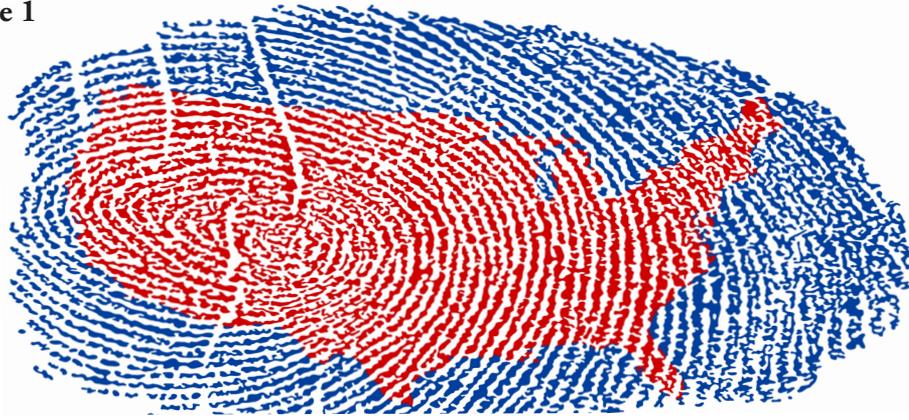


American Security Quarterly

Vision, Strategy, Dialogue

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Hart & Augustine: Why 9/11 Can Happen Again

Cole: **The Cost of Creativity**

Wallin: **Digital Diplomacy: What are we Trying to Achieve?**

Connell: **Are We Underestimating the Benefits of US Trade?**

Daniels: **Benefit or Burden? The Future of U.S. Tactical Nuclear Weapons**

Holland: **Europe Should Embargo Imports of Russian Natural Gas**

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Alvarado-Castle: **Energy & Climate Security: A Necessary Nexus**

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American Security Quarterly - edited by Adin Dobkin

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NATL. SECURITY
STRATEGY

National Security Strategy

Why 9/11 Can Happen Again

Gary Hart & Norman Augustine
[Los Angeles Times](#)

Feb 20, 2014

In February 2001, a bipartisan federal commission on which we served warned that terrorists would acquire weapons of mass destruction and mass disruption. “Attacks against American citizens on American soil, possibly causing heavy casualties, are likely over the next quarter-century,” the Hart-Rudman Commission said. “In the face of this threat, our nation has no coherent or integrated governmental structures.” We added: “[Congress](#) should rationalize its current committee structure so that it best serves U.S. national security objectives.”

We identified 50 ways to improve national security, none of which was implemented before [9/11](#). One recommendation — to create a single agency to deal with homeland security — was not acted on until a year and a half after those tragic attacks.

One particularly consequential recommendation has been altogether ignored. Congress has failed to “review its structure systematically in light of likely 21st century security challenges,” a critical step needed “to

ensure both that important issues receive sufficient attention and oversight and the unnecessary duplication of effort by multiple committees is minimized.”

Put bluntly, congressional oversight of homeland security remains an organizational maze. Instead of doing what our group and the 9/11 Commission recommended, Congress has made matters worse. After the creation of the [Department of Homeland Security](#), oversight was claimed by 79 committees and subcommittees, but that number has expanded to at least 108.

No major company could function with that kind of structure, and neither can the third-largest federal department. As former Homeland Security Secretary [Michael Chertoff](#) said, “When many voices speak, it’s like no voice speaks.”

Virtually everyone who has examined the matter agrees about the need to streamline congressional supervision of homeland security. Since the 9/11 Commission made it a central recommendation, reports from think tanks such as the [Heritage Foundation](#) and the [Brookings Institution](#) have concurred, as did the [Sunnylands-Aspen Institute](#) task force, a group of national security experts that met last year and included 9/11 Commission Chairmen Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton.

Because Congress has spurned this chorus of qualified counsel, the country remains unprepared to thwart some of the same kinds of terrorist attacks that we warned about in the pre-9/11 days. Amid concerns about a cyberattack on the power grid, air-traffic control system or financial sector, the seven congressional committees that claim jurisdiction over cyber security can’t even agree on whether responsibility for the issue should reside in the Department of Homeland Security or elsewhere.

There are other areas of vulnerability. For example, when you fly on a major airline from a major airport, you, your shoes, laptop and luggage are screened

by the Transportation Security Administration. But there isn't necessarily such screening if you board a private jet at Teterboro Airport in New Jersey, just a dozen miles from Manhattan, or any number of small airports across the United States. A potential hijacker could walk through the terminal straight to the plane. And as [Adm. Thad Allen](#), a former commandant of the [U.S. Coast Guard](#), notes, when a small boat enters one of the harbors adjoining our nation's cities, whether it be Los Angeles, New York, Seattle, Galveston, Texas, or others, those responsible for national security can't readily determine to whom it is registered or what is in its hold.

Nor are these means of carrying danger onto our shores the full extent of the problem. As former Sen. [Bob Graham](#) of Florida, who headed a commission on weapons of mass destruction from 2008 to 2010, noted in the Sunnylands-Aspen report, the list of biohazards, including substances that could kill before we become aware that they are in our air or water, hasn't been prioritized.

Unlike most stories about Congress not working well, this isn't a saga of left versus right, Republicans versus Democrats. Reports from across the political spectrum have described the status quo as "byzantine," "wasteful" and "dysfunctional." Republican-appointed Homeland Security Secretaries Tom Ridge and Michael Chertoff and Democrat-appointed [Janet Napolitano](#) have all indicated that fragmented oversight makes it more difficult for the department to do its job.

The reason for congressional inaction is as simple as it is sad. As noted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies/Business Executives for National Security task force, Congress has "protected prerogative and privilege at the expense of a rational, streamlined committee structure. The result is a Department of Homeland Security that is hamstrung by a system of congressional oversight that drains departmental en-

ergy and invites managerial circumvention."

A refrain emerged after 9/11: Why hadn't the media, Congress and the president paid more attention to the warnings and recommendations of the Hart-Rudman report?

To that question we would now add: Must the country suffer another devastating, potentially preventable attack before more of its turf-protecting elected representatives forgo "prerogative and privilege" for the sake of our nation's security?

The Cost of Creativity

August Cole
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Feb 26, 2014

Money is a funny subject inside the Beltway.

Civil servants get by on proscribed grade-guided salaries that often mean commuting dozens of miles to work while those on Capitol Hill learn to walk with a practiced lean against the steady gale of dollars bending and twisting American politics.

At the same time, the more than \$1 billion in taxpayer dollars spent daily on defense and national security is essentially incomprehensible to the average American because of its scale. Among wonks, it is just as easy to get lost in the baroque aspects of Pentagon budgeting. Asking "how much?" instead of "why?" usually dominates conversation, particularly ahead of a full budget rollout, in part because it's an easier question to answer.

This week, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel makes his case in Washington and to the troops for the Obama administration's proposed fiscal 2015 budget plans

that [hew to at least \\$75 billion in cuts during the next two years](#) and an approximately \$500 billion cap. At war's end, the tension between spending money on people or things only gets higher with each fiscal year. It will worsen if sequestration returns.

Of all the comments that have been made about what's ahead, it's worth paying attention to what [Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense Christine Fox said Wednesday at the American Enterprise Institute](#). Fox, the former head of the [Pentagon's own office of eagle-eyed budget skeptics](#), made two important statements, which outsiders might see as contradictory.

The first was that the military's four-year review due next month, the Quadrennial Defense Review, usually seen as an unconstrained wish list from top brass and senior officials, would be rooted in fiscal reality. The Pentagon could not put out a QDR, she said, that "did not match the world that we're living" in.

Secondly, she called for more "creativity" in military spending and priorities. What more creative spending should entail is a focus on "enablers," she noted, the technologies and systems such as electronic warfare or deception that can help a fighting force win with less. Yet these are also less costly investments without political constituents to fight for them in lean times. This approach needs support from on high. Her successor, Robert Work, should speak to this point once the hold on his nomination to the Pentagon's No. 2 post is lifted.

Sadly, realism and creativity no longer play cards and drink cheap bourbon together in Capitol Hill's shadow, as they once did. They are on opposite sides of the fiscal divide.

Even if the vision in the next QDR is tied down by today's constraints and budget politics, it need not lack creativity. Big-ticket weapons, such as America's unrivaled aircraft carriers, formed an important part

of the narrative of U.S. military dominance and power projection. Today they are endangered because of their expense and abiding questions about their true wartime utility in the Pacific. How then to affordably project air power thousands of miles from American bases? The best answers will not be ones we have heard before.

Creativity counts more than ever, as our irregular adversaries have shown. Peer rivals will also want confront the U.S. on their terms, not ours. Pentagon planning must take an adversary's imagination into account just as seriously as it considers the operational readiness of China's carrier.

Fortunately, creativity is one of the few things in Washington that is still free.

Cybersecurity: A Balanced Approach

Nathan Alvarado-Castle
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Feb 25, 2014

Cybersecurity has become a growing field for industries and governments alike. But what exactly are we talking about when we speak of security in the cyber realm?

Whether it's state advancements in cyber-operations like [Stuxnet](#), the National Security Agency's [global surveillance apparatus](#), or the breaching of sensitive personal-data and critical infrastructure by cyber-criminals and foreign governments, the field of cybersecurity has become associated with a range of threats, impacts, and actors so numerous the term often loses its distinction.

The result has been a battle of "threat inflation" or

“threat deflation” in the press, depending on the actor’s position. For some, inflating the threat is extremely lucrative for their industries. For others, depicting cyberattacks as existential threats is not only empirically-unfounded (till this day no cyberattack has resulted in a death of a human), but can lead to the erosion of fundamental civil liberties.

Allan Friedman and P.W. Singer, recent publication, “Cybersecurity and Cyberwar: What Everyone Needs to Know”, argues the truth lies somewhere in the middle of this debate.

According to Singer and Freidman, “97 percent of Fortune 500 companies have been hacked (and 3 percent likely have been too and just don’t know it), and more than one hundred governments are gearing up to fight battles in the online domain . . . The US Department of Homeland Security’s National Cyber Security Division has doubled or tripled in size every year since its inception.”

Cyberattacks, whether they be malware, distributed denial of service attacks (DDoS), or advanced persistent threats (APTs), are not only numerous, but unique in their execution and effects.

As Singer & Freidman explain, “A cyberattack is not constrained by the usual physics of traditional attacks. In cyberspace, an attack can literally move at the speed of light, unlimited by geography and the political boundaries. Being delinked from physics also means it can be in multiple places at the same time, meaning the attack can hit multiple targets at once.”

What does this suggest for security in a hyper-connected world like ours?

Because cyberspace relies on physical infrastructure and human users, traditional ideals in a globalized world like ‘sovereignty’, ‘nationality’, and ‘property’ are becoming increasingly difficult to conceptualize as the flow of people, goods, and ideas become more fluid and diverse.

