

Trump's Middle East Policy Making and the Future of Security

Abbas Mossallanejad* - Full Professor of Political Sciences, Faculty of law & Political Sciences, Tehran University, Tehran, Iran

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Abstract

As it looks at the region, Trump can see three central challenges facing the Middle East, working together to create the horrible brew we're now dealing with. The first challenge is the security vacuums in places like Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen that followed the collapse of some of these Arab republics. These vacuums are highly problematic, setting the conditions for extremism. They are where extremists organize and plan attacks, and where refugees originate. A lot of these destabilizing problems, then affect the entire region. Trump's election is a massive setback for humanitarian issues, in fact, many welcome him, despite his rhetoric on Muslims, women and minorities. Most troubling, however, is that many of U.S questions about his approach to the Middle East cannot be answered right now because he literally has no experience in foreign policy.

The international community has no idea what to expect from Trump, and such diplomatic uncertainty is a humbling experience at best. Trump needs to reassure its nation's allies before he becomes president; assurances and commitments are especially crucial when times are tough, as they are now. NATO is important, but so are the Sunni Arab states. Given that one of Trump's few clear aims is to destroy the Islamic State, it is absolutely imperative that Saudi Arabia and similar countries be involved, since the group's ideology cannot be discredited without them.

The expectation that "Trump as president" will be starkly different from "Trump as candidate" is a false hope at best. Saudi Arabia should be ready for some surprises, likely in the form of negative rhetoric from the Trump administration. Ultimately, the kingdom needs to create an alliance of Sunni countries to serve as a bulwark against a potentially anti-Sunni Trump.

While Trump has long signaled a desire to get out of the Middle East, candidates often flip positions when they face difficult decisions as president. Yet the ultimate outcome of any given regional crisis will depend heavily on the cabinet members and advisors surrounding him. Whatever the case, given the region's current situation the Palestinians more divided than ever, the Iranians bent on regional expansion, and the Saudis in the midst of a "revolution disguised as economic reform" U.S historical allies in Israel and the Sunni Arab countries need a strong America now more than ever.

Keywords: the Middle East, Regional Security, ISIS, Trump Administration, Policy Making.

* E-mail: Mossallanejad@ut.ac.ir

1. Introduction

When President Obama took office, U.S was in the midst of an economic collapse: banks were at risk; two out of five mortgages were underwater; pension funds were collapsing; unemployment was doubling and the American dream was dying. In Trump polling for the first time, two-thirds of the American people were saying they no longer believed their children were going to have a better life than they had. In addition to that and the hyper-partisan environment in Washington, which created the gridlock we're living with, Obama faced severe crises in the Middle East, despite the change in tone in the last few years of the Bush administration. The Iraq War had created consequences U.S was still reeling from.

Trump's platform of "no confidence in Washington" clearly gripped large swaths of the American population, many of whom ascribed to angry populism and partisan tribalism. While citizens had definite grievances about issues such as wealth disparity, Obama care, and limited job opportunities, their negative partisanship was largely reactionary: "US hate the other side," they said with their vote (Zogby, 2017: 8).

In addition to Trump's skillful maneuvering of the antiestablishment wave, his Republican supporters also played the game well, guaranteeing themselves control over the House and Senate. The appointment of Supreme Court justices is now the prerogative of a unified Republican government, which will influence social policy for the next twenty to thirty years. Ultimately, the outcome is a case of the dog catching the bus.

Here are good reasons to worry about how Donald Trump will handle foreign policy, but there are also reasons to think he won't be any worse than some other administrations. The neoconservatives who dominated foreign-policy making in George W. Bush's administration had lots of prior experience, God knows, and look at all the harm they did. My fears about Trump's foreign policy have always been two-fold: that he might pursue a more sensible grand strategy but do it incompetently, thereby weakening America's international position, or that he will eventually get co-opted by

the foreign-policy establishment and repeat the Blob's most familiar mistakes. Based on some of his early appointments like Islamophobia Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn as national security advisor, might even get the worst of both worlds: unrealistic goals pursued ineptly.

Some of the United States scholars and interpreter argue that the threat that Trump may pose to America's constitutional order. His lengthy business career suggests he is a vindictive man who will go to extreme lengths to punish his opponents and will break a promise in a heartbeat and without remorse. The 2016 campaign confirmed that he has little respect for existing norms and rules he refused to release his tax returns, lied repeatedly, claimed the electoral and political systems were "rigged" against him, threatened to jail his opponent if he won, among other such violations and revealed his deep contempt for both his opponents and supporters (Walt, 2016: 11).

These fears may strike many of you as alarmist, and it's entirely possible that Trump will uphold his oath to defend the Constitution and stay within legal lines. But given his past conduct, expressed attitudes, and bomb-throwing advisors, U.S politicians think there are valid reasons to think the constitutional order that has prevailed in the United States for more than two centuries could be in jeopardy. And that should worry all Americans. The constitutional reality never lived up to the Founding Fathers' hopes and ideals, of course, but the system has had a self-correcting quality that has served the nation well. Equally important, the Constitution has helped the United States avoid the self-destructive excesses and extreme injustices that are common in authoritarian countries (Walt, 2017: 2).

