

To: jeevacation@gmail.com[jeevacation@gmail.com]
From: Office of Terje Rod-Larsen
Sent: Wed 8/22/2012 5:54:22 PM
Subject: August 22 update

22 August, 2012

<u>Article 1.</u>	The Washington Post <u>Seeking to cool war fever over Iran</u> <u>David Ignatius</u>
<u>Article 2.</u>	The Weekly Standard <u>Time to Authorize Use of Force Against Iran</u> Elliott Abrams
<u>Article 3.</u>	Foreign Policy <u>Everyone calm down: Israel is not going to bomb Iran. Well, at least not in 2012</u> Aaron David Miller
<u>Article 4.</u>	AL-MONITOR <u>Eight Islamic Sects Meet in Saudi, But Can They Make Amends</u> Sleiman Takieddine

<u>Article 5.</u>	The Daily Star <u>Ethics matter, the world tells Israel</u> Rami G. Khouri
<u>Article 6.</u>	Foreign Affairs <u>Government, Geography, and Growth</u> Jeffrey D. Sachs

Article 1.

The Washington Post

Seeking to cool war fever over Iran

David Ignatius

August 22 -- As Israel and Iran entered this summer of confrontation over Tehran's nuclear program, the Iranians were also conducting talks with the United States and other leading nations to seek a diplomatic alternative to war. Since then, the rumors of an impending Israeli military strike have grown almost daily, but whatever happened to the negotiations?

The answer is that the "P5+1" talks with Iran have been in

recess during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, but contact is expected to resume soon between the top negotiators. Talking with Iranian and U.S. experts, I don't hear any hint of a breakthrough that would ease the war fever, although some useful new ideas have been floated.

The diplomatic track has been frustrating to U.S. officials, so far. But it remains important because the military alternative is so fraught with dangers — not least for Israel and its long-term goal of preventing the Iranians from having nuclear weapons. An Israeli military strike might set the Iranian program back several years. But it would probably shatter the international coalition against Iran, galvanize support for the mullahs at home and in the region — and thus might make Iran's eventual acquisition of a bomb even more likely.

Because of such risks, many leaders of Israel's national-security establishment, past and present, appear to oppose Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's consideration of a military strike. Despite this internal Israeli split, Republican candidate Mitt Romney has strongly endorsed Netanyahu and chided President Obama for taking an independent U.S. position, saying at a campaign rally Monday: "The president throwing Bibi Netanyahu under the bus was totally unacceptable. Him negotiating for Israel, our friend, totally unacceptable, in my view."

Here's the situation in the negotiations Romney evidently dislikes: By the end of August, Catherine Ashton, the European diplomat who is the chief negotiator for the P5+1, will likely talk by phone about next steps with Saeed Jalili, the representative of Iran's supreme leader. The possibilities include

another technical meeting of experts or deputy negotiators, or a full, top-level negotiating session.

The P5+1 nations (the United States, Britain, France, China, Russia and Germany) are still discussing their bargaining position. The consultations quickened last week with a trip to Beijing, Moscow and London by Wendy Sherman, the under secretary of state who is the top U.S. negotiator. The six countries agreed to continue working together despite some disagreements about tactics: “At the end of the day, we will proceed in unity,” said a senior administration official.

There remains a “significant gap between the P5+1 and Iran,” according to the U.S. official. The Iranians officially have offered only to suspend enrichment of uranium to the 20 percent level, in exchange for lifting sanctions. This position is a non-starter for the United States and its negotiating partners.

Unofficially, Iranians have signaled that they would be ready to export their stockpile of 20 percent uranium and cap future enrichment at 5 percent. This comes closer to meeting U.S. concerns, but it still leaves Iran with a big stockpile of about 6,000 kilograms of low-enriched uranium that could fuel a breakout — to “dash” toward a bomb. It’s this ability that most worries Israel.

An interesting bridging proposal comes from Seyed Hossein Mousavian, a former Iranian negotiator who is now a visiting fellow at Princeton. He told me this week that in addition to capping enrichment at 5 percent, Iran might agree to a “zero stockpile” of this low-enriched fuel. A joint committee with the P5+1 would assess Iran’s domestic needs, and any enriched

uranium would either be converted immediately to the needed fuel rods or panels, or it would be exported.

In exchange, Mousavian argues, the P5+1 would recognize Iran's right to enrich uranium and would gradually lift sanctions.

This intriguing proposal lacks official Iranian support, but it would address Israel's biggest concern and would surely interest U.S. officials. Mousavian also notes Iran's willingness to allow much wider inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) into what are known as "possible military dimensions" of the Iranian nuclear program. This transparency proposal would allow the IAEA to monitor any possible breakout, but U.S. officials caution that, if the Iranians decided to go for a bomb, they could simply expel the IAEA inspectors and make the dash.

Here's a final thought, based on the all-too-real possibility that negotiations will remain deadlocked and Israel will decide to take unilateral military action. In the resulting fog of war, there will be a need for reliable communications in the Persian Gulf and a hotline with Tehran. Establishing these communications links is an urgent priority, as the rumors of war continue.

Article 2.

The Weekly Standard

Time to Authorize Use of Force

Against Iran

Elliott Abrams

August 21, 2012 -- How America can stop what the New York Times calls “Israel’s March to War” is the hot topic this month. The issue—for the Times—is whether Israel is on the verge of bombing Iran’s nuclear sites, or can be persuaded to delay that decision and rely on the United States instead. This is what a parade of U.S. officials visiting Jerusalem this summer have counseled (and pressured) Israel to do. But the comments of Israel’s top officials suggest that its patience is wearing thin and that it may act soon, in weeks if not months. As the Associated Press put it, “Israeli leaders, who have long issued veiled threats against Iran, now appear to be preparing the country for war. The heightened rhetoric has fueled jitters that the zero hour is near.”

Why would Israel, with so much less power than the United States, decide to take on a task at the far outer edge of its military capacities? Why not leave that task to the superpower, which would do a much better job? The answer is simple: Israelis do not believe the United States will perform the task—will ever use military force, even as a last resort, to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

In that belief Israel is not alone; its view is shared by Iran. The Iranian record in the nuclear negotiations demonstrates that its leaders do not see themselves at the edge of the apocalypse. Instead they feel free to delay forever, present ridiculous

proposals, and refuse to engage in serious bargaining. Meanwhile they push their nuclear program forward, with ever more centrifuges producing ever more enriched uranium, while they also test improved missiles.