The traditional roles of governments are beginning to alter to reflect this change. Additionally, the private sector (which controls 90% of US critical infrastructure) has taken large steps to change as well.

But as Singer and Friedman point out, the inability to streamline responses to cyberattacks by the government, and the plethora of varying standards of security set by the private industry, make preventative and coordinated action extremely difficult.

The result is cyberattacks will continue to persist in our data-driven society. But ultimately, the degree of impact these attacks have on our society at the public, private and individual level, is wholly contingent on the structuring of the public-private relationship, and the costs that would be accrued onto the attacker.



CLIMATE SECURITY

Climate Security

California, Drought, and Climate Change

William Fassuliotis
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Feb 20, 2014

California and much of the rest of the West Coast have been gripped by drought for the past two years. 90.2% of California has been categorized as being in “severe drought” or worse, and more than two-thirds of the state is experiencing “extreme drought” or worse, according to the most recent report from the [United States Drought Monitor](#). 2013 was California’s driest year since records were first kept in July, 1849. In 2013, San Francisco [shattered](#) a nearly century old record for lack of precipitation, experiencing only 5.59” vs the previous low of 9.00” set in 1917 (vs an average of 23.65”). The situation is not getting much better in 2014, as the most recent January ranked as the third driest January on record. Most worrisomely, NOAA and the Drought Monitor [report](#): “all timescales back to 48 months have been drier than average.”

NASA [posted images of the same view](#), a year apart, illuminating the drier conditions and lack of snow covering the Sierra Mountains. Mountain snowpack is about 12 percent the normal amount for this time of year.

The drought threatens homeland security. [Farmers have been hit especially hard](#). Experts estimate nearly 600,000 acres of farmland in the Central Valley region will lay devoid of crops due to lack of water, and \$11 billion lost in annual state revenue from agriculture in 2014. In addition to the economic problems it causes in the industry, farmers, and workers, the drought could threaten the US food supply with food shortages, creating instability in prices and quantity. Drought increases the number and magnitude of forest fires. Homes will be threatened, and firefighters and search and rescue teams potentially overwhelmed.

President Obama toured drought afflicted California this past week, [pointing out the link](#) between the water scarcity and climate change: “These actions will help, but they’re just the first step. We have to be clear. A changing climate means that weather-related disasters like droughts, wildfires, storms, floods, are potentially going to be costlier and they’re going to be harsher.”

The American Security Project released a report in 2011, entitled, “[Pay Now, Pay Later](#),” giving a state-by-state assessment of the potential costs of climate change. Our report on California can be found [here](#), and appears especially prescient. One quote from the article sounds as if ripped from a current headline:

California’s agriculture industry— which employs over one million workers and is worth \$30 billion—is expected to suffer heavy losses due to rising temperatures and water shortages.

The water distribution system, which takes water from the mountains in northern California and distributes it to southern California, relies on the snowpack during the spring and summer months. The system will be further stressed as snowfall decreases throughout the Sierra Nevada Mountains—under a high emissions scenario, snowpack is expected to decrease by 70-90%.

This crisis did not occur without forewarning. In a [written testimony](#) presented on April 27th, 2011,

before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Dr. Jonathan Overpeck, Professor of Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Arizona, testified the following:

The bottom-line is that New Mexico and the rest of the broad Southwest – extending from California through east Texas and Oklahoma – are at an increasing risk of unprecedented warming, drying and drought, and should prepare accordingly to ensure secure water supplies through this century.

There is broad agreement in the climate science research community that the Southwest, including New Mexico, will very likely continue to warm. There is also a strong consensus that the same region will become drier and increasingly snow-free with time, particularly in the winter and spring. Climate science also suggests that the warmer atmosphere will lead to more frequent and more severe (drier) droughts in the future. All of the above changes have already started, in large part driven by human-caused climate change.

National Security, Climate, and the Philippine Typhoon

Andrew Holland
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Nov 13, 2013

On Friday, November 8, Super Typhoon Haiyan made landfall in the Central Philippines, around the island of Leyte, as possibly the most powerful tropical cyclone on record. Reports of the death toll range as high as 10,000; President Aquino [believes](#) the final toll will likely be in the range of 2,000-2,500. After the Typhoon passed through, the situation of the survivors has become dire – with [over 600,000](#) people displaced and food and fresh water in short supply.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has [ordered the USS](#)

[George Washington](#) and her battle group from Hong Kong to the Philippines to provide humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of the typhoon. Already, about 90 U.S. Marines and sailors have deployed from Okinawa to the Philippines and are on the ground providing support. Prime Minister Cameron has ordered the Royal Navy's HMS Daring to the region as well. This disaster response mission is part of the Department of Defense's growing humanitarian response mission to help affected regions. Simply put, if the U.S. military did not provide fast-acting logistical support to relief missions like this, there are no other entities that can provide the heavy lift or logistical expertise necessary to get large quantities of aid to a region in time.

Last week, prior to the storm, in reference to Pacific Command's disaster response mission and capability, the [PACOM Commander Admiral Locklear said](#):

"It's the right thing to do... Also, if something is going to happen in the Pacific that is going to create a churn in the security environment, the most likely thing will be a humanitarian disaster problem of some kind – whether it is horrific typhoons or tsunamis or floods or something else."

He's right. Beyond the clear threats to the human security of the residents of the affected area: loss of life, home, food, electricity, and clean water, natural disasters can act as a clear threat to national security – especially when the government is unable to respond effectively. That's because a government failure can create the opportunity for other security threats to develop, ranging from crime and corruption to insurgency or terrorism.

Unfortunately, we may already be seeing this in the Philippines; there are reports of massive [looting](#) after the storm passed over, and unverified reports that the Filipino military has [engaged and killed](#) a group from the New People's Army, a communist rebel group in Leyte, as they tried to attack a government relief convoy.

I'm not going to spend much time debating whether or not man-made climate change was responsible for this storm in particular. There is an ongoing debate about whether climate change will both increase the number of tropical cyclones as well as their intensity. The latest [IPCC report](#) only expressed a 'low confidence' in the impact of climate change on tropical cyclones – that doesn't mean there's no impact, but it means we don't know. What we do know is that the water in the Pacific has been warmer than average –and that warmer water is an important part of cyclone intensity. Phil Plait's [Bad Astronomy blog](#) has a good explanation of the climate/cyclone link. Suffice it to say that climate change is another risk that must be considered when planning for security threats in the region.

These are precisely the reasons that the U.S. Department of Defense has labeled climate change as an “accelerant of instability” in the [2010 QDR](#). PACOM, which has responsibility for all American forces in the Pacific region, has operationalized that guidance from the QDR to include real and significant planning for the many natural disasters that happen around the Pacific Rim. Admiral Locklear has stated that [climate change](#) “is probably the most likely thing that is going to happen . . . that will cripple the security environment, probably more likely than the other scenarios we all often talk about.”

As ASP has determined in our [Global Security Defense Index on Climate Change](#), the U.S. is not the only country that is planning for the security threats of climate change; over 70% of the world also deems climate change to be a security threat. The Philippines's [National Security Policy](#) specifically gives the security forces the mission to “Help Protect the Country's Natural Resources and Reduce the Risks of Disasters” and goes on to say that “the government must focus on establishing disaster and calamity preparedness and effective response mechanisms.” Clearly, Typhoon Haiyan has overwhelmed the ability of the Filipino security services to effectively respond to this calamity; it is appropriate for

the U.S. and international community to help as much as possible.

Climate change acts as a threat multiplier and an accelerant of instability. Whether this storm was 'caused' by climate change is a moot point now. Even with concerted international action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, like those proposed at the UNFCCC negotiations in Warsaw, the Pacific will likely see these disasters for decades to come. Efforts to reduce risk should include military preparations for response, readiness that increases the capacity to prevent such harm, as well as greenhouse gas mitigation to reduce the chance of future storms. The net effect, unfortunately will be that the military is likely to have many opportunities to practice disaster response: it should be treated as a key mission.

What Typhoon Haiyan Means for National Security

Andrew Holland
[The Weather Channel](#)

Nov 13, 2014

On Friday, November 8, Super Typhoon Haiyan made landfall in the Central Philippines, around the island of Leyte, and was possibly the most powerful tropical cyclone on record. Estimates of the death toll range into the thousands, with President Corazón Aquino [believing](#) the final toll will likely be in the range of 2,000-2,500. Since the Typhoon passed through, the situation of the survivors has become dire – with over [600,000 people](#) displaced and food and fresh water in short supply.

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He's right. Beyond the clear threats to the human security of the residents of the affected area – loss of life, home, food, electricity, and clean water – natural disasters can act as a clear threat to national security, especially when the government is unable to respond effectively. That's because a government failure can create the opportunity for other security threats to develop, ranging from crime and corruption to insurgency or terrorism. Unfortunately, we may already be seeing this in the Philippines; there are reports of massive [looting](#) after the storm passed over, and unverified reports that the Filipino military has [engaged and killed](#) a group from the New People's Army, a communist rebel group in Leyte, as they tried to attack a government relief convoy.

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ENERGY SECURITY

Energy Security

What is the Future of Nuclear in the US? First, Ensure that Current Nuclear Plants Remain Operational

Andrew Holland
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Feb 26, 2014

This is a Cross-Post by ASP Senior Fellow Andrew Holland from the National Journal’s Energy Experts blog. Holland was responding to the question of whether the U.S. should invest in nuclear power?

The U.S. is undergoing a decisive change in how we use and produce energy. A clean-energy revolution is seeing wind and solar power grow at unprecedented rates due to both government incentives and reductions in prices. Meanwhile, this is accompanied by the shale gas revolution that has caused experts to increase estimates of gas reserves to say that the United States has more than a century’s worth of reserves – and had caused a drastic drop in the price of natural gas. The result of these two revolutions is that, since 2008, total electricity produced by wind has increased by over 200%, the total produced by solar has increased by an astonishing 970%, natural gas production has increased by 26% – but from a

much higher base. Coal generation has fallen 20% (all numbers from EIA).

Left out of this revolution has been nuclear power. Over that same time period, it has stayed steady at between 19 and 20% of total electricity production.

This baseload capacity that nuclear energy provides, however, is crucial to the rest of the energy revolution. There are real hurdles to continued growth in both renewables and natural gas. Renewable power suffers from problems of variability; it is very difficult to predict how much the wind will blow or how strong the sun will shine. The American electricity grid — built to connect massive, centralized, “always on” power plants to consumers — is unable today to handle the unpredictability that a substantial increase in renewable power would bring. Natural gas, faces economic hurdles — the low gas prices of last year have quickly fallen from memory as consumers and utilities face a rate shock due to the cold winter. We know that natural gas has a history of rapid and extreme price fluctuations: this has made utilities reluctant to rely on it.

