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Article 1.

NYT

Egypt's Step Backward

Thomas L. Friedman

February 21, 2012 -- Sadly, the transitional government in Egypt today appears determined to shoot itself in both feet.

On Sunday, it will put on trial 43 people, including at least 16 U.S. citizens, for allegedly bringing unregistered funds into Egypt to promote democracy without a license. Egypt has every right to control international organizations operating within its

borders. But the truth is that when these democracy groups filed their registration papers years ago under the autocracy of Hosni Mubarak, they were informed that the papers were in order and that approval was pending. The fact that now — after Mubarak has been deposed by a revolution — these groups are being threatened with jail terms for promoting democracy without a license is a very disturbing sign. It tells you how incomplete the “revolution” in Egypt has been and how vigorously the counter-revolutionary forces are fighting back.

This sordid business makes one weep and wonder how Egypt will ever turn the corner. Egypt is running out of foreign reserves, its currency is falling, inflation is rising and unemployment is rampant. Yet the priority of a few retrograde Mubarak holdovers is to put on trial staffers from the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute, which are allied with the two main U.S. political parties, as well as from Freedom House and some European groups. Their crime was trying to teach Egypt’s young democrats how to monitor elections and start parties to engage in the very democratic processes that the Egyptian Army set up after Mubarak’s fall. Thousands of Egyptians had participated in their seminars in recent years.

What is this really about? This case has been trumped up by Egypt’s minister of planning and international cooperation, Fayza Abul Naga, an old Mubarak crony. Abul Naga personifies the worst tendency in Egypt over the last 50 years — the tendency that helps to explain why Egypt has fallen so far behind its peers: South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Brazil, India and China. It is the tendency to look for dignity in all the wrong places — to look for dignity not by building up the capacity of

Egypt's talented young people so they can thrive in the 21st century — with better schools, better institutions, export industries and more accountable government. No, it is the tendency to go for dignity on the cheap “by standing up to the foreigners.”

That is Abul Naga's game. As a former Mubarak adviser put it to me: “Abul Naga is where she is today because for six years she was resisting the economic and political reforms” in alliance with the military. “Both she and the military were against opening up the Egyptian economy.” Both she and the military, having opposed the revolution, are now looking to save themselves by playing the nationalist card.

Egypt today has only two predators: poverty and illiteracy. After 30 years of Mubarak rule and some \$50 billion in U.S. aid, 33 percent of men and 56 percent of women in Egypt still can't read or write. That is a travesty. But that apparently does not keep Abul Naga up at night.

What is her priority? Is it to end illiteracy? Is it to articulate a new vision about how Egypt can engage with the world and thrive in the 21st century? Is it to create a positive climate for foreign investors to create jobs desperately needed by young Egyptians? No, it's to fall back on that golden oldie — that all of Egypt's problems are the fault of outsiders who want to destabilize Egypt. So let's jail some Western democracy consultants. That will restore Egypt's dignity.

The Times reported from Cairo that the prosecutor's dossier assembled against the democracy workers — bolstered by Abul Naga's testimony — accused these democracy groups of

working “in coordination with the C.I.A.,” serving “U.S. and Israeli interests” and inciting “religious tensions between Muslims and Copts.” Their goal, according to the dossier, was: “Bringing down the ruling regime in Egypt, no matter what it is,” while “pandering to the U.S. Congress, Jewish lobbyists and American public opinion.”

Amazing. What Abul Naga is saying to all those young Egyptians who marched, protested and died in Tahrir Square in order to gain a voice in their own future is: “You were just the instruments of the C.I.A., the U.S. Congress, Israel and the Jewish lobby. They are the real forces behind the Egyptian revolution — not brave Egyptians with a will of their own.”

Not surprisingly, some members of the U.S. Congress are talking about cutting off the \$1.3 billion in aid the U.S. gives Egypt’s army if these Americans are actually thrown in prison. Hold off on that. We have to be patient and see this for what, one hopes, it really is: Fayza’s last dance. It is elements of the old regime playing the last cards they have to both undermine the true democratic forces in Egypt and to save themselves by posing as protectors of Egypt’s honor.

Egyptians deserve better than this crowd, which is squandering Egypt’s dwindling resources at a critical time and diverting attention from the real challenge facing the country: giving Egypt’s young people what they so clearly hunger for — a real voice in their own future and the educational tools they need to succeed in the modern world. That’s where lasting dignity comes from.

Asharq Al-Awsat

Revolutions expose the frailties of Arab armies

Dr. Amal Al-Hazzani

21 February 2012 -- From the October 1973 war against Israel up until a year ago, we used to sincerely believe that the Arab states were seeking to build up their armies, although their readiness was unconvincing at the time, and that soon these armies would be ready to wage a war to liberate the occupied territories.

However, the year 2011 was a real shock, for it brought us the naked truth of a bitter reality: there is no single Arab army that can maintain control of its internal situation, let alone wage a regional war.

