclusive, but fruitfully so. What unites them is his skill in the art of posing questions designed to perplex and provoke. He lets us overhear the Socratic form of dialogue that Plato invented and that Mr. Fraenkel practices much to his students' pleasure, and ours.

Taken in aggregate, what do these disparate groups of students teach their teacher? In the second and shorter part of "Teaching Plato in Palestine," Mr. Fraenkel moves from travelogue to a spirited defense of philosophy as a language of public reason universal enough to cut across cultural and religious boundaries and eloquent enough to address what he calls "tensions that arise from diversity." Rather than allowing us to shelter behind cultural relativism, he argues, philosophy subjects our own beliefs to critical scrutiny, thus enhancing our capacity to articulate our convictions to ourselves and to others.

Unlike the disillusioned Plato, Mr. Fraenkel returns from his travels with renewed faith in the wide promise of philosophy. One hopes that, for all the tyranny and fear in the world today, the author's faith continues to fare better than his predecessor's and that his almost prayerful aspiration for philosophy's transformative power isn't drowned out by the din of the loudspeakers.

Mr. Balint, a writer living in Jerusalem, taught at Al Quds University from 2011 to 2014.