For these reasons, it is important that America’s nuclear power plants remain operational. Our electricity system requires a stable, cheap source of energy to provide “always on” baseload power. Coal can provide that, but we know the environmental drawbacks of coal — both the mining of, and the emissions from — are extraordinarily harmful. Nuclear power, on the other hand, can provide emissions-free baseload power at a low cost.

Today, a total of 102 nuclear reactors are operational around the country. No other electricity source can combine the benefits of knowing that it will always be on with its affordability and its lack of emissions.

Opponents of nuclear power will talk about the price of building new nuclear plants. This is true — building them can be very expensive, and they almost always are over-budget and behind schedule. However,

once those costs are sunk — as they have been for the country’s 102 nuclear power plants, they provide the cheapest form of electricity — estimated at a third less than coal and half of the price of gas.

This cheap, always available, zero-carbon power is an important backstop to the growth of new technologies. It can help smooth the price fluctuations that natural gas is vulnerable to and it provides the “always on” capacity that renewable power cannot.

For these reasons, the U.S. should not allow short-sighted reactions to either politics or to market prices close nuclear reactors. In a reaction to public pressure after the 2011 disaster at Fukushima Daiichi, the governments of Japan and Germany initiated plans to close their nuclear power plants. The American public — to its credit — was not so reactionary.

However, utilities today are doing what environmental campaigners and hostile politicians could not: closing operational nuclear power plants. When nuclear plants have to compete with low natural gas spot prices or with variable wind prices, utilities are not allowed to think for the long term. We see this with recent decisions to begin closing Vermont Yankee, Wisconsin’s Kewaunee Power Station, and upcoming decisions on other plants.

Many of our nuclear power plants are approaching the end of their initial 40-year life span. So long as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission ensures a rigorous review of their safety and risk, their licenses should be renewed. Utilities, likewise, should value the nuclear plants as reliable sources of emissions-free power at a cost that is stable and predictable.

Like any energy source, nuclear has its problems: most notably, our political and scientific leaders have not yet found a long-term solution for storing the spent nuclear waste. This challenge is solvable, but will require hard work, consensus and compromise.

As we look to the future, perhaps it is time for a leapfrog away from current nuclear technology. Instead of building the same nuclear power systems that were built for 1950s- era nuclear submarines, the government's role should be to fund pathbreaking research and development into the next generation of power plants. This would include small modular reactors in development now, but it should also include a path to fusion energy – the real source for safe, secure, and sustainable energy. Research into fusion has made a series of scientific gains recently, both in the U.S. and in labs around the world, that are proving that it can be an energy source for the future. Fusion Energy Sciences received \$500 million in the FY2014 omnibus legislation – a victory that will keep research going. It should receive much more: the American Security Project has put forward a 10 year plan for the development of fusion energy, costing \$30 billion – roughly the cost of a week of U.S. energy consumption.

In the short term, we must make sure that short-term market forces do not shut down existing nuclear capacity. In the longer term, the government should make transformative investments into the next generation of technology. Nuclear power has proved itself to be safe, clean, and sustainable. We should benefit from the long-term investments made decades ago to ensure stable power with today's power plants for decades to come.

NERC Geomagnetic Disturbance Events (GMD) Reliability Standards: Comments Due Soon

Andrew Charles Wills

[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Mar 4, 2014

With over [200,000 miles of transmission lines](#) spanning from coast-to-coast, purveyors of the North American power grid, from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to the [North American Reliability Corporation \(NERC\)](#) and all the utilities and energy entities in between, must stay abreast of potential threats to the viability and reliability of consistent energy. In meeting this goal, the Department of Energy and NERC hosted a workshop in 2010 to discuss high-impact, low-frequency event risks to the North American bulk electric system, one of which was the risk of “Geomagnetic Disturbances (GMD).”

It sounds otherworldly. So what exactly is a “Geomagnetic Disturbance” and why should it matter to us right now?

GMDs are speculatively rare occurrences when geomagnetically-induced currents cause “saturation” of high-voltage transformers. In other words, the devices that are used transform the power from high voltage (large transmission lines) to distribution lines (small residential lines) are overwhelmed by an additional current added to the transmission system. According to studies cited by FERC, this “saturation” occurs because the interaction of Earth's magnetic field and solar events (or “solar storms”) causes certain “geomagnetic induced currents” to flow up the ground wires that stabilize and assist transmission lines and through conductors such as transformers and transmission lines. Some studies suggest that this “saturation” could cause a sudden collapse of the Bulk-Power System by overheating a transformer if a GMD event occurs at precisely the right time under the right conditions.

Shortly after the 2010 DOE/NERC workshop, NERC created a Geomagnetic Disturbance Task Force (GMDTF) to study these events and later [published a study](#) which further defined the extent of this risk, its potential to cause damage to the bulk electric system, and the industry's need for operational standards to manage these high-impact low-frequency event risks. Notably, the only event that has ever been officially attributed to a GMD event occurred in 1989 on the Hydro-Quebec grid, an event that caused a short-term loss of power (about 9 hours) to the area. Equally notable, however, is a recent assessment of damages of a four-day power outage in the United States — in its [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for GMD Standards](#), FERC declared that the value of the damage caused by four days of outage is between \$4 billion and \$10 billion.

After the publication of these several reports and studies across energy industry participants, the government took action on the possibility of GMD events.

FERC issued a [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) (NOPR) on October 18, 2012 citing various studies and the possibility of GMD events, requesting that NERC address this problem by creating reliability standards to address the geomagnetic disturbances. In [Order 779](#), FERC issued its official request for NERC to develop standards for GMD events and requested development in two phases. First, the Commission compelled “NERC [to] file one or more Reliability Standards that require owners and operators of the Bulk-Power System to develop and implement operational procedures to mitigate the effects of GMDs consistent with the reliable operation of the Bulk-Power System.” In the second stage, the Commission suggested that NERC “...file one or more Reliability Standards...that require owners and operators of the Bulk-Power System to assess the impact of GMDs on Bulk-Power System equipment and the Bulk-Power System as a whole.”

NERC has currently drafted and published for comment three drafts of the stage 1 standards requested

by the Commission in its 2012 Final Rule. Known as EOP-010-1 (Energy Operations Planning Standard), the standard will require operators of certain aspects of the grid to develop and operating plan for controlling and mitigating damage from these GMD events. [NERC filed its petition for approval](#) of these standards on November 14, 2013, and on January 16, 2014, [FERC issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) to solicit comments from the industry participants and the general public.

Comments for this NOPR are due on March 24, 2014. Industry responses may be similar to those made to the previous NERC petitions for approval of GMD Standards. See NERC's Consideration of Comments on Draft 1 [here](#), and Consideration of Comments for Draft 2 [here](#). Some industry participants feel that compliance will be very costly and will burden energy consumers, and others have hinted that the somewhat “speculative” nature of GMD events does not constitute such a drastic, potentially expensive response. At this point, it is up to administrative processes to determine whether these standards will be approved as written.

To read the current standards, follow [this link](#).

The Future of Nuclear Power

Farhad Mirzadeh
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Nov 20, 2014

A 20-year deal between Russia and the United States has just been completed with the last transfer of blended uranium. The deal, known as the “megatons-to-megawatts” program, was agreed upon 20 years ago when Russians agreed to dismantle its 40,000 nuclear warheads and blend them from highly enriched uranium (HEU) to low enriched uranium (LEU).

At the time the deal was signed, Russia's economy was in shambles which allowed the US to import uranium for its nuclear reactors at a dumping price.

Now, [some analysts](#) question where US policymakers are going to go from here. Unless new measures are adopted, supplies of uranium are going to dwindle and prices will go up. The reason for this is two-fold. First, Russia is now poised to continue blending uranium and exporting it to the world at market value. Second, countries like China and India are increasing their capacity for nuclear power, increasing the demand for uranium.

However, there are several developments underway that ensure a steady supply of uranium to meet our energy demands. First, the increasing price of uranium may entice new entrants into domestic uranium mining. They would tap into the world's [fourth largest uranium reserves](#).

Moreover, a new agreement has been reached the United States Enrichment Corporation (USEC) and Russia's Techsnabexport (TENEX) which will allow USEC to continue purchasing uranium fuel from Russia for power producers in the US.

Some have called for the reprocessing of spent fuel to alleviate a potential shortage of uranium. This process would take the leftover waste, and reprocess it for more reactor fuel. More than [30 percent](#) of spent nuclear fuel can be reprocessed. However, such techniques pose a problem for proliferation because reprocessed fuel could be converted into plutonium.

But an [interdisciplinary report](#), produced by the MIT Energy Initiative, finds that a type of breeder reactor, an enriched uranium-initiated breeder reactor, could resolve uranium shortages and the problems of reprocessing. It would add natural or depleted uranium to the reactor core at the same rate nuclear materials are consumed, making an efficient fuel cycle that does

not produce weapons grade waste.

In the past couple decades, and even within the last few years, nuclear technology has made great strides. It can supply a growing share of our energy needs while avoiding harmful carbon emissions that contribute to global warming. Old arguments against nuclear power don't stand up to the facts of today.

The Fizzling of the “Nuclear Renaissance”

Farhad Mirzadeh
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Oct 25, 2013

A lot of enthusiasm has surrounded nuclear power within the last debate. It seemed that the taboo on nuclear power was lifted as construction began for new reactors in the U.S. and worldwide. Enthusiasts dubbed this as the “nuclear renaissance.” More companies and governments began to invest in nuclear projects. However, this enthusiasm fizzled as quickly as it picked up in the U.S., according to an article by the Christian Science Monitor titled [“Nuclear power: why US nuclear ‘renaissance’ fizzled and plants are closing”](#).

Public opinion and market forces have merged to minimize interest in nuclear power. For example, safety concerns were heightened after the devastating accident at Fukushima, prompting many citizens to reject local plans to build new reactors or update existing ones.

More importantly, market forces have favored a lessened emphasis on nuclear power for energy needs. The shale gas boom has dramatically decreased the price of natural gas, making it a more attractive energy option. Even in the realm of alternative energy

sources, consumers have tended to prefer deriving energy from wind and solar power due to the cheapening costs and increasing supply of them. For many, these alternatives mean they don't have to even take the risk of building new nuclear plants or dealing with the potential of an accident. For governments, it makes sense to invest in cheaper solutions such as natural gas and solar power.

Despite low support in the U.S., countries like China and Indonesia have plans to support nuclear power production. There is even hope for yet another revival; small scale modular reactors may become widely available and are cheaper, safer alternatives to providing nuclear power. According to some, the increasing emphasis on climate change and alternative energy technologies will mean funding for research and development into new technologies that will make nuclear power a competitive option.

Energy & Climate Security: A Necessary Nexus

Nathan Alvarado-Castle
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Feb 4, 2014

Energy and climate security should be treated as two sides of the same coin. But often, US national security analysts make a sharp distinction that separates the fundamental link the two issues share.