Some of Scholars argue that the Trump's era will be as a dark scenario of subverted democracy is likely, only that it is far from impossible. Democracy has broken down in plenty of other countries, and there is no reason to think the United States is completely immune from this danger. For a good rundown of the political science literature on this topic, check

out this useful list by Jeff Colgan of Brown University. The good news is that the United States doesn't suffer from some of the traits that make democratic breakdowns more likely: It isn't poor, its political institutions have been around for a long time, and it is not in the middle of a deep economic crisis. The bad news is that the United States has a presidential system which appears to be more prone to this problem than parliamentary orders and also one where executive authority has grown steadily over time. And we've never had a president remotely like this one (Sur, 2017: 7).

One of the obstacles to a democratic breakdown is the government bureaucracy, whose permanent members are insulated from political pressure by existing civil service protections that make it hard to fire senior officials without cause. But one can imagine the Trump administration asking Congress to weaken those protections, portraying this step as a blow against "big government" and a way to improve government efficiency. The Wall Street Journal op-ed page would be quick to endorse this idea, on the grounds that firing a few senior bureaucrats would encourage the rest to work harder and better.

The president or his lieutenants can gut government agencies more or less at will, the fear of being fired will lead many experienced public servants to keep their heads down and kowtow to whatever the president wants, no matter how ill-advised or illegal it might be. And when you consider that Trump seems to be appointing loyalists to top posts even when they lack the obvious qualifications Trump's incoming chief of staff, Reince Priebus, has never worked in the federal government, this possibility gets scarier still (Walt, 2017: 3).

However, no one has yet tried to use these new powers of surveillance to monitor, intimidate, embarrass, deter, or destroy political opponents. U.S. politicians don't know if the exposure of the indiscretions of former New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer or former CIA Director David Petraeus is an example of this problem or not, but it certainly demonstrates how an

ambitious and unscrupulous president could use the ability to monitor political opponents to great advantage. He would need the cooperation of top officials and possibly many underlings as well, but this only requires loyal confederates at the top and compliant people below. The White House had sufficient authority, under George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, to convince U.S government employees to torture other human beings. In comparison with that, convincing some officials to monitor emails and phone calls and online searches in order to dig up damaging dirt on the president's rivals should be child's play.

Effective liberal democracies depend on the rule of law being implemented in a politically neutral fashion. That's an ideal that no society achieves completely, and there are many ways in which the U.S judicial system falls well short. But given the nature of Trump's campaign and the deep divisions within the United States at present, a key litmus test for the president-elect is whether he will direct U.S officials to enforce similar standards of conduct on both his supporters and his opponents.

If anti-Trump protesters are beaten up by a band of Trump's fans, will the latter face prosecution as readily as if the roles were reversed? Will local and federal justice agencies be as vigilant in patrolling right-wing hate speech and threats of violence as they are with similar actions that might emanate from the other side? U.S politicians don't know about the result, but U.S politicians do not find the nomination of Jeff Sessions for attorney general reassuring on this point. If Trump is quick to call out his critics but gives racists, bigots, and homophobes a free pass because they happen to like him, it would be another sign he is trying to tilt the scales of justice in his favor (Walt, 2017: 4).

2. Research methodology

The Research Methodology used in this article is descriptive and analytic and final subject of the article has been codified and supplied according to the content databases available in libraries and cyber space's.

3. Finding:

3.1. Trump's Program for Middle East Security

The countries targeted last year were Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan, an increase from the six bombed by the United States in 2015. The number of bombs dropped also rose, with at least 23,144 bombs dropped the year before. The majority of the bombs were dropped in Iraq and Syria, followed by Afghanistan, where the so-called war on terror has ravaged the region since 2001.

Another 496 bombs were dropped by the U.S in Libya, where the United States began an air campaign to oust the Islamic State group, who along with other extremist groups filled the void when NATO carried out a regime change operation that toppled the country's leader Muammar Gaddafi. The year 2016 also saw the continuance of drone strikes in Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan, where the United States has carried out covert drone wars for years, resulting in hundreds of civilian deaths.

3.1.1. Trump's Policy toward Israel

Israelis tend to have little faith in polling, so they were not surprised by the election results. Unlike Jordanians, however, Israelis would have voted for Hillary Clinton by a 15 percent margin according to some reports. In general, Israelis hope for three traits in an American president: empathy, a good understanding of the region's evils, and guaranteed dependability as a military ally. While Trump has shown credible empathy for Israel and its hardships in the Middle East, the last factor being a dependable ally remains untested (Rugh, 2017: 4).

Yet Israel also has two major disagreements with President Obama that Trump can capitalize on: the Iran deal and the Palestinian conflict. Although Trump has no stance on the latter issue, Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas enjoys less legitimacy today than ever, so it is not as grave a matter to Israelis as the Iran nuclear agreement - a deal that Trump has frequently and vociferously criticized. Although Israelis want to see

American leadership abroad, some uncertainty persists on their fundamental national security issues, engendering a sense of drift.

