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United States Foreign Policy: The Challenge of ISIS, Terrorism, and other Enemies

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Abstract

This paper examines numerous resources that address questions about Islam, ISIS, Iran, North Korea, Europe and US foreign policy. It considers issues related to how the United States might deal more effectively with terrorists from the Middle East, focusing on how the US government has engaged countries, the UN and problems related to animus targeting American strategies. The paper begins by looking at some numbers related to payments made for stabilizing world politics, and it then looks at ISIS and Islam in Europe. From there the analysis transitions into North Korea and Iran, exploring how those two countries may affect the way countries view US intentions and credibility. The paper concludes by arguing that the fight against radical Islam and its jihadist approach cannot achieve success through bombing and bluster. Instead, the US must continue to invest in growing worldwide economic progress, thinking about the ways in which The Marshall Plan revived Germany and created a friend from the worst enemy known to the American democracy.

Introduction

Foreign policy decisions require an understanding of varied interests across the world community. Everyone would like to believe that their actions align with external needs as well as internal political considerations. Unfortunately, some actions prove to be confused by domestic concerns that conflict with international agreements. Perhaps the public does not understand the consequences of a specific governmental action. Maybe the public recognizes what is best, while leadership is out of touch. Plus, the will to act must coincide with the ability to deliver a coherent message. This paper will examine the United States government's policy alternatives related to ISIS and its dangerous beliefs. However, some assumptions here extend well beyond the current crisis connected with terrorism, suggesting that international relations should include more than governmental interactions. Political leaders must consider the needs and interests of competitors from other countries; they must also consider the political beliefs of their constituents. However, they should likewise be aware of the populations across the world that will be affected by U.S. maneuvering. Furthermore, it may not be nearly enough to satisfy political interests; it may be just as critical to recognize the historical context that drives decisions.

In this regard, there is often a path dependence that affects policy-making, which should help leaders to follow established principles, thereby encouraging everyone by establishing consistency that implies reliability. Nevertheless, political considerations can be fear-driven, which in the era of terrorism may play havoc with consistency or rationality. With these cross-currents in mind, this paper asserts a strong belief in the power of economic interests. Money plays a giant role in markets that affect lifestyle and cultural expectations. Many countries think about how they might exterminate their enemies, and the U.S. is no exception in hoping to destroy ISIS. Trying to use physical power to accomplish that purpose, however, has proven to be ineffective over decades. On the other hand, countries have responded favorably to internal expectations of better lifestyles and generally better economic conditions. At least that is the contention here; that money can affect political beliefs, improve the public's attitudes toward the potential for jobs and overall satisfaction; and increase the willingness to cooperate with others at home and across the globe.

Engaging the Globe

The United States pays. In fact, we pay many dictatorships. The biggest payment, and perhaps the biggest success was The Marshall Plan. It rebuilt Europe and it restored Germany to a position of respect in the world community. Today, Germany controls Europe in many respects, a far cry from the broken-down defeated Third Reich from 1945. Smaller examples abound. Among those, perhaps one of the most successful is Egypt. Egypt receives more than $1 billion per year (Plumer, 2013), and in return, the Egyptians restrain themselves from fighting with Israel. In 1956 Nasser led the way against Israel. Today, despite the difficulties among

Egyptian leadership factions, Israel fears other countries. Who else could the US pay? Iraq receives enormous amounts of money from the US, mostly through support for battles, some of which have been won, while others have long ago disappeared into oblivion. In 2011, government payments included $20 billion for air conditioning in Iraq and Afghanistan (NPR, 2011). The United States certainly does not pay Iran, though we did provide them with an infusion of their own capital as part of the nuclear agreement prior to President Barack Obama's exit from the White House; the total was $400 million with another $1.3 billion in interest to follow (Tully, 2016). Now, we appear to be close to restoring sanctions against Iran, taking back part of the largesse that we offered the current regime for backing away from nuclear weapon research. The US does not pay Syria; we do "cooperate" with Saudi Arabia which provides funding for Syrian rebels (Mazzeti & Apuzzo, 2016); we provide some degree of "friendship" to Jordan which amounted to $1.3 billion last year (Jordan Times, 2017); and generally, we spend some money through the United Nations, more than $5 billion per year currently plus dues (Better World Campaign, 2017). Of course, we play politics with the UN funding, one example being the cut of $65 million for Palestinian refugee relief (Harris & Gladstone, 2018). Essentially, the United States pays. This pattern of providing foreign aid and other methods of injecting resources into destabilized world problem areas in the hopes of "fixing" troubled relationships is not new. It is sometimes viewed very unpopularly, but it raises many questions regarding intentional efforts to bolster troubled regimes in support of US interests around the world.

Though this paper begins with a reference to the spending of US resources worldwide, the topic here is ISIS. ISIS or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant represents one part of

radical Islamic terrorism. It provides the entire world, even the Muslim world, with a considerable challenge, partly because it morphs back and forth between a concept and a country. One moment it holds territory, and then that territory is lost through battles in the Middle East. Perhaps ISIS is more concept and less nationhood; but the problem goes far beyond any definition of its existence. The difficulty for most of the world revolves around a focused intent to destroy those who oppose a perceived Islamic notion, based on retribution, annihilation and an accompanying catalyst: terror aimed at motivating change.

The purpose of this paper connects with a foreign policy plan that envisions United States leadership, engagement with the world as a democratic country focused on principles of fairness and equality. Obviously, it is impossible to enforce any kind of principles on the world community. Even the UN offers only a place for discussion; vetoes are bound to stop any actions found to be undesirable by China and Russia. Nevertheless, the U.S. includes in its foreign policy bag of tricks a modeling process that, combined with money, could influence other countries to toe a line of civility. No policy or modeling can assure the world of safety or common sense. Still, U.S. influence is considerable, and may prove to be increasingly powerful if foreign policy emphasizes the payment for good behavior envisioned by this paper.