Both threats are existential in so far as they threaten the very basis of our lives. Until this day, the access and geographical proximity to supplies for energy has been the primary variable for determining the quality of living that has characterized advanced economies. In fact, Jared Diamond's, [Guns, Germs and Steel](#), echoes this sentiment. Similarly, predictive seasonal patterns, which have remained [remarkably](#)

[stable for 8-12 thousand years](#), enabled significant advances by humans in agricultural production, population growth, and technological innovation. It is therefore sensible to claim availability of energy and predictability of climate have a nexus.

Nonetheless, even with the [energy renaissance](#) in the US, energy security remains a major concern within national security circles. Yet, climate security remains on the margins, and seen predominately as an environmental issue.

Google Trends show the significant difference in search traffic for 'energy security' in comparison to 'climate security' since 2005. This sharp difference is further emphasized when you utilize Google Ngram, which accounts the usage of these terms in publications throughout the years.

This has begun to change, however, in recent years. As national security analysts have been forced to consider these events beyond solely an environmental concern given the [frequency and volatility of high impact climate-related events](#).

As early as 2004 and 2005, global climate events were seen as security threats. In 2004, an earthquake followed by a tsunami in south Asia killed 230,000 people spanning 14 countries. The following year, Hurricane Katrina damaged US critical industrial infrastructure in the Gulf amounting to the most costly natural disaster in US history. From these events, the US has learned many lessons and have put them to good use. This was on display with the recent US response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines as USS George Washington and three other US vessels alongside 300 Marines was first on the scene delivering food, water, shelter and logistical advice for allocating resources effectively.

Amidst the current debate in the US regarding lifting the moratorium on LNG exports and its [geopolitical ramifications](#), it is paramount that the carbon-based

supply of energy and its effects on the environment not supersede the undeniable truth. Global climate change threatens not only state and corporate assets, but the very foundation that has made the quality of living we have managed to enjoy all the more uncertain.

Since the 1970s we have sought solutions for our energy-strapped world. It is now time to invest with the same voracity towards a mitigation policy for climate change. This starts with drastically and rapidly relinquishing our global economy from its dependency on carbon-based energy. To do this, we must shift our conception of energy security to include the effects our dependency creates.



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Public Diplomacy

Are the Olympics an Opportunity for Public Diplomacy?

Madeline Bersch
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Feb 4, 2014

The Olympic Games are often touted as an opportunity for nations to set aside their differences and come together to celebrate excellence in athletics. A huge production is made of the bi-annual event, which can cost billions of dollars and attracts leaders and spectators from around the globe. This year's games are reported to have cost Russia \$51 billion (yes, you read that correctly... billion with a "B")—making it the most expensive Olympics in history. But are they really the best opportunity for public diplomacy?

The Olympics are depicted as a "feel-good" event, a way to celebrate a country's "best and brightest" athletic stars. In the U.S., companies capitalize upon this positive atmosphere, releasing television commercials emphasizing their integral role in the event and marketing products specifically geared towards the Games.

With this, nationalism abounds. In the opening ceremonies and throughout the competition, athletes

are [outfitted](#) in gear made exclusively for those representing their country. Athletes are there to bring home the gold; in sports, there is only one winner. The opening ceremony itself is also a huge display of nationalism on behalf of the host country. During the [2012 Summer Olympics in London](#), the opening ceremony featured eccentric, artistic performances highlighting Britain's history and showcasing famous Brits. The [2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing](#) was even bigger, with the opening performance featuring thousands of drummers who had rehearsed for nearly a year leading up to the Olympics. In other words, politics and diplomacy take a back seat to the competition and performance.

On the level of a spectator, the Sochi Games, which are set to begin on Feb. 7, don't exactly encourage citizen diplomacy, either. There are serious security concerns, including threats of terrorist attacks directed toward foreign spectators. A militant leader recently [stated](#) tourists would specifically be targeted in revenge for "all the Muslim blood that is shed every day around the world." In December, [two suicide bombings](#) in two days killed 34 and wounded numerous others, in attacks linked to a terrorist group in a nearby province.

This environment, and the [reported](#) 40,000-strong security force to be used at the Winter Olympics, does nothing to foster a welcoming atmosphere as spectators watch the games in Sochi. Furthermore, media coverage of the Games usually focuses on the athletes of the country in which that media outlet functions. Millions more people view the Olympics on television than attend the games themselves. The emphasis on nationalistic news coverage again excludes the opportunity for cross cultural awareness by these viewers, both in the U.S. and around the world.

In terms of politics, Russia has also been in the news for a [recent law](#) restricting gay right activities, which has received considerable outcry in the U.S. and elsewhere. President Obama will not be attending this year's Games due to his schedule, but [named](#) several

openly gay and lesbian [athletes](#) to the U.S.' opening and closing delegations to the Games. For the [first time in 20 years](#), the U.S. will not be sending the President, Vice President, or one of their spouses. [France and Germany](#) also elected to not send their heads of state. Many news sources speculate that leaders' absences are due to a chilling in relations with the Russian government.

It's certainly possible for diplomacy to occur over the course of the Games; however, I'm skeptical that a setting in which nationalism rules would present a fair opportunity to create meaningful and lasting—as well measurable—public diplomacy outcomes, especially in an official government capacity. While bringing athletes together can have positive effects, the environment surrounding the Olympics does not lay sturdy groundwork for public diplomacy to flourish.

Top 10 U.S. Public Diplomacy Priorities for 2014

Matthew Wallin
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Jan 9, 2014

It's a new year for [public diplomacy](#), and one that's likely to be filled with opportunities and challenges. With this in mind, I have assembled a top 10 list for public diplomacy priorities for 2014. While by no means serving as a complete list of all the important issues facing U.S. public diplomacy, it is a reflection of the numerous discussions I have held with officials, practitioners, and academics over the past year. In no particular order:

1.) Confirm a new Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

As of late, the Senate confirmation has been a dirty, partisan political business. Key national security positions, like that of the Under Secretary for Public

Diplomacy and Public Affairs, continue to remain unfilled.

This is becoming a tired story for public diplomacy. Vacancy has been a continuing issue for this particular position: remaining unoccupied approximately 32% of the time since its creation in 1999, and without leadership since July 2013.

2.) Keep an eye on IIP

2013 saw the release of an Inspector General report on the Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP). Of particular note was State Department spending on Facebook campaigns, which was held to particular scrutiny by the media. While the IG criticism offered on this issue was valid, it also noted that State Department spending was done to increase its Facebook audience reach, NOT to simply attract likes for the purpose of likes. The real question here, reflected in the IG report, is not that the State Department spent money on expanding its audience, but how it then taps and interacts with that audience in order to further foreign policy goals. That said, a number of changes, including leadership, have been brought to IIP recently, and the direction it's heading will be important to objectively observe.

3.) Merge the analog and digital

If trends continue as they are, the world will continue to connect to the internet at an astonishing rate, meaning it's important to stay ahead of the curve. While digital diplomacy provides certain advantages, it works best as a component to real world person to person communication. Not all portions of the world are as connected as the West, so maintaining non-virtual proficiency is still incredibly important. Considering all of this, practitioners should direct a certain level of attention when engaging online to seek tangible results that occur "offline."

4.) Incorporate metrics

Some have referred to reliable metrics as the holy grail of public diplomacy. Though some aspects of public diplomacy may be immeasurable, it is a fallacy to brush off the necessity of developing metrics to determine whether U.S. efforts in this realm are having an effect. Public diplomacy has goals, and progress towards those goals can be measured. In order for public diplomacy to justify its budget to critics on the Hill, practitioners must make concerted efforts to develop short, medium, and long term metrics, that while difficult, will only help them become more effective in the long-run.

5.) Define a strategic narrative

Events since the turn of the century have created a great deal of confusion about America's strategic purpose. What does America stand for? What does it believe in? While there are many answers to these questions, and some can be found in the founding principles and the history of this country, the partisan bickering occurring at home has not been painting American democracy as a shining example to be followed. American politics confuse audiences abroad. Questions of security vs. liberty vs. privacy have further clouded the outward message that the U.S. is sending. U.S. infrastructure is crumbling, and American competitiveness in many fields has decreased. It is thus difficult to construct a credible strategic narrative for the context of public diplomacy that can be used to further U.S. foreign policy goals.

This issue will not be easy to fix, but it is one that deserves attention.

6.) Get serious about U.S. International Broadcasting

U.S. international broadcasting has seen growing competition from well-funded outlets like RT and CCTV. The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) has gained several new board members recently, but still has two vacancies. Questions continue arise over the mission of U.S. international broadcasters and which broadcasting mediums are best. There has

also been ongoing discussion about the creation of a CEO position at the BBG. With the modernization of Smith-Mundt last year, Americans are starting to become more exposed to what their international broadcasters are producing. It's time to start paying more attention, and determine how international broadcasting can effectively serve America's needs.

7.) Train the next generation

Comprehensive training goes beyond what the State Department does at the Foreign Service Institute or in the process of simply training new employees. Several universities around the country are educating students and professionals in the history, theory, and practice of public diplomacy. The expansion of university public diplomacy programs needs to continue, and become available for more students, especially at the undergraduate level. The State Department, BBG, and Department of Defense would all be wise to increase involvement, opportunities, and assistance where appropriate to the current crop of these university programs. The private sector stands to gain as well, benefitting from the skills, knowledge, and passion possessed by these students.

8.) Inform the Homeland

It is time to better connect the American public to public diplomacy efforts. American business, government, and education are far too tied to the global community for American citizenry to draw a blank when the term public diplomacy is used. Many Americans see public diplomacy practiced daily, often in the form of academic or cultural exchange. But this needs to be increased and expanded, especially towards Middle America. The best way to educate Americans is to expose them to the material and offer opportunities for participation. More Americans need to be sent abroad on international exchanges and build relationships overseas. Whether that is sending [bluegrass](#) to Central Asia or scientists to the Middle East, opportunities need to be made available for more Americans to learn about the world and teach about the United

States.

Furthermore, our leaders should not be afraid to promote and discuss these programs in the public diplomacy context, many Americans could benefit from an awareness of how and why their government is reaching out to audiences overseas.

9.) Iran

The [U.S. and Iran](#) are at a critical juncture in their historically troubled relationship. This is an opportunity that neither the United States nor Iran can afford to pass up. Iran's President Rouhani has made incredible progress in changing the tone of rhetoric coming out of that country, and has openly engaged in public diplomacy aimed directly at an American audience. Sanctions have brought the Iranians back to the negotiating table, but domestic politics in both countries has the potential to derail a peaceful solution to the nuclear situation. For the sake of creating mutual understanding, the U.S. should be wary to not cede the public diplomacy realm completely to Iran and increase the use of PD as a tool in the effort to change the relationship between the two countries. PD has the potential to assist in reaching a diplomatic solution to the nuclear crisis in a way that both works for Iran and satisfies the legitimate security concerns of the U.S. and international community.

