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LEADING FROM BEHIND



RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

NOVEMBER 3, 2012

I. AT THIS CRITICAL TIME, OBAMA'S STRATEGY OF LEADING FROM BEHIND HAS WEAKENED AMERICAN INFLUENCE AROUND THE WORLD

"The President Has Been Roundly Criticized For Lacking An Overall Strategy In The Region As Protests Have Spread, Governments Have Been Toppled And Violence Has Escalated." (Sam Youngman, "Obama Considering 'Targeted Sanctions,' Against Syria," [The Hill](#), 4/25/11)

- **Obama's Policies Around The World Have Been "Passive And Ad Hoc."** "President Obama deserves credit for killing Osama bin Laden, but the Republican challenger is right to say that doesn't amount to a successful foreign policy. In the Middle East, as well as in Europe and Asia, current policy has been passive and ad hoc." (Editorial, "Romney's World," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 10/8/12)

Obama "Has Failed To Stand Up For Human Rights And Democracy At Key Moments." "Anyone who's been reading this page over nearly the past four years knows we think there's ample room for fair criticism of President Obama's foreign-policy record. From Russia to Bahrain to Egypt, he has failed to stand up for human rights and democracy at key moments. His passivity in Syria has allowed a bad situation to get worse. The Arab Spring presented dangers but also opportunities for American policy that Mr. Obama was slow to seize and has been too hesitant to follow up on. We think the United States will pay a price for his failure to forge a stronger post-war relationship with Iraq, and his setting of deadlines in Afghanistan increased the risks there for U.S. interests." (Editorial, "Where's Your Foreign Policy Program, Mr. Romney?" [The Washington Post](#), 9/14/12)

- **The Washington Post: "The Obama Administration, In Contrast, Appears To Have Put Democracy Promotion In The Region On A Back Burner."** "In the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001, the Bush administration correctly judged that an absence of political freedom was contributing to the growth of Islamic extremism, as was U.S. support for strongmen such as Mr. Mubarak. For a time it pressed Arab governments for democratic change, and it made some headway in Egypt before retreating in its final years. The Obama administration, in contrast, appears to have put democracy promotion in the region on a back burner." (Editorial, "'Free To Speak Out' In Egypt," [The Washington Post](#), 1/4/10)

"The Doctrine Of Silence Is Failing With Links To His Overarching Failure On The Economy: It Betrays A Presidential Reticence, Coolness And Aloofness That Leave Americans Uncomfortable." "The Obama administration has a doctrine. It's called the doctrine of silence. A radical shift from President Bush's war on terror, it has never been set out to the American people. There has seldom been so big a change in approach to U.S. strategic policy with so little explanation. ... But the doctrine of silence is a failing with links to his overarching failure on the economy: it betrays a presidential reticence, coolness and aloofness that leave Americans uncomfortable." (Roger Cohen, Op-Ed, "Doctrine Of Silence," [The New York Times](#), 11/28/11)

- **The Washington Post: "Obama's Silence...Sends A Message To The People Of Syria And To The Larger Middle East: His Pledge To Use All Of America's Resources To Support The Cause Of Freedom In The Arab World Was An Empty One."** "Most of all, Mr. Obama's silence and his administration's passivity sends a message to the people of Syria and to the larger Middle East: His pledge to use all of America's resources to support the cause of freedom in the Arab world was an empty one." (Editorial, "More Brutality In Syria And Passivity In Washington," [The Washington Post](#), 6/24/11)
- **"In Short, America Would Talk About Democracy Promotion. But It Would No Longer Be Democracy's Venture Capitalist."** (David E. Sanger, *Confront And Conceal*, 2012, p. 315)

"Nonetheless, Obama May Be Moving Toward Something Resembling A Doctrine. One Of His Advisers Described The President's Actions In Libya As 'Leading From Behind.'" (Ryan Lizza, "The Consequentialist," [The New Yorker](#), 5/2/11)

“World No Longer Swoons For Obama”