Just last week there were several more proposals about how to bridge the gap between Israel and the United States, and give the reassurance Israel needs. Dennis Ross, adviser to Presidents George H.W. Bush, Clinton, and Obama on the Middle East, presented his view in the Times.

“First, the United States must put an endgame proposal on the table that would allow Iran to have civil nuclear power but with restrictions that would preclude it from having a breakout nuclear capability,” Ross wrote. “Second, America should begin discussions with the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany (the so called P5+1) about a ‘day after’ strategy in the event that diplomacy fails and force is used....Third, senior American officials should ask Israeli leaders if there are military capabilities we could provide them with — like additional bunker-busting bombs, tankers for refueling aircraft and targeting information — that would extend the clock for them. And finally, the White House should ask Mr. Netanyahu what sort of support he would need from the United States if he chose to use force...”

Nice try, but that won’t persuade either Israel or Iran. When negotiating with the Iranians, there is no “end game proposal;” everything is a first bid and Ross’s “restrictions” become colonial impositions that must disappear. Moreover, the United States and the P5+1 have repeatedly made such proposals before, to no avail. Discussions about a “day after” strategy, or

more weapons for Israel, show no greater U.S. resolve. Finally, asking what Israel needs if it uses force only reinforces the view that the United States will not do so.

Almost simultaneously, the former head of Israeli military intelligence Gen. Amos Yadlin weighed in. In an interview with the Times of Israel, he described the situation: “The diplomatic negotiations that took place in Istanbul, Baghdad, and Moscow produced nothing....And therefore if you’re not prepared to live with an Iran with a nuclear bomb, you are left with only one option and that’s the option of military intervention.”

The problem, he goes on, is that there is too little trust that the United States will act. He advises that “even statements” could help, but “not to AIPAC;” instead, “a declaration to the Congress, that if the steps the administration is relying upon today ... do not achieve success by the summer of 2013, then the Americans will deal with the problem via military intervention.” Then, in addition to words, “actions should be taken to show that you’re serious...in order to demonstrate to the world more clearly that you’re really training for this and preparing for this.”

“The American threat has to be a great deal more credible,” Yadlin advises, and he explains why: “It cannot be that the secretary of defense will stand up publicly and say that an attack on Iran will plunge the world into World War III or the Middle East will go up in flames. That shows that you really don’t mean to do it.” Yadlin wants Israel to delay a decision and wants the United States to take a tougher line. He concludes that “even if the batteries of trust are not full, a public commitment and a legal commitment, like a letter to Congress, would help a great

deal toward the correct decision being taken in Israel.”

Yadlin is at bottom right. The refusal of President Obama to make a categorical statement that Iran will be prevented from getting a nuclear weapon suggests that he is keeping his options open. Mr. Obama has said, “My policy here is not going to be one of containment. My policy is prevention of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons,” adding that, “When I say all options are on the table, I mean it.” But having a “policy of prevention” is far from a pledge to prevent, and vague phrases like “I have Israel’s back” or “all options are on the table” have obviously failed to persuade Israelis or Iranians that he will use force to stop an Iranian bomb.

On the other hand, no president is going to promise in August 2012 to undertake a military strike precisely “by the summer of 2013.” In a Washington Post op-ed a few days after his Times of Israel interview, Yadlin urged that President Obama quickly visit Israel to speak to the Knesset, and simultaneously “notify the U.S. Congress in writing that he reserves the right to use military force to prevent Iran’s acquisition of a military nuclear capability.” Yadlin’s goals are clear, but his methods won’t work in the American political and constitutional context. The idea of an Obama visit to Israel in the weeks just before, much less just after, the Democratic party convention is unrealistic; the time for Obama to do that is long past. And as for the president “notifying” Congress that he “reserves the right” to use force, that won’t work either; the president either has that right as commander in chief or he does not, and a letter saying “yeah, I do” or even stating another, starker warning to Iran won’t be persuasive—especially in the weeks leading up to the election.

More persuasive than the Ross or Yadlin proposals would be an effort by the president to seek a formal authorization for the use of force from Congress. This is the way for him to show seriousness of purpose, and for Congress to support it—and send an unmistakable message to the ayatollahs. This path was suggested [here](#) in THE WEEKLY STANDARD early July, by Jamie Fly and Bill Kristol, and this is the moment to move forward with it. Like the joint resolutions for the Gulf Wars in [1991](#) and in [2002](#) and the joint resolution passed [after 9/11](#) regarding terrorism, a new resolution would not declare war; it would say “The President is authorized to use the Armed Forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate” to achieve the goal. In this case, that goal would not be to counter “the continuing threat posed by Iraq” or “against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001...in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States.” It would be to prevent Iran—the world’s foremost state sponsor of terrorism, in violation of countless U.N. Security Council and IAEA board of governors resolutions, and under international sanctions—from obtaining nuclear weapons.

Such a proposal by President Obama would be controversial, and many Democrats would vote against him. (There is precedent for this: In the 1991 Gulf resolution, 45 Democrats in the Senate voted against the resolution and only 10 voted for it, and it passed only 52-47; in the House 86 Democrats voted yes and 179 voted no.) But it would, in the phrase Mr. Obama likes to use, be a teachable moment. First, the very presentation of such a resolution by the White House would show a new level of

clarity and commitment. This would be likely to affect both Iranian and Israeli calculations far more than statements like “all options are on the table.”

Second, should such a resolution fail, everyone would be clear that the United States was not going to act and that Israel need delay no longer so as to leave it to us. Third, a clear statement from the president that he intended to use military force if necessary would almost certainly be backed by the Republican candidate, Mitt Romney, producing rare election year unanimity on a national security issue. That too would likely change Israeli and Iranian views of the chances the Americans would act. Fourth, seeking such a Joint Resolution now would be a useful acknowledgement by the United States that we do not have perfect knowledge of when, as Iran advances toward a bomb, a military strike might be needed—so we will start getting ready now.

Those who believe that a negotiated deal with Iran is still theoretically possible should welcome this congressional expression of intent. The Iranian regime still believes it can get nuclear weapons and is not negotiating in good faith. Only if it is persuaded that it will never get those weapons—that the choice is between a negotiated agreement and an American military strike—is a deal possible. Similarly, those who oppose an Israeli strike must realize that the best way to avoid it is to persuade Israelis that by deferring their own action they are not accepting an Iranian bomb but accepting that the world’s most powerful nation will deal more effectively with Iran than they will.