Many in the Israeli government, such as Labor Party leader Isaac Herzog, are positioning themselves to benefit from Trump's victory. As for Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, not all is as wonderful as one might believe. While he understands the region's sensitivities and sees the imperative of separating from the Palestinians, both the left and the right are criticizing his settlement policies. Given the lack of pressure from the Obama administration to reduce settlement activity, Trump's right-wing platform might further embolden the Israeli right, who have been an obstacle to Netanyahu's centrist political maneuvering.

In one of the very first moves as the U.S. Senate began its term in 2017, three Republican senators including former presidential candidates Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio introduced legislation designed to force the U.S. State Department to move its Israeli embassy from Tel Aviv to the contested city of Jerusalem. That would be a significant and unprecedented provocation to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process (Bennis, 2017: 1).

"There is no country in the world that has its embassy in Jerusalem," she told the Real News Network recently. According to several UN Security Council resolutions, the city is supposed to remain "a separate body" managed by "an international agency, presumably the United Nations itself," until final borders between Israel and a future Palestinian state are negotiated.

Yet those talks "are far from finished," Bennis said. "They are, in fact, not even underway." Bennis told the network, is significant not only as a global religious landmark, but Jerusalem as a living city with real people whose lives are completely circumscribed by the reality of Israeli occupation. The gradual Israeli settlement of majority Palestinian East Jerusalem, she added, "goes to the core of what Israeli occupation looks like." (Khashoggi & Others, 2016: 6)

Israeli leaders were sending mixed messages to Obama and his top advisers about how far they were willing to go to stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. Then-Defense Minister Ehud Barak briefed his Pentagon counterparts on secret plans to launch a commando-style raid on Iran's most heavily fortified nuclear site. Israel's Mossad intelligence service, in turn, privately told the Americans that the Israelis could not act against Iran alone. The White House was never certain whom to believe.

Congress has made similar moves with respect to the U.S embassy before, Bennis explained, but past presidents have always bypassed them. With Donald Trump coming into office, however, that could change. Trump, Bennis said, "says not only that he supports this, but he has, in fact, appointed David Friedman as his ambassador to Israel." Friedman who is Trump's "bankruptcy lawyer, not a diplomat" is "known for being a financial supporter of the settlements" and "has gone on to say he looks forward to carrying out his work in the eternal, undivided capital of Israel in Jerusalem." (Bennis, 2017: 2).

3.1.2. Trump's Policy toward Saudi Arabia

The United States also has vital interests in the kingdom's facilitation of air and sea travel between Asia and Europe, its economic and military support rather than opposition to U.S policies and interests in the region, and its continued reliance on conventional rather than nuclear weapons for its defense. Saudi Arabia, for its part, has no alternative to the United States as the ultimate guarantor of its security. The next administration should strive to restore U.S-Saudi relations so that they permit exploration of how to advance interests that both countries share with Iran, like the stabilization of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Trump has also enflamed the "War on Islam" rhetoric, and the resultant spike in Islamophobia could conceivably lead to increased torture, bans on American Muslims, and indiscriminate bombings in the Middle East all of which would exacerbate the problem of international terrorism.

Alternatively, Trump may be inclined to outsource his Middle East policies to Russia (Khashoggi & Others, 2016: 7).

The wider challenge for Saudi Arabia is to translate oil wealth into greater regional clout, something the country's youthful leadership has vowed to do. There were few signs of success last year. The Yemen war grinds on; in Syria, Saudi-backed fighters were driven out of their stronghold in Aleppo; Egypt, kept afloat by Saudi Arabia's dollars, has sometimes seemed reluctant to fall in line with its foreign policy.

Saudi Arabia intervened in March 2015, leading a coalition that's carried out intensive airstrikes and deployed a limited number of ground troops. It's trying to reinstate a Yemeni government that enjoys international recognition yet lost control of much of the country to Shiite rebels, known as Houthis and said by the Saudis to have ties with the kingdom's chief regional rival, Shiite-ruled Iran (Hyman, 2017: 1).

Saudi Arabia says it's fighting to halt the spread of Iranian influence. Yet the rebels in Yemen -- whose connection with Iran is disputed -- still control much of the country. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, an Iranian ally, is recapturing territory from Saudi-backed Islamist groups. Egypt may be tilting toward Assad. Even within OPEC, Saudi Arabia's U-turn in November, agreeing to pare production, won't be followed by Iran -- which is authorized to boost its own output under the deal.

Saudi Arabia has better weapons than its enemies in Yemen, no surprise in a war that pits one of the richest Arab countries against the poorest. And still the Saudis are struggling to impose their will. Several months after his political bosses declared that the campaign in Yemen was almost over, Colonel Massoud Ali al-Shwaf's border guards come under regular attack. Al-Shwaf is responsible for operations along the frontier in Najran province, where expanses of desert and mountain ravines make it challenging at the best of times to stop infiltration and smuggling.

Now he's also confronted by Yemeni resisters who fire rockets from

portable launchers, then bury them under rocks to escape retaliation. “There’s always engagement,” the colonel said at the Beer Askar base, about 10 miles from the border, adding that his forces had repelled a cross border attack a day earlier. “From the start of the war the threat changed and increased,” al-Shwaf said. “U.S has the casualties to prove it.” (Hyman, 2017: 2)

This policy is expensive, when the kingdom is imposing austerity at home as it seeks to rebalance an energy dependent economy after the oil slump. The government doesn’t disclose the price-tag of its Yemen’s war or the extent of support for opposition fighters in Syria. But the conflicts have been a growing burden at a time when plummeting oil revenues have led to a \$200 billion decline in Saudi net foreign assets over the last two years. Requests for comment from the Saudi Foreign Ministry weren’t immediately answered.