Obama Has “Not Managed To Radically Transform America’s Standing In The World Through The Illuminating Force Of His Biography Or Personality.” “When presidential candidate Barack Obama swept into Europe in 2008, television screens showed massive, adoring crowds. But the latest TV images from abroad are far more ominous: mobs in the Muslim world besieging U.S. embassies, torching American flags and even burning Obama himself in effigy. The two sets of images show a gap between aspirations and reality: A president who is popular overseas has not managed to radically transform America’s standing in the world through the illuminating force of his biography or personality.” (Josh Gerstein, “World’s Obama Fever Cools,” [Politico](#), 9/21/12)

Obama Repeatedly Promised To Restore America’s Standing In The World. OBAMA: “And we will restore our moral standing in the world. We will once again lead the world not just militarily, but diplomatically, economically.” (Senator Barack Obama, Remarks At A Campaign Event, Charleston, SC, 1/10/08)

- **In 2008, Obama Promised That “One Of The Things That I Intend To Do As President Is To Restore America's Standing In The World.”** OBAMA: “And one last point I want to make. It is important for us to understand that the way we are perceived in the world is going to make a difference, in terms of our capacity to get cooperation and root out terrorism. And one of the things that I intend to do as president is to restore America's standing in the world. We are less respected now than we were eight years ago or even four years ago.” (Sen. Barack Obama, [Remarks During The First Presidential Debate](#), Oxford, MS, 9/26/08)
- **Obama In 2009: “I Would Like To Think That With My Election...You’re Starting To See Some Restoration Of America's Standing In The World.”** OBAMA: “I would like to think that with my election and the -- the early decisions that we've made, that you're starting to see some restoration of America's standing in the world. And although as you know, I always mistrust polls, international polls seem to indicate that you're seeing people more hopeful about America's leadership.” (President Barack Obama, Press Conference At G-20 Summit, [London, UK](#), 4/2/09)

Obama’s International Popularity “Has Dimmed In Much Of The World,” “As Obama prepares to stand for reelection, the surge in good feeling toward the U.S. that he ushered in has dimmed in much of the world. And evidence is scant that his popularity has advanced U.S. interests with America’s allies or its adversaries in a tangible way.” (Josh Gerstein, “World’s Obama Fever Cools,” [Politico](#), 9/21/12)

- **Polling Shows Global Opinion Of Obama’s International Policies “Has Declined Dramatically Since 2009.”** “Global opinion of President Barack Obama has declined dramatically since 2009, according to a new survey of the president and his policies in 21 countries. Approval of Obama’s international policies has dropped from 78 percent to 63 percent in Europe; from 34 percent to 15 percent in Muslim Countries; from 40 percent to 22 percent in Russia; and from 57 percent to 27 percent in China, reports the Pew Global Attitudes Project.” (Tim Mak, “World Poll: Chill On Obama Policies,” [Politico](#), 6/13/12)
- **Obama’s Popularity Has “Universally Slid” Since His Election.** “Obama was most popular just after winning the presidency and those numbers have almost universally slid since. Obama’s popularity dropped by double digits in 29 countries between 2010 and 2011, but overall it dropped just two percentage points from a high of 49% in 2009.” (Jay Newton-Small, “Obama About As Popular Abroad As He Is At Home,” [Time's "Swampland"](#), 4/19/12)
- **Only 20 Percent Of Adults In 12 Countries Across The Middle East And North Africa Approve Of Obama.** “Approval of U.S. leadership in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region was already slipping before the recent wave of anti-U.S. protests across the region. An average of 20% of adults across 12 MENA countries Gallup surveyed between January and May 2012 approved of

the job performance of the leadership of the U.S. This rating was down from 22% in 2011 and 25% during the first two years of President Barack Obama's term." (Jan Sonnenschein and Mohamed Younis, "U.S. Approval Eroding In MENA Before Film Controversy," [Gallup](#), 9/24/12)

- **Obama's Handling Of The Eurozone Crisis Hurt His Standing In France And Germany.** "His popularity waned by 13 points in France to 42% and by 10 points in Germany to 40%, reflecting the general feeling in both countries that the U.S. didn't do enough to help with the Eurozone crisis." (Jay Newton-Small, "Obama About As Popular Abroad As He Is At Home," [Time's "Swampland"](#), 4/19/12)
- **Obama's Approval In Afghanistan "Plummeted 12 Points To 31%."** "In Afghanistan, in the wake of scandals where U.S. soldiers inadvertently burned Korans and one soldier allegedly killed 17 Afghan civilians, Obama's approval rating plummeted 12 points to 31%." (Jay Newton-Small, "Obama About As Popular Abroad As He Is At Home," [Time's "Swampland"](#), 4/19/12)