Proposing an authorization to use force does not lock Mr.

Obama into using force, much less doing so at a specific time. He can use the authorization as a club to beat Iran into a negotiated deal. Therein lies one great appeal of this tack, but also one great trap—for Israel and for those in the United States who believe that Iran must at all costs be prevented from acquiring nuclear weapons. The risk is that the Obama administration will instead sign a bad deal and call it victory. There is probably no way to avoid this possibility, which exists today as well, but there is one good way to diminish it. Congress could adopt, separately or as part of the “Use of Force” resolution, certain standards. A June 15 letter to the president from 44 senators, Democrats and Republicans alike, suggests what those standards might be. The joint resolution could say that force is authorized to prevent an Iranian bomb, acknowledge that a negotiated outcome is far more desirable, and then state that any acceptable negotiated deal must require immediate closing the underground facility at Fordow, freezing of all enrichment above five percent and exporting of all of Iran’s stockpile of uranium enriched above that level, and imposing intrusive inspections to ensure that the program is not secretly reestablished.

There are few legislative days left in 2012 because this is an election year, but there are enough to debate and pass this joint resolution if it is given its proper priority. Congress needs to act on the farm bill and the federal budget before adjourning, but it is quite likely in both cases that three or six month extensions will kick those balls down the road to a lame duck session or into the new Congress next year. The Iranian nuclear program, by contrast, must be addressed right now—or Israel is quite likely to strike while it still can.

In any event, the debate over a joint resolution will clarify who stands where. At the moment, no one is persuaded that the United States will use force to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. That situation worries Israelis and emboldens Iranians, not the outcome we want. A clear statement now that is backed by the nominees of both parties and elicits widespread support in Congress would demonstrate that, whatever the election results, American policy is set. That is the best (and may be the only) way to avoid an Israeli strike in the near future and the best (and may be the only) way to persuade Iran to negotiate seriously. And if we are unwilling as a nation to state that we will act to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, that conclusion should solidify support for what would then become the inevitable Israeli strike. A refusal by the White House to seek such a joint resolution would itself suggest that, while “all options are on the table,” the likelihood is that that is precisely where they will remain.

Article 3.

Foreign Policy

Everyone calm down: Israel is not going to bomb Iran. Well, at least not in 2012

Aaron David Miller

August 20, 2012 -- Worried about a war with Iran, regional instability, more terrorism, rising oil prices or plunging markets?

Don't be -- at least not yet. Think 2013. If Israel can't get assurances that the U.S. is prepared to use force, then Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak will act later this year or early next.

But for now, there will be no war and certainly no deal over the nuclear issue. And the reason for that is pretty compelling: the mullahs, the Israelis, and the Americans all don't want one right now -- and here's why.

1. It's not necessary

Nobody should trivialize the danger posed by a nuclear Iran or underestimate Israel's concerns about that possibility. Even if we had divine assurance that Iran wouldn't use nukes against Israel, an Iranian bomb would embolden Tehran's regional aspirations, erode American deterrence, trigger an arms race in the region, and give a repressive power an additional hedge on its own security.

At the same time, few buy the case for an immediate strike, either. Indeed, let's be clear about something: Iran doesn't have a nuclear weapon. As far as we know, it hasn't tested one, produced enough fissile material for a sustainable program, or mastered the weaponization of a nuclear warhead -- yet. Right now, in August 2012, there's only one country that believes it's imperative to strike Iran: Israel. And even that is somewhat misleading, because there's no consensus within the Israeli public, political elite, or security establishment about the need to attack. According to one recent poll, 60 percent of Israelis were against an Israeli strike.

Still, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has framed the idea

as one of necessity. For just about everyone else in the world (though actually, the Saudis might want someone to take a whack at Teheran so long as the mullahs don't take it out on them), including the United States, Israel's closest ally, attacking Iran's nascent nuclear capacity would be a war of choice -- and a galactically risky one at that.

Look at the return-to-risk ratio. The attack might go badly, in which case planes and pilots would be lost or taken hostage. Even if everything goes according to plan, oil prices could surge, markets and fragile economies might tumble, terror would likely increase, and Iranian missiles could conceivably strike Israel. Attacks against Americans in Afghanistan would almost certainly intensify, and Israel's stock abroad, perhaps even in America, would plummet precipitously.

And for what? The possibility that Iran's nuclear program will be set back for a few years? And who's going to measure how much damage has been done? Or turn around and tell the Iranians they don't have a legitimate reason to ramp up their nuclear program? What happens to sanctions, without which Iran would probably already have a nuclear weapon?

For Israel to court those kinds of risks on the grounds that within three to six months, Iran will have entered a nebulous zone of immunity where its sites will be so redundant, so hardened, and so diffused that they will be beyond Israel's capacity to strike effectively is not a sufficient or credible basis on which to trigger an international crisis with global financial, security, and economic consequences. This is doubly true when you consider that the returns -- a temporary crippling of Iran's nuclear program that isn't even guaranteed -- are so tentative.

2. Israel doesn't really want to do it

And the Israelis know it. The fact is they have no intention of doing anything now; for the time being, it's far less risky to maintain the status quo. Sanctions are tough and might get tougher, cyber and covert war have had some effect, and the unraveling situation in Syria -- where Iran has remained a stalwart ally of embattled President Bashar al-Assad -- has isolated Tehran even further. Meanwhile, the Israelis can keep the world focused on their agenda and on the edge of their collective chairs, worried about a military strike and perhaps willing to do even more to hammer the Iranians. It's far from ideal, but not half bad for a strategy that doesn't require firing a single shot or missile.

Make no mistake: The Israelis are prepared to strike Iran. Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak has a plan and believes it can succeed. But he knows Israel's capacity to inflict a crippling blow to Iran's nuclear program is limited. It's akin to mowing the grass, really -- a move that would buy Israel a couple of years at most. What a unilateral strike will do, however, is not only to legitimate Iran's quest for nuclear weapons but also accelerate it. That's precisely what happened when the Israelis struck Saddam Hussein's plutonium reactors in 1981. And the Israelis know that, too.

3. Let America do it

What the Israelis really want is to persuade the United States to bring the full force of its military might to bear on the problem. Washington could do extensive damage to Iran's unconventional and conventional military capacity. Ultimately, however, a U.S.

attack would probably also fail to stop Iran's nuclear program permanently -- producing only a more substantial delay.