10.) Egypt

U.S. understanding of the situation in [Egypt](#) has been less than superb. Recent years have seen controversial moves by the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, and dangers to the diplomatic staff stationed there. The importance of maintaining a relationship with this key ally in the Middle East cannot be underestimated. The U.S. should make efforts to increase its on-the-ground understanding of the situation in Egypt, and assist where appropriate in the progress towards democracy.

Digital Diplomacy: What are we Trying to Achieve?

Matthew Wallin
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Nov 27, 2013

Last week, I had the opportunity to attend the Digital Diplomacy Open House held at the Canadian Embassy by the [Digital Diplomacy Coalition](#). The event featured small booths and presentations by various countries with embassies in DC.

During their presentations, I noticed a few trends with regards to the conduct of digital diplomacy as practiced by the participating organizations.

One: A few countries are starting to understand what it takes to “get noticed” online. In particular, the British Embassy has set itself apart by embracing internet culture and tapping into the viral factories of outlets like BuzzFeed. The British presentation proposed that rather than trying to attract audiences to their embassy website, it was better to “go to the people.” This included participating in a mix of online outlets, as well as real world and cultural events where they could build their online audience.

Two: There is still a general overall confusion about what to actually “do” with online tools. Of all the presentations, I got the impression, especially after asking direct questions of the presenters, that many of these embassies or international organizations do not direct their online activities to actually achieving particular foreign policy objectives. Some have had success in expanding their audiences—even creating hashtag campaigns that span the gamut of social media outlets. But with a few exceptions, there was little emphasis or analysis of whether anything was being achieved with these efforts. In some cases, efforts to

get noticed online, or by traditional media, tended to obscure whether or not these efforts were actually accomplishing the intended purpose.

Three: Countries are getting better at identifying who they are reaching online. As I explored in a report on the [challenges of the internet and social media](#) earlier this year, there are three types of audiences: the target audience, the perceived audience and the actual audience. The target audience is the people you are trying to reach. The perceived audience is the people you think you are reaching. And the actual audience, is simply the audience you are actually reaching. As the internet is relatively “borderless,” aside from censorship and blocking technology utilized by countries like China or Iran, the communications an embassy directs at a specific foreign audience actually may be seen by a much wider audience.

The French presentation demonstrated an excellent understanding of this issue, indicating that roughly 59% of their Facebook followers are located in the US, and 18.5% are in France—meaning a sizeable 41% of their actual audience is not in the U.S. This type of understanding is key in measuring effect and shaping the content of messages.

The bottom line about online media, made even more evident by this event, is that output does not equate effect. This is something that is easy to forget, given the perceived ease of using online tools. Creating awareness by spreading information through these tools is not a guarantor of success, especially if people do not take some sort of “real” action after being made aware. Getting followers, likes, and building an audience is definitely an important factor in using the internet for foreign policy purposes, but it is far from the end-game. Public diplomats would be wise to keep in mind what it is they want to do with those audiences, and what it is they are actually trying to achieve.

Gauging the Iranian Public

Matthew Wallin
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Nov 5, 2014

For years, public diplomacy academics and practitioners have espoused the importance of listening. Let's take a moment to do just that, and listen to what's going on in Iran.

At the core of the issue lies the question: "What do the Iranian people think?" As the United States has no official diplomatic presence in Iran, this can be difficult to determine. In 2009, the world witnessed the Iranian Green Revolution erupt in the streets of Tehran and other cities, continued to watch as those protests were put down.

In 2013, Iran saw the election of President Rouhani, a relative moderate who offered stark contrast to his predecessor, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Certainly, the legitimacy of the "democratic" structure in Iran is always up for debate. But what is abundantly clear is that the opportunity presented by Rouhani's Presidency to explore a diplomatic resolution to the Iranian nuclear question should not be passed up.

Remnants of the Great Seal of the United States on the former US embassy in Tehran. Photo by Bertil Videt

As the diplomatic efforts between Iran, the U.S., and the international community take center stage, there has been some notable concern emerging about what is still going on publicly in Iran. On the 34th Anniversary of the start of the Iran Hostage Crisis, huge crowds [demonstrated](#) outside the former U.S. embassy in Tehran, shouting "death to America." [Posters have been spotted](#) in Tehran questioning the tactics of America's diplomacy. Parades attended by Rouhani

have featured [anti-American propaganda](#).

All of this raises the question of whether or not Rouhani is making a legitimate effort to change the status quo between Iran, the United States, and the international community.

At this point, it may be difficult to determine what it is exactly that "the Iranian people" think. And that's to be expected. Before looking outward, Americans should look inward, realizing that much as there are divisions within our own country, there are divisions in others, and it is often difficult to categorically make statements about the political stance of an entire population.

This is what listening in public diplomacy is about: gaining a nuanced understanding of a population, its history, its culture, its politics, and how it is impacted by American policy. Of course, part of understanding the politics in that country is analyzing how the public factors into that process. Rouhani may very well be playing a very nuanced political balancing act on the public stage at home in order to carry out his negotiations on the nuclear issue. We cannot expect Iran, or Rouhani himself, to explode in a wave of completely pro-Western celebration or rhetoric.

Significant numbers of Iranians may be protesting America in the streets, but as the New York Times' Thomas Erdbrink explained in an [interview with NPR](#), this may not be reflective of their true sentiment. These happenings cannot always be taken at face value, as I have explored before in the case of American [flag burning](#) in foreign protests. As Erdbrink revealed, private conversations with Iranians revealed strong desires to continue talks with the U.S.

But does the sentiment of the Iranian public, whether expressed privately or publicly, actually matter to the course of negotiations over Iran's nuclear program? At first glance, the answer is no, as nuclear issues clearly

fall within the realm of high politics, and western diplomats are certainly aware that supreme power in Iran falls in the hands of Ayatollah Khamenei. Yet even given this sobering fact, those negotiators must also carefully gauge the delicate political dance going on internally in Tehran.

At second glance, given what the Iranian public did (and failed to do) in 2009, and given the way they may be used as pawns in public protests, the U.S. and international community could benefit by making efforts to better understand how the public fits into this very tricky game of chess. Even if politics in Iran are not entirely beholden to the will of the masses, the role of the public in having “elected” Rouhani should not be discounted.

The fact that Rouhani is currently president, whether elected by the Iranian people or merely “permitted” by Supreme Leader Khamenei, is not an insignificant step. That there is so much opposition within Iran coming from the politically powerful and entrenched hardliners—erecting posters and organizing demonstrations like the one seen at the former U.S. Embassy, is indicative of divisive political winds that could tear down the scaffolding currently helping to maintain the diplomatic process.

Certainly, the U.S. should exercise some skepticism in negotiations with Iran, as it should in any diplomatic foray. However, it should not allow this skepticism to interfere with legitimate outreach by the Iranians, for fear the U.S. should not appear as a credible negotiating partner. Keeping in mind the forces within Iran that are obviously tearing at Rouhani, and perhaps even the Supreme Leader, the U.S. should continue to negotiate in good faith. It should refrain from taking actions or making demands that appear too unreasonable, which would ultimately cause whatever support exists in Iran for Rouhani and moving diplomacy forward to collapse and be withdrawn. The alternative leaves much to be desired.



AMERICAN
COMPETITIVENESS

American Competitiveness

Untangling Trade: How TPP Can Help American Businesses

Brendan Connell
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Feb 28, 2014

Last week, I posted a short article on [three pro-TPP arguments](#) that often get buried under the anti-TPP hype. In this, I talked of the need to neaten the so-called “spaghetti bowl” of the international trade system; Since so many TPP prospects are already in active FTAs with each other, a Trans-Pacific partnership could fuse these pre-existing FTAs together into one coherent set of rules. So just how “tangled” is trade between the potential TPP signatories and why should this matter to American businesses?

The chart shows how the status quo of TPP member-trade is structured via pre-existing FTAs. What looks like a perpetual entanglement of cable wires

to us looks equally as daunting to American exporters. What tariff applies where? And how can opportunities for profit be calculated when the transaction costs of trade are more-or-less up in the air?

If the dizzying array of different tariff rates weren't bad enough, rules of origin turn the problem into a nightmare of even larger proportions. Rules of origin establish what percentage of an export needs to be made of content from the exporting country in order to qualify for reduced tariff rates. In other words, rules of origin determine where a product "comes from".

With the proliferation of global supply chains, the crisscrossing of intermediate goods has made calculating what tariffs apply where a considerably difficult task. But factor in that rules of origin are different for each product and each FTA, and determining the "origin" of one's goods soon becomes a mathematical feat of mammoth proportions.

The confusion that varying tariffs and rules create are not just an inconvenience, they are a discouragement for American industries to sell abroad, especially for those smaller businesses.

Derek Scissors, a senior research fellow at The Heritage Foundation, [writes](#):

"The U.S. and other TPP members have multiple trade agreements with multiple outside parties, often featuring complex rules themselves—"noodles" that are hard to separate. If the TPP's rules of origin are also complex, it will be difficult for firms and individuals to determine how to take advantage of the TPP liberalization without risking penalty. Many economic actors could proceed without regard to the TPP, neutralizing its impact."

To be clear then, TPP is an opportunity for a more coherent trade network, but it doesn't guarantee

it. Surely, the special interest groups of every TPP member will be fighting to manipulate the new rules of origin in their favor. But the window of opportunity is nevertheless there to make engaging in trade a less overwhelming task for the American businessman. Rules and tariffs therefore need to be converged to be as simple as possible. Only by doing this can the "spaghetti bowl" of the Pacific become untangled.

Are We Underestimating the Benefits of US Trade?

Brendan Connell
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Feb 20, 2014

The world is turning upside down. Distinguished economist and free-trade supporter, Paul Krugman, released a new [column](#) on Thursday calling the economic effects of TPP overstated and saying that failed TPP negotiations would be "no big deal".

Krugman pleads:

"Basically, old-fashioned trade deals are a victim of their own success: there just isn't much more protectionism to eliminate. Average U.S. tariff rates have fallen by two-thirds since 1960. The most recent report on American import restraints by the International Trade Commission puts their total cost at less than 0.01 percent of G.D.P."

Krugman soon went on to dismiss TPP's benefits to the average American worker, instead labeling the agreement as merely a tool for big corporations to "assert control over intellectual property."

"Is this [intellectual property rights] a good thing from a global point of view? Doubtful. The kind of property rights we're talking about here can alternatively

be described as legal monopolies. True, temporary monopolies are, in fact, how we reward new ideas; but arguing that we need even more monopolization is very dubious — and has nothing at all to do with classical arguments for free trade.”