Mohammed bin Salman, the deputy crown prince and architect of Saudi transformation plans, said in a March interview that the warring parties in Yemen were making “significant progress” toward resolving their conflict. Since then, peace talks have repeatedly collapsed. “It’s hard to describe this Saudi intervention as a success,” said Stephen Seche, a former U.S ambassador to Yemen who’s executive vice president of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington.

“The Saudi bombing campaign has not managed to bring the Houthis to their knees. It has inflicted enormous damage on Yemen’s infrastructure and enormous suffering on the people of the country.” More than 10,000 Yemenis have been killed or wounded, according to the United Nations, and UNICEF said last month that 2.2 million children are acutely malnourished.

3.1.3. Trump’s Policy toward Iran

When it comes to the Middle East, Donald Trump's stances are contradictory, especially regarding Iran. Saudi Arabia, while certainly concerned about the Islamic State's presence in Syria and Iraq, is much more

perturbed by the actions of Shiite Iran. Trump is vocally anti-Iranian, but he also supports Bashar al-Assad in the Syrian conflict, which ultimately bolsters Iranian regional control. Thus, Saudi Arabia is rightfully nervous about a Trump presidency.

The Iranian-supplied rockets were raining down on Gen. James N. Mattis's troops throughout the spring and summer of 2011 with greater and greater intensity. Six American soldiers were killed by a volley in eastern Baghdad in early June. A few weeks later, three more Americans died in a similar strike, driving the monthly death toll to 15. It was the worst month for U.S troops in Iraq in more than two years, and Iran's proxies were vowing more rockets and more bloodshed (Greg &Entous, 2017: 2).

Mattis, the top American commander in the Middle East, was determined to send a clear message to Tehran to stop it. His proposal, crafted with the support of the ambassador and the senior American commander in Iraq, was to hit back inside Iran, said current and former senior U.S officials, who took part in the debate. One option was a dead-of-night U.S strike against an Iranian power plant or oil refinery.

Mattis's proposals quickly reached the White House, which had a different view of how to curb Iran's increasingly aggressive behavior. To President Obama, a U.S strike on Iranian soil would only inflame a volatile situation and widen a conflict that he had promised to end. Others in the White House worried that Mattis's proposal risked starting yet another war in the Middle East(Greg &Entous, 2017: 2).

Mattis will play a different role for a new commander in Trump's cabinet. Donald Trump's choice to lead the Pentagon, Mattis will oversee a force of nearly 1.3 million active-duty troops scattered across more than 150 countries. He will serve a president who has questioned the impartiality of America's intelligence agencies and has moved in often puzzling ways to embrace longtime adversaries, such as Russian President Vladimir Putin. He has emphasized the value of unpredictability over careful deliberation and

raw power over diplomacy.

For much of the Obama presidency, Iran loomed as one of the toughest and most volatile foreign policy problems. A big part of that challenge was managing Israel, the United States' closest ally in the region, but one that might take unilateral action against Iran. "The American response solved the immediate problem of Iranian-backed attacks, but was not sufficient to deter Iran from further challenges to the U.S military throughout the region," one senior U.S official involved in the deliberations said (Bennis, 2017a: 4).

Mattis's preparations for a possible conflict also rattled some U.S diplomats whom Mattis invited to Central Command's regional headquarters in Qatar in 2011 for briefings on how Iran might strike back at U.S allies and facilities. Some of the diplomats had the impression that Mattis was describing a "World War III" scenario, one ambassador said.

Among the greatest dangers in the region was uncertainty, and some White House officials worried that Iran might misread Mattis's war preparations as an act of aggression. At the time, the United States had no direct channels of communication with the Iranian military to de-escalate tensions (Goldenberg, 2017: 9).

On occasion, the U.S military would conduct exercises designed to send messages to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps about America's seriousness. During and after those maneuvers, U.S spy agencies would monitor the Iranians' reactions. Sometimes the Iranians missed the intended signal, suggesting to the Americans that they did not notice what the United States had done. At other times, they seemed to react to American actions that were not intended to be provocative.

3.2. Trump's Policy toward Syrian war

The United States is indirectly or directly involved in about half of these Syrian wars, aligned with and against Assad and with and against the insurgent forces, sometimes with Turkey and sometimes against Turkey, sometimes with the Kurds but always against Russia. Oh, and Israel

continues to bomb Syrians whenever it feels like it. Notwithstanding all the humanitarian crocodile tears, one-sided anti-Assad narratives and public-relations exercise masquerading as diplomacy. The net effect of U.S policy has been to perpetuate the anarchy and slaughter in Syria by feeding ever more weapons into it. This is a policy congenial to Israel, which openly prefers chaos to competent but hostile government in Syria. It frustrates or horrifies everyone else (Bennis, 2017a: 4).