But for the Israelis, the advantages of letting Washington take the lead are considerable. They would avoid a crisis in their relationship with the United States as well as the international censure that would accompany a unilateral strike. The damage to Iran's nuclear facilities would also be much greater.

And while the mullahs could handle, and perhaps even profit from, an Israeli strike, a war with America -- involving a sustained air and missile campaign that lasts for weeks -- is not something they want. The "rally around the flag" effect could be dampened by the severity of an American attack and, who knows, questions might even be raised about the wisdom of pressing ahead with the nuclear project. The Israelis probably even have dreams of regime change in Tehran.

All of this augurs for putting the proverbial ball in America's court -- and not surprising and alienating the Obama administration by striking before the November elections. The last thing Netanyahu wants is a reelected and angry American president. Sure, Netanyahu doesn't want to see Barack Obama reelected at all. But the one way to guarantee that would be to strike before the elections. There's probably no way America could stay out, depending on the nature of Iran's response. And if the United States did become involved militarily, there would be a positive rally-round-the-president effect. Mitt Romney would be left applauding from the sidelines.

Still, the Israelis really do have a problem. Sanctions aren't doing nothing, but they aren't enough to stop Iran from going

after a weapon, and negotiations aren't working either. At the same time, Iran is committed to at the very least developing the capacity to weaponize, should it decide to do so. And the fall of the Assads, when it comes, may only add to Tehran's fear of Sunni encirclement and accelerate its drive for the ultimate weapon.

None of this means it ain't gonna happen. If you're betting on a war with Iran, think year's end or early next. Netanyahu will probably split the difference: delay his strike until after November to placate Obama and give the Americans one last chance to persuade him they will do it themselves. But the prime minister could be waiting for a long time. Obama's heart just isn't in this one.

Ultimately, Israel will act. No Israeli prime minister, certainly not this one, will ever be fingered as the guy who allowed the Iranians to weaponize without doing everything in his power to stop it, even if an attack only delays the program and causes Israel a lot of grief in the process. The kaboom is probably coming -- just not quite yet.

*Aaron David Miller is a distinguished scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. His new book, *Can America Have Another Great President?*, will be published this year.*

Article 4.

AL-MONITOR

Eight Islamic Sects Meet in Saudi, But Can They Make Amends

Sleiman Takieddine

Aug 21, 2012 -- During the Islamic Summit Conference that was held in Saudi Arabia last week, King Abdullah called for a dialogue between different Islamic sects. The Shiite Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad officially attended the summit. The Saudi King invited eight sects to the dialogue: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'I, Hanbali (i.e. the four Sunni schools) and the Shiite al-Jaafari, al-Zaidi, al-Abazi and al-Zahiri sects, which exist in the Gulf region, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Yemen and Iraq. Two years ago, the Saudi King himself called for an interfaith dialogue at a conference, which was held in New York and was attended by Israeli figures. Although many initiatives were previously launched to hold dialogues and bring together different Islamic sects, a special importance has been attached to the Islamic Conference as it has been sponsored by Saudi Arabia at a time when the practice of Takfir [when a Muslim declares another Muslim a Kafir, or unbeliever] is on the rise. This practice is becoming more common than ever, even within political movements of the same sect. However, the Sunni-Shiite conflict is the main reason behind the rift in the Arab and Islamic world.

It is obvious that this initiative is not likely to bear immediate fruit. It needs an integrated project and mechanisms that would address the key issue, which is religious reform. Nevertheless,

the conference holds significant importance at the political level, since it represents a positive step on the part of a hard-line religious Sunni authority towards another hard-line Shiite power, each leading a political camp.

Needless to say, we live in a world that has long overcome the issue of recognition of the other in terms of religion and culture. However, although Muslims have managed to integrate into this world, they have failed to reconcile with themselves, their history and their culture. They continue to dig up stories and dogmas from their religious history to further widen the gap of their conflict. Yet, this summit remains a very modest step in the right direction.

What about the social and political relations existing between these sects?

It is well known that before the Islamic revolution, the Gulf did not see Iran as its foe. Arabs used to deal with Tehran on a political basis. Syria, on the other hand, was also a cooperative country and a partner in the management of the Arab world and its affairs. However, the Shiite sect's legitimacy was not acknowledged by the Saudi King. Shiites in the Kingdom are deprived of their rights.

Shiites comprise the majority of the Bahraini people, a large proportion of the Iraqi people and one third of Lebanese society. Previously, the Saudi Kingdom did not deal with these people on a sectarian basis, except for its own [Shiite] citizens. However, today, the Kingdom looks at Iraq, Bahrain, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria as well as Iran from a sectarian perspective. In order to change this outlook, the Kingdom ought to put the

Saudi Shiite groups on equal legal footing with other groups of different sects in the Gulf emirates.

Recent Arab history has not been rife with religious conflicts. Since the first Arab revolution in 1916, the identity of the region's peoples was characterized by nothing but Arabism. During the time of national renaissance and the struggle against European colonialism, it was difficult to categorize the history of Arab peoples based on their religions and sects.

Arabism, which is an organized intellectual movement, did not only appeal to Sunnis, who represented the broader public of the nationalist movement, but to "minorities" as well. Arabism attracted all of the elites in all Arab countries, including the Arabian Gulf. Sectarian problems must be seen as receptacles for social and political effects caused by regimes that have used religious and cultural arsenal to support and justify religious and sectarian privileges among their peoples. Had Bahrain or Iraq been Shiite states, inter-Arab relations would not have changed to such an extent. Had Iran been a Sunni state for the past 400 years, positions would not have changed towards it, and the Saudi Kingdom would have dealt with the Sunni-based Egyptian government according to its political choices rather than its religious sect. The same is true for Turkey.

However, we do not deny the fact that Iran has stormed the Arab world and sought to export the revolution and thus its influence to Arab countries. Iran has become a partner in the Arab interests and managed to procure for itself geographic, political and sectarian regions. Today, Iran is trying to take advantage of the Arab world crisis and invest in the Shiite environment to serve its interests in Iraq, Yemen, the Gulf, Syria and Lebanon.

While it has succeeded in justifying the overthrow of autocracy in Iraq and thus reaping the fruits, Iran cannot justify the killings of the majority of the Syrian people by relentlessly supporting the regime under the pretext of its political resistance. For the regime's domestic policy is no longer voicing political resistance, which in turn is no longer viable unless Arab solidarity is renewed in order to formulate national, social and integrated policies.

