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Article 1.

NYT

Bolder Hamas Tests Alliances in a Shifting Arab World Jodi

Rudoren<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/r/j=di_rudoren/index.html> and Fares Akram

November 15, 2012 -- Gaza City — Instead of the wedding drums that typically provide the evening soundtrack in this forlorn coastal strip, the black, still air was pierced by gunshots on Thursday, as citizens fired celebratory rounds after the ruling Hamas<<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/h/hamas/index.html?inline=nyt-org>> faction announced that one of its rockets had hit an Israeli aircraft.

The Israeli<<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/israel/index.html?inline=nyt-geo>> Defense Forces denied the hit, though footage on Hamas television and YouTube appeared convincing.

Either way, the reaction was nonetheless emblematic of the latest lopsided battle between this impoverished, intensely crowded and hemmed-in enclave and its militarily mighty neighbor to the north — as was the rat-tat-tat of guns being quickly overtaken by the thunder of F-16 strikes across the city: “The mood of the people is high despite the siege, despite the Israeli aggression,” said Dr. Hassan Khalaf, director of Al Shifa Hospital here, where many of the Palestinian<<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/p/palestinians/index.html?inline=nyt-classifier>> dead and wounded were taken.

“To be killed while smiling or while confident or not confident, the final outcome is death,” Dr. Khalaf added. “At least now we feel like we can injure the Israelis while they try to harm us.”

Nearly four years after Israel’s Operation Cast Lead killed about 1,400 Gazans in three weeks of air and ground assaults in response to repeated rocket fire, this new conflict has a decidedly different feel, and not just because Israel has said that it has tried to limit its attacks to precision strikes.

This time, Israeli forces are fighting a newly emboldened Hamas, supported by the regional powerhouses of Qatar, Turkey and Egypt, and demonstrating its strength compared with a weak and crisis-laden Palestinian Authority<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/p/palestine_authority/index.html?inline=nyt-org>.

After months of mostly holding its fire as it struggled to stop other militant factions from shooting rockets across the border, Hamas has responded forcefully to Israel’s killing on Wednesday of its top military commander<<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/15/world/middleeast/israeli-strike-in-gaza-kills-the-military-leader-of-hamas.html>>, Ahmed al-Jabari. It sent more than 300 rockets into Israel over 24 hours, with several penetrating the heart of Israel’s population center around Tel Aviv; three civilians were killed in an apartment building about 15 miles north of

Gaza<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/gaza_strip/index.html?inline=nyt-geo>, and three soldiers were wounded in a separate strike.

For Hamas, the goal is not necessarily a military victory, but a diplomatic one, as it tests its growing alliance with the new Islamist leadership of Egypt and other relationships in the Arab world and beyond.

"The conflict shows how much the region has changed since the Arab uprisings began," said Nathan Thrall, who researches Israel and the Palestinian territories for the International Crisis Group, which works to prevent conflict. "Now when Gaza is under fire, the loudest voices come not from the so-called Axis of Resistance — Iran, Syria and Hezbollah — but from U.S. allies like Egypt and Qatar."

One possible way out of the crisis, Mr. Thrall suggested, would be a three-party deal in which Hamas vows to contain Gaza's more extreme elements in exchange for improved trade through Rafah, the border crossing controlled by Egypt, as well as Kerem Shalom, the commercial crossing managed by Israel.

"The new X-factor is that Egypt is now part of that mix," said David Mavovsky of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Hamas, he said, hopes the message to Israel will be: "You don't want to mess with us in Gaza because you'll hurt your relationship with Cairo."

President Mohamed Morsi of Egypt has so far rallied to Hamas's side: he not only recalled his ambassador from Israel but is sending his prime minister, Hesham Kandil, here on to "confirm Egypt's solidarity with the people of Gaza in the face of the wanton Israeli aggression," according to a statement from his spokesman on Thursday.

Ismail Haniyeh, the Hamas prime minister, thanked Mr. Morsi in a televised speech on Thursday night "for the quick and brave decisions he made," adding, "Today's Egypt is unlike that of yesterday."

Coming weeks after the emir of Qatar became the first head of state to step-foot in Gaza since Hamas took control in 2007, the visit of such a high-ranking Egyptian creates a dilemma for Israel. Intense bombing during or before Mr.