In Egypt we find the oldest army in the history of the Middle East, the largest Arab army in terms of size, and one that has fought fierce wars against Israel. However, following the 2011 revolution, the Egyptian army has taken on a completely different appearance, contrary to its former prestige and power, and the firm stances it always adopted in the face of hardships and challenges throughout the course of history, such as the brave decision to protect people's lives and state institutions during the Tahrir Square demonstrations. Now the army seems too feeble to protect itself or the security of its senior officials, hence its affiliates have been subjected to physical and psychological abuse at the hands of callow youths, who are

unfamiliar with the major wars conducted by the Egyptian army in the past. Such youths only know the army's historical value through their school curriculums or the stories of their grandparents. The Egyptian army has lost control of the street, and although it succeeded in penetrating the Bar Lev Line during its war against Israel in 1973, it failed miserably to have any impact upon Tahrir Square.

Perhaps, the only person who managed to interpret Egypt's future realistically was the late President Anwar al-Sadat. In fact, by signing the peace agreement with Israel, he saved the Egyptian people a hundred years or more in efforts to liberate the Sinai soil, which the Egyptians now rely upon as a reliable source of one-third of the country's economy.

In Syria, the so-called "Fortress of Arabism", the situation is even worse. The army that imposes military service upon every single Syrian youth - despite all its intelligence apparatuses, battalions and brigades - failed to confront unarmed protestors demonstrating without weapons, only using their loud voices in opposition. The Syrian regime sought the assistance of thousands of members from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and Hezbollah to quell the demonstrations, simply because it trusted them and deemed them to be more loyal to than the members of its regular army, who promptly defected from their leaders. Yet Syria never sought the assistance of Iran or Hezbollah to liberate the Golan Heights, which could have tipped the balance of power with Israel. Rather, it only appealed to them for immediate assistance to keep the Bashar al-Assad regime in power.

In Libya, the situation is almost farcical. In the year 2000, Muammar Gaddafi wanted to declare a war on Israel, yet he had no qualified army to do so. He never considered training one up

properly, fearing that it could rise against him someday. During the Libyan revolution, Saif al-Islam Gaddafi blamed the Libyan army for its violent handling of the demonstrators. According to Saif al-Islam, the army was reckless because it was not properly trained to deal with riots, so how could such an army ever deal with the riots provoked by Israel?

As for Yemen, the truth is that the army there is in a better condition than many other regional countries, for one significant and sorrowful reason: the Yemeni arena continues to experience consecutive civil wars, and as a result, the army and security troops are constantly engaged in genuine field exercises that are far better than the exercise drills provide by military training colleges and institutes. This prompted Yemeni President to always boast that a Yemeni citizen is a sniper by nature since his early childhood. However, despite being dominated mainly by relatives of the President, the army recently failed to end the war with the protestors on the streets. It is true that the president was not defeated, yet he did not win either. In the end, he only succeeded in transforming elements of the Yemeni army into street fighters battling one another.

So, has the reality of the Arab armies been buried under a layer of propaganda? The answer is partially yes, because the vast majority of Arabs used to believe that the Arab military and logistical solidarity alone could destroy Israel. The Egyptian army's size, the Syrian army's belief in resistance, and the Gulf states' logistical support could all contribute to Israel's defeat. The conclusion we can draw today is that military objectives cannot be fulfilled by the size of the army or by military spending, nor can they be attained by mere slogans. Rather, military objectives can only be fulfilled by the country's internal stability, and an entrenched sense of patriotism that prompts

citizens to obey their leaders willingly, even if they are not fully convinced of the objectives. We saw this in America with the army of George W. Bush, half of whom were not convinced by the war [against Iraq], yet they remained committed as a military force, although not in agreement with the political regime.

Dr. Amal Al- Hazzaniis is an Assistant Professor in King Saud University in Riyadh.

Article 3.

Wall Street Journal

How to Talk Down Tehran's Nuclear Ambitions

Richard Haass and Michael Levi

February 22, 2012 -- After months of escalating tensions, Iran has indicated a willingness to restart talks over its nuclear program with the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany. The United States and the other countries should take Iran up on its offer with a firm proposal of their own. Iran is motivated by pain from economic sanctions that have made it more difficult for Tehran to sell oil and have weakened its currency, thereby raising the cost of essential imports. Iran's leaders are also concerned that their country could be the target of military attacks from Israel, the U.S. or both. It is in the American interest to pursue a negotiated outcome to the current impasse. The reason is straightforward. Sanctions and clandestine efforts will not succeed in stopping

Iran's nuclear advance at an acceptable plateau or in undermining the regime—and the two principal alternatives to diplomacy promise to be costly and risky. One alternative is to go to war with a classic preventive attack. This would likely delay the Iranian program, but perhaps not for more than a few years. Moreover, whatever is destroyed will likely be rebuilt in a manner that makes future attacks more difficult. An attack also could trigger retaliation and set in motion a chain of events that leads to widespread loss of life and a massive increase in oil prices.