Assad remains in power. The Gulf Arabs feel let down. Sectarian strife swells. Foreign interventions wax and wane. Iran retains its preeminent political role in the Levant. Turkey turns this way and that. Kurdish self-determination looms and recedes. Turkey and Europe drown in refugees. The United States and Russia are ever-closer to war. All sides, including the United States, remorselessly violate both international law and the basic canons of human decency. Daesh revels in its martyrdom. And the slaughter continues.

3.2.1. Trump's Policy toward Assad Government

The disgusting effects of lawless outside intervention in Syria, as in Libya, have driven a stake through the heart of the so-called principle of responsibility to protect. Americans are in denial about the significant role Trump have played in destabilizing and immiserating Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan. U.S accept no responsibility for the 450,000 or more dead Syrians or the 11 million displaced from their homes. U.S politicians and public oppose taking in the refugees from the anarchy U.S have helped to foster. This is craven, dishonorable, and a reproach to U.S moral standing and prestige. But let's leave such quibbles aside. This is, after all, Washington, where both common sense and moral accountability come to die.

American attempts to oust the government of Syria have produced another backfire for attempted regime change. Syria has also served up a further demonstration of the limited capacity of armed intervention to

impose the U.S government's will abroad. Bombing and support for insurgents are feel-good actions, not substitutes for coherent strategy. Trump and those who have followed U.S lead have gained nothing and lost much from Trump policy latest thoughtless lurch into the Levant.

3.2.2. Trump's Policy toward regional agent of Syrian Proxy war

Part of trump's reason for joining Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the UAE in attempting to overthrow the Assad government was to show solidarity with them complicity, instead, U.S politicians should say. An erratic U.S performance has irreparably damaged all these relationships. Complicity in the Syrian catastrophe and Israel's assaults on Gaza and Lebanon, and in Saudi Arabia's brutal attempt to bring Yemen to heel, have earned the United States outrage abroad and no plaudits at home. As U.S influence has receded, Russia has re-emerged as a diplomatically skillful greater power in the Middle East. Meanwhile, there is no silver lining to be seen in the dark cloud of Syria's agony (Goldenberg, 2017: 10).

Parallel contradictions are at work in Iraq, which US2003 invasion and occupation also thrust into anarchy. By marked contrast with Syria, where we're working with Sunni Islamists to oppose Iran and a pro-Iranian Shiite regime, in Iraq we're working in parallel with Iran to suppress Sunni Islamists and resistance to Shiite exclusion of Sunnis from a role in governing the country. Ironically, given American support of it, Iraq's government participates in a joint intelligence headquarters with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Quds Force, Hezbollah and Russia. As in Syria, American policies appear to align every which way.

There are fewer wars going on in Iraq than in Syria only five or six by my count. In various combinations, the Iraqi government, the United States and Iran are each fighting against Daesh. The Shiite Arab majority is against the Sunni Arab minority and vice-versa. Daesh kills secularists, Shiites and carefully selected Sunni Arabs and Kurds. The Kurds, with American support, stand against Daesh and sometimes against the Iraqi government.

The Kurds kill Turkmen and the Turks kill them.

Occasionally, presidential candidates hint that they have a plan that diagrams how Americans can end U.S. misadventures in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, but the last box on their plan seems to read "a miracle happens here." It's the Middle East, where miracles are said to have happened in the past, so U.S. politicians suppose you can't rule it out, but it's hard to consider it much of a probability (Goldenberg, 2017: 5).

Trump's counterterrorism policies need a fundamental overhaul. We're not being assaulted by religious fanatics so much as by young men, and the occasional woman, who fit the murderous profile of misfits like Dylann Roof, Timothy McVeigh and Ted Kaczynski. Whether homegrown or foreign, U.S. attackers see themselves as humiliated, persecuted, bullied or otherwise victimized. They're looking for a cause larger than themselves in which to cloak their criminality. Like the perpetrators of gun massacres from non-Muslim backgrounds, they are boastful and crave attention through spectacular violence.

Sometimes they act to get such attention. All too often Trump gives it to them. Obama mistake their terrorist doctrine for their motivation. But they are psychotic, not pious. They are gangbangers, not theologians. Bombing the so-called Islamic State and snuffing Muslims from the air with drones don't help cure anti-American terrorism with global reach. They feed the very paranoid delusions on which it thrives.

Eliminating the Islamic State's control of parts of Syria and Iraq will not eliminate the causes of terrorism directed at the West. In Syria, the combatants have all relied on external support. They have not needed to court popular support by avoiding atrocities against civilians. Cutting off overt and covert aid to combatants would help restore their incentive to do so to take account of the feelings of the people they are victimizing in Syria (Freeman & Others, 2016: 7).

3.2.3. Trump's Policy toward international actors of Syrian war

Syrians, Turks, Saudis, other Gulf Arabs, Europeans, Iranians, Lebanese and Russians would all be better off if America and other external parties agreed to mutual restraint and an end to the supply of weapons and training and fighters to Syria. Syrians need to sort out their differences among themselves. Curtailing the proxy wars in Syria would remove major obstacles to Syrians' actually doing this. It would also bring the world back into conformity with the principle that one should do no harm and mark a return to respect for international law something now rarely mentioned but which U.S have a stake in preserving.