Kandil's visit could be a public relations disaster internationally, but agreeing to a cease-fire without responding harshly to the rocket fire near Tel Aviv and the three civilian deaths near Gaza would be difficult for those at home to swallow. "If this had happened before, there would have been more pressure on the Palestinians," said Waleed al-Modallal, a political science professor at the Islamic University of Gaza. "Now the resistance is working freely."

Not entirely freely. Mourners broke into a jog on Thursday morning as they accompanied Mr. Jabari's remains from his home to a mosque for his funeral because Israeli planes were dropping bombs nearby. High-ranking Hamas officials were not among the crowds, heeding Israel's warning to stay out of sight or risk the same fate.

Among the Palestinian fatalities were five children, two men over 55 and a pregnant 19-year-old, according to relatives and Gaza health officials.

"We heard an explosion that shook the house, and in a moment a shell hit the house," said Um Jihad, the mother-in-law of the pregnant woman, Heba Al-Mash'harawi, and grandmother of one of the babies, 11-month-old Omar.

Furniture and curtains were ablaze in seconds, and the baby suffocated from smoke, family members said.

As bombing continued — a dozen an hour, according to an Israeli military spokesman — schools were closed and most Gazans huddled indoors, some fleeing the harder-hit outskirts of the cities for relatives' homes in more populated areas. Amnah Hassan, 53, said 25 people from three generations crowded into the center of the ground floor of their home, away from windows and only venturing out in the late afternoon to buy a battery-operated radio to monitor news when electricity went out.

Israel dropped leaflets warning Gazans to stay away from facilities used by Hamas to store weapons and accused Hamas of using civilians as human shields by setting up such storehouses in residential neighborhoods.

"Their father was killed in Cast Lead, so they are more terrified," Ms. Hassan said of three of her grandchildren. "In Cast Lead the bombings did not stop. Here, it becomes quiet for a while, then we think it's going to be quiet, then suddenly the airstrikes resume. We don't know what's going to happen later."

Thursday was the Islamic New Year, but there were no parties here. Normally traffic-clogged boulevards were mostly empty, and marketplaces had shuttered shops instead of shoppers.

"Who will think of eating sweets in these bitter circumstances?" asked Mohammed Elmazaner outside his bakery.

Article 2.

Spiegel

Netanyahu's Extremely Risky Gamble

Ulrike Putz<<http://www.spiegel.de/extra/0,1518,632135,00.html>>

11/15/2012 – Beirut -- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is hoping the offensive in the Gaza Strip wins his Likud party more votes in January's election. But the move is extremely risky. Skirmishes could escalate into a full-blown war that might weaken Hamas but shift Palestinian support behind even more radical groups.

Just a few hours before the launch of the deadly offensive against military=targets and Hamas leaders in the Gaza Strip, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was in his favorite place: in front of live television cameras= On Wednesday evening, he addressed the Israeli people with direct, aggressive words. "Today, we relayed a clear message to the Hamas organization and other terrorist organizations," he said. "If there is a need, the military is prepared to expand the operation." Defense Minister Ehud Barak also addressed reporters, saying that Hamas' "consistent provocation in recent weeks ... forced our hand into acting with both precision and decisiveness."

The dual appearance seems to betray the motives behind the most recent attacks. "When the cannons roar, we see only Netanyahu and Barak on the screen, and all the other politicians have to applaud them," wrote the daily Haaretz in a commentary published Thursday. "The assassination of (Hamas' top military commander Ahmed) Jabari will go down in history as another showy military action initiated by an outgoing government on the eve of an election.= Indeed, one can conclude that the most recent offensive against militants is the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip<<http://www.spiegel.de/international/topic/gaza-strip/>> -- which started Wednesday with the killing of Jabari -- has been =conceived as more of a show fight for the Israeli public than the beginning=of a decisive battle.

Dangerous Gambling

Both Netanyahu and Barak would have good reasons for wanting to use a successful mini-campaign to score points before parliamentary elections are held=on Jan. 22. Netanyahu is undoubtedly afraid that ex-Prime Minister Ehud Olmert could snatch votes away from his Likud party if he decides to throw his hat in the ring. In fact, there are rumors that Olmert was planning to announce his candidacy precisely on Wednesday evening. But the military action= codenamed "Pillar of Defense" upset his plans.