Under Obama, "America's Image Is Again In Decline, Especially In The Middle East." "But while polls show Obama remains personally popular in many parts of the world, America's image is again in decline, especially in the Middle East, the focus of intense personal outreach at the start of the president's term." (Matt Spetalnick, "Obama Foreign Policy Bright Spot Now Looking Dimmer," [Reuters](#), 9/23/12)

- **Despite Obama's Intentions To Extend An Olive Branch To The Muslim World, His Actions Throughout The Arab Spring Only Increased Arab Disillusionment With America.** "Many Arabs asked, 'How could the US president, much less *this* president, justify joining his allies in using force to protect Libyans from being slaughtered in Benghazi, but shrink back when Assad did the same, or worse, in Homs?' How could he declare that it is America's moral responsibility to provide aid to people who are being killed by their own governments, but only if it can be done without putting American lives at risk, and without American boots on the ground? Isn't that just halfway in? And how could he denounce Muammar Qaddafi and Bashar al-Assad for how they abused their own people, and yet fall silent when Bahrain's royal family—host to the US Navy's Fifth Fleet, the most important single facility for keeping Iran at bay in the Strait of Hormuz—presides over security forces that beat protestors and arrest the doctors who cared for the wounded? 'I could lay out a perfectly reasonable rationale for each decision we made, in isolation,' one senior State Department official conceded to me in early 2012. 'But the fact of the matter is, our interests never perfectly line up with our values, and they never have. So we're haunted by those same questions every day.'" (David E. Sanger, *Confront And Conceal*, 2012, p. 336)
- **In The Palestinian Territories, Pakistan, Syria And Even Europe, Obama's Failure To Fulfill Lofty Promises Has Damaged U.S. Standing And Credibility.** "Many add another failure, asking how a president who spoke so movingly about the plight of the Palestinians during his first trip to the Middle East in 2009, and who said he could imagine Palestinian statehood by 2011, seemed to abandon that cause in face of overwhelming opposition. Ask Pakistanis about the signature achievements of the Obama presidency, and they will launch into the subject of civilian casualties from drone strikes. Ask the Syrian opposition, and they will describe an America of double standards that enters wars when they are relatively easy, as in Libya, but ignores carnage when the solutions could put American lives at risk. Even the Europeans, who were so eager to see George Bush return to Texas, and who massed at the Brandenburg Gate to hear candidate Obama in 2008, now grumble that there was more hope than change." (David E. Sanger, *Confront And Conceal*, 2012, p. xviii)
- **Pivotal Nations In The Middle East Have More Hostile Views Of The United States Today Under Obama Than They Did Under President Bush.** "While the U.S. is more popular in many places than it was when Bush left office, American standing never got a huge boost in some critical regions, such as the Mideast. And in two strategically pivotal nations, Pakistan and Egypt,

sentiment toward the U.S. is more hostile than it was under Bush — an anger experts attribute to Obama's aggressive campaign of drone strikes against terror suspects and tumult related to the Arab Spring democracy movement.” (Josh Gerstein, “World’s Obama Fever Cools,” [Politico](#), 9/21/12)

66 Percent Of Americans Say That Barack Obama Has Either Made Things “Worse” Or “Not Made Much Difference” With Regards To America’s Standing In The World, While Just 33 Percent Say He Has Made Things “Better.” ([NBC News/The Wall Street Journal](#), 1000A, MoE 3.1%, 5/16-20/12)