Focusing on calling off the proxy wars in Syria could also facilitate exploration of how to dial down the increasingly dangerous geopolitical rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Unless that's done, there can be no return to peace and stability in the region. As part of a search for a regional détente, the United States needs to have a serious discussion with the Saudis about a war-termination strategy for Yemen. Riyadh traditionally managed Yemen with money, not military operations an approach in which it has enjoyed many advantages over Tehran.

Trump needs to help the Saudis find a way to replace warfare with less ruinous ways of pursuing their entirely understandable interest in denying Yemen to Iran strategically. Working with Saudi Arabia to reduce armed conflict in its region would also help detoxify the U.S-Saudi relationship. It's become politically poisonous in both countries, as illustrated by the blossoming of American Islamophobia, Saudi vituperation against America, and the recent override of President Obama's veto of JASTA, the cynically named Justice against Sponsors of Terrorism Act. This is actually the "shyster's relief act" of 2016.

3.2.4. Trump's Policy toward Proxy war Agents

The Persian region is ripe for new approaches. The opportunities for imaginative statecraft that can secure a long-term place for Israel in the

region, share the burden of protecting access to the energy supplies of the Persian Gulf, dial down anti-Western terrorism with global reach, phase out the slaughter in Syria, restabilize Iraq, and channel Saudi-Iranian and U.S Russian rivalry away from proxy wars are all there to be found if only U.S leaders have the political courage to look (Goldenberg, 2017: 5).

These vacuums are, in some ways, the embers of the fire. Then you add gasoline: the proxy wars, state-on-state competition. The most prominent and problematic is the Iranian-Saudi competition. U.S also has Turks, Qataris, others in the region, the United States and Russia. All these countries are insecure. They are concerned about losing influence in these vacuums that have been created. How do they respond? They provide weapons and money in an effort to increase their influence and make sure they are on the winning side or have some influence in whatever vacuums are filled. But by doing this, they just add fuel to the flames (Freeman & Others, 2016: 4).

A third factor is the American role. What you have right now in the Middle East is a perception that the United States is pulling back. It's important, whether it's partially true or not true, since this perception is feeding further competition. It's creating insecurity among some of U.S friends, especially the Saudis and other Gulf states. They fear that the United States is moving away from them and towards Iran, and this is then causing them to be more aggressive in their responses and to act out in ways that are sometimes unhelpful to their interests and ours.

This perception of American withdrawal is a complicated dynamic. U.S has tried to pursue a purely de-escalatory strategy; U.S politicians fear that all you're going to end up doing is fueling the fire. If you try to pull back, all you're going to do is send more signals to the Russians and the Iranians to pull forward and send more signals to your friends that they're on their own. So Trump would offer a different approach for the region for the next administration.

The first priority is to fill the security gaps across the region, starting with Syria and Iraq. After 9/11, U.S had to decide how to deal with the problem of terrorist safe havens. U.S invaded countries. U.S army puts 150,000 troops on the ground. It turns out that this doesn't work. It's too expensive for U.S interests; it's not sustainable politically in the United States; and it doesn't actually achieve U.S objectives. Here's what Trump would do for U.S policy: First, what U.S needs to focus on, is who U.S army are going to support, as opposed to who U.S are going to oppose. Are U.S policies against Assad? Are U.S policies against ISIS? Are U.S policies against Jabhat al-Nusra?

In all these cases, the United States and its partners worked with forces on the ground and groups that to call acceptable, as they're not interested in conducting terrorism abroad and exporting extremist ideology. Their ideology is inclusive enough that they can work with other actors in these territories instead of being so extreme it would just fuel the fire. They also have to have local legitimacy. U.S policy needs to work region by region in Iraq and Syria to support these actors, including in northwest Syria, where an al-Qaeda safe haven is essentially being created (Carey, 2017: 2).

The second part of the strategy involves providing the necessary direct limited American military support to help these actors hold territory. That varies region by region. It doesn't involve going back to 150,000 troops on the ground, but it does involve advisers in a lot of these cases. When U.S administration has a few hundred or a couple of thousand advisers on the ground, you have a force-multiplier effect. That allows you to help your partners take and hold territory. But American forces should not be taking and holding any territory themselves.

Part of this does involve, in some cases, making sure that at least your partners aren't exposed from the air. This is one of the big problems in northwest Syria, where you have an opposition force that's a jumble of extremists and more acceptable groups. The Assad regime, Russia and Iran

don't have the capacity to retake that territory and physically hold it, but their strategy for the past few years has just been to make sure nobody else can take that territory and govern it. The end result is incredible violence, where the biggest losers are civilians and the biggest winners are extremist groups.

Trump policy concentrated for an escalation there that actually does require different and creative means. Some of U.S. candidates for president talk about safe zones or no-fly zones. There are other options short of these that don't require major American military intervention, but can relieve these groups of the pressure that comes from the Assad and Russian air forces. That's step two: direct military support (Goldenberg, 2017: 7).

Step three is taking that American investment and strategy and getting your partners coordinated and on board with you. Right now Trump don't really has that. Where Trump does have it for example, in southern Syria with the Jordanians it's actually worked pretty well. But Trump needs to get on board with the Turks and the Saudis in supporting the same groups, not supporting extremists.