The other alternative to negotiations is to live with an Iran that possesses one or more nuclear weapons, or that is perpetually on the verge of being able to. But a nuclear Iran would place the region on a hair trigger: The incentive of Iran or Israel to strike first in a crisis would be great, while other countries (including Egypt and Saudi Arabia) would be tempted to acquire nuclear weapons of their own. An Iran backed with nuclear weapons might be even more aggressive in pursuit of its aims to become a regional hegemon. And no one could rule out the possibility that nuclear material might end up in the hands of terrorist groups backed by Tehran. This makes negotiations worth exploring, even though they are unlikely to resolve the problem for all time. Iran will not do away with its nuclear program, which is simply too extensive and enjoys too much political support among Iranians. No Iranian government could forfeit the "right to enrich" and survive. Negotiations need to achieve meaningful results if they are to be embraced. The guiding principle is that Tehran must allow intrusive inspections and limits on its nuclear activities so that it cannot complete a dash for the bomb without providing the world with enough advance warning to react. This

means enabling international inspectors to visit suspected nuclear facilities, not simply those declared by Iran. Stepped-up inspections should focus on providing continuous surveillance, whether electronically or by full-time inspectors, of enriched uranium stocks and output from Iran's nuclear facilities.

Placing physical limits on the Iranian program would involve steps to convert Iran's growing stocks of enriched uranium into fuel for its reactors, which is the regime's stated purpose. This would lengthen the time it would take to convert any nuclear material into bomb material. Tehran should be required to reconfigure its enrichment facilities so that they only produce reactor fuel, rather than medium or highly enriched uranium. Iran has produced five years worth of medium-enriched uranium for its medical reactor—so anything more only makes sense as part of a military program. Limits to the scale of Iranian facilities, and on the deployment of new technologies, are also essential. In exchange for such concessions, the world should offer to dial back the most recent sanctions (including those not yet fully implemented) that target the Iranian oil and financial sectors. But no existing sanctions should be eased (or new sanctions delayed) as a reward for Iran's agreeing to talk, lest negotiations prove to be nothing more than a tactic. And sanctions aimed at firms and individuals involved in illicit nuclear activities—particularly those associated with military efforts—would need to stay. So, too, would other sanctions prompted by Iranian violations of human rights, support for terrorism, and threats to regional security beyond its nuclear program. Iran might well reject this deal. Many Iranians see their nuclear program as a symbol of national greatness and a guarantee against invasion and attempts to oust the regime. Moreover, even if some Iranian leaders are inclined toward

making a deal, others may remain opposed. Just two years ago, a split between Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad and Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei scuttled a modest agreement that would have slowed Iran's nuclear program. One way to increase the odds that a deal would be accepted is to make the outlines of any compromise public. The Iranian people would then be able to see that the world was not trying to humiliate Iran but rather offering it something fair, if only Iran's leaders would agree. Political pressure could grow on those leaders to accept the compromise, gain relief from sanctions and avoid military attack. But even if public pressure fails to induce Iran's leaders to compromise, negotiations still make sense. Before the decision is made to embrace alternatives that promise to be costly, it is important to demonstrate—to domestic and world opinion alike—that a reasonable policy was explored. The political, economic, military and human responsibility for any conflict should be with Iran if that is where we end up.

Mr. Haass is president of the Council on Foreign Relations, where Mr. Levi is a senior fellow.

Article 4.

Project Syndicate

Sarkozy at Dusk

Dominique Moisi

2012-02-21 – And the next French President will be...the

Socialist Party's candidate François Hollande. A month ago, any prediction uttered with such certainty would have sounded imprudent, if not foolish. Uncertainty prevailed. Four candidates dominated the competition, and no one would have dared to predict which two will make it to the second-round run-off. Indeed, the race looked more open than ever in recent memory.

Suddenly, something happened – not an event in itself (though it started with Hollande's first great public rally in mid-January), but rather something that may resemble an irresistible process that can be summarized as follows: a majority of the French want to punish a president who has fallen from their graces.

They might not have dared to do so had they not found a reasonably credible alternative. Hollande, by appearing more sound and determined than most French voters thought he was, has given a voice (and a face) to a widespread desire to reject the incumbent, Nicolas Sarkozy.

That is not to say that Hollande is charismatic. On the contrary, there remain lingering doubts about his gravitas, not to mention serious concerns about the realism or the wisdom of his program. But, unlike his former companion, Ségolène Royal, who challenged Sarkozy for the presidency in 2007, he looks and sounds “real.”

From now on, the campaign appears set to be transformed into a classic left-right struggle, but with a major difference between the two main candidates' strategies. Hollande wants to turn the presidential election into a referendum on Sarkozy, who, given his unpopularity, is seeking to frame the battle in terms of values and experience.

Indeed, the essence of Sarkozy's campaign message has become: "You might not like me personally (you would be wrong, by the way, because I am not as you see me, and my experience in power has transformed me deeply), but you support my conservative values, because they represent what you really think. In a world that is changing so rapidly and brutally, you need stability and reassurance. I can give you that."