How can good behavior and leadership from the U.S. beat back ISIS? First, it could encourage other countries to believe in the dedication of American policies to worldwide respect for each nation and culture. Second, it could focus on markets as a means of enhancing growth for all. Third, it could prove through behavior that the U.S. is determined to support free and fair trade among the world's countries. Fourth, it could emphasize a set of policies meant to

encourage bad actors to join the world community as reasonable members dedicated to strengthening their own nation's population. On the latter point, it is certain that many bad actors find their citizens struggling to achieve anything resembling "success." Each culture might find a different definition for citizen satisfaction, but there are a few ideas that might make sense in this regard. Satisfaction might be improved when people have shelter, food and the prospects for a safer existence. If that sounds like success, it may only be a beginning. Other factors could play into this equation. However, going back to the example of Germany in 1945, it is apparent that the U.S. proved to be up to the task of revising German ambitions relative to the rest of the world community. Dollars and cents combined with a respect for safety and a future role in the world's economic arena to provide a path to some sort of decency.

No question, every country represents a different set of circumstances which might influence its leadership and its people. On the other hand, there are some common interests which are probably important to the potential for stability. In the case of ISIS, these interests may involve more than just the theology tied to radical ISLAM. There may be some other obvious factors worthy of consideration. For example, Israel's existence adds a large degree of animus to the relationship between Arab countries and the rest of the world. America's power and desire for wealth and control may be viewed by radical ISLAM as a perfect target for its hatred and desires for revenge. Efforts by the U.S. to withhold nuclear weapons and any other perceived weapons of mass destruction from volatile countries may be valuable in energizing national agency against Americans. Still, there is a difference between leaders taking advantage of long-held hatreds and divisions among key nations in the world, and the populations of countries which might currently believe that their only chances for success come from the

destruction of American power. No doubt, the U.S. is a perfect target for fears and hatred promoted by leaders hoping to bring along populations willing to die due to U.S. historical behaviors. Nevertheless, there is a difference between one's ability to attract widely held cultural hatred to prop up hatred against the most powerful country in the world, and the ability to keep a nation's fires stoked against others in the absence of peace and prosperity. In this paper, there will be evidence suggesting the potential for diminishing cultural hatred by promoting the possibilities for hope connected to economic gains.

The ISIS focus here makes great sense because radical ISLAM probably represents the most dangerous opponent to U.S. foreign policy goals in the world community. The latest developments in North Korea make a strong case for this point of view, while also suggesting the importance of the basic "pay for peace" proposal underlying the commentary throughout this paper. The Korean peninsula might have been pacified 24 years ago if the American supported deal had been followed honestly. We will look at that example briefly as a means of examining the proposed American approach to the entire world community. Though the changes on the Korean peninsula may not be a fait accompli, the developments there represent a way of thinking about foreign policy which includes an important look at cultural realities. For the North and South Koreans there is one way of looking at life and the hopes of two societies, while the issues for those affected by ISIS look much different. Still, the differences may not be as certain as one might suggest when looking at the theocratic identities involved. This paper will consider the differences between a theocracy and the personal aggrandizement included in the Korean

example. There could be some considerable evidence for similarities worth including in the proposal for the U.S. policy of paying countries for better behaviors.

Focus on ISIS

Stern & Berger assert an internal motivation among jihadists related to religious motivation, a belief in "the promise of perceived religious rewards such as entry into heaven and the benefits that promise includes…" (Stern & Berger, 2015). Most in the West probably believe this explanation is best for understanding the potential violence offered as a solution for Arab Muslims to overcome infidels who oppose ISLAM. However, Stern & Berger add, "Parsimonious explanations, which focus only on single external factors, whether religious or political, cannot explain why one sibling becomes a jihadist and another a doctor" (2015, p. 83). The point here seems clear; that terrorism is as complex as any ideology. It includes effects on populations which may extend from religious principles to political ideals and even to economic interpretations. The latter may not be a matter of monetary understanding but might instead relate to expectations for a better life. That could help to explain why Stern's siblings would choose different lifestyles. Hopefulness can take many forms; hopelessness focuses on the absence of agency, and it helps to predict violent behavior (Moses, 1999).

Violence represents more than an attack on western civilization in jihadist communities. It emerges among terrorist groups as a form of infighting that we see today throughout the Middle East (Stern & Berger, 2015). Arab countries oppose each other as much as the United States, attempting to gain acquiescence from their Muslim enemies, searching for a way to overcome the horrors experienced and blamed on westerners primarily but not exclusively.

Ultimately, though, the attempt to find solutions to life's problems is not a bizarre religious desire to die but may instead be a desire for "a sense of inclusion, belonging, and purpose in its (ISIS) demented utopia (2015, p.85). In its essence, the authors view ISIS as an extension of the horrors in the Middle East, largely produced by the hopelessness that breeds violence and depressed behaviors. This does not sound like a simple religious fanaticism that threatens the existence of all rational beings. Instead, it suggests the extension of decades of trauma throughout a region that has been largely destitute and nomadic. Rather than focus on the demented view of a traumatized group of wanderers as destined to attack the rational world, there may be some value in considering the relationships suggested by Stern and Berger, connected groups that extend their hatred to all in reaction to a fanatical hopelessness that dates back in modern times to World War I.