Krugman’s points here are justified to an extent. In fact, my recent [article](#) on TPP made sure to highlight how most of the trade occurring between TPP members is already under preexisting FTAs. But Krugman’s faults are not in what he said, but in what he didn’t say.

Trade—especially nowadays—is as much about building political relationships and national security strategy as it is about raw economics. Exporting cars is no more important than exporting US ideas on how to manage the world economy. The cross-border flow of goods can also be a cross-border flow of trust between countries. And trade agreements—if done right—can be an effective tool for aiding [development](#) in some of the world’s most poverty-stricken regions. All of these less-than-obvious benefits from trade cannot be neglected, since they often further US interests in a more efficient way than say, an army could.

Shawn Donnan’s [response](#) on Friday in the Financial Times is particularly relevant to the above points and is worth quoting at full length:

“Krugman seems to be missing one of the big motivations for US trade policy these days. Both the TPP, which groups 12 Pacific Rim countries including Japan, and the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, the EU-US negotiations launched in July, are really big strategic, rather than economic, projects. They are about responding to the changing shape of the global economy and the rise of China and other emerging economies and trying to reinforce the US (and to a lesser extent, the EU’s) position at the centre of it. They are, particularly in the case of the TPP, about security policy as much as economic policy. If, as the FT’s Geoff Dyer puts it in his new book, the “contest of the century” is the one between

the US and China, then trade deals (as they often have in history) have a whole other purpose.”

Of course, no one should overstate or abuse the points made in Donnan’s article. At the misfortune of journalists in need of a catchy heading, a failed TPP or TTIP would not be America’s “doomsday equivalent” to the fall of the Roman Empire. But Donnan has rightly highlighted that the utility of trade extends beyond the bounds of just pure economics and numbers. National security, geopolitics, and reputation are all considerations intermingled within TPP, TTIP, and the like. This means determining the direction of trade policy is much more complex than as seen from the surface. On a brighter note though, it also means you don’t need to have a PhD in economics to see trade’s benefits.

The Slow-Minded Myth about a Fast-Tracked Policy

Brendan Connell
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Jan 31, 2014

In light of Obama’s most recent State of the Union speech, February might well be the month where the dispute over presidential [“fast-track”](#) powers in trade policy—or trade promotion authority (TPA)—comes to a head. In addition to a series of cheesy double entendres, the common discourse between political pundits over fast-track mostly involves the alleged trade-off between effectiveness and accountability in US trade policy. But does a “slow-tracked” nation mean any more accountability than a “fast-tracked” one?

Whether or not you’re a fan of free-trade, history seems to affirm TPA as a “get-things-done” approach. Since the dawn of the post-WWII economy, only one

US free trade agreement (with Jordan) has been enacted without TPA. Compare that to the creation of the WTO and the fourteen US free trade agreements that were all made possible through the expedited TPA process.

Still, critics decry TPA as an undemocratic and unaccountable process. The [Senate Finance Committee writes](#) to USTR Michael Froman:

“We are not prepared to support TPA legislation that resembles the current framework for consultations or that does not provide mechanisms that enable Congress to hold USTR more accountable throughout the negotiation process or give USTR greater authority to negotiate basic standards on good governance and human rights.”

But hogging trade authority on the Hill doesn't necessarily mean more accountability.

After all, the shifting of trade authority away from Congress in 1934 began largely as a response to excessive log-rolling, with congressmen favoring the short-term special interests of their local constituencies over the nation's long-term economic interests. This pre-1934 “accountability” showed its face most infamously in the Smoot-Hawley Tariff, which left the legacy of paralyzing the world economy and US trade.

What critics also forget is that fast-track is not without “tracks”. Congress still possesses an up-down vote in the end, along with a generous array of advisory committees as [highlighted](#) by Third Way think tankers, Jon Cowan and Jeff Okun-Kozlowicki:

“It [TPA] also ensures that industry and the public have a critical voice. Within past Trade Promotion Authority legislation, Congress built a system of advisory committees to ensure that trade negotiators were consulting with private sector representatives from the agricultural, labor and environmental communities, among others. Organizations represented on the

committees ran the gamut from advocacy groups – including the AFL-CIO, the Environmental Defense Fund, Oceana, Consumers Union and the National Farmers Union – to large U.S. companies like Cargill, General Electric and Kraft Foods.”

Opposing the Trans-Pacific Partnership and so-called globalization is one thing. But when we talk about TPA, we are discussing a means, not an end. TPA—as it did in the past—can act as a more pragmatic gateway towards trade agreements, allowing the US to negotiate with foreign nations in good faith and counteracting the dangerous protectionist instinct of local constituencies. And contrary to the myth professed by TPA critics, all of this can be done while still reserving the same amount of accountability in a slow-tracked setting.

The Three Overlooked Grounds for TPP

Brendan Connell
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Feb 12, 2014

The tide is slowly creeping in for the [Trans-Pacific Partnership \(TPP\)](#) as potential signatories meet on February 22nd in attempts to hammer out a final agreement. With that in mind, we can only expect the protests against TPP to ramp up as “judgment day” looms. Some see TPP as a menace—the archetype of globalization that will push down US wages, shift jobs abroad, and do it with no regard to its deleterious effects on Mother Nature.

But when we try to pinpoint TPP's effect on US trade and social welfare, we must resist comparing it to the “ideals” that some dream up—a universal free trade agreement, infinite US job growth, or perhaps a fully enforceable “green-trade” system. Instead, TPP must be evaluated by looking at what the current and future TPP-less world looks like for the US.

Viewed in this way, there are actually three cracks in the armor of TPP critics:

1.) A Stone to Step on: It's a fairly common argument to say free trade agreements (FTAs) act as stepping stones for reaching more inclusive trade agreements that are otherwise stalled in the abyss of the Doha round. TPP seems to reflect this mindset well. After all, TPP started out as only a small four-member 2005 pact between Singapore, New Zealand, Chile, and Brunei. TPP's evolution has involved countries continuously jumping onto the coattails of the negotiations—first the US, followed by NAFTA countries and others, and then finally Japan. From the US standpoint, it already holds active trade agreements with six out of the eleven actively negotiating members. With South Korea now becoming interested, this number would increase to 7. TPP then is merely one more stepping stone towards wider multilateralism.

2.) A Neater “Spaghetti Bowl”: While FTAs can be good in themselves, a large crisscrossing network of them (labeled as the “[Spaghetti Bowl](#)”) can create massive confusion, with companies scrambling to determine which tariffs and rules of origin apply to what goods. But because such a large number of TPP countries are already in active trade agreements with each other, TPP will likely add coherence to the international trade scene by harmonizing existing red tape and tariff rates. And less confusion, of course, means a more certain business environment. In contrast to previous FTAs then, TPP will neaten the trade waves rather than tangle more knots.

3.) Life is No Better on the Sidelines: The scenario that must always be realized is if the US falls by the wayside in TPP negotiations. To illustrate, one needs to only look at how Canada's reluctance to pull the trigger on trade negotiations with South Korea hurt them greatly once Korea finally signed [KORUS](#) with the US. Michael McCain, CEO of Maple Leaf Foods, [writes](#):

“Since the U.S. signed its trade agreement with South Korea, Canada's agriculture and food exports to that country have plummeted from more than \$1-billion to just over \$300-million, a loss of more than 70 per cent over the past two years alone. Canada's total exports have fallen by just about \$1-billion. Canada has lingered in the background while major global competitors including the European Union, Chile and Australia, along with the U.S., reap the benefits of trade deals with South Korea.”

Even if you're one to say the US gains minimally from TPP (which is a shaky assumption), there's no question it stands to lose greatly if other TPP members gain better access to important foreign markets such as Japan. The US should be aware of the consequences if the TPP goes on without it.

Are the arguments of TPP critics unfounded? Certainly not. Considerations over the US economy and working class are debates that must always be touched on. But most of TPP is simply synthesizing preexisting FTAs and the benefits of the agreement could build rather than break the international trade structure. The US shouldn't let the pipe dreams of an “ideal” trade regime affect the progress of US trade policy.

The Forgotten Partners of US Trade

Brendan Connell
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Feb 27, 2014

For trade geeks like me, twitter feeds are becoming ever more crowded with colorful rhetoric and heated conversations over possible transatlantic and transpacific trade agreements. But smothered by the TTP/TTIP talks is a US trade program many probably

don't even know exists. This is the [African Growth and Opportunity Act \(AGOA\)](#), a preferential trade program designed to promote trade and development in one of the most poverty-stricken regions of the world. It's an imperfect program. Its benefit to the US economy is almost trivial. And it certainly isn't a buzz word on the social media airwaves. But there is a catch: It's immensely important for US national security.

AGOA—unlike TTIP and TPP—is not a free trade agreement, but an nonreciprocal trade preference program that allows many least-developed countries (LDCs) to gain duty-free access to US markets without lowering their own import barriers. While it does not cover all LDC exports, AGOA has been remarkably wide in scope, extending tariff benefits even to apparel exporters that don't use US fabric—a rare phenomenon for those familiar with the [US yarn-forward rule](#). This has helped domestic industries such as in South Africa, Lesotho, and Kenya, boost their exports and economically diversify. Unfortunately for AGOA beneficiaries though, the program is due to expire in September, 2015.

So in a world drowning in an alphabet soup of trade agreements, why should Americans care if the sun sets on AGOA? You would have a hard time arguing AGOA is in the vital economic interest of the US. Though AGOA may have the potential to foster growing trade relations between the US and LDCs, AGOA countries still make up only a miniscule [2% of total US imports](#). While this little amount of trade is certainly beneficial for the much smaller stunted economies of developing countries, it's pretty negligible as far as the US economy goes.

But US interests in AGOA lie not in trade per se, but in formulating a prudent national security strategy. Promoting development through trade in AGOA countries can be an efficient way for eradicating anti-Americanism and terrorist safe havens before they even pop up. Not only has AGOA given citizens in LDCs new sources of income, but AGOA legislation

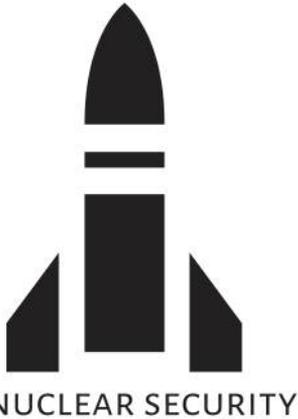
has also set up trade capacity building (TCB) programs that provide AGOA members with technical assistance for promoting new economic projects and more sound governance. This means AGOA is an effective—even if unorthodox—weapon to facilitate economic growth and further US national security in an oft-neglected region.

To add is the fact that not extending AGOA would open up more doors for outside influence, particularly coming from energy-hungry China. [Similar arguments](#) have been given about TTIP/TPP, where many worry that the US role in the world economy would become marginalized if the agreements were to falter. And China's strategy of late has not necessarily been “stability-stimulating” in Africa either. In fact, China's go-to blueprint—whether in Sudan or [Liberia](#)—has been to gain access to foreign raw materials and energy resources by offering large sums of money, weapons, or both.