By emphasizing the ideological divide between him and Hollande, Sarkozy is also being led to court, more openly than ever, the extreme-right electorate of Marine Le Pen's National Front, as if he sensed that she might not find enough signatures to qualify for a place on the ballot. This strategy may make sense in the first round, but, by attracting extreme-right voters in the first round, Sarkozy could lose the support of centrist voters in the run-off. They might be willing to vote for "experience," but not for a "Christian conservative" who strays from humanistic values.

In any case, one could argue that the French are being unfair toward their president. Sarkozy has had to confront exceptionally difficult circumstances, and his record is far from poor. At the beginning of his term, France was at the helm of the European Union, and he proved to be a skillful leader.

Understanding the gravity of the economic crisis that erupted in 2008, he reacted swiftly and with considerable energy. He has also launched a major and long-overdue reform of the pension system and higher education. He made the right choices in intervening in Côte d'Ivoire and Libya.

One could easily add more such examples. In brief, Sarkozy has sincerely tried to reform a deeply paralyzed country. And he

cannot be held responsible for high unemployment, given the depth of the world crisis.

Yet, barring a last-minute miracle – a major mistake by Hollande that wrecks his credibility, or a fresh bout of crisis that stokes voters’ desire for reassuring continuity at the top – Sarkozy appears condemned to be the second one-term president in the history of the Fifth Republic, following Valéry Giscard d’Estaing.

In 1981, Giscard was defeated largely as a result of the “betrayal” of his former prime minister, Jacques Chirac, who ran against him. In 2012, no one in Sarkozy’s camp is betraying the president (those who are trying, such as former Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, have received no support). It is Sarkozy himself who has betrayed the hopes of his supporters and consolidated the hostility of his opponents.

Sarkozy did so mostly at the very beginning of his presidency, and he is likely to be punished for it in 2012. He has changed for the better, but only up to a point, and clearly not enough for a majority of the French, who, according to recent public-opinion polls, simply cannot stand the idea of having him on their television screens for another five years.

Of course, as former British Prime Minister Harold Wilson used to say, “a week is a long time in politics,” and Sarkozy will officially become a candidate only this week. Yet it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for him to prevent the upcoming election from becoming an emotional and negative referendum on his persona.

Dominique Moisi is the author of The Geopolitics of Emotion.

Article 5.

NYT

Peaceful Protest Can Free Palestine

Mustafa Barghouthi

February 21, 2012 -- Ramallah, West Bank -- OVER the past 64 years, Palestinians have tried armed struggle; we have tried negotiations; and we have tried peace conferences. Yet all we have seen is more Israeli settlements, more loss of lives and resources, and the emergence of a horrifying system of segregation.

Khader Adnan, a Palestinian held in an Israeli prison, pursued a different path. Despite his alleged affiliation with the militant group Islamic Jihad, he waged a peaceful hunger strike to shake loose the consciences of people in Israel and around the world. Mr. Adnan chose to go unfed for more than nine weeks and came close to death. He endured for 66 days before ending his hunger strike on Tuesday in exchange for an Israeli agreement to release him as early as April 17.

Mr. Adnan has certainly achieved an individual victory. But it was also a broader triumph — unifying Palestinians and

highlighting the power of nonviolent protest. Indeed, all Palestinians who seek an independent state and an end to the Israeli occupation would be wise to avoid violence and embrace the example of peaceful resistance.

Mr. Adnan was not alone in his plight. More than 300 Palestinians are currently held in “administrative detention.” No charges have been brought against them; they must contend with secret evidence; and they do not get their day in military court.

Britain’s practices in Northern Ireland during the 1970s and 1980s were not so different from Israel’s today — and they elicited a similarly rebellious spirit from the subjugated population. In 1981, Bobby Sands, an imprisoned member of the Irish Republican Army, died 66 days after beginning a hunger strike to protest Britain’s treatment of political prisoners. Mr. Sands was elected to Parliament during his strike; nine other hunger strikers died before the end of 1981; and their cases drew worldwide attention to the plight of Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland.

Just as Margaret Thatcher, then the British prime minister, unsympathetically dismissed Mr. Sands as a “convicted criminal,” Israeli officials have accused Mr. Adnan of being an active member of Islamic Jihad. But if this is the case, Israel should prove it in court.

Mr. Adnan’s actions over the past nine weeks demonstrated that he was willing to give his life — nonviolently and selflessly — to advance Palestinian freedom. Others must now show similar courage.

What is needed is a Palestinian version of the Arab revolutions

that have swept the region: a mass movement demanding freedom, dignity, a just peace, real democracy and the right to self-determination. We must take the initiative, practice self-reliance and pursue a form of nonviolent struggle that we can sustain without depending on others to make decisions for us or in our place.

In the last several years, Palestinians have organized peaceful protests against the concrete and wire “separation barrier” that pens us into what are best described as bantustans. We have sought to mobilize popular resistance to this wall by following in the nonviolent traditions of Martin Luther King Jr. and Mohandas K. Gandhi — and we remain determined to sustain peaceful protest even when violently attacked.