- **“Obama's Lead On Foreign Policy Has Plummeted By 11 Points Since The Outbreak Of Violence In The Middle East...”** “Mitt Romney has all but erased President Obama's lead on foreign policy issues in the aftermath of the attack on the U.S. Consulate in Libya, according to a Pew poll released Thursday. Obama's lead on foreign policy has plummeted by 11 points since the outbreak of violence in the Middle East that culminated with the death of four Americans in Libya on Sept. 11, according to Pew. The president holds a slim 47 percent to 43 percent edge over his GOP rival on the issue of who would do a better job on foreign policy, down from a 15-point advantage in September. The poll of 1,511 adults was conducted two weeks ago, and found that many Americans have soured on the situation in the Middle East: only 25 percent see a positive future for the region, down from 42 percent in April.” (Julian Pecquet, “Romney All But Erases Obama's Polling Lead On Foreign Policy,” [The Hill's Global Affairs](#), 10/18/12)
- **Among Independents, 40 Percent Disapproved Of Obama’s Handling Of The Libya Attack And Only 28 Percent Approved.** “A separate Pew poll taken last week, also released Thursday, found that a large chunk of independent voters disapprove of Obama's handling of the Libya situation, possibly helping Romney with a bloc of voters that could decide the election. The second poll found that while the general public was split evenly on Obama’s handling of the attack, independents were more likely to disapprove of the president's handling of the situation, 40 percent to 28 percent.” (Julian Pecquet, “Romney All But Erases Obama's Polling Lead On Foreign Policy,” [The Hill's Global Affairs](#), 10/18/12)

Around The World, People Are Disappointed That “Relatively Little Has Changed” Under Obama. “It was not just U.S. Democratic voters who were looking forward to ‘hope and change’ when Barack Obama became the 44th U.S. president. Around the world, many anticipated the United States would behave very differently under the new leader. They wanted to hear less about Americans swaggering and throwing their weight around. Some, perhaps, wanted more talk of U.S.-style freedom and democracy, but not if it meant Washington imposing its will. Few dispute that Obama's election brought with it a noticeable change in tone. But 3-1/2 years later, there are growing complaints that when it comes to substance, relatively little has changed.” (Peter Apps, “Analysis: Obama Falls Short Of Meteoric Expectations Abroad,” [Reuters](#), 4/29/12)

The World Cannot Wait While Obama Puts Campaigning Ahead Of Global Leadership

Despite The Rising Tension In The Middle East, Obama Has Made A “Calculated Abdication” And “Decided To Put The World On Hold Until After November 6.” “The truth is that everyone knows, most of all Assad and his patrons in Tehran and Moscow, that Mr. Obama has decided to put the world on hold until after November 6. Israel is supposed to do nothing about Iran, and Syria's rebels are supposed to hunker down and survive, in order to let Mr. Obama keep assuring Americans that ‘the tide of war is receding.’ On the contrary, thanks in part to Mr. Obama's calculated abdication, Middle East tension and turmoil are rising.” (Editorial, “Waiting For Barack,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 8/12/12)

- ***The Wall Street Journal: “The Region Is More Dangerous And May Be Sliding Into Another War Because No One Trusts U.S. Resolve.”*** “Mr. Obama said his diplomacy would enhance U.S. influence and create a safer, more stable Middle East. Instead, the region is more dangerous and

may be sliding into another war because no one trusts U.S. resolve.” (Editorial, “Obama’s U.N. Friends,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 8/23/12)

Obama Cannot Take A “Timeout” From Global Leadership During The Election Season. “Yes, this is an election season, and Americans are fatigued from a decade of war. But global leadership does not take a timeout, and sometimes it has to lead toward a consensus, not wait for one to form. ‘The United States has been, and will remain, the one indispensable nation in world affairs,’ the president declared in a speech last week. Fine words.” (Editorial, “The Time For Patience In Syria Is Over,” [The Washington Post](#), 7/27/12)

Despite World Leaders Gathering In New York At The United Nations, “Obama Has No Plans To Meet Privately With Any Of Them” But Will Make Time For Daytime TV. “The world’s leaders are gathering in New York, but President Barack Obama has no plans to meet privately with any of them. He will make time for ‘The View,’ a freewheeling TV talk show more likely to reach voters than Obama would with the diplomacy he is skipping at the United Nations.” (Ben Feller, “Obama, In Election Mode, Tightens His UN Diplomacy,” [The Associated Press](#), 9/22/12)