Today, Iran is seen as a force inhibiting the path of change in the Arab world, as this change will be done at the hands of Sunni political Islam.

Here we are in Lebanon facing a contradictory Iranian position. Iran supports our national defense, as in the “resistance” and its arms and all relevant achievements in this regards. On the other hand, it tries to place Lebanon at the forefront of the Arab-Israeli conflict and inter-Arab conflict and therefore preventing the country from rising and from regaining its stability and unity.

Today, the Sunni-Shiite conflict is likely to be affiliated with the Saudi-Iranian conflict and the interfaith dialogue has yet to put forth any viable solutions.

Today, Lebanon falls under the responsibility of Iran and Saudi Arabia. The fragmentation witnessed over the past years reflects a joint trusteeship, aiming at exporting regional conflict to Lebanon at the ideological and political levels. It would have been a dignified and viable step, had the Saudi King sought to establish a dialogue with Iran in order to protect Lebanon and distance it from the Syrian crisis. For Lebanon must not be

subject to the hegemony of any doctrine or sect, whatever the aspirations of regional states.

Article 5.

The Daily Star

Ethics matter, the world tells Israel

Rami G. Khouri

August 22, 2012 -- We may be quietly witnessing these days an important change in Middle Eastern history. The calm, rational human emphasis on ethical behavior and the quest for peace and justice could be triumphing over the attempt to spread victimization and hysteria and to overlook violent and criminal behavior.

This development was clear this week in the United Church of Canada's vote to boycott products from Israeli settlements. This was in contrast to the exhortations by former U.S. State Department and White House official Dennis Ross – a stalwart of the pro-Israel scene from his post at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy – that the United States should withhold financial aid from Egypt if it violates the Camp David peace treaty with Israel (because Cairo is sending more military assets to the Sinai to combat terrorists attacking both Israel and Egypt).

While world attention in our region focuses on Syria,

transformations across North Africa, the situation in Iraq, and Iranian-Israeli tensions, more and more people around the world – including mainline churches, labor unions, academics and some Western government investment funds – are judging Israelis, Palestinians and others in the Middle East according to their actions, and are demanding that all parties abide by a single, universal standard of justice and law.

Here Israel is increasingly portrayed as perpetuating against the Palestinians apartheid-like behavior that the world rallied to defeat in South Africa a few decades ago. Actions to counter Israel's many unjust policies are coordinated by the growing Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Campaign for “freedom, justice and equality.” BDS advocates in favor of boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israeli or international companies, goods and services “involved in Israeli policies violating Palestinian human rights and international law.”

The two largest Protestant church denominations in North America (the U.S. Presbyterians and the United Church of Canada) have both voted to boycott the sale of products made by Israeli settlements on Palestinian lands. This is a significant breakthrough, because mainstream, ordinary North Americans who used ethical principles to passionately debate the consequences of Israel's settlements policy ultimately rejected and rebuked these Zionist tactics. The pro-Israel lobbies worked hard to stop this trend, but largely failed in the end, mainly because Israel's behavior was judged according to universal legal and moral criteria.

I was honored to be invited to attend the Presbyterian Church

Congress in Pittsburgh and speak for the successful resolution to boycott products from Israeli settlements. In the process I experienced the fascinating spectacle of the pro-Israel lobby at work in the United States. The lobby usually prefers working in the political shadows, but was forced out into the open air here. The pro-Israel groups, including some Christian zealots, mainly repeated old arguments that seemed less and less convincing. Portraying Israel as a threatened, vulnerable society surrounded by aggressive neighbors contradicted a reality visible to all – namely that Israel is stronger than its neighbors, and continued to steal and colonize their land, and to subjugate and traumatize Palestinians through assassinations, sieges, mass imprisonment, water theft, travel controls and other problematic actions.

The majority of Presbyterians grappled mightily and emotionally with how they could best constructively promote justice and peace for all. They ultimately accepted that the Israeli occupation and colonization of Arab lands were illegal and immoral underlying drivers of tensions, injustices and violence, and needed to be redressed.

In this wider context, Dennis Ross' call for the U.S. to sanction Egypt for its policies in Sinai is a timely example of how the pro-Israel lobbies seem to place Israel's interests above those of anyone else, including the Palestinians, everyone else in the Middle East, or perhaps even the United States. Ross wants the U.S. to withhold essential aid to Cairo if Egyptians, among other things, do not "respect their international obligations, including the terms of Egypt's peace treaty with Israel."

Such fervent pro-Zionist bias that makes Israel's well-being the benchmark of assessing others' policies – without demanding

the Israel respect international legal obligations in an equal way – is routine for American pro-Israel groups. However, millions of people across the world increasingly reject Zionist supremacy and Israel-first rules as the way to deal with the quest for peace and justice for all in the Middle East. Instead, seeking justice and equal rights for Israelis and Palestinians alike, they expect both sides mutually and simultaneously to respect the same body of international law.

The contrast of the ethics-based conduct of leading North American churches with the pro-Israel bias of Dennis Ross' political universe in Washington marks a potentially major change under way. In the important interaction among universal ethics, narrow lobby group interests, and national policymaking, more and more groups around the world are insisting that justice and ethics matter, and must shape policy.

That humane and activist approach ultimately defeated South African apartheid, and could well temper the excesses of Zionist colonialism and its shrinking band of apologists around the world.

Article 6.

Foreign Affairs

Government, Geography, and Growth

Jeffrey D. Sachs

September/October 2012 -- According to the economist Daron

Acemoglu and the political scientist James Robinson, economic development hinges on a single factor: a country's political institutions. More specifically, as they explain in their new book, *Why Nations Fail*, it depends on the existence of "inclusive" political institutions, defined as pluralistic systems that protect individual rights. These, in turn, give rise to inclusive economic institutions, which secure private property and encourage entrepreneurship. The long-term result is higher incomes and improved human welfare.

What Acemoglu and Robinson call "extractive" political institutions, in contrast, place power in the hands of a few and beget extractive economic institutions, which feature unfair regulations and high barriers to entry into markets. Designed to enrich a small elite, these institutions inhibit economic progress for everyone else. The broad hypothesis of *Why Nations Fail* is that governments that protect property rights and represent their people preside over economic development, whereas those that do not suffer from economies that stagnate or decline. Although "most social scientists shun moncausal, simple, and broadly applicable theories," Acemoglu and Robinson write, they themselves have chosen just such a "simple theory and used it to explain the main contours of economic and political development around the world since the Neolithic Revolution."