Using these techniques, we have already succeeded in pressuring the Israeli government to reroute the wall in villages like Jayyous and Bilin and helped hundreds of Palestinians get their land back from settlers or the Israeli Army.

Our movement is not intended to delegitimize Israel, as the Israeli government claims. It is, instead, a movement to delegitimize the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, which we believe is the last surviving apartheid system in the world. It is a movement that could free Palestinians from nearly 45 years of occupation and Israelis from being part of the last colonial-settler system of our time.

I remember the days when some political leaders of the largest Palestinian political parties, Al Fatah and Hamas, laughed at our nonviolent struggle, which they saw as soft and ineffective. But the turning point came in the summer of 2008, when we

managed to break the Israeli naval siege of Gaza with small boats. Suddenly, I saw great respect in the eyes of the same leaders who had doubted the power of nonviolence but finally recognized its potential.

The power of nonviolence is that it gives Palestinians of all ages and walks of life the tools to challenge those subjugating us. And thousands of peace activists from around the world have joined our movement. In demonstrations in East Jerusalem, Silwan and Hebron we are also being joined by a new and younger Israeli peace movement that categorically rejects Israeli occupation.

Unfortunately, continuing Israeli settlement activity could soon lead us to the point of no return. Indeed, if we do not soon achieve a genuinely independent Palestinian state, we will be forced to press instead for a single democratic state with equal rights and responsibilities for both Palestinians and Israelis.

We are not sure how long it will take before our nonviolent struggle achieves its goal. But we are sure of one thing: it will succeed, and Palestinians will one day be free.

Mustafa Barghouthi, a doctor and member of the Palestinian Parliament, is secretary general of the Palestinian National Initiative, a political party.

SPIEGEL

'The Pursuit of a Two-State Solution Is a Fantasy'

An interview with **Sari Nusseibeh**

02/21/2012 -- Prominent Palestinian philosopher Sari Nusseibeh believes it is too late for a two-state solution to the Middle East conflict. In a SPIEGEL interview, he outlines his vision for an Israeli-Palestinian confederation and why he mistrusts the new moderate stance taken by the Islamic militant group Hamas.

SPIEGEL: Mr Nusseibeh, in your new book you claim that it is too late for a Palestinian state. Why?

Nusseibeh: You are sitting in my office in Beit Hanina in a place called East Jerusalem. Now, you look to the west from here and you see parts of this Arab neighborhood that are severed from us. If you look to the east over there, you find Pisgat Zeev, an enormous Israeli settlement which is part of Jerusalem. Further east there is Maale Adumim, an even larger settlement of Israelis in what is called East Jerusalem. There is no East Jerusalem any more. East Jerusalem has already become a misnomer. But a Palestinian state without East Jerusalem as its capital is a no-no.

SPIEGEL: Do you want to give up the 1967 borders which have been the basis of all the peace plans?

Nusseibeh: It is extremely hard for the most imaginative of us to see how to work out a redrawing of the map in order to give us, the Palestinians, East Jerusalem as capital. But secondly, there are the Israeli settlers. Can you take away half a million people? No, you cannot. Nothing is impossible, mathematically speaking. But we are talking about politics, and in politics not everything is always possible.

SPIEGEL: So we should admit to ourselves that the two-state solution is dead?

Nusseibeh: Mathematically speaking, a two-state solution is an excellent solution. It causes minimum pain and it is accepted by a majority on both sides. Because of this, we should have brought it into existence a long time ago. But we did not manage to do so.

SPIEGEL: Who is to blame for that?

Nusseibeh: First of all, it took Israel a long time to accept that there is a Palestinian people. It took us, the Palestinians, a long time to accept that we should recognize Israel as a state. The problem is that history runs faster than ideas. By the time the world woke up to the fact that the two-state solution is the best solution, we had hundreds of thousands Israelis living beyond the Green Line (*ed's note: the 1949 Armistice Line that forms the boundary between Israel and the West Bank*). There is a growing fanaticism on both sides. Today, the pursuit of a two-state solution looks like the pursuit of something inside a fantasy bubble.

SPIEGEL: What are the alternatives?

Nusseibeh: The final political form doesn't matter that much. The important thing is that both sides can agree on it and that the basic principles of equality and freedom are upheld. They can be upheld in the context of one state, of two states, of three states, or in the context of a federation or a confederation of states.

SPIEGEL: In your book you propose that, in a joint single state, Palestinians should be given civil rights, but no political rights. "The Jews could run the country while the Arabs could at last enjoy living in it," you write. Could that work?

Nusseibeh: Yes, as a transition. Ever since the occupation began, we have been denied basic civic rights, on the promise that a solution or a state is around the corner. For 20 years, we have been promised that. But they should not keep the Palestinians living in the basement until a solution is found. I suggested we be allowed to have basic rights. Allow us freedom of movement, allow us to live and work wherever we want. Allow us to breathe.

SPIEGEL: Where do you want to draw the borders? Along ethnic lines?

Nusseibeh: Yes, I am proposing a federation between Israel and a Palestinian state based upon the demographic placement of populations in the country.