- **With Crises Abroad, Obama’s Decision To “Jump Back On The Campaign Trail” Instead Of Meeting With Top Foreign Leaders Is A “Reflection Of Where His Priorities Lie.”** “Obama’s final turn on the world stage before facing voters will be a reflection of where his priorities lie. Despite simmering global crises, he will skip traditional private meetings with foreign counterparts and squeeze his U.N. visit into just 24 hours so he can jump back on the campaign trail.” (Matt Spetalnick, “Obama Foreign Policy Bright Spot Now Looking Dimmer,” [Reuters](#), 9/23/12)
- **Obama’s Lack Of Private Meetings With Key Allies In New York Signaled “Campaigning Is His Imperative.”** “Obama’s activities at the United Nations said plenty, too: There are not many of them. Campaigning is his imperative. He is skipping the private meetings with key allies that a U.S. president typically schedules when the whole international community comes to New York. The president will spend only 24 hours in New York in total this time, and he spent some of it Monday to appear on ‘The View,’ giving a talk show interview intended to sell his election pitch to a big TV audience.” (Ben Feller, “Obama At The UN, In Shadow Of Campaign Politics,” [The Associated Press](#), 9/25/12)

Unlike Obama’s Predecessors, He Is “Skipping The Face-To-Face Meetings With Counterparts Where Much Of The U.N. Work Gets Done...” “Just six weeks until the election, the realities and priorities of campaign politics hang prominently over Obama’s final turn on the world stage before facing voters. Unlike his predecessors, he is skipping the face-to-face meetings with counterparts where much of the U.N. work gets done, leaving Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to pick up more of those sessions herself. Obama’s itinerary on Monday and Tuesday is compressed so that he can get back to campaigning in some of the most contested states such as Ohio and Virginia.” (Ben Feller, “Obama, In Election Mode, Tightens His UN Diplomacy,” [The Associated Press](#), 9/22/12)

- **Both President George W. Bush And Bill Clinton Held Meetings With Foreign Leaders During U.N. Visits In Their Re-Election Years.** “Both Presidents George W. Bush in 2004 and Bill Clinton in 1996, though, held a series of meetings with foreign leaders during U.N. visits in their re-election years. The Obama White House opted not to jam in a few and risk offending the allies who were left out, administration officials said.” (Ben Feller, “Obama, In Election Mode, Tightens His UN Diplomacy,” [The Associated Press](#), 9/22/12)

Obama Delegated Meetings With World Leaders To Secretary Clinton During “Some Of The Most Pressing Foreign Policy Crises The Administration Has Faced Since Taking Office In 2009.” “That task he delegated to Mrs. Clinton, who churned through the first of dozens of meetings she will have over the next week. They deal with some of the most pressing foreign policy crises the administration has faced since taking office in 2009, like the deadly protests in the Islamic world and the confrontation between Japan and China over a handful of unpopulated islands. Mrs. Clinton met President Asif Ali

Zardari of Pakistan ('It's been a difficult time for all of us,' he told her after riots protesting a video trailer that denigrates the Prophet Muhammad and was made in the United States) as well as Mr. Karzai. By the end of a scheduled 12-hour day, she was to have met with President Mohamed Morsi of Egypt. A senior administration official said Mrs. Clinton's meeting with Mr. Zardari and Pakistan's foreign minister, Hina Rabbani Khar, represented a 're-energized dialogue at the highest levels' — if not the very highest level with Mr. Obama. In between, she held an emotional meeting with President Mohamed Magariaf of Libya, who reiterated his apologies for the Sept. 11 killings of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans in Benghazi. He noted the counterprotests, held in Benghazi and other Libyan cities on Friday, that expressed support for the United States." (Helene Cooper and Steven Lee Meyers, "While U.N. Beckons Clinton, Obama Takes In 'The View,'" [The New York Times](#), 9/24/12)