Defense Minister Barak can also no longer assume that his "Independence" party, which broke off from the Labor Party in January 2011, will win enough votes to keep seats in the country's parliament, the Knesset. However, a successful offensive could boost its waning popularity enough to guarantee it=some parliamentary seats. An offensive that gets the population to close ranks behind the military would also divert attention away from pressing social problems in Israel.<<http://www.spiegel.de/international/topic/israel/>> =oing so would take the wind out of the sails of groups such as the Labor Party and cost them votes, thereby helping Netanyahu's and Barak's respective parties.

Still, even if the offensive might give the two some political advantages, =t also entails massive risks. If the violence gets out of hand and the conflict between Israel and Hamas escalates into something like the three-week=war that broke out between the two in December 2008, it could have drastic=consequences for the men who orchestrated it.

The Israeli public is extremely sensitive to casualties. Sentiments could swiftly turn in the event of a few more of incidents like the Thursday attack= that saw a rocket slam into an apartment building in the southern Israeli=town of Kiryat Malachi, killing two men and a woman. Likewise, should the Israeli government respond to a constant barrage of rockets launched from the Gaza Strip by ordering ground troops to advance into the coastal area, it could spell even more casualties and even more public opposition to the leaders who launched "Pillar of Defense."

A Dangerous Balancing Act on Both Sides

Netanyahu's government hopes the offensive will usher in the status quo ante=. Israel would like to re-establish the cease-fire that it hammered out with Hamas in January 2009, at the end of the war in Gaza. Though it was a fragile peace, for the most part, it was respected. But Hamas has been emboldened by the recent election victory in Egypt of the Muslim Brotherhood, Ham=s' political parent organization. Just a few months ago, Hamas started to seriously jeopardize the peace by beginning to launch rockets into Israeli =territory and attacking Israeli border patrols.

Internal political calculus was also behind the Palestinians' decision to increase the number of attacks during the late summer: Hamas' power base is =rumbling. Many Gaza Strip residents believe the organization is too weak and view the cease-fire with Israel as a betrayal. In recent years, the support of these disenchanted residents has migrated to considerably more radical groups. By making itself appear more bellicose, Hamas hopes to win back =these former supporters.

Indeed, more than anything, it is the presence of these ultra-radical group= in the Gaza Strip that could turn Israel's current offensive into an adventure that spirals out of control. Goaded by Israeli airstrikes and shelling= from tanks and naval gunboats, these extremists will be even less inclined= to agree to a new cease-fire. Their supporters expect them to take a tough= stance and reject all compromises.

These groups are affiliated with terror cells based in the Sinai Peninsula,=and some of them have ties to al-Qaida. In the past, they have already blocked the attempts of Egyptian intermediaries to broker a cease-fire. In the=days to come, Israel could face a situation in which Hamas becomes incapable of imposing one even if it wants to.

Should that happen, the Israeli government would have no choice but to take over the entire Gaza Strip. However, doing so could weaken Hamas so much that the ultra-extremist Palestinian groups could simply push it aside. For this reason, it is paradoxically in Israel's interest not to allow the ongoing offensive to severely batter Hamas and thereby imperil its grip on power.

Netanyahu and Barak are now walking a perilous tightrope -- and one of their own making.

Article 3.

NYT

The World's Next Genocide

Simon Adams

November 15, 2012 -- AT a recent meeting hosted by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, Peter W. Galbraith, a former American ambassador who witnessed ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, made a chilling prediction. "The next genocide in the world," he said, "will likely be against the Alawites in Syria<<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/syria/index.html?inline=nyt-geo>>.=94

A few months ago, talk of possible massacres of Alawites, who dominate Bashar al-Assad<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/a/ba=har_al_assad/index.html?inline=nyt-per>'s government in Syria, seemed like pro-regime propaganda. Now, it is a real possibility.

For more than a year, Mr. Assad's government has been committing crimes against humanity in Syria. As it fights for survival on the streets of Aleppo and Damascus, the risk of unrestrained reprisals against Mr. Assad's Alawite sect and Syria's other religious minorities is growing every day.

Following the rise to power of Mr. Assad's father, Hafez, in 1970, Alawites were transformed from a persecuted minority sect to the controlling force within the army and government. With a system of perks similar to those in other dictatorships, the elder Mr. Assad drew other religious and ethnic minorities into his political orbit while rebellions by members of the Sunni majority, like the one in Hama in 1982, were mercilessly crushed.

When the Arab Spring reached Syria last year, it dredged up animosities that had been lurking for decades. The protest movement was avowedly nonsectarian, attracting Syrians from all communities. But in the government's eyes, the opposition was simply a Sunni front seeking to topple the Assad family and end Alawite rule.