SPIEGEL: And you think Israelis would accept that?

Nusseibeh: Oh yes, they would love that. Israelis who wish for a predominantly Jewish state may well find this a reasonable solution, because even if they somehow manage to get rid of the

Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza, which they regard as a demographic burden, they will still feel in the long term that they have a problem with the Arabs in Israel. What I am suggesting is not totally crazy. This idea has always been there. If you go back in Jewish history, you will find Israelis suggesting it right from the beginning, like (the prominent intellectual and cultural Zionist) Martin Buber.

SPIEGEL: What would be the benefit for Palestinians in such a federation with Israel?

Nusseibeh: They would have freedom of movement -- they could settle and work wherever they want. That's a huge benefit. And more than that: According to the classical two-state solution, there is no return of (Palestinian) refugees to Israel, only to the West Bank or Gaza. But in a future map which is solely drawn the way I am proposing it, chunks of what is now Israel could become part of a Palestinian state. And therefore, many refugees might actually be able to go back exactly to their hometowns.

SPIEGEL: In your book, you describe your proposal as "shock therapy to awaken Israelis" and push them to find a solution. Does that mean you ultimately don't really believe in what you are saying?

Nusseibeh: It can be both. It can be an alert, a wake-up call. I want Israelis to see that they have a problem and to think: Maybe we should go for the two-state solution. But it can also be a sign of things to come. If we don't do anything, eventually people will wake up and find out they are living in a kind of confederation.

SPIEGEL: Do you believe that things are moving in that direction by themselves?

Nusseibeh: Exactly. We are constantly sliding towards that direction. Look at the negotiations. It has just been going around in circles.

SPIEGEL: In your book, you describe the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians as more or less just a game, "one to be played as long as possible." Do you think negotiations should be stopped?

Nusseibeh: I do not really mind if negotiators from both sides go on talking with each other in (the Jordanian capital) Amman as they recently did. They can spend 48 hours talking. But I believe that they will not get anywhere. They will only get somewhere if they pull back from just trying to be clever with one another. (Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu is good as a salesman, but he does not strike me as being a wise person.

SPIEGEL: What about Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas?

Nusseibeh: Well, let me say: I think you need to be farsighted and you need to be caring enough.

SPIEGEL: Should the Palestinian Authority (PA) dissolve itself instead of continuing to administer the occupation?

Nusseibeh: No, that would be too risky. On the contrary, the PA should be strengthened, given more territory and more authority. And I think the international community should continue to support it.

SPIEGEL: That could change quickly if Hamas, the Islamic militant group that controls the Gaza Strip, and Abbas's rival Fatah movement, which governs in the West Bank, were to form a joint government. Do you believe their reconciliation will work?

Nusseibeh: It is only natural for Hamas and Fatah not to fight with each other. But this does not mean that not to fight means automatically to agree. At the moment it looks like they are trying to conceal the disagreements. And I do not like this. I think people should be clear about their positions. And I am not really sure what Khaled Mashaal (*ed's note: Hamas' top leader in exile*) wants, to tell you the truth.

SPIEGEL: Khaled Mashaal recently said that Hamas should focus on non-violent resistance. Do you believe him?

Nusseibeh: I remember a situation with him, maybe 10 years ago. It was at the height of the second intifada, and it was the first time I was invited for a comment on Al-Jazeera. I tried to explain why suicide attacks were not good, that they would not achieve anything. I did not initially realize that Mashaal was on the other side. He replied that I was talking rubbish and that suicide attacks are great and shooting and killing is great. That is why I got so fed up when I heard him now saying he wants civil resistance. Why is he coming up with this now, after 10 years of having ruined us? The entire wall (*ed's note: the West Bank barrier*) would not have been built. Things would be so different today.

SPIEGEL: Do you believe there will be elections in the West Bank and Gaza any time soon?

Nusseibeh: I do not think that elections could happen any time soon. And to tell you the truth: I am not so sure myself that I am very much in favor of elections in the present context. Elections are a good thing in certain circumstances, for instance when your country is free, and people that you elect can take decisions on your behalf. But in our case this is fantasy. What have the people that we elected done for us? Nothing. If Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) himself, the president of this country, wants to go from one place to another, he has to get a permit.

SPIEGEL: How can the kind of federation you are proposing work, if at the same time a majority of Palestinians voted for Hamas, whose declared goal is a religious state?

Nusseibeh: If you look at Gaza from the top down, you see Hamas. I do not see Hamas in Gaza, personally. I see normal human beings: my relatives, my friends and my students. They did not vote for Hamas because they suddenly woke up and they became extremist Muslims. No, they voted for Hamas because the peace process failed. If the Israeli government today were to open up the borders, will Hamas stand in their way, and if they did stand in the way will the people listen to Hamas? No, I don't believe so. People want normal lives.

SPIEGEL: We are sitting here on the campus of Al-Quds University. What do your students think about politics -- do they tend to support Hamas or Fatah?