"Obama's Relatively Low-Key U.N. Itinerary Will Also Be A Stark Reminder That The Heady Optimism That Greeted Him When He Took Office Promising To Be A Transformational Statesman Has Cooled, Giving Way To Geopolitical Realities." "From Middle East upheaval to the troubled Afghan war effort to a more assertive Russia, President Barack Obama is facing pressures that threaten to chip away at a foreign policy record his aides hoped would be immune to Republican attack. Obama's final turn on the world stage before facing voters will be a reflection of where his priorities lie. Despite simmering global crises, he will skip traditional private meetings with foreign counterparts and squeeze his U.N. visit into just 24 hours so he can jump back on the campaign trail. But Obama's relatively low-key U.N. itinerary will also be a stark reminder that the heady optimism that greeted him when he took office promising to be a transformational statesman has cooled, giving way to geopolitical realities." (Matt Spetalnick, "Obama Foreign Policy Bright Spot Now Looking Dimmer," [Reuters](#), 9/23/12)

II. LEADING FROM BEHIND: AFGHANISTAN

The Biggest Failure In Afghanistan Is Obama's Leadership

Obama In 2008: "This Is A War That We Have To Win." OBAMA: "I have argued for years that we lack the resources to finish the job because of our commitment to Iraq. That's what the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said earlier this month. And that's why, as President, I will make the fight against al Qaeda and the Taliban the top priority that it should be. This is a war that we have to win." (Senator Barack Obama, Remarks On A New Strategy For A New World, Washington, DC, 7/15/08)

The Washington Post: "Americans Rarely Hear Mr. Obama Explain The Mission Or The Stakes" In Afghanistan. "Afghans, the Taliban and neighbors such as Pakistan can reasonably conclude that the United States, rather than trying to win the war, is racing to implement an exit strategy in which the interests of Afghans and their government are slighted. Americans, meanwhile, rarely hear Mr. Obama explain the mission or the stakes." (Editorial, "Obama's Troubled Handling Of Afghanistan," [The Washington Post](#), 3/13/12)

- **The Wall Street Journal: "Rarely Has A U.S. President In Wartime Said So Little So Infrequently About His Own Strategy."** "Mr. Obama's rare recent public comments on the war have been moments of apology to Afghans, rather than explaining to Americans the progress our troops have made and the support they receive from the vast majority of Afghans. Rarely has a U.S. President in wartime said so little so infrequently about his own strategy and the forces fighting to make it work." (Editorial, "The Perils Of Retreat," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 3/13/12)
- **As Of May 2012, Obama Hadn't "Given A Single Major Speech On Afghanistan" Since July 2011, And Over Time "The American Public Has Turned Skeptical Of The Conflict."** "President Obama has been in the political equivalent of an undisclosed location on Afghanistan for nearly a year, so what a pleasant surprise Tuesday to see him emerge on the subject . . . in Afghanistan. The Afghan campaign needs Mr. Obama's closer attention and vocal support. The American public has turned skeptical on the conflict, with 60% telling pollsters that the remaining 90,000 U.S. soldiers should come home soon. Yet Mr. Obama has rarely tried to sway them. Since announcing in June of last year an early drawdown of his "surge" forces, the President hasn't given a single major speech on Afghanistan." (Editorial, "Obama In Kabul: The President Gives His First Major Afghan Remarks Since June," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 5/1/12)

The Wall Street Journal: "It's Hard To Tell If President Obama Still Supports" The War In Afghanistan. "The American people tell pollsters they're souring on the Afghan war, and no wonder. It's hard to tell if President Obama still supports it. He rarely mentions a conflict in which 90,000 Americans are risking their lives. His last major speech on Afghanistan was a June 2011 announcement that he was pulling back early on his surge of 30,000 troops, withdrawing them this year." (Editorial, "Afghanistan's Bloody Spring," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 4/16/12)

- **Obama Never Mentions Military Successes In Afghanistan, Only His Plans For Withdrawal.** "When he is asked about Afghanistan, Mr. Obama repeats his commitment to steady U.S. withdrawals ahead of the 2014 handover to the Afghans, rather than to American military success. He seems trapped by one of his signature re-election campaign lines: 'The tide of war is receding.'" (Editorial, "Afghanistan's Bloody Spring," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 4/16/12)
- **The Wall Street Journal: "The Political Detachment Of Mr. Obama From His Own Surge Is Unprecedented."** "Debates over war strategy aren't unique to this Administration, but the political detachment of Mr. Obama from his own surge is unprecedented—and demoralizing. U.S. Ambassador to Kabul Ryan Crocker has made no secret of his frustration with the 'two-front war' that he and his colleagues must wage—in Afghanistan and in Washington. To adapt John Kerry,

what soldier wants to be the last to die in a war that the President no longer believes in?" (Editorial, "Afghanistan's Bloody Spring," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 4/16/12)