Their causal logic runs something like this: economic development depends on new inventions (such as the steam engine, which helped kick-start the Industrial Revolution), and inventions need to be researched, developed, and widely distributed. Those activities happen only when inventors can expect to reap the economic benefits of their work. The profit motive also drives diffusion, as companies compete to spread

the benefit of an invention to a wider population. The biggest obstacle to this process is vested interests, such as despotic rulers, who fear that a prosperous middle class could undermine their power, or owners of existing technologies, who want to stay in business. Often, these two groups belong to the same clique.

The authors' story is soothing. Western readers will no doubt take comfort in the idea that democracy and prosperity go hand in hand and that authoritarian countries are bound to either democratize or run out of economic steam. Indeed, Acemoglu and Robinson predict that China will go the way of the Soviet Union: exhausting its current economic success before transforming into a politically inclusive state.

This tale sounds good, but it is simplistic. Although domestic politics can encourage or impede economic growth, so can many other factors, such as geopolitics, technological discoveries, and natural resources, to name a few. In their single-minded quest to prove that political institutions are the prime driver or inhibitor of growth, Acemoglu and Robinson systematically ignore these other causes. Their theory mischaracterizes the relationship among politics, technological innovation, and growth. But what is most problematic is that it does not accurately explain why certain countries have experienced growth while others have not and cannot reliably predict which economies will expand and which will stagnate in the future.

DIAGNOSING DEVELOPMENT

Acemoglu and Robinson's simple narrative contains a number of conceptual shortcomings. For one, the authors incorrectly

assume that authoritarian elites are necessarily hostile to economic progress. In fact, dictators have sometimes acted as agents of deep economic reforms, often because international threats forced their hands. After Napoleon defeated Prussia in 1806 at the Battle of Jena, Prussia's authoritarian rulers embarked on administrative and economic reforms in an effort to strengthen the state. The same impulse drove reforms by the leaders behind Japan's Meiji Restoration in the late nineteenth century, South Korea's industrialization in the 1960s, and China's industrialization in the 1980s. In each case, foreign dangers and the quest for national opulence overshadowed the leaders' concerns about economic liberalization. In their discussion of the incentives facing elites, Acemoglu and Robinson ignore the fact that those elites' political survival often depends as much on external as internal circumstances, leading many struggling states to adopt the institutions and technologies of the leading states in a quest to close economic gaps that endanger the state and society.

The authors also conflate the incentives for technological innovation and those for technological diffusion. The distinction matters because the diffusion of inventions contributes more to the economic progress of laggard states than does the act of invention itself. And authoritarian rulers often successfully promote the inflow of superior foreign technologies. A society without civil, political, and property rights may indeed find it difficult to encourage innovation outside the military sector, but it often has a relatively easy time adopting technologies that have already been developed elsewhere. Think of cell phones. Invented in the United States, they have rapidly spread around the world, to democracies and nondemocracies alike. They have

even penetrated Somalia, a country that has no national government or law to speak of but does have a highly competitive cell-phone sector.

In fact, most of the economic leaps that laggard countries have made can probably be credited not to domestic technological innovations but to flows of technology from abroad, which in turn have often been financed by export receipts from natural resources and low-wage industries. China did not become the fastest-growing large economy in history after 1980 thanks to domestic invention; it did so because it rapidly adopted technologies that were created elsewhere. And unlike the Soviet Union, China has not sought in vain to develop its own technological systems in competition with the West. It has instead aimed, with great skill, to integrate its local production into global technological systems, mastering the technologies in the process. China will likely become an important innovator in the future, but innovation has not been the key to the country's 30 years of torrid growth.

What's more, authoritarian political institutions, such as China's, can sometimes speed, rather than impede, technological inflows. China has proved itself highly effective at building large and complex infrastructure (such as ports, railways, fiber-optic cables, and highways) that complements industrial capital, and this infrastructure has attracted foreign private-sector capital and technology. And just like inclusive governments, authoritarian regimes often innovate in the military sector, with benefits then spilling over into the civilian economy. In South Korea and Taiwan, for example, public investments in military technology have helped seed civilian technologies.

The book misinterprets the causes of growth in another way. Acemoglu and Robinson correctly identify state power -- "political centralization," in their words -- as a necessary precursor to economic development. After all, only a strong government can keep the peace, build infrastructure, enforce contracts, and provide other public goods. But in Acemoglu and Robinson's version of events, a state's strength arises from the choices made by its ruling elites. The authors forget that a state's power depends not just on the willpower of these elites but also on an adequate resource base to help finance that capacity.

In their discussion of Africa, for example, Acemoglu and Robinson recognize that the continent's lack of centralized states and long history of colonial rule have set its development far back, but they never adequately explain why sub-Saharan African governments were localized and weak to begin with. Geography has a lot to do with it. Sub-Saharan Africa's geographic conditions -- its low population densities before the twentieth century, high prevalence of disease, lack of navigable rivers for transportation, meager productivity of rain-fed agriculture, and shortage of coal, among others -- long impeded the formation of centralized states, urbanization, and economic growth. Adam Smith recognized Africa's transportation obstacles back in 1776 in *The Wealth of Nations*. These transport problems, along with ecological and resource-related weaknesses, made Africa vulnerable to invasion and conquest by Europe in the late nineteenth century (after the Europeans learned to protect themselves against malaria with quinine), and they still hamper development in some parts of the continent today.

Not only can unfavorable geography cripple states; it can also

slow the development and diffusion of technology. Again, however, Acemoglu and Robinson leave this variable out of their equation for economic growth, failing to acknowledge that diffusion requires not only inclusive political institutions but also sufficiently low costs of adopting the new technologies. In places where production is expensive because of an inhospitable climate, unfavorable topography, low population densities, or a lack of proximity to global markets, many technologies from abroad will not arrive quickly through foreign investments or outsourcing. Compare Bolivia and Vietnam in the 1990s, both places I experienced firsthand as an economic adviser. Bolivians enjoyed greater political and civil rights than the Vietnamese did, as measured by Freedom House, yet Bolivia's economy grew slowly whereas Vietnam's attracted foreign investment like a magnet. It is easy to see why: Bolivia is a landlocked mountainous country with much of its territory lying higher than 10,000 feet above sea level, whereas Vietnam has a vast coastline with deep-water ports conveniently located near Asia's booming industrial economies. Vietnam, not Bolivia, was the desirable place to assemble television sets and consumer appliances for Japanese and South Korean companies.