The Syrian government's actions have deepened the sectarian divide. As the violent repression of protests gave way to the destruction of opposition-controlled villages, the government moved from targeting individual dissenters to imposing collective punishment upon entire neighborhoods. Sunni areas were shelled by artillery and tanks, and the pro-government shabiha militia, made up mainly of Alawites, carried out ferocious massacres of men, women and children. The majority of victims were Sunni civilians.

As the civil war intensifies, Mr. Assad is increasingly outsourcing the dirty work. In Damascus, militia groups within Druse, Christian and Shiite areas are being armed by the government. While the justifications for these militias are "neighborhood self-defense" and the protection of religious sites, the shabiha emerged in a similar way before becoming killing squads for Mr. Assad. And by drawing Christians, Druse, Shiites and Alawites into the civil war on an explicitly sectarian basis, the Syrian government has at least guaranteed that there will be reprisals against these communities if Mr. Assad falls.

Indeed, as pro-democracy protests degenerated into civil war, the ideological composition of the opposition changed. The Free Syrian Army's slogan remains, "We are all one people of one country." But inside Syria those chanting "Christians to Beirut, Alawites to their graves!" have become more than a fringe element. Human Rights Watch and other groups have documented cases of rebels executing Syrian soldiers and Alawites regarded as government collaborators. Growing numbers of foreign Sunni extremist fighters are battling not just to rid Syria of Mr. Assad, but to religiously cleanse it. As a result, many Syrians now fear that their fate will mirror that of Iraqi Christians, who were largely forced out of Iraq by war and sectarian terrorism. The city of Homs was once home to 80,000 Christians; there are now reportedly fewer than 400.

Three vetoes by Russia and China have blocked attempts by the United Nations Security Council to hold the Syrian government accountable for its crimes. But those who have opted for a proxy war in Syria and who are now financing the rebels cannot avoid responsibility for what comes next.

Governments that have publicly committed themselves to helping end Syria's misery, including the United States, must immediately do two things to help prevent a violent backlash against Alawites and other minorities. First, they must

impress upon the newly united Syrian opposition that support depends on strict adherence to international humanitarian law. Armed groups who advocate fracturing Syria along sectarian or regional lines should be denied funds; there should be absolutely no aid for rebel groups who target Alawites and other minorities for reprisals or who commit war crimes.

Second, outside governments should intensify their efforts to hold all perpetrators of mass atrocities accountable at the International Criminal Court= regardless of their allegiance. That also means allocating funds for additional United Nations human rights monitors on the Syrian border in order to collect evidence and testimony for future prosecutions. Syria has experienced untold horrors throughout its history. But it is a historic crossroads of cultures, faiths and civilizations. The real choice in=Syria today is not between Alawites or Sunnis, or between Mr. Assad and Al-Qaeda, but between action enabling further crimes against humanity to take=place and action dedicated to ending impunity for such crimes once and for=all.

Simon Adams<<http://globalr2p.org/whowear/staff.php>> is executive director =f the Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect.

Article 4.

The Atlantic

The Gaza Invasion: Will It Destroy Israel's Relationship With Egypt?

Eric Trager

The fact that Israel endured over 800 rocket attacks from

Gaza<<https://twitter.com/washinstitute/status/268784101895589889>> in the past year before co=mencing yesterday's military operation against Hamas suggests that Jerusalem hoped to avoid the current flare-up. Among other concerns, the Israeli government knew that another Gaza war would ignite the neighboring Egyptian =street," and since Egypt's post-revolutionary government would have to be =ore responsive to popular sentiments, a downgrade in Israeli-Egyptian relations would be likely. The rise of the Muslim Brotherhood -- Hamas' Egyptia= cousin -- as Egypt's new ruling party exacerbated those

qualms<<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303640804577488930454305916.html>>, give= the Brotherhood's longtime opposition to the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace =reaty and refusal to acknowledge Israel's rightful existence.