The sooner AGOA gets extended the better. This is because the closer AGOA comes to expiring, the more uncertainty that will be created in LDC business communities and the more quickly AGOA's achievements will begin to unravel. Whitney Schneidman, fellow at Brookings' Africa Growth Initiative in the Global Economy and Development program, [writes](#):

“...it took Congress more than a year to extend AGOA's third country fabric provision in 2012, a provision that had already been extended twice. While the provision was eventually extended, it happened at the 11th hour, leading to the cancellation of contracts and the loss of jobs in AGOA-eligible countries.”

One does not need to be a pure philanthropist to see that the death of AGOA will carry many costs with it. As pointed out, these costs go beyond just trade and will affect the US just as much as they affect the AGOA economies. Policy-makers would be wise then to assure TPP/TTIP doesn't drown out the forgotten (but important) trade initiative that is AGOA.



Nuclear Security

Give First-step Iran Deal Chance to Bear Fruit

Stephen Cheney
[Stars & Stripes](#)

Oct 25, 2013

This week, Secretary of State John Kerry will testify before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on the recent agreement between the so-called P5+1 (European nations, the United States, China and Russia) and Iran. Though this agreement has faced opposition from some in Washington, we and other leading military and national security experts support this first-step agreement with Iran.

Strong international sanctions have succeeded in bringing Iran to the negotiating table. Now is the time to allow the diplomats to do their work. Now is not the time to enact a new round of sanctions that would push the Iranians away and sabotage the diplomatic effort.

Addressing the Iranian nuclear threat presents our country with two real options: diplomacy or probable military action. Given the enormous costs and

consequences of military action, trying to resolve the Iranian nuclear threat through diplomacy first is a far wiser choice given the alternative. While simultaneously maintaining our military readiness, we should give this initial deal a chance to succeed as the international community closely monitors Iran's compliance and works to achieve a full resolution.

As retired military leaders, we know firsthand the enormous consequences of military action. Sending the men and women of our military into combat should always be the last resort, undertaken only when all options for a diplomatic resolution that satisfies our national security interests have been exhausted. Armed conflict with Iran to fully disable its nuclear program would require an enormous U.S. military commitment, and have unknown security consequences for the whole of the Middle East. Though we are confident that our military is ready and capable of undertaking such a mission, we believe that, in this instance, diplomacy is the best tool for ensuring Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon.

The current agreement may not be perfect (few agreements ever are). But war is even less perfect.

Benefit or Burden? The Future of U.S. Tactical Nuclear Weapons

Nathan Daniels
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Jan 22, 2014

After years of contentious debate within NATO about the presence of American nuclear weapons in Europe, the United States faces a critical decision about whether or not to spend billions of increasingly scarce defense dollars on the upgrades needed to keep

these weapons in service. Last Thursday I attended an [event](#) hosted by the [Stimson Center](#) regarding this issue.

Former Air Force Chief of Staff, [General Norton Schwartz](#), along with former Ambassador to Germany and Ronald Reagan’s START negotiator, [Richard Burt](#), discussed the logic for the military and diplomatic utility of these weapons. They explained why they joined 15 other distinguished defense thinkers on the Peterson Defense Advisory Committee in calling for reductions in tactical nuclear weapons.

Drawing on the Committee’s recent report, [Strategic Agility](#), the event brought a wealth of national security expertise to offer a clear-eyed perspective on how policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic should approach decisions about US tactical nuclear weapons.

Remarks from General Schwartz included concerns over our current nuclear bomber capabilities, as well as the aging out of our theatre strike delivery platforms. But he noted that they may still have a sufficient lifespan of around 20 more years.

He reiterated the fact that the NATO Alliance has declared on multiple occasions, most recently in 2010 and 2012, that a nuclear capability is essential to Alliance Security. This suggests that there can be little debate about the policy commitment of the allies to the NATO nuclear deterrent posture. However, what is debatable is the level of NATO financial commitment to sustaining the resulting theatre nuclear capability.

So where does this leave us today?

According to Schwartz, it is important for the NATO allies to manifest not only financial, but also policy commitment to the NATO nuclear posture.

He also makes note of the F-35 and whether or not pursuing nuclear capabilities with this aircraft is the

best use of investment dollars. Furthermore, B-61 life extension is necessary independent of F-35 nuclear integration.

“Without financial buy in by the NATO partners, either the F-35 nuclear integration or through fielding of an independent or an equivalent and enduring European manufactured fighter aircraft, F-35 investment dollars should re-align to the long range strike bomber” – General Schwartz

Ambassador Burk suggests that we must reduce the deployment of air delivered tactical nuclear weapons deployed in Europe. However, the proposal discussed in the [Strategic Agility Report](#) that includes phasing out the B-61 delivered by attack aircraft deployed in Europe is politically controversial, and it does need to be fully discussed with our European allies.

The concern in the past was if there was not a collaborative approach to nuclear policy, the countries might decide to unilaterally obtain a nuclear weapon. This has made the nuclear mission in NATO more of a shared, multilateral mission.

Ambassador Burk goes on to make further points:

- The perceived need in Europe to have a nuclear mission has largely disappeared since the end of the Cold War.
- There is not a strong desire in Europe for aircraft to have a nuclear mission, i.e. the F-35.
- In the case of the Netherlands that may buy the F-35, they are debating if they even want it.
- Many, if not all delivery countries in Europe are not even going to have the capability in 20 years time to even deliver these weapons.

“Aren’t we sort of sleep walking into unilateral disar-

mament, while at the same time spending money for a weapon system that no one wants to use?” – Ambassador Burk

- The only countries that might have concerns over taking away the nuclear fighter capabilities in Europe might be some of the newer members of the alliance that still have a residual concern about Russia – Poland and the Baltic States.
- We should continue to actively be taking steps to reassure these countries of the American commitment to look out for them.
 - Poland has been chosen as a site for the new NATO missile defense system.
 - The Baltic States are being embraced by NATO in a variety of ways, i.e. military exercises and deployments to those countries
- The perceived political requirement for the allies to both participate in nuclear delivery and the sense of need to have tangible nuclear weapons in Europe has disappeared.

His closing remarks point out that in the current era, we get plenty of extended deterrence through our military presence in Europe overall, but perhaps more importantly through our robust and capable strategic forces’ capability; like intercontinental ballistic missiles, sea based nuclear deterrence, and the man bombers.

“Finally, we can certainly maintain a viable nuclear deterrent posture with fewer weapons. This was the logic behind New Start, after all. But as President Obama has indicated, 0 is not a likely outcome in our lifetime.” – General Schwartz



ASYMMETRIC OPERATIONS

Asymmetric Operations

A Dispatch from Our Man in Kiev

[Flashpoint Blog](#)
Feb 23, 2014

From our man in Kiev:

There is some very good news, but there is also some very bad news:

The Good News:

We saw some very important reforms passed in the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) on Saturday morning, including elections at the end of May and a return to the 2004 Constitution.

MPs & regional officials from former President Viktor Yanukovich’s Party of Regions are resigning enmasse. The SBU has opened criminal cases against the head of Kharkiv Oblast and others for their seditious statements calling for the division of the country.

Yanukovich’s opulent residence Mezhihirya has been opened to the public and journalists have discovered thousands of documents verifying the rampant corruption of his administration and the illegal activities he engaged in as president. Parliament

has passed legislation to return the compound to the people of Ukraine. Yanukovich attempted to flee the country, but his unscheduled chartered flight out of Donetsk was prevented from taking off by the Ukrainian Border Police. He left the airport with his entourage and has not been seen since.

The Bad News:

Yulia Tymoshenko, who was released from prison last night, is THE critical player to watch.

She is a very polarizing figure in Ukraine – loved by many, but disliked and regarded with suspicion but just as many.

Her imprisonment 3 years ago may have been a politically motivated act of selective justice, but that does not mean she's innocent.

Many see the gas deal she made with the Russians as Prime Minister as having contributed greatly to Ukraine's huge financial mess, while she is rumored to have made millions in kickbacks on the deal. She is also closely associated with Pavlo Lazarenko, a former Prime Minister who in August 2006 was convicted and sentenced to prison in the United States for money laundering, wire fraud and extortion.

Some insiders here believe Putin decided to dump Yanukovich 2 days ago and will support Yulia Tymoshenko instead. The two have long had close dealings via Viktor Medvechuk, the strongest of the pro-Russian oligarchs.

There is a more general reality here that must be understood in the context of recent events: with the exception of Vitaly Klichko, the Ukrainian political opposition leaders are believed by most ordinary Ukrainians to be only somewhat less corrupt than the president and his party – although pro-western in orientation and hardly the barbaric cave men they seek to replace.

They are viewed with suspicion by average Ukrainians and it would be incorrect to assume they represent a majority of the protesters.

This is a people's revolt against cronyism and corruption.

Current Political Situation:

As the only functioning government body, the Rada (Parliament) has set May 25 for the next presidential election.

Oleksandr Turchynov, who was named Speaker of the Rada just yesterday, will serve as interim president following the dismissal of President Viktor Yanukovich. He is a close ally of Yulia Tymoshenko.

During the next few days, The Rada will hold an internal election for Acting Prime Minister of an interim government. There are currently 2 candidates for the position: Independent MP Petro Poroshenko, a pro-western oligarch and businessman who stood by the protesters from the beginning; and MP Arsiny Yatsenyuk, a former head of the Central Bank who became leader of the opposition Batkivshchyna Party following Tymoshenko's imprisonment. Yulia Tymoshenko's name was floated by an MP from her party as a possible third candidate for PM, but today she withdrew her name from consideration. It is widely believed that she will run for President later this year. The fact that Vitaly Klitchko isn't in the mix confirms that he will keep his plans to run for president even if it means having Tymoshenko as his opponent.

Parliamentary elections will probably occur in September.

Several leaders of the Maidan protest groups have already issued statements AGAINST the new parliamentary majority for issuing decrees, making appointments and passing new laws without any

serious discussion or debate. Tymoshenko's party, Batkivshchyna, is the largest of the 3 major opposition parties in Parliament and they are essentially running the show at the moment. Again, this is a people's revolt and the people are wary of opposition political leaders, especially Tymoshenko. Although there has been some progress in stabilizing key national institutions, matters are far from settled and the situation remains fluid.

Russia's response to current events has been muted thus far, but I very much doubt that Putin has played his last card.

The Crimea and the East

The Eastern Oblasts (Regions) of Crimea and Kharkiv should be watched closely.

Separatist/pro-Russian sentiment is very strong in these regions and the Russian Black Sea Fleet is based in the port of Sevastopol. Sevastopol, in particular, holds great strategic importance for Russia due to the direct access it provides to the Mediterranean Sea.