The overarching effect of these analytic shortcomings is that when Acemoglu and Robinson purport to explain why nations fail to grow, they act like doctors trying to confront many different illnesses with only one diagnosis. In any system with many interacting components, whether a sick body or an underperforming economy, failure can arise for any number of reasons. The key to troubleshooting complex systems is to perform what physicians call a "differential diagnosis": a determination of what has led to the system failure in a

particular place and time. Bad governance is indeed devastating, but so, too, are geopolitical threats, adverse geography, debt crises, and cultural barriers. Poverty itself can create self-reinforcing traps by making saving and investment impossible.

THE POWER OF THE MAP

To make a convincing case that political institutions alone determine economic development, one would have to conduct an exceptionally rigorous analysis to over-come the huge amount of data strongly suggesting that other factors also play an important role in development; as the astrophysicist Carl Sagan said, "Extraor-dinary claims require extraordinary evidence." Yet Acemoglu and Robinson do nothing of the sort. They never define their key variables with precision, present any quantitative data or classifications based on those definitions, or offer even a single table, figure, or regression line to demonstrate the relationships that they contend underpin all economic history. Instead, they present a stream of assertions and anecdotes about the inclusive or extractive nature of this or that institution. And even their own narratives betray a chronic blindness to competing explanations.

Consider South Korea's development. As Acemoglu and Robinson recognize, President Park Chung-hee, who was in power from 1961 to 1979, ran an extractive political system that still somehow managed to create inclusive economic institutions. Contrary to what the Acemoglu-Robinson hypothesis would predict -- that political reform precedes economic growth -- Park and his allies, although they represented an authoritarian elite, were motivated by a desire to strengthen the state and develop the economy so that South

Korea could survive on a divided peninsula and in a highly competitive region. Moreover, the country's economic progress from 1970 until around 2000 had less to do with the authors' preferred explanation of homegrown innovation than with its remarkable success at reverse engineering and at manufacturing equipment for established firms located overseas. Eventually, South Korea's economic success promoted political democratization and homegrown innovation. Authoritarian-led economic progress came first.

South Korea's style of growth is far more typical than Acemoglu and Robinson acknowledge. Indeed, the pattern is so familiar that it has been given a name: "the East Asian developmental state model," or, more generally, "state capitalism." China, Singapore, Taiwan, and Vietnam all began with extractive political institutions and ended up with more inclusive economic institutions. In every case, economic development either preceded political reform or has so far not led to it. Whereas South Korea and Taiwan became democracies after the economic reforms of their authoritarian rulers, China and Vietnam have not yet democratized, and Singapore is semidemocratic. These outcomes contradict Acemoglu and Robinson's theory that inclusive political institutions pave the way for growth and that without such institutions, economies will inevitably sputter out.

The South Korean and Taiwanese examples serve as a reminder of an easy mistake to make when using Acemoglu and Robinson's framework. Inclusive political institutions in South Korea and Taiwan today are associated with inclusive economic institutions. Yet historically, the causation in both countries ran from economic reforms to political democratization, not the

other way around. The fact that inclusive political and economic institutions are correlated in today's world does not mean that the former caused the latter.

There are also countries that possess both inclusive political and inclusive economic institutions yet never achieve much development, often due to geographic barriers. That seemed to be the fate awaiting Botswana in 1966, when it gained independence. Back then, the country was one of the poorest places on the planet -- no surprise for a landlocked desert. But over the following decades, the country emerged as an economic success story, and it now boasts one of the highest per capita incomes in Africa.

So what changed? According to Acemoglu and Robinson, Botswana broke the mold "by quickly developing inclusive economic and political institutions after independence." The authors wax rhapsodic about the Tswana people's long tradition of political inclusion, which meant that at independence, they "emerged with a history of institutions enshrining limited chieftaincy and some degree of accountability of chiefs to the people."

Oh, and yes, did they mention the diamonds? In 1967, prospectors discovered a gargantuan deposit of diamonds that would become the world's largest diamond mine, and other discoveries soon followed. During the 1970s and 1980s, the diamond boom remade the economy of this tiny desert state, which became one of the world's largest producers and exporters of diamonds. Botswana's diamond revenues, which soared to over \$1,000 per citizen, have provided more than half of all its export earnings and a substantial proportion of its budget

receipts. Yet in Acemoglu and Robinson's telling, diamonds are just a sideshow.

Perhaps the authors would retort that Botswana has outperformed other diamond producers, such as Sierra Leone, and that its inclusive institutions account for the difference. Even so, critical geographic forces are still at work. Botswana is blessed with far greater reserves than Sierra Leone, earning diamond revenues of around \$1,500 per person annually, compared with under \$30 for Sierra Leone. Moreover, Botswana's diamond mines have been managed by a large corporation (De Beers) closely aligned with South Africa, Botswana's powerful neighbor, making it harder, perhaps, for Botswana's elites to run away with all the wealth. Such institutional details, which are at least as important as the political history of the Tswana people, go unmentioned in *Why Nations Fail*. Throughout the book, Acemoglu and Robinson see what they want to see -- so much so that even when they stumble on the world's richest diamond mine, they can't seem to understand that geography has something to do with economic development.

Acemoglu and Robinson's treatment of Botswana typifies their approach. The book opens with a description of twin cities divided by the U.S.-Mexican border: Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora. Since both cities share similar geography, the authors conclude, the relative poverty of the Mexican Nogales compared with the Nogales across the border must be explained by the difference between the two countries' political systems.

Yet the case of the two Nogaleses is about geography and nothing else. Only geography can explain why the desert city of

Nogales, Sonora, even exists; why its population is ten times that of Nogales, Arizona; and why it is one of the most industrialized places in Mexico whereas its American counterpart is one of the poorest places in the United States. Nogales, Sonora, exists as an industrial city because it borders the United States and the terminus of Interstate 19. Firms invest in the city because it is an excellent location inside Mexico to serve the U.S. market, but there is no comparable reason to invest in Nogales, Arizona, since it is a lousy place inside the United States to serve the U.S. market. The upshot is that Nogales, Sonora, is highly developed compared with the rest of Mexico, whereas Nogales, Arizona, has to rely on federal and state transfers to address its poverty. And if Interstate 19 ran through a different part of the Mexican-Arizonan border, surely Mexico's maquiladora operations would be located there instead.