It was therefore unsurprising that Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi, a former Brotherhood leader, conceded to popular outrage<<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/58146/Egypt/Politics-/Hundreds-march-in-Cairo-to-demand-an-end-to-diplom.aspx>> in the wake of "Operation Pillar of Cloud" this week by recalling Egypt's ambassador to Israel. Yet in the grand scheme of diplomatic gestures, this was, in fact, a relatively minor move. Indeed, former President Hosni Mubarak did exactly same thing<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2000/nov/22/israel>> in November 2000 when Egyptian demonstrations ag=inst Israel mounted during the second intifada. The real question, therefo=ce, is what Morsi does next: will he stop at simply recalling his ambassador=, or will use the fighting in Gaza to justify a more severe approach towar=s Israel?

At the moment, Morsi is seemingly being pulled in two directions. On one ha=d, Egypt's diplomatic and security establishments are urging calm. In this=vein, Foreign Minister Mohamed Amr issued a bland statement<<http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/58130.aspx>> calling on Israel to stop the fighting, and =as taken the matter to the Arab League, which, in addition to being feckle=s, won't discuss the fighting in Gaza until Saturday<<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-arableague-gazabre8ad110-20121114,0,7228486.story>>. Meanwhile, during the three days leading up to Wednesday's conflagration, Egypt's intelligence services had been working to prevent Israel-Hamas escalation, and they are now hoping that the current episode will pass speedily =efore Egyptian-Israeli relations are truly endangered. "Whatever happened =appened," a high-ranking intelligence official told me yesterday when I as=ed whether a prolonged Gaza conflict would lead Morsi to intensify his res=onse. "We must look to the future without any blood or escalation."

Yet the Muslim Brotherhood is pulling Morsi in a very different direction. =n the wake of Wednesday's fighting, the Brotherhood called<<http://www.ikhwanonline.com/new/Article.aspx?ArtID=128660&SecID=212>> on Morsi to "seve= diplomatic and trade relations with this usurper entity," so that the Egyptian government can "begin to be a role model for Arabs and Muslims who ke=p relations with this entity." The Brotherhood will also organize mass pro=ests against Israel<<http://dailynewsegypt.com/2012/11/14/brotherhood-calls-for-protests-against-israeli-action/>> on Friday, and

prominent Brotherhood-leaders have insisted that post-revolutionary Egypt be more supportive of the Palestinians. "The Egyptian people revolted against injustice and will not accept the attack on Gaza," tweeted [Brotherhood political party chairman Saad al-Katany](https://twitter.com/Saad_Elkatatny/status/268754940430794753).

During the first four-plus months of his presidency, Morsi has mostly embraced the more pragmatic approach endorsed by Egypt's security and diplomatic professionals. This is partially due to Morsi's stubborn refusal to deal with Israelis (not to mention his refusal to even utter the word "Israel" in official statements), which has forced him to delegate responsibility for Israel policy to these bureaucratic institutions that are disinclined from confrontation with Israel. But it is also due to the Muslim Brotherhood's belief that it must complete its project of Islamizing Egypt before it can pursue its regional ambitions. Indeed, as Mohamed Sudan, secretary for foreign relations of the Brotherhood's political party, said earlier this week [Morsi is pursuing the right path towards Israel because he is "cancelling normalization with the Zionist entity gradually."](http://www.misrelgdida.com/Policy/101072.html)

Still, there are indications that Morsi may choose a more confrontational posture sooner rather than later. On Tuesday, the Brotherhood's political party announced [that its legal committee was working on a new draft law to unilaterally amend Egypt's peace treaty with Israel](http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/fjp-drafts-amendment-israel-peace-treaty-morsy-parliament-review). Meanwhile, prominent Muslim Brothers have made hostile gestures towards Israel in recent months, including the Supreme Guide's call for a "holy jihad" for

Jerusalem [as well as Morsi's answering "amen" to an imam who prayed for the destruction of Jews](http://www.ikhwanonline.com/new/Article.aspx?SecID=213=ArtID=124850) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQVJIL4pAE>.

Morsi has also demonstrated that he knows how to use a crisis to advance the Brotherhood's political agenda. He responded to August terrorist attacks in Sinai by quickly firing the military chiefs who posed the greatest threat to the Brotherhood's rule. Similarly, he may use the current flare-up to accelerate the Brotherhood's pursuit of its anti-Israel ambitions. Whether or not Morsi uses the current fighting in Gaza to break off Israeli-Egyptian relations entirely now, it is clear that this remains the Muslim Brotherhood's ultimate ambition.