Here's what I do know for certain:

- 1) Sources in Russia have confirmed that Russian Special Forces Units are still on high alert.
- 2) Valentyn Nalyvaichenko is the newly appointed head of the Security Services of Ukraine, known as the SBU. He held the same post under ex-President Viktor Yanukovich. Nalyvaichenko is a Ukrainian patriot and he will work hard to ensure the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Europe Should Embargo Imports of Russian Natural Gas

Andrew Holland
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Mar 4, 2014

The situation between Russia and Ukraine is rapidly spinning out of control. We see Russian troops occupying the Crimea, and the interim Ukrainian Prime Minister saying: "This is actually a declaration of war to my country" and has mobilized the Ukrainian military reserves. Putin, meanwhile, says that Russia "reserves the right to use all means at our disposal" to protect Russians – seemingly a blank check.

What leverage does the United States and its allies in Europe have over Russia? Energy was central to the causes of the conflict, and it could prove to provide a solution.

The last two international crises between Ukraine and Russia (in 2006 and 2009) were over fees that Ukraine paid to Russia for supplies of natural gas and transshipment fees for sending it along to Europe. Natural gas was also a precursor for this crisis; a large part of the aid package given by Putin's government to the Yanukovich government that sparked protests in November was for reduced rates of natural gas. A look at the maps of pipelines from Russia to Europe shows how they all enter from East and North from Russia and exit through to the EU in the West.

In the last five years, the U.S. has undergone a boom in energy production. Europe, on the other hand, has gone through a prolonged euro crisis, and some are pointing to its energy prices as making it uncompetitive with a U.S. that is benefitting from the shale gas boom. It is ironic, then, that Europe, with few domestic energy resources, holds a trump card.

For more than 40 years, U.S. policymakers have wor-

ried that the network of oil and gas pipelines stretching from East to West were creating a dependence on first the U.S.S.R. and then Russia that would allow the Russian government to exert political pressure on European governments: they could threaten to cut-off supplies, it was thought, and the European governments would fold. What we overlooked is that energy dependence goes both ways. Russian firms and the Russian federal budget are even more dependent on Europeans to buy their gas than European countries are to receive it. It is time for Europe to play that trump card.

On Sunday, the G7 made a strong statement condemning Russia's "clear violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine." The European members of the G7 can add teeth to this statement by embargoing the importation of any natural gas from Russia that is not transshipped through Ukraine. Such a statement would show solidarity with Ukraine by stopping gas imports while also giving Ukraine's strapped budget the transshipment fees it needs.

The European G7 members of Germany, France, Italy, and the UK have a diverse and redundant energy system that could operate without imports of natural gas from Russia. Stepped-up Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) imports from Norway and from the Middle East, plus other energy exports from the U.S., combined with fuel substitution (coal and renewables), along with reduced seasonal demand from warmer spring temperatures mean that this embargo could be enforced without substantial harm to European economies.

Germany would be the key country in an embargo. The Nord Stream pipeline stretches more than 750 miles under the Baltic Sea from Vyborg, Russia to Griefswald, Germany. Its twin pipes can provide about 2 trillion cubic feet of gas per year (around 10% of EU demand). From its start, seemingly the only reason for the extra expense to lay it under the Baltic was to avoid transit countries like Ukraine, Lithuania,

or Poland.

With the announcement of an embargo, the German government could immediately cut off imports through the Nord Stream, immediately denying Gazprom and the Russian government a very significant source of hard currency. Germany has an opportunity here to punish Russia's bad behavior by turning off the Nord Stream's tap.

Russia has overstepped its bounds by invading Ukraine. One of its largest sources of income is from energy exports and production. The G7 can immediately add teeth to its statement of condemnation by announcing that it would not buy Russian natural gas – while also keeping solidarity with Ukraine by announcing that any gas passing through Ukraine would be exempt.

The U.S. should support this statement by announce support for NATO allies. The U.S. could providing energy exports to make up for the Russian shortfalls (though we could not export the natural gas without yet-to-be-build infrastructure). Russia should learn that the politics of energy insecurity goes both ways: it is not just importers that are threatened. Energy suppliers, too, cannot simply flout international norms by invading neighboring countries.

Iran-Pakistan-India: Can a Pipe Dream Become Reality?

Nathan Alvarado-Castle
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Feb 19, 2014

Renewed interest in the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline has surfaced amid the [Joint Plan of Action](#) (JPOA) agreement outlined by the P5+1 with Iran.

Earlier this month, a Pakistan delegation met in Teh-

ran to discuss the status of the [pipeline's deadline](#). The negotiations over a new deadline come as Pakistan has yet to complete the 700-kilometer pipeline linking the existing 900-kilometer pipeline Iran built as part of the deal.

The preliminary agreement outlined by Iran and Pakistan in 1995 set the deadline for December of this year. Under the agreement, failure on Pakistan's part to complete the pipeline would result in a \$1 million per-day fine until the pipeline was completed. However, Iran agreed not to penalize Pakistan in anticipation of the pipeline being operational with Iranian gas flowing into Pakistan sometime in the near future. This optimism was emboldened recently as the [negotiations concluded](#) with Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi in Islamabad, on Tuesday, indicating all efforts to meet the deadline will be exercised.

The other geopolitical puzzle to this grand-pipeline-deal, and perhaps the most controversial, is India's stake in Iran's energy. The idea for extending the Iran-Pak pipeline into India came in February of 1999 when an accord between Iran and India was signed. However, as tensions arose over Iran's nuclear program, India backed out of the deal in 2009 amid US pressure.

Yet there has been a renewed interest on India's behalf following the interim agreement in Geneva. The JPOA relaxes, "[a number of sanctions on Iran, including the one which does not require countries like India to reduce imports of oil from Iran to avoid American sanctions.](#)" Additionally, recent reports indicate India [increased](#) its crude oil imports from Iran by 35% in December of last year. Furthermore, with ongoing talks between Iran and India over the IPI gas-pipeline or the possibility of an alternative route under the [Sea of Oman](#), India's interest in gaining access to not only Iran's crude oil, but natural-gas reserves, appears mutual.

But as all pipeline projects devised in volatile coun-

tries warrant criticism, many observers of the proposed pipeline claim such a project to be a [pipe-dream](#). With the uncertainty looming over Iran's commitment to the JPOA, Pakistan's dependence on US foreign aid/security – let alone US stance on the pipeline itself – and with India-Pak relations historically strained, all signs say they are right.

Nevertheless, what is clear, since the Geneva I agreement, Iran has and will continue to aggressively pursue access to regional markets for their energy sector. And despite US warnings Iran is not "[open for business](#)", global demand from US allies and the Far East make such a position untenable for the US.

Unemployment isn't working: the Arab Stabilization Plan and Unemployment in the Middle East

Kameron Simmons
[Flashpoint Blog](#)

Feb 12, 2014

The international community has recently seen the Greater Middle East go through one of its most tumultuous transitional periods since the Cold War. Through this period the world watched a wave of unrest sweep the populace, materializing in political uprisings in several states across the region. These uprisings have been characterized by widespread outcry for political stability, governmental reform, and a solution to the crippling unemployment crisis facing the Middle East.

Though these movements brought hope of improvement, years later we still find the Middle East and North Africa in a perpetual cycle of political and economic instability. The current unemployment rate in the Middle East sits at 26.2% and 27.1% in Northern Africa, leaving 14-15 million people in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region looking for

work. When focused on specific demographics, these numbers only worsen. The female unemployment in the region currently sits at a devastating 42.6% in the Middle East, and 34.1% in North Africa. Pockets of youth joblessness reach as high as 60% in countries like Tunisia and Egypt.

These high levels of unemployment perpetuate political instability and economic stagnation, as regional governments lack the financial capacity to stimulate growth through their own resources. The high levels of risk and volatility in the region have caused investment, tourism, and private flows to freeze.

For the most part, this lack of economic stimulation continues unchecked. This causes governments to increase the spending levels of borrowed money, leading to further economic stagnation, higher deficits, and more infrastructural degradation.

The continuation of this crisis accompanies an increased risk to regional stability and global security, affecting millions of lives. Every day the economic and employment conditions continue to deteriorate, further increasing the risk of radicalization and civil violence. The Arab-British Chamber of Commerce hosted a conference at which King Abdullah II of Jordan spoke on the issue of unemployment in the Middle East. He stated that “Our young people coming out of school to face the worst unemployment rate of any region. Smart economic policy is critical to support inclusive, job-generating growth”.

The questions left unanswered, then, are how do we solve this crisis and alleviate the unemployment plaguing the region? How do we do it successfully, sustainably, and without increasing the risks of policy failure and radicalization?

Many job creation plans for the region are impossible to implement and fall victim to structural challenges that rack the economic stage in the Arab World. According to World Bank figures, a direct investment of

US \$100 billion could create up to 11 million jobs in 5 years.

Inspired by the European Recovery Plan (Marshall Plan) Majid H. Jafar, CEO of the Crescent Petroleum and Vice-chairman of the Crescent Group, created what he terms the Arab Stabilization Plan. This plan advocates an Arab-led implementation of this critical investment into infrastructure through private and public-private flows. The Arab Stabilization Plan will target Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and Yemen. Countries like the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait are looked at as likely investor countries, along with institutions like the World Bank and the IMF.

The Arab Stabilization Plan would create a hierarchy of institutions focused on the success of the investments and providing smooth implementation plans that yield results without blowback. This would include several policy forums, regional investment executive boards, on the ground project design support, and economic impact analysis.

The implementation of the Arab Stabilization Plan is predicted to spur the creation of 11 million jobs in the MENA region. The economic rate of return of the investment is projected to be above 25%, causing significant stabilization and employment relief in both the short and long term.

The Arab Stabilization Plan attempts to secure the infrastructural integrity necessary for long term growth, while simultaneously reducing the global threat the region poses to international security and mitigating the affects of strenuous economic conditions of millions of people in the greater Middle East.

You can read Majid H Jafar’s opinion editorial on the unemployment issue [here](#)

Or learn more about the details of the Arab Stabilization Plan [here](#)

ABOUT THE EDITOR:



Adin is an Adjunct Junior Fellow at ASP, in addition to working in media & government affairs. His research primarily revolves around subjects of military operations and American competitiveness

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[Executive Authority in US Trade Policy](#)

Brendan Connell

[Fact Sheet—America’s Infrastructure: Challenges and Opportunities](#)

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[Perspective: The Arctic-Five Critical Security Challenges](#)

Andrew Holland, Nick Cunningham, and Xander Vagg

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Nelson Cunningham is President of McLarty Associates.



Governor Christine Todd Whitman

Christine Todd Whitman is the President of the Whitman Strategy Group, a consulting firm that specializes in energy and environmental issues.

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