Finally, the idea is to have these local actors take and hold more territory, to the point where they start to plug these vacuums and close them. Then Trump could get to try to leverage the situation to forge a negotiated outcome or political solution for the conflict. This strategy does not involve regime change; that should not be an American objective in Syria. What this involves is trying to come to a political agreement and set the conditions that work for the actors. Trump has a hard time seeing how Assad stays in power in a situation like that, but U.S objective is not to get rid of Assad. Trump objective should be to close these vacuums in Iraq and Syria and replace them with something that's at least marginally acceptable to U.S interests (Carey, 2017: 5).

This is going to be a place where the next administration will have to put a lot of effort. If U.S policy instead tries to de-escalate and pull back your

forces, nobody else is going to pull theirs. U.S has been doing this half-heartedly in Syria and Iraq for a few years, and the end result has been that everybody else is dumping weapons. Trump policy has a hard time seeing how U.S can get to an agreement with the Russians, the Iranians or any of U.S friends right now that starts with this(Bennis, 2017b: 5).

Trump cannot call for major escalation. There are things Trump can do, exercises, interdictions of ships going to places like Yemen, small signals that you can send. The Iranians want no part of a major direct conflict with the United States. So U.S Should Finding ways to do that, ideally with U.S partners, starts to reset the calculus. It's sort of a signal to the Saudis, to the Israelis, to others that we're not turning the region over to Iran. But at the same time it's a signal to the Iranians that this is how far you can go. Part of it also just involves U.S public posture.

The last thing on Iran is that, even as Trump does this, to keep channels open for dialogue and look for ways to cooperate. What worked in the nuclear agreement was a combination of economic pressure while keeping the channels open for engagement. In the region generally, U.S can take the same approach: more pressure where Trump is disagree and where he want to push back, even as you leave channels open for engagement in the discussion. Trump's policy shouldn't foreclose that option, but U.S can't assume it's actually going to happen.

This is where Trump policy can use several leverage forget them to dial back on certain things. Trump would go to get the Saudis to stop the war in Yemen tomorrow, but at least Trump cabinet can start to influence their calculus in terms of the types of operations they're conducting and what might or might not be constructive. Trump policy not going to get the Turks to stop arming groups in Syria, but he can maybe get them to stop arming some of the most problematic and extreme groups in Syria.

The Turkish approach is mostly, anybody but Assad, so let's just dump weapons and support in there. Trump can exert more leverage and get better

cooperation, for invest more in the region and then use that leverage to try to change the behavior of U.S partners. It also involves, very early on, some very positive signaling. Many of U.S partners, because of the nuclear deal on how Trump views some of U.S partners in the region, a lot of U.S traditional friends in the region are looking past this president to the next one because they are very frustrated.

Trump's cabinet think there will be some opportunities early on for a reset with the new president that don't involve major shifts in policy, but just a change in tone. Look at the way President Obama acted with Europe early in his administration, a Europe that had gotten completely fed up with George Bush, even as Bush administration policies started to change from 2006 to 2008 and became much more pragmatic and realistic. Just the signaling created a lot of space diplomatically and U.S politicians think you can replicate some of that in this case, early on, for a new president.

Trump needs to get to de-escalation, a point where you can actually get a Saudi-Iranian rapprochement or at least agreement on how they view the region. U.S policy in Trump era got to end the Syrian civil war through negotiated outcomes. So the approach that Trump policy lying out views that as a step two, followed by trying to build those institutions. First, you have to reset the region and start to address the core problems that are driving it.

Trump has reassured its partners, for its policy on Iran. Trump has started to do more to close the security vacuums that exist. US will be in a better position to try to negotiate an outcome for example, in Syria, one that ends that war and then leverage the types of negotiations, there to expand into a broader regional construct down the line, something along the lines of a Middle East OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe](Goldenberg, 2017: 6).

The Iraq War did exactly the opposite. It weakened U.S militarily. It cost U.S too much in lives and treasure and prestige across the region, the

consequences of which are still with us. For those who want to advocate U.S military force, as some are wont to do, the number that sticks in my head is 22 suicides a day, the number of American veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan who kill themselves every single day. Trump loses more lives every year than U.S lost in both wars combined over the span of their duration. In addition to an exhausted military and declining prestige, there were the costs U.S were not equipped to handle because Trump had tax cuts and two unfunded wars and the emergence of not only a multipolar world but competition in various regions over who would be its hegemonic power(Bennis, 2017b: 9).

It wasn't that President Obama withdrew. It was that the Iraq War made Iran ascendant; brought Turkey into its own gave Russia a new opportunity to expand itself. That's the world President Obama inherited in 2008.He did extraordinary work on the economy, but the devastation wrought by what U.S politicians call the house that George built, the region after Iraq, coupled with an Arab Spring that only made the situation more complicated, and was too much for this president or any president, especially one who did not have the support of Congress.

4. Analyses and Conclusion

Trump has to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict, and it proposed something really quite simple: the 1967 borders with land swaps. Trump had no idea it was going to create uproar. Obama just changed the words, but the meaning was the same, and Netanyahu exploded. He went to the White House, pointed his finger in Obama's face, went to Congress, and used the joint session to sabotage the president's effort. The president, approaching an election year, backed off.