This is where Washington comes in. While the Obama administration cannot change the long-held aims of an insular, extreme movement like the Muslim Brotherhood, it must work to prevent the Brotherhood from pursuing those aims anytime soon. The administration can begin by telling Morsi very clearly that while he is free to disagree with the United States on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he cannot disagree on the importance of maintaining Egypt-Israeli relations, which have served to prevent war between two of the region's strongest militaries for the past three-plus decades. Moreover, the administration should use economic aid, as well as American support for the \$4.8 billion IMF loan that Egypt is pursuing, as leverage for ensuring that Morsi stays within well-defined red lines. After all, this aid is not charity - it is an investment in a relationship with an Egypt that is at peace with its neighbors. And an Egypt that uses another round of Israeli-Palestinian fighting as an excuse for breaking its international commitments, as the Brotherhood would like Morsi to do, is a very bad investment.

Eric Trager is the Next Generation Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Article 5.

The Wall Street Journal
The Return of a Nightmare
Walter Russell Mead

The Second Nuclear Age
By Paul Bracken
(Times Books, 306 pages, \$29)

November 15, 2012 -- Fifty years ago the world came close to nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union at the time of the Cuban missile crisis. The two sides backed down, and it is generally thought that the nuclear threat has only receded since that near-catastrophe. In fact, the risks of nuclear war are higher now than they were then thanks to the new nuclear powers. But nuclear weapons and questions of nuclear strategy no longer dominate

American strategic thought. Most Americans have thought as little as possible about nuclear weapons since the end of the Cold War. This uneven but powerful book by Paul Bracken shows why that is a mistake.

Like a rumpled professor in an undergraduate seminar, Mr. Bracken takes a long time to get to the heart of his subject. There is a lot of throat clearing, anecdote telling and general attempts to put his audience at ease. Readers will be tempted to abandon the book early on, but this would be a mistake. As the "The Second Nuclear Age" unfolds, the author makes a convincing argument that nuclear strategy is likely to play a major role in geopolitics.

Since their use invites devastating retaliation, many strategists today imagine that nuclear weapons can never be used to good effect and are therefore essentially worthless. This perception doesn't just shape American thoughts about our own arsenal; it impels American leaders to underestimate the difficulties of nonproliferation because they don't fully grasp the size of the gains that nonnuclear powers can achieve in joining the Bomb Club. Our strategists, says Mr. Bracken, are in a state of denial: "An older generation wants to make the nuclear nightmare go away by inoculating the young with protective ideas. Nuclear weapons are useless and we should get rid of them. Strengthen the [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty]. Get rid of ballistic missiles. Deterrence will work."

These ideas, very much at the heart of the present administration's strategic thought, are fantasies, Mr. Bracken believes. His central contention is that we are in a second nuclear age. While there were several nuclear powers in the previous one, the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union overshadowed the others. The dynamics then were largely bipolar. We are in a multipolar nuclear world. And there are nine nuclear powers today—the U.S., Britain, France, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea. More will likely emerge.

The author presents detailed case studies on East Asia, South Asia and the Middle East to bolster his argument that the multipolar nuclear world is already changing the military strategies of regional powers in significant ways and to show that American national strategy—still focused on nonproliferation and lacking an understanding of the new nuclear dynamics—is lagging behind.

His analysis of the role of nuclear weapons in the India-Pakistan rivalry is disturbing and illuminating. The two sides haven't used their weapons, but their arsenals have changed their military and political strategies in ways that make the region more explosive and crisis prone. Pakistan, unable to compete in conventional weapons with its larger and wealthier neighbor, is expanding the quantity, upgrading the quality and diversifying the designs of its arsenal. India, meanwhile, is investing heavily in capabilities that would allow it to spot Pakistani preparations for a nuclear strike, possibly to pre-empt with force.

Mr. Bracken says that nuclear and conventional strategy are closely tied for both countries. India is organizing its nonnuclear forces in ways intended to anticipate and offset Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. It is also investing in detection and surveillance technologies aimed at both monitoring the state of Islamabad's nuclear preparedness and revealing its conventional vulnerabilities. These Indian capabilities have in turn changed Pakistan's nuclear and conventional plans. Both sides thus derive important advantages from their nuclear arsenals. (For India, these advantages are supra-regional, as New Delhi looks nervously to a rising Beijing next-door.) Neither will ever give up nukes.

The author's own sense of the dynamics of a multipolar nuclear world is sometimes less than complete. He tries, for example, to analyze the impact of nuclear Iran on the Middle East by confining his analysis to Israel, the United States and Iran. Missing are the inevitable and serious effects as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and other regional powers respond to the new situation.