Obama Disregarded Advice From Commanders On The Ground

When He Announced His Afghanistan Surge Strategy In December 2009, Obama Promised "To Begin The Transfer Of Our Forces Out Of Afghanistan In July Of 2011." OBAMA: "But taken together, these additional American and international troops will allow us to accelerate handing over responsibility to Afghan forces, and allow us to begin the transfer of our forces out of Afghanistan in July of 2011." (President Barack Obama, [Remarks On Afghanistan War Strategy](#), West Point, NY, 12/1/09)

- **December 2009: "President's Afghan Drawdown Plan Called Risky, 'Unrealistic.'"** (Matt Smith, "President's Afghan Drawdown Plan Called Risky, 'Unrealistic,'" [CNN](#), 12/1/09)

Obama's Decision To Publicize The Timeline For Withdrawal Sparked "The Biggest Fight Within The Administration," With The Generals And Secretaries Gates And Clinton Calling It A "Mistake" That Could Jeopardize The Success Of Both The War And Taliban Reconciliation Talks. "The biggest fight within the administration, though, came over Obama's decision to start pulling the surge troops back out by the summer of 2011—whether they were successful or not. The divisions over that decision burn to this day. Generals fume that it undercut the effort. Gates opposed it. Clinton thought it was a mistake and still does; an internal deadline would have been fine, she believed, but a public one simply telegraphed to the Taliban and the Pakistanis when the United States would be leaving. The Taliban read the newspapers too, she pointed out. In the end her concern—also voiced by Gates—seems prescient. The effort to explore the possibility of "reconciliation" talks with the Taliban sputtered along in low gear for years. It is impossible to know for certain how the pullout plan affected the Taliban's calculations, but interviews with Taliban taken prisoner by NATO suggested that the insurgents knew time was on their side, and they were simply waiting for the Americans to begin a significant withdrawal." (David E. Sanger, *Confront And Conceal*, 2012, p. 34)

- **"The Military Was 'All In,'" Said One Obama Adviser, "And Obama Wasn't."** "I think he hated the idea from the beginning,' one of his advisers said of the surge. 'He understood why we needed to try, to knock back the Taliban. But the military was 'all in,' as they say, and Obama wasn't.'" (David Sanger, "Charting Obama's Journey To A Shift On Afghanistan," [The New York Times](#), 5/19/12)

In August 2010, Marine Corps General James Conway Told Reporters That Talk Of A July 2011 Deadline Was "Probably Giving Our Enemy Sustenance." "The top U.S. Marine general made a sharp departure from the White House's talking points on Afghanistan, saying President Barack Obama's promised July 2011 deadline to start withdrawing troops from the country had given 'sustenance' to the Taliban. 'We know the president was talking to several audiences at the same time when he made his comments on July 2011,' Gen. James Conway told reporters on Tuesday. 'In some ways, we think right now it's probably giving our enemy sustenance....In fact, we've intercepted communications that say, 'Hey, you know, we only have to hold out for so long.'" (Nathan Hodge, "Conway: U.S. Withdrawal Deadline Boosts Taliban In Afghan War," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 8/24/10)

- **General Conway: "In Some Ways, We Think Right Now It's Probably Giving Our Enemy Sustenance."** "In terms of the July '11 issue, you know, I think if you follow it closely, and of course we all do, we know the president was talking to several audiences at the same time when he made his comments on July 2011. In some ways, we think right now it's probably giving our enemy sustenance. We think that he may be saying to himself -- in fact, we've intercepted communications that say, hey, you know, we only have to hold out for so long." (Marine Corps Gen. James Conway, [Press Briefing](#), 8/24/10)
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In Early 2011, Obama Made The Decision To Begin “A Speedy, Orderly Exit From Afghanistan” Without Seeking Advice From Secretary Gates Or Secretary Clinton. “By early 2011, Mr. Obama had seen enough. He told his staff to arrange a speedy, orderly exit from Afghanistan. This time there would be no announced national security meetings, no debates with the generals. Even Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton were left out until the final six weeks.” (David Sanger, “Charting Obama’s Journey To A Shift On Afghanistan,” [The New York Times](#), 5/19/12)