The problem is that after the years of neglect, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has developed into pathologies on both sides. With Israel, it's the spoiled child syndrome. When you get everything you want whenever you want it, and you know if you act up, you're still going to get it, there's no

incentive for good behavior. On the other side, when you know you're never going to get what you want or need, no matter what you do, no matter how good you are, there's no incentive for good behavior.

The result is two political groups that are spiraling downward into chaos, Israel moving far from to the right, and Palestinians moving toward greater dysfunction. The president had hoped to arrest that, but only reinforced both negative trends: The Palestinians, feeling they had no champion in Washington; Israelis feeling there was nothing that could stand in their way and whatever they wanted they'd get, \$38 billion as a reward for bad behavior and Netanyahu's bucking the president. In reality, Netanyahu didn't lose the Iran vote. He actually won it; he ended up getting rewarded for bad behavior.

The Trump's problem with Iran wasn't the bomb, because Iran didn't have. The problem with Iran was its regional behavior for its support from resistance movement. Trump to used that same pressure to control Iranian behavior; it would be a very different situation today in the Middle East. But U.S has done. Trump probably would waste a lot of political and diplomatic and economic pressure, and U.S have short of the goal. So the Arab Persian Gulf states need to be reassured that U.S didn't forget that Iranian behavior is a problem solving the region.

Saudi Arabia has taken an adventure in Yemen that is horrifying to the Yemeni people. So Saudi government which has now embarked on a dramatic plan, Saudi Vision 2030, quite admirable in many ways to look back and see a Lyndon Johnson scenario. They tried to do both the war and economic and cultural reform and couldn't handle both at the same time.

Trump will help Saudi Arabia save itself and get out of Yemen. The way to do that is by making very clear to them we've got their back, and not the back of Iran. This means taking seriously the commitments U.S made that Trump still have not fulfilled, when the president brought the PGCC countries to meet here in Washington and then went again to meet with

them there. It means another meeting post-election of the PGCC states to make clear that U.S goal will be to push back against Iran.

The Middle East has become known primarily as a region of conflict, dysfunction, and political and economic instability. The pathologies of Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya have come incorrectly to characterize the entire region. The next U.S administration will necessarily be preoccupied with the Middle East as well, though it should guard against disproportionate fixation on the region. A few main themes affect the challenges in the regional Trump policy is:

- Salafi Terrorism notwithstanding the relatively small number of victims in the United States.
- State-to-state conflicts and Sunni/Shiite frictions between Saudi Arabia and Iran, Saudi Arabia and parts of Yemen, and Israel and Palestine.
- Internal conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya and currently quiescent Lebanon but latently everywhere.
- The primary challenges are demographics, economic diversification, socioeconomic reform and the role of religion.
- Saudi Arabia, the dominant PGCC, is beset as well by two additional problems, a large Shiite population against whose co-religionists elsewhere Saudi has set itself, and a militant Wahhabi population that stokes the antagonism, that encourages and trains terrorists through its madrassas and mosques across the globe, and whose trainees target the royal family and the country's social structure.
- The United States and its allies can help if the regime is prepared to take the necessary steps for reform. Indeed, it is in the national interest for a vibrant, peaceful, prosperous Egypt to fulfill its traditional, self-assigned aspiration as the anchor of the Arab world, forging the path for the others.
- The challenge for the next Trump administration is to find the appropriate balance between its commitment to human rights and democracy including some role for the Muslim Brotherhood, however risky and the need for

order and stability, especially in the face of the turbulence in the region.

- Trump will confront a region in protracted conflict and internal instability, driven by social fissures exacerbated by a religious, political and social awakening, long-festering impotence and humiliation, the corruption and self-dealing of established elites, a revolt by elements of the mass public that despair of their prospects, and by unrealistic hopes that political or religious movements hold the key to a better future.
- Trump even with its allies, cannot resolve these fundamental dynamics. Any solution will be rooted in local conditions and actors, not imposed by external forces.
- Trump cannot engage everywhere, let alone equally. It has neither the resources nor the interests to do so and will exhaust itself if it tries, quite possibly leaving each engagement worse than when it first intervened.
- What is the relationship between Trump and partner interests, capabilities, means and ends? What are the costs and benefits of intervention for the United States and local populations? What are the likely consequences? What are the likely responses of adversaries and other affected parties? What second-order measures should be taken to deal with those responses? What are the costs and benefits of those ancillary measures? How will the United States tailor its objectives to its resources? Is containing, rather than reversing, the dysfunctional dynamics of the Middle East the most realistic Trump ambition?
- Most important, what are the local actors willing to do to solve their own problems? Absent local political will for reform, U.S engagements are likely to be futile and quite possibly counterproductive to U.S interests.
- What are the costs of Trump attention to the Middle East on its other interests? It is far from obvious that the Middle East rises to the first or primary place among those priorities. Conversely, what would be the costs of inaction or reduced engagement in the region?
- Trump's policy should avoid unilateral engagements and intercessions. It

needs international and, especially, regional partners, if only to share the burden and soften the suspicion that any Trump intervention is motivated by selfish interests inimical to the region. Europe is the obvious international partner.

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