Even so, Mr. Bracken's view is a powerful one. It holds little comfort for theorists of international relations, whatever their orientation. Liberals will be appalled by his picture of a future in which widespread nuclear weapons impede the growth of the law-based order they seek. Nuclear weapons embody traditional ideas of state sovereignty; a world in which they drive strategic decisions and political arrangements is one that won't be guided by international law and organized by liberal institutions. If you have a nuclear weapon, the United Nations and the International Criminal Court can't make you do anything you really don't want to do.

But realists will also find much to annoy them in Mr. Bracken's book. As the author shows, the view common among many "realist" strategic thinkers—universal proliferation means universal peace—is formulaic and undermined by the fact that nuclear weapons have real uses that commend them to states. The problems of the second nuclear age aren't ones we will solve quickly. Mr. Bracken sees decades of multilateral nuclear rivalry as more states gain bombs and as the strategic consequences of nuclear arsenals in more hands come to be better understood. This isn't a cheery book, but it is a valuable one. The questions Mr. Bracken raises about the sustainability of current American foreign policy thinking are particularly timely. Nuclear strategy must come out of its post-Cold War retirement. We are once again in a world where nuclear weapons count.

Article 6.

The Economist

China's leaders: Changing guard

Nov 17th 2012 -- FOR the first time since the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, China's most important reins of power have been handed over at the same time to a single man: Xi Jinping (pictured, centre, above). The decision, revealed on November 15th, that Hu Jintao has stepped down not only as the Communist Party's general secretary, but also as head of China's army, was part of the biggest shake-up of the party's leadership in a decade. But although Mr Xi now has the titles of power, his ability to use them will be heavily constrained.

That Mr Xi, who is 59, would succeed Mr Hu as party chief has been in little doubt since 2007. There was also little doubt that one day he would take over Mr Hu's other important position as chairman of the party's Central Military Commission, which controls the armed forces. But it was uncertain until the announcement was made whether Mr Hu would relinquish both titles at the same time.

Mr Hu is constitutionally obliged to step down from his other post, as China's president, next March, but that is a far less substantial job. His predecessors, Jiang Zemin and the late Deng Xiaoping, both kept the military post for a couple of years after leaving the Politburo, ostensibly to ensure a smooth transition. Not since Hua Guofeng took over on Mao's death have both jobs been transferred simultaneously.

Hua turned out to be little more than a transitional figure. Few people expect Mr Xi to be the same. But his new jobs by no means give him absolute power. Crucially, his two predecessors, Mr Hu and Mr Jiang, are still alive. Both will wield considerable influence: Mr Jiang, at the age of 86, probably even more than the 69-year-old Mr Hu. The membership of the Politburo Standing Committee, the party's ruling body, bears Mr Jiang's imprint. Mr Xi and the man expected to succeed Wen Jiabao as prime minister next March, Li Keqiang, are the only two left from the outgoing committee, which has been reduced from nine members to seven. Of the five newcomers, all but one are considered to be protégés of Mr Jiang.

This is unlikely to displease Mr Xi, himself counted a Jiang-ist. Mr Li will be less enthused. Many observers believe that at one time Mr Hu was keen for Li should succeed him, not Mr Xi. As prime minister, Mr Li's chief responsibility will be overseeing the economy. But he might find it difficult to get his way given the presence of two others in the standing committee who are Jiang's men. One is Wang Qishan, who has played a central role in economic management for more than four years, and has now acquired a very powerful role as the party's chief anti-corruption official. The other is Zhang Gaoli, the party leader in the port city of Tianjin, who is expected to take over Mr Wang's economic portfolio. The body's new membership does not suggest any clear policy shift. Reformers will be disappointed at the omission of two men once thought frontrunners for elevation: the party chief of Guangdong province, Wang Yang, and the head of the party's Organisation Department, Li Yuanchao. Both are seen as Mr Hu's men and are reputed to be relatively liberal.

None of this necessarily means that Mr Xi will shy away from economic, or even political, reforms. Mr Hu has been widely criticised by liberals in China for letting reforms stagnate, especially in his second term. Some allow themselves a smidgen of hope that Mr Xi may prove bolder. As a "princeling", the child of a senior leader, Mr Xi is assumed to be rather more self-confident than Mr Hu. His father was close to Rong Yiren, a powerful figure in the party.

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