Nusseibeh: Students on campus are individual human beings; they are not walking ideologies. Let me tell you a story. It was in 2003, when the Israelis wanted to build the separation wall, right in the middle of our campus. The immediate thing that occurred

to the students was -- and this was unrelated to whether they were from Hamas, Fatah or Islamic Jihad -- we will go out and throw rocks at the Israeli soldiers. But I told them: Listen, if you do that, then one of you will be killed. The university will have a martyr, but the next day, it would be closed. And so they stayed non-violent. In the end, we won. Israel didn't build the wall on the campus. What do I want to say with this story? Regardless of how you see them from above, regardless of their ideology, human beings are reasonable people.

SPIEGEL: Do your students still believe that this conflict is solvable? And what do they think about a federal state of Israel and Palestine?

Nusseibeh: First of all, they think that it does not look solvable. But what I can say is that people are no longer sold on the idea of two states. Only very few are still stuck to the national identity idea, but they do not actually believe that they can get the state that we wanted to get. Others are turning to religion. Religious ideas are what is important now.

SPIEGEL: You are a professor for Islamic philosophy. What do you think about the role of religion in this conflict?

Nusseibeh: I grew up with the idea of a very tolerant Islam. My family has had the keys to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (in the Old City of Jerusalem) for hundreds of years, and we are proud of it. This is our connection to Christianity. Our reverence for Jesus is something inborn in me as a Muslim. My reverence to the Jewish prophets is inborn in me as a Muslim.

SPIEGEL: But that is not the Islam revered by all Muslims.

Nusseibeh: In the true sense, religions in theory are ways to support human values. In so far as religions interfere with human values, then they go in the wrong direction. And this is what is happening unfortunately in many religions, including Islam. There are some Muslim clerics I like, but I distrust people who regard themselves as guardians of religion.

SPIEGEL: Do you attend mosque regularly?

Nusseibeh: No, I almost never go. Once I took my sons to the mosque, but the man who held the prayer put me off. He talked about things that are totally crazy. Even ignoring what the content is, it's the way they scream. You feel like they are holding a whip and scaring the people into the truth of Islam. That is not Islam. That is a kind of terrorism. In my understanding, Islam is a gentle religion. And the message of Islam is a gentle message.

SPIEGEL: The conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians does actually look minor in comparison to a possible war with Iran. What will happen if Israel attacks Iran?

Nusseibeh: That would be a major mistake. Everything that Israel does to (assert) itself through the use of more force is a step towards its own destruction. There is the saying: "Those who live by the sword will die by the sword."

SPIEGEL: Could a military escalation with Iran put pressure on Israelis and Palestinians to finally come to a solution?

Nusseibeh: Israel is not taking us too seriously at the moment. They will keep us under the lid for a longer period of time. If they attack Iran, I do not think this will make them more open

towards us. I certainly think it would not make us more open towards them. And without doubt I do not think the Arab world would be more open towards them.

SPIEGEL: That sounds like a very dark scenario.

Nusseibeh: This is why I am proposing this plan. How many people are living between the Jordan and the Mediterranean?

SPIEGEL: Around 11 million people.

Nusseibeh: There are about 4 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and 1 million in Israel, and there are about 6 million Jewish Israelis. But this is a small place. We are inside each other. Sooner or later, we will have to somehow find a way to live with each other. My son lives in a Jewish suburb of Jerusalem. My daughter-in-law told the Jewish music teacher that she does not want her son to sing religious Jewish songs. And the Jewish teacher said fine -- when we are going to do this, he doesn't need to take part. But otherwise he can join the party.

SPIEGEL: Is that how your proposed state could work as well? When it's a Jewish issue, then the Palestinians would stand aside, but otherwise they join in?

Nusseibeh: And vice versa, because you cannot expect Jews to enjoy Palestinian songs. But come on, Muslims and Jews have lived amiably for long periods of time. It was not full of roses, but actually it was better than in Europe for most of the time. We have friendships between Jews and Arabs that are very strong and sometimes go back generations. It is not impossible.

SPIEGEL: Mr Nusseibeh, thank you for this interview.

The Economist

Neurons V Free Will

Anthony Gottlieb

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On the evening of October 10th 1769, in one of his typically curt dismissals of a philosophical problem, Dr Johnson silenced Boswell, who wanted to talk about fate and free will, by exclaiming: “Sir...we know our will is free, and there’s an end on’t.” Nearly two and a half centuries later, free will and responsibility are debated as much as ever, and the issue is taking some new twists. Every age finds a fresh reason to doubt the reality of human freedom. The ancient Greeks worried about Ananke, the primeval force of necessity or compulsion, and her children, the Fates, who steered human lives. Some scientifically minded Greeks, such as Leucippus in the fifth century BC, regarded the motion of atoms as controlled by Ananke, so that “everything happens...by necessity.” Medieval theologians developed a different worry: they struggled to reconcile human freedom with God’s presumed foreknowledge of all actions. And in the wake of the scientific revolution of the 17th century, philosophers grappled with the notion of a universe that was subject to invariable laws of nature. This spectre of “determinism” was a reprise of the old Greek worry about necessity, only this time with experimental and mathematical evidence to back it up. In the 20th century, the new science of psychology also seemed to undermine the idea of free will:

Freud's theory of unconscious drives suggested that the causes of some of our actions are not what we think they are. And then along came neuroscience, which is often thought to paint an even bleaker picture. The more we find out about the workings of the brain, the less room there seems to be in it for any kind of autonomous, rational self. Where, in the chain of events leading up to an action, could such a thing be found? Investigations of the brain show that conscious will is an "illusion", according to the title of an influential book by a Harvard psychologist, Daniel Wegner, in 2002—a conclusion that has been echoed by many researchers since. In 2011, Sam Harris, an American writer on neuroscience and religion, wrote that free will "could not be squared with an understanding of the physical world", and that all our behaviour "can be traced to biological events about which we have no conscious knowledge". Really? There are now hopeful signs of what might be called a backlash against the brain. Hardly anybody doubts that the grey matter in our skulls underpins our thoughts and feelings, in the sense that a working brain is required for our mental life. This is not a new, or even a modern, idea: Hippocrates proclaimed as much in the fifth century BC. But there is a growing realisation among some neuroscientists that looking at flickers of activity inside our heads can be a misleading way to see how our minds work. This is because many of the distinctively human things that people do take place over time and outside their craniums. Perhaps the brain is the wrong place to look if you want to find free will. This is a theme of recent books by Michael Gazzaniga, a neuroscientist at the University of California at Santa Barbara, and Raymond Tallis, a retired British doctor and neuroscientist. As Dr Tallis puts it in his "Aping Mankind: Neuromania, Darwinitis and the Misrepresentation of Humanity", trying to

find human life in the brain is like trying to hear the rustle of a forest by listening to a seed. In part, this backlash against the brain results from the conviction that today's technologies for investigating it have been hyped. The existence of diagnostic hardware such as fMRI and PET scanners, which let you peek inside brains while they are still alive and thinking, has encouraged some neuroscientists to think they can find the locus of moral responsibility, the seat of love and all manner of things in the gaudy images produced by brain scans. But although our mental lives depend on the brain, it doesn't necessarily follow that our behaviour is best understood by looking inside it. It's like the old joke about a drunk who drops his car keys at night and walks down the road to look for them under a distant streetlight—not because that's where they're likely to be, but because it's where he can see. As well as casting illumination in what is sometimes the wrong place, today's scanners are still rather dim streetlights. Since they cannot see the activity of neurons, fMRI scanners make do with changes in blood oxygen levels, and PET scanners indirectly measure changes in blood flow, to spot where something is (or rather, was) going on. These techniques can detect the trails only of large bursts of neural activity, and will miss anything involving less than many millions of brain cells. The art of neuro-imaging has been in full swing for not much more than a decade. In a study of its reliability, two psychologists at the University of California at Santa Barbara concluded in 2010 that the discipline had emerged from infancy, but was still rather a mixed-up adolescent. That may be an understatement as far as experiments on thinking, emotion and personality are concerned. A team of psychologists at MIT and the University of California at San Diego, who were puzzled by the suspiciously definitive

results of many brain-scan studies on these topics, asked the authors of 55 such papers how they had analysed their data. The team reported in 2009 that over half the studies used faulty methods that were guaranteed to shift the results in favour of the correlations they had been looking for between mental activity and blips in parts of the brain. It's worth bearing this in mind the next time you read about a brain-scan study which purportedly reveals how and why we do what we do.

No doubt brain scanners, and our ability to interpret them, will improve in due course. But the problem with trying to investigate some aspects of our mental life via the workings of the brain is not just a practical one. This fact is nicely illustrated by Dr Tallis's discussion of a series of experiments that have been widely taken to undermine the notion of free will. In the 1980s, the late Benjamin Libet, a neurophysiologist at the University of California, San Francisco, wired up his subjects so that he could monitor the timing of some electrical events in their brains. He asked them to flex their wrists whenever they felt like it, and to register the exact time when they decided to do so. The results seemed to show that our actions can be triggered before we form an intention, rather than afterwards, thus leaving no time for conscious will to play a role in what we do. Similar tests have been repeated and refined many times, and appear to confirm that the feeling of deliberation can be a mirage. But while twitches of the wrist may be simple to monitor, they're an odd place to search for free will. It sounds like the problem of the drunk and his streetlights again. Tallis points out that taking part in such experiments involves performing all sorts of other actions, too, such as setting an alarm to get to the laboratory on time, declining other appointments, catching a bus, finding the

right room, consenting to the project, listening to instructions, and so on. Mundane as they are, such activities are better examples of the sorts of actions that we'd like to regard as free and rational than are twitches of the wrist. And it would be crazy to think that conscious deliberation isn't really involved in them. Stepping back from investigations of the brain, and looking at our actions in the broader context of everyday life—considering our interactions with others, for example—does not in itself provide the knock-down demonstration of free will that Dr Johnson would have liked. But it is at least a good beginning on't.

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