At the same time, this case reveals nothing about why Mexico overall is poorer than the United States. Indeed, there are many reasons -- political, geographic, and historical. The lesson of Nogales is that geography counts. Proximity to markets is powerful enough to create an industrial city in the middle of the desert, but obviously only on the Mexican side.

Yet Acemoglu and Robinson seem generally unwilling to think dynamically in spatial terms. To them, geography implies a static characteristic of a place over the centuries. That, of course, is not the point. Geography matters because it affects the profitability of various kinds of economic activities, including agriculture, mining, and industry; the health of the population; and the desirability of living and investing in a particular place. The proof is on the map. Geography has shaped not only the international division of labor and patterns of wealth and

poverty but also the distribution of people and income within countries. In most countries, people cluster near coasts and navigable rivers. Drylands, highlands, and steeply sloped places are generally poorer and less populated than rain-fed coastal plains. Populations aggregate near major neighbors, leading to the Nogales phenomenon in Mexico and the high concentration of Canada's population along the U.S.-Canadian border. As technologies and world markets change, the relative advantages and disadvantages of particular places change as well. This doesn't mean that geography is unimportant, only that its importance depends on the technologies available at a given time and place.

Acemoglu and Robinson gloss over another obvious point: inclusive political institutions have presided over decidedly extractive practices conducted abroad or directed against minorities at home -- indeed, some of the greatest abuses of humanity. In the eighteenth century, Europe sated its sweet tooth with sugar cane produced by slave labor in the Caribbean. Manchester's fabrics in the mid-nineteenth century were woven from cotton picked by slaves in the U.S. South. And for decades, the nuclear power industry has fueled its reactors with uranium mined by Africans and Native Americans whose jobs have left them poisoned. As the brutality of colonialism amply demonstrates, Europe's supposedly inclusive political culture stopped at the water's edge, and in the case of the United States, those principles ended at the Mason-Dixon Line or the borders of lands occupied by Native Americans.

HOW INDUSTRIALIZATION HAPPENED

The real story of development over the past two centuries would

go something like this: The Industrial Revolution gained steam first in Great Britain, in part for reasons that Acemoglu and Robinson emphasize, in part thanks to the country's aggressive policies to overtake Indian textile manufacturing, and for many other reasons as well (including accessible coal deposits). By the early nineteenth century, the technologies that were first developed in Great Britain began to spread globally. The pattern of diffusion was determined by a complex combination of politics, history, and geography. In Europe, technology generally moved eastward and southward to the rest of Europe and northward to Scandinavia. Even authoritarian governments in Europe did not stand in the way for long, since fierce interstate competition meant that each country sought to keep up with its rivals. Reforms were rife, and where they were delayed, laggards often succumbed to military defeat at the hands of more industrialized foes. The need for state survival drove many elites to open their institutions to industrialization.

Outside Europe, in the nineteenth century, industrialization spread most successfully to places with good geography: countries that happened to have local coal deposits or other low-cost energy sources, industrial inputs such as iron ore or cotton, or easy access to international transport and world markets. It tended to avoid places that were disease-ridden, far from ports, mountainous, or inhospitable to farming. Imperialism mattered, too. It often stalled or stopped the process of technological diffusion, since the imperial powers (both European and Japanese) tended to prevent industrialization in their colonies, which were reserved for the supply of low-cost raw materials and low-wage labor. Local politics could also make a difference: whether the country was stable or unstable, which outside power

it aligned itself with, and how open it was to foreign investment.

Industrialization became far more widespread after World War II as nations gained independence from colonial rule and its anti-industrial policies. Domestic politics played a role, as Acemoglu and Robinson rightly argue, in that despotic or unstable governments could cripple development. Yet politics was only one of many determinants of success. Many extractive states, such as China, mastered new technologies and promoted rapid economic growth that has lasted decades. The Middle East oil states became rich despite their extractive institutions. The advent of high-yield crops in the 1950s and 1960s (the "green revolution") spurred rapid agricultural development mainly in places that enjoyed reliable rainfall or were suitable for irrigation.

Sub-Saharan Africa tended to lose out. The long era of brutal colonial rule left the region bereft of skilled labor and physical infrastructure compared with the rest of the world. Development remained difficult in view of the many geographic obstacles that constrained domestic energy production, made farming difficult, sapped the health of the work force, and raised the costs of transportation both within sub-Saharan Africa and between sub-Saharan Africa and major world markets. Today, however, Africa is overcoming these problems one by one, thanks to new energy discoveries, long-awaited agricultural advances, breakthroughs in public health, better infrastructure, and greatly improved information, communications, and transportation technologies. Africa may finally be at the tipping point of rapid and self-sustaining growth.

As for the future of development, Acemoglu and Robinson's

narrow focus on political institutions offers insufficient predictive help. Consider how ineffectual the theory would have been at foretelling the global winners and losers in economic development from 1980 to 2010. At the start of 1980, an economist basing his judgments of future economic performance on political and civil rights during the preceding decade or so might have foolishly bet on Gambia, Ecuador, or Suriname and almost entirely missed the rapid growth of authoritarian East Asia, most notably China. From 1980 to the present, many developing countries with undemocratic and highly corrupt governments grew faster than many poor countries with democratic and less corrupt governments. Other democracies failed as a result of economic reversals, and some authoritarian regimes became more inclusive partly as a result of their economic progress.

Despite all these problems with Acemoglu and Robinson's theory, readers will have sympathy for their approach. The authors tell a story many want to hear: that Western democracy pays off not only politically but also economically. Yet real economic life is neither so straightforward nor so fair.

Authoritarian regimes sometimes achieve rapid growth, and democracies sometimes languish. Acemoglu and Robinson's story is sometimes right: politics matters, and bad governments can indeed kill development. Yet the key to understanding development is to remain open to the true complexity of the global processes of innovation and diffusion and the myriad pathways through which politics, geography, economics, and culture can shape the flows of technologies around the world.

In fact, economic development will be even more complex in the coming decades. As human-led climate change progresses, many

regions could well be hit by devastating environmental shocks, such as heat waves, droughts, and floods, that are far beyond their control. Populations will migrate in reaction to uneven patterns of demographic change. Advances in information and communications technology will make new kinds of global production networks possible. In such a complicated world, explanations of growth that center on a single variable will become even less useful.

Jeffrey D. Sachs is Director of the Earth Institute, Quetelet Professor of Sustainable Development, and Professor of Health Policy and Management at Columbia University. He is also Special Adviser to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.