Huntington writes in his 1993 Foreign Affairs article, "The Clash of Civilizations?" about the constant battles in the Arab world during the early 1900's, a time when power was increasing in the western nations (Huntington, 1993). At the same time, Sykes-Picot attempted to divide Syria after World War I, and 2014 ISIS leaders were still thinking about that post-WW I division, and indeed rejected it explicitly (Zelin, 2014). This paper's conclusion here is straightforward. Islamic radicalism gains its strength from historic views held by Arab states, many of which were divergent within the Islamic world. Huntington asserts a belief in cultural and ethnic divisions as an increasingly problematic factor in world politics during the last decade of the 20th century. Continuing divisions among Arab groups represent a historical reality in ISLAM, rejecting any notion of one group of united Arabs, instead exacerbating hatreds within the Middle Eastern countries that developed after WW I. The clash of civilizations envisioned

by Huntington continues unabated in the 2018 reality of ISIS, a name that defines a current terrorist reality, though it is nothing more than an extension of jihadist realities in place for generations.

The longstanding hatreds and disappointments in the Arab world, taking part in extremist activity on both sides of the Sunni/Shia divide cannot be underestimated as far as their danger to any society in which they become engaged. Nevertheless, the U.S. emphasis placed on ISIS as an existential threat to American society should be viewed as an exaggeration. Gerges emphasizes the importance of Islam vs. Islam in his description of Al Qaeda and ISIS, battling amongst each other. He quotes the words of Abu Qatada from Al Qaeda, "They (ISIS) are ruining the wider jihadi movement and are against the whole ummah (Muslim nation)" (Gerges, 2016, p. 247). This is nothing less than Huntington's clash which extends in modern times from the western treatment of the Arab world in the early 1900's to the Arab-Israeli conflict in the late 1940's. Everywhere one turns in this story, there is bloodshed among the Arab countries and bloodshed between the Arab countries and the West. While the terrorism that we have come to fear in 2018 is every bit a part and parcel of these internal and external clashes among Muslims, it is also a path dependent historical reality which probably informs foreign policy for most of the world more through the understanding of context than through the emphasis of the conflict. We will come back to this with specific recommendations soon, but first there may be some value in digging into a view of Muslims throughout the world.

Muslim Realities in Europe

Goody examines Muslims in Europe during most of the early 1900's and finds that they have a serious problem trying to identify who they really are. In one sense he describes them as reflecting on themselves as a group of Robin Hoods, certainly not in the sense considered by the west, but in a reflexive view that highlights ISLAM as a group of great rebels (Goody, 2004). Furthermore, Goody writes of the Muslims of the 21st century in Europe seeing themselves as freedom fighters, not terrorists; and he extends this view to a consideration of the Arab-Israeli conflict by suggesting that the Arabs and the Jews were involved in more than just a battle against each other (Goody, 2004). There was a fight between the Jews and the British over the independence of Israel; there was a fight between the Jews and the Arabs over even the restricted immigration that emboldened each of the groups against the other (Goody, 2004). The point here should not be lost in trying to understand the varied Arab viewpoints at present. The Middle East is no simple "us against them" proposition. Arab Muslims have been opposed to each other for 100 years since the end of WW I, and they have opposed the Jews in Israel, and they have opposed the West for its support of the Jews and for its opposition to Arab freedom fighters, as they have seen it. All of this may argue more for Huntington's clash of civilizations than for any singular terrorist force under the banner of ISIS or any other related name.

Caldwell offers some additional evidence in support of the relationship between Muslim terrorism and the concept of Arab freedom fighters, both for independence and against Jews (Caldwell, 2009). He additionally reflects on the divisions within Muslims, themselves, pointing to variations of radicalism between British Muslims and other European Islamic radicals (2009). He specifically argues that the Muslim groups in Great Britain are the most radical in all of Europe, suggesting a need to understand the differences that keep Arabs from uniting, even as

the West continues to view Arab terrorism as a unified group of murderers. Clearly, this reflects the Gerges description of civil war among jihadists since 2004 in and around Syria (Gerges, 2016), but also highlighting the diverse hatreds among European Muslims also dating back to at least 2004 (Caldwell, 2009). And while Caldwell highlights the hatred among British Muslims, he extends this to the French as well, also emphasizing its connection to antisemitism. He writes, "One French government report noted that, in heavily immigrant schools, anything that was crummy, corrupt, broken, dirty, or undesirable was described as feuj, a slang word for Jewish (Caldwell, 2009, p. 213). Clearly, there is a connection between Islamic radicalism's hatred for the West, hatred for Jews, hatred for Israel, and hatred for each other. This can be seen throughout descriptions of Muslims in Europe today, not much differently than descriptions of Arab infighting at the end of WW I. It is important to note all this animus against varying groups, because it emphasizes the diverse nature of terrorists which may offer good reason to think about the ways to battle such terrorism.

In thinking about any battle against this idea of terrorism, it might well be valuable to note a few other key points noted by Caldwell. First, he asserts that antisemitism in Europe rises and falls with events in the Middle East (Caldwell, 2009). He also suggests that there is an aspect in Islamic terrorism that harkens back to the days of greatness in the Arab world which have dissipated in the present. He believes that today's events are a desire to recapture that lost civilization, not the same as being deeply devoted to a theocratic concept of governance. There is an obvious interaction between religion and the Arab desire for power, but it is hard to say which takes precedence in the psychology of the area's disturbances.