- **“When The President And A Half-Dozen White House Aides Began To Plan For The Withdrawal, The Generals Were Cut Out Entirely.”** “Not long before, after a highly contentious debate within a war cabinet that was riddled with leaks, Mr. Obama had reluctantly decided to order a surge of more than 30,000 troops. The aide told Mr. Obama that he believed military leaders had agreed to the tight schedule to begin withdrawing those troops just 18 months later only because they thought they could persuade an inexperienced president to grant more time if they demanded it. ‘Well,’ Mr. Obama responded that day, ‘I’m not going to give them more time.’ A year later, when the president and a half-dozen White House aides began to plan for the withdrawal, the generals were cut out entirely. There was no debate, and there were no leaks.” (David Sanger, “Charting Obama’s Journey To A Shift On Afghanistan,” [The New York Times](#), 5/19/12)

In June 2011, Obama Announced That The Afghanistan Surge Was Ending With The Withdrawal Of 10,000 Troops That Year And 23,000 Troops In 2012. “President Obama announced Wednesday he is ending the Afghanistan ‘surge’ by withdrawing 10,000 troops by the end of the year, promising an end to the war is near. In a prime-time address, Obama said another 23,000 troops will leave Afghanistan by the end of September 2012 after a decade-long conflict increasingly unpopular with American voters and lawmakers from both parties. ‘The tide of war is receding,’ said Obama, who noted that all U.S. troops will leave Iraq by the end of this year. ‘It’s time to focus on national building here at home.’” (Sam Youngman, “President Obama Lays Out Exit Strategy For The Afghanistan War,” [The Hill](#), 6/23/11)

- **Obama’s Withdrawal Was Not An Option Presented By His Top Generals.** “When asked by South Carolina Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham during a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee Tuesday whether the president’s withdrawal plan was ‘one of the options presented to the president by General Petraeus,’ [Marine Lt. General John] Allen responded, ‘It was not.’” (Jamie Weinstein, “General: Obama Afghan Withdrawal Plan Not Among Options Presented By Petraeus,” [Daily Caller](#), 6/28/11)
- **General David Petraeus: “The Ultimate Decision Was A More Aggressive Formulation, If You Will, In Terms Of The Time Line, Than What We Had Recommended.”** PETRAEUS: “The president then made a decision. The commander in chief has decided. And it is then the responsibility, needless to say, of those in uniform to salute smartly and to do everything humanly possible to execute it. Now, as Chairman Mullen, Admiral Mullen, stated today before the House Armed Services Committee, the ultimate decision was a more aggressive formulation, if you will, in terms of the time line, than what we had recommended. Again, that is understandable in the sense that there are broader considerations beyond just those of a military commander.” (Select Committee On Intelligence, U.S. Senate, Hearing, 6/23/11)
- **Marine Lt. General John Allen: Obama’s Withdrawal Plan From Afghanistan “Was Not” One Of The Options The Military Had Presented.** SEN. LINDSEY GRAHAM: “All right. Now let’s talk about counterinsurgency. The option that the country has chosen through President Obama is to withdraw 10,000 this year – all surge forces gone by September. Is it fair to say, General Allen, that was not one of the options presented to the president by General Petraeus?” LT. GEN. ALLEN: “It is a more aggressive option than that which was presented.” SEN. GRAHAM: “My question is was that a option?” LT. GEN. ALLEN: “It was not.” (Armed Services Committee, U.S. Senate, Hearing, 6/28/11)

The Washington Post: “President Obama Failed To Offer A Convincing Military Or Strategic Rationale For The Troop Withdrawals From Afghanistan That He Announced Wednesday Night. In

Several Ways, They Are At Odds With The Strategy Adopted By NATO, Which