Tietze describes an important trend in her article in Gole and Amman's 2006 book describing the importance of religion and community in Europe for Muslims. She writes, "When social and economic problems and discrimination threatens young adults with personal devaluation, exclusion from social temporality and confinement to the neighborhood, religious identification can become an impetus for struggling against alienation" (Tietze, 2006, p. 341). The point may help to wrap up some key ideas about ISLAM and terrorism and the clash of civilizations. It might be wise to think about Muslim identity as part of a reflection back to the post-WW I divisions, the Palestinian battles over Israel, and the disaffected groups of young people in Europe and throughout the Middle East. The Gerges notion of a civil war among Arabs may be far more important for U.S. foreign policy experts than any idea that a battle against some singular concept of terrorism could ever be won by any nation, certainly not in any physical sense. We will yet come back to this idea.

ISLAM, ISIS and Secular Thought

Gole explains thoroughly, if not always with perfect clarity, her reasons for believing that ISLAM represents both a challenge and a "liberating" factor in European politics (Gole, 2015). As a result, she believes that Europe will lead the rest of the world to a reflexive understanding between ISLAM and secular values; that could create space for progress between otherwise opposing factions (2015). One woman's view of philosophy and religion does not make foreign policy, but it could be representative of a viewpoint that might have some application in thinking about relationships differently. She writes, "Islamists seek to enter into spaces of modernity, yet they display their distinctiveness" (2015, p. 154). All Muslims, as many have pointed out

correctly, are not terrorists or antagonists to the West, and Gole suggests a liberation from attitudes of the past can be possible for both groups. She worries about the "demoniacal definitions of the adversary" being attributed to Muslims. That is why she is so interested in the two-part conflict between the modern and the distinctive nature of being Muslim. She may only be hopeful, but she is surely optimistic that there is a secular breakthrough possible, in which ISLAM becomes European and escapes from terrorism and jihadist movements (2015). There is probably some truth in her rendering, which suggests that foreign policy experts thinking about terrorism ought to be more than overly focused on a war against this religious group. No doubt, it would be foolish to become overly sanguine about the potential for deep understanding between two vastly opposite civilizations in the foreign policy arena; but it could be costly to simply follow the stereotypes. Yes, they have a basis at some level, but there are enough voices speaking in opposition to the simplicity of opposition and fear to suggest some reason for considering alternate routes to the war on terrorism.

Abdolmohammadi writes of a "revival in democracy, secularism, nationalism and constitutionalism" among the young in Iran (Abdolmohammadi, 2015, p. 5). However, he does not limit his analysis to this one group. His optimism refers likewise to the current political regime, describing it as a hybrid rather than a simple theocratic government (2015). The argument asserts a belief in the potential for pluralism to overcome authoritarianism; naturally, that assessment will take time to be proven one way or the other. This is not a recent trend, according to the author, who dates it beginning back to 1997 (2015). So, there are two points to be made here; secularization can be a long-term process and it can also be overcome by other forces in society. Perhaps that lends credence to a more negative perception of Iran than

suggested by the revival theory, but it might also open the door to suggestions that the society could be influenced from the outside; that its future shape is not to be simply determined by its Islamic roots.

No question, there are many things that one can say about the Middle East, and one of them would not be that a secular trend is surely pushing the major Islamic countries toward an end to conflict. On the other hand, the voices here have suggested many reasons for believing that the potential for change should not be ignored. Socio-cultural factors ought to be considered alongside political realities created by a war on terrorism that the U.S. has declared and that much of the western world has joined. If Iran is potentially available for secular changes that might support constitutionalism and democracy, then joining the political leadership demanding absolute compliance with western standards sounds more like a provocation and less like a reasonable policy. So, how can the realities of ISIS and the conflicts of a society prone to terrorist attacks be addressed through a peaceful foreign policy process? Can we be thoughtful and helpful using a proclivity to pay those who we would like to engage peacefully and prosperously in trade and cultural exchange?

Developing a Foreign Policy Opposing ISIS

The first thing that might be of value would be to look back at Huntington's clash of civilizations. Without a doubt, we are at least seeing some form of that clash in the current era of terrorism and anti-Muslim sentiment. However, as we saw earlier, part of this clash of civilizations includes a battle between members of the Muslim community. Arab Muslims have in varied respects been at each other's throats for decades, even while proclaiming hatred for

Israel and a desire to harm the United States. In one sense, we certainly want to encourage our foreign policy apparatus, as much as it is currently, to fight back against any physical threat to the homeland. On the other hand, we ought to respect the differences in the Muslim communities around the world, and especially in Europe which is our most reliable partner in world affairs. Yes, there is a clash of civilizations, but there is also a reality recognized by a wide variety of authors considered to be experts on ISIS and ISLAM. From Gerges, to Stern, to Goody, to Gole, there are serious reasons for expecting that terrorists are as susceptible to cultural influences as they are to physical force. However, it goes beyond that point. We should not necessarily believe that good works or better conditions in the world can change the mindset of a terrorist. However, there is a potential for affecting worldwide conditions that could help to create a changed environment outside the extremist groups determined to harm the innocent.

After thinking about the reality of this clash of civilizations, it could be worthwhile to consider Gerges' concept of a civil war among Arabs. Indeed, this is not a new concept, since we have seen that divisions existed among the Palestinian Arabs decades before Israel's independence. Meanwhile, the current difference between secular Muslims and fundamentalist theocrats in Iran surely offers us good reason for contemplation. If the U.S. believes that the Iranian danger must be stopped at any cost, and no doubt Israel agrees, what should we do, encourage the opposing factions or think about how to engage that culture peacefully?

From the physical standpoint, we already know what that looks like. We are currently taking back territory from ISIS and killing everyone we can find who might be threatening an attack against the United States. Surely, we know that policy cannot be successful in the long

run. In fact, there is some good reason to believe that all the killing along with our missiles only emboldens terrorists to fight on for freedom, in their view. We have not the slightest bit of evidence for believing that attacks against terrorists could make the homeland safer. No doubt, we need to use force any time we know that we might be attacked. Still, a foreign policy based on fighting jihadists at every turn would be no different than believing we could stop murders on the streets by sending out police every time someone seemed threatened. Responding to threats and violence has vast limitations. The solution to this problem seems to be somehow connected to the notion that secularization is a process in the Middle East that could be used to produce more peaceful and engaged citizens of the world.

North Korea: A Brief Interlude

Before dealing more directly with Iran and its more immediate effect on ISIS, a consideration of current developments in North Korea might help to encourage the kind of thinking that includes strategy and intentional efforts to engage one's enemies. Iran and North Korea clearly represent enemies for the United States in 2018. Some of that may be a direct result of poor analysis in previous U.S. administrations, but assigning fault means little at this point. More importantly, these two countries must be addressed responsibly because their future relationship with the U.S. could have a significant impact on how we handle the ISIS threat in the coming years.

Twenty-four years ago, American negotiators cut a deal with North Korea. It is a straightforward arrangement that required the U.S. to deliver economic support in return for the establishment of a relationship between the two countries that was eventually to reach the

ambassadorial level. North Korea's opportunity to utilize nuclear power for peaceful purposes was to combine with additional energy assistance along with some telecommunications technology. North Korea was expected to get out of the business of trying to produce nuclear weapons (Agreed Frameworks, 1994). No doubt, both sides believed that the other was not following through completely with their obligations; however, during the Bush Administration starting in 2000, any accusations of fault quickly expanded to descriptions of North Korea as part of the "axis of evil." Did foreign policy experts believe that kind of rhetoric would revive negotiations to put "the deal" back on track? At the same time, Iran was drawn into the Bush rhetoric describing our enemies as evil and worse. Perhaps the foreign policy leaders of that time were reacting to perceptions of bad behavior and violence associated with enemies, but visceral reaction is not foreign policy strategy. So, first consider how all of this played out in North Korea.

In most respects, one would have to say that the results of all our decades of negotiations in North Korea have not gone very well. Bruce Bechtol describes the attitudes of the Kim government as "unpredictable and threatening nation states in the world" (Bechtol, 2013). Furthermore, he describes the country's behavior as "defiant and unstable" (2013). No one could argue with these brief conclusions; they perfectly represented the condition of North Korea prior to the recent Olympic games. Obviously, something occurred at those games. Without any inside knowledge, it appears that either Donald Trump scared Kim Jong-Un so severely that the dictator decided to simply cave-in and give up. Or, it is possible that the two leaders of the North and the South met with each other, found common interests, and decided that there would be great value for both sides in coming together to change the face of the Korean peninsula. Pick

either side; clearly the writing here implies the likelihood that the second choice is correct. Either way, the next phase of these talks will soon be underway. Either Donald Trump will approach this apparent mending of fences with careful and thoughtful entreaties for further relationship building, or he will rush into the meetings with demands and threats. A reasonable guess would choose the former, but recent Administration behavior suggests that the latter is possible. No foreign policy expert could guess which strategy will be employed by Trump and his advisers, but there are two additional possibilities. Either Kim is a madman and prepared to reverse all sensible statements in short order; or he has thought out his behavior very carefully and is now willing to stand side by side with South Korea.

Perhaps Kim is a madman; he has murdered and stolen as a dictator. Nevertheless, he may also be cunning and ambitious, figuring that a relationship with South Korea could bring every kind of aid possible, i.e. energy, telecommunications, food and trade with the rest of the world. Which decision would make more sense for North Korea? It appears that determination has been made at this point. Now, from the U.S. foreign policy standpoint, behaving calmly and with great interest in rebuilding North Korea in ways like South Korea, could set the stage for an incredible turnaround in world affairs. If the two Korean leaders put their countries on that course, the U.S. could build strong social capital among all nations by exhibiting a willingness to cooperate, perhaps even lead the way forward from this point. There is no doubt that an upcoming summit could drive relationships around the world toward previously unexpected possibilities. At the same time, there are dangers in these meetings, and they may be very different than those we hear currently regarding Kim's potential misrepresentations. One might ask what benefit could be achieved in North Korea by establishing a pretense of decency, only to

reverse and point missiles at the U.S. and other previous enemies. That appears to be a losing proposition in contrast to the rewards that could be achieved now through a continuing closeness and a building trust between North and South Korea.

There is a serious foreign policy lesson here, and it is not just a matter of a sudden reversal on the Korean peninsula. Assumptions that dominated our foreign policy establishment for decades are now in shambles. Name-calling that dominated CNN months ago has given way to kind words and even hugs. Can the United States, or any country, be certain that its fears and biases are more valuable than outreach and engagement? We learned that lesson between World War I and II in Germany. Now, we may learn a new lesson in North Korea.

What About Iran?

Suddenly, Iran joins North Korea in the news, as the U.S. tosses its agreement with the Iranian government to stop all work on nuclear weapons. Michael Singh writes in the latest issue of Foreign Affairs that a nuclear deal with Iran ignores the key factor in Middle East relationships in 2018; he asserts that American foreign policy must address a chaotic Middle East in which Iran endangers the potential for creating regional stability (Singh, 2018). He asserts much broader goals in Iran than simply acquiring nuclear weapons; he suggests that the Iranian goal is to disrupt the entire Middle East (2018). If it is true that the leaders of Iran hope to expand their footprint in countries where power vacuums are dangerously present, one must

wonder how ending a nuclear program would resolve the power issue which Singh claims as the number one fear of many policy experts (2018). No doubt, American foreign policy strategists must also be concerned over the potential for Iranian acquisition of nuclear weapons, but the disruption in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and elsewhere, as suggested by Singh, will not be expanded by the presence of nuclear weapons (2018). It is much more likely that Iran will find ways to inject itself into specific power struggles in individual countries than any theories of catastrophic attacks might imply. Even if the mullahs had operative missiles today, they would surely not be launching nuclear attacks against anyone.

The Sagan/Waltz debate should not be ignored in this respect. Now, the debate over the dangers of nuclear holocaust cannot be resolved by opinions and presumptions. On the other hand, the Waltz argument seems to offer more reasonable expectations for a world that will not be exterminated. First, Waltz claims that the creation of a nuclear program among terrorists would not be easy to create due to the requirements of space and infrastructure (Sagan & Waltz, 2003). If Iran were to consider selling nuclear technology to crazed jihadists, the likelihood of evading detection would be slim. Instead, Waltz worries that biological and chemical weapons could be more easily hidden and then used by terrorists attempting to create wholesale death. That does not give the world reason for complacency, but it does offer a rationale for backing off worries about the acquisition of hydrogen bombs. Waltz writes of the desire of the most menacing leaders to retain power, suggesting that President Carter and President George H. W. Bush held office for less time than people like Qaddafi and Sadam Hussein (2003). The point is simple; authoritarian dictators crave authority more than the opportunity to blow up the planet.

Perhaps as Singh argues, our real interest would be more effectively focused on developing stable countries and interactions among countries (Singh, 2018).

In the case of Iran this might well argue for a worldwide policy considering ways to encourage domestic growth and peace in Iran in contrast to encouraging fears of horrific attacks punctuated by mushroom clouds. Gladstone and Chinoy explore the effects of the new US retreat from the Obama deal, and they conclude that a revival of sanctions will impact everything from transportation to petroleum to insurance and finance in Iran (Gladstone & Chinoy, 2018). The author suggests that petroleum sales might be most severely affected by the time sanctions resume, but we already know that the Iranian regime had previously been able to secretly sell oil, and we also recognize that Europe, China and Russia will not comply with our sanctions, keeping Iran in an antagonistic relationship with the U.S., without much likelihood that the regime will suffer. Furthermore, one must wonder how much value there is to promote further antagonism in Iran, where its own people currently participate in substantial anti-government protests. The government is both repressive and out of touch with its peoples' true existential desires (Derakhshan, 2018). If a large swath of the population hopes to gain more freedom from the government, there may be greater value for the U.S. and the world to pursue policies that encourage disenchantment among the secular members of society.

Iran and North Korea: Fear vs. Realistic Expectations

The objectives and potential interests of North Korea and Iran certainly play a major role in considering some of the most dangerous conditions in today's world community. ISIS, as part of the jihadist movement represents real danger to every nation on the planet, and the positions

of various nations that favor a consistent barrage of attacks against these terrorists may only serve to antagonize those who we would prefer to engage. While some combination of nations taking military positions against ISIS pound their chests with satisfaction each time jihadists are killed, and land is reacquired, the elimination of our enemies accomplishes little to reverse the conditions that put the world in danger from suicide attacks. The search for an approach to end terrorism has failed to find a strategy capable of diminishing justified fears. Difficult decisions in opposition to enemies are nothing new to US foreign policy, while attempts to blunt the threats of countries like North Korea and Iran ought to be developed and connected to our anti-violence objectives throughout a dangerous world.

Seventy years ago, the U.S. beat Japan and Germany in World War II. The end of the war found the victors in a substantially different mindset than dominated in 1918. U.S. foreign policy strategists recognized the factors that crushed the German people because of The Treaty of Versailles. Instead of attempting to punish those who spread death and destruction for years, The United States and The Soviet Union led the way toward creating The United Nations, believing that cooperation among a community of nations might prevent future devastating hostilities. We know in retrospect the limitations of the UN, but we also understand the value of a place for discussing conflicts prior to the outbreak of hostilities. No question, the limits of the power of the UN are stunningly disappointing, but its existence opens the door to possibilities. Among these are the potential for exploring ideas that could encourage a path forward to cooperation. Very importantly, this is not meant as a Pollyanna-type "we can do anything if we just lock arms and love each other" approach. Finding ways to bring people together, as well as countries, requires sophisticated understandings of the needs and desires of leaders and their

populations. At the same time, the people who negotiate deals are still individuals with concerns and objectives. Understanding peoples' goals, empathizing with their needs and trying to gauge their political objectives cannot be undervalued.

The goals of two fierce enemies of the United States need to be considered in any strategy that opposes terrorism and possible attacks against the West. Stern writes of the "battle between…organizations in the jihadist movement," but she emphasizes the likelihood that both of their visions aside, the jihadist movement has a future that will not be easily sidetracked (Stern & Berger, 2015). Even more to the point for understanding the importance of Iran, Stern reflects on the Iranian Revolution as a starting point for considering a historical view of the apocalypse, only important because it is meaningful to jihadists who long for an "end to disunity in the Muslim community" (2015). Whatever we may think of these ideals, if they are meaningful to jihadists, they may link Iran to the hatred that aims to destroy the West. Furthermore, as much as jihadists may desire to end disunity in their communities, we can only wonder how such views of community affect the decisions now coming out of North Korea. In other words, the wars of the world are not just created out of nothingness; they can connect to fundamental relationships in communities where ancestry can be as important as nuclear weapons or other political considerations.

In this regard, one can only wonder how the conversations played out recently in South Korea between Moon Jae-in and Kim Jung-un. Perhaps the U.S. would like to believe that warnings, threats and sanctions forced Kim to acquiesce to the demands of President Trump. However, terrorists, enemies and revolutionaries do not typically cave in to tough language from

anyone. Whatever pushed the Korean presidents together at the recent Olympic games may become more apparent soon, but it should be remembered that at the start of 2018 leaders were talking of blowing each other up. In addition, it would be impossible for the presidents of the two Koreas to ignore the decisions at the start of May by the United States to pull out of the Iranian nuclear deal. Aside from the pressure this puts on Europe, China and Russia in their Iranian dealings, one would suspect that any leader of an enemy of the United States ought to understand that Trumpian policies cannot necessarily be trusted. If that were not apparent after the Bush rejection of the Agreed Frameworks in 1994, the current reasons for being suspicious of American representations can hardly be ignored by any members of the world community. And, as much as this affects thinking in North and South Korea, Iran and among the jihadists everywhere, it raises serious considerations of American policy which might create doubts about strategy; does it really exist in any form?

Naturally, no one would want to give much attention to the "concerns" of jihadists, but there are always potential converts who could be impacted by U.S. policy reversals and deceptions, which only play into narratives that do little to help western fears and anti-terrorist objectives. Before going directly to the issue of ISIS, there could be real value in thinking about how policies might stop our enemies from acting belligerently or might induce our enemies to give up their hopes for destroying democratic societies.

Is Honesty the Best Policy?

Once again, the Pollyanna doctrine is no method of "running the world." On the other hand, even dictators and psychopaths are not stupid. When Moon Jae-in met with Kim Jung-un, one can only imagine that conversation. Did the two Korean leaders believe that they were saving themselves from the wrath of Donald Trump, or did they believe that a deal could be made to remove sanctions, inject billions of dollars into the North and produce stability that might put an end to decades of divisions between one people, too long held apart. Well, that may be a part of this unfolding drama, but geo-political considerations cannot be ignored in a time of rising expectations from China in northeast Asia. Jean-Pierre Cabestan of Hong Kong Baptist University writes that Kim's latest change of heart may be tied directly to fears of growing pressures from China and revelations that could have emerged from recent meetings between Kim and President Xi Jinping (Cabestan, 2018). The point may be very simple, and one not being acknowledged in a fit of honesty by anyone; that moving closer to South Korea and the United States might serve the purpose of reducing the danger of war with the West and demands from the East. The United States could play a key role in protecting the Korean peninsula from Chinese dominance, even without the Trump Administration being a player in designing strategy or complex political intrigue.

Meanwhile, we can think about how the West might deal with terrorism, enemies from the Middle East or Northeast Asia; or anywhere else in the world. Certainly, the U.S. has applied a policy already identified early in this paper, and which could be a serious factor in addressing the dangers of terrorism. The United States pays. It pays for all sorts of accommodations, everything from pacification to rebuilding societies and expanding economic growth. The idea may have started in earnest with the Marshal Plan in the late 1940's, but it has

extended throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, paying Egypt to leave Israel alone, paying Israel to leave the Arabs alone (so the U.S. could provide protection), paying Europe and the UN to steady our relationships among friends and paying the Russians after the fall of the Soviet Union to reduce the number of missiles pointing in the wrong direction. No question, we do not identify our aid policies as what they really are, money for cooperation, but the policy has been used for decades and it works. There is no need for honesty regarding our willingness to pay, but that does not reduce the bargaining or the understanding of how our payments have affected relationships around the world.

How to Stop ISIS

Here is a hint. We cannot kill enough jihadists to win the war against ISIS or terrorism, and we cannot likely eliminate the beliefs that have spawned hatred toward the United States, Britain and others in the Arab world. World War I ended with the recognition that Sykes-Picot would be no friend to Muslims, and World War II closed with a conflict in Palestine that remains in effect to this very day. Gerges tells us of the attempt by Hamas to play down the role of ISIS in their region, despite its powerful impact, resulting from hatred among Arabs and hatred of Jews as well. Gerges describes it this way, "Although Hamas tried to downplay the ISIS challenge, there have been reports of armed clashes and arrests of ISIS members" (Gerges, 2016, p.228). He adds further, "ISIS appeals to members of constituencies that idealize a past that has not been contextualized and explained in reference to its particular history and that in their eyes

must be resurrected wholesale (2016). Finally, Gerges explains, "The lure of the caliphate is that it imbues these recruits with a greater purpose in life: to be part of a historical mission to restore Islamic unity and help bring about redemption and salvation" (2016). Gerges reflects on the isolation of young people who join ISIS, there lack of hope, their unemployment, their alienation, their disenfranchisement (2016).

Gerges and Stern alike help the reader to understand a long history of dishonesty, misrepresentation, deceit, despair, religious hopes, religious fears, and hopes for a miraculous turn of events restoring some perceived greatness to a downtrodden but "proud" people. Page after page from these top ISIS researchers provides an explanation that we easily recognize. Eric Hoffer wrote The True Believer in 1951, and it sounds like ISIS in 2018. A few words here from Hoffer just set the stage for a kind of understanding that might offer real hope for winning against ISIS, though in a way rarely considered. Hoffer writes in 1951, "All mass movements generate in their adherents a readiness to die and a proclivity for united action; all of them, irrespective of the doctrine they preach and the program they project, breed fanaticism, enthusiasm, fervent hope, hatred and intolerance…all of them demand blind faith and single-hearted allegiance" (Hoffer, 1951, p. 10). The sentiment is unmistakable, whether in Gerges, Stern or Hoffer; it is all the same.

Therefore, trying to beat down this enemy seems unworkable, infeasible, untenable, and plain impossible. These true believers demand satisfaction, and they will not be denied. You can stamp on an ant hill all day long, but everyone knows how that will end. Governments can send missiles and troops and the mother of all bombs, but the true believers will not be denied;

and without a doubt, you cannot buy a terrorist. They surely do not want anyone's money, at least not as an inducement to stop the holy war. These are people, and their fears and hatred and faith are all they have. To win this war, governments must win hearts and souls; and while that will not be accomplished by payments, it can be achieved through changes in societies and the establishment of conditions that breed hope and enthusiasm; but not for killing, instead for winning in life, finding purpose in life.

Now, there is no school where this better life can be taught or enshrined. At the same time, there is no better way to stop ISIS than to create a society in which no one wants to be part of a killing machine that leads nowhere and offers nothing but destruction for all. There are, however, government policies that can explore ways of building support for better lives, better educated populations, more money for growth and innovation and housing and healthcare, and less money for bombs and military parades. No question, defense is a necessary military objective, but defending one's borders means more than building a wall or lobbing a bomb. It means producing a lifestyle that can support hope and a purpose for living. When North Korea meets with South Korea and eventually with the United States, there must be more presented than demands for acquiescence. That would not work even if Kim Jong-un lied and promised a list of promises a hundred or a thousand pages long. The Agreed Frameworks in 1994 set out a plan for helping the North Koreans to revive their society. Perhaps they wanted to build a hydrogen bomb, but no functioning, successful, sensible country will blow up one of those bombs. Waltz explains it in detail, and despite Sagan's protestations, there is no solution to stopping terrorism short of a better life. Waltz writes, "They would pull the temple down on all of us, themselves included. The damage they would do knows no limit" (Sagan & Waltz, 2003).

Still, there is another way around this, because none of these jihadists will ever control nuclear weapons, as Waltz explains well; and no country will attack with nuclear weapons, because they do not want to die. The world needs to give all these countries a reason to live.

Conclusion

In 1948 the U.S. government delivered billions of dollars to Germany in the form of the Marshall Plan. That was the same Germany that had been commandeered by Adolph Hitler up to 1945, killing six million Jews and pushing the entire world to near destruction, especially if nuclear weapons had become part of the party. In the wake of World War II, the United Nations produced the start of a system that offered the planet a chance to talk about problems, examine extremely problematic behaviors, and develop the framework for delivering humanitarian aid while building infrastructure for trade and fair conflict resolution. Of course, only parts of these ideal goals have ever been achieved, but with the help of the United States, worldwide leadership could follow a path aimed at developing growth and civil society across the planet. No doubt, there will still always be dictators and madmen, but the U.S. has a policy that works. It pays for everything it wants. It does not always get what it wants, but the policy can be extremely effective. In Germany, it reversed the direction created by the most horrific government known to modern man. We paid billions of dollars to the people who followed Adolph Hitler. They established a society that stopped killing and started growing businesses. Is Kim Jong-un worse than Adolph Hitler? Are the mullahs worse than the Nazis? Our investment in Germany made

it, ironically, the leader of Europe. Our dollars were well spent, and remember, we did not get the idea right the first time when we attempted to punish the Germans in 1918.

The United States could go back to the Agreed Frameworks in North Korea, just before President George W. Bush described the Axis of Evil. The United States could help Iran achieve a growing and modern government to match its educated and progressive society. No repressive government could last for long in a healthy, innovative economic environment. China has its strains because of its growth and economic successes. Any country with a stable market, a reasonable currency and an educated citizenry will find great difficulty convincing its population to remain enslaved and to attack all its neighbors.

Of course, ISIS adds to the complexity of a foreign policy attempting to encourage worldwide economic stability. We have heard here about the problems of Muslims in Europe, the problems of Palestinians and Arab division in the Middle East, and the problems of true believers everywhere. None of this has been effectively tamed in 2018, but the approach to ending the terror associated with jihadist groups has been at the barrel of a gun. Clearly, modern governments find their citizens demanding rapid solutions; none are offering Marshall Plans or economic assistance for healthcare and education and innovation. It is understandable that societies describe their budgets as tight and the needs of their own people as requiring benefits and jobs. Still, over time, regimes cannot necessarily be changed, and governments may not be amenable to democratic change; but people are pretty much the same everywhere. They want better living conditions and they want hope for better opportunities in their lives.

Realism vs. idealism may be one way of looking at different perspectives on governance. Hard interests may seem preferable for setting primary goals over soft power related objectives, thinking about how long-term growth of economic activity promotes more jobs and hopes that can overcome the extremism associated with the true believer. Impatience may be even more ubiquitous and corrupting in 2018 than in 1918 when World War I came to its close. Many believed then that the Germans would never rise again if they were kept down and humiliated into conciliation. Nevertheless, they did recover, but not in a way that anyone ever imagined possible. Any group of people, if deeply depressed, repressed and deprived may be capable of almost anything. The key to effective foreign policy and successful international relationships may be empathy for others and a recognition that while anyone can be repressed into insanity as in Nazi Germany, others may be capable of progressing into humanity… maybe.

Hans Morgenthau wrote, "Political realism believes that politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature" (Morgenthau, 1961). Resolving human problems may help to address radical ISIS and the jihadist will to wreak havoc. Guns and bombs have proven their ineffectiveness, but money is power in creating political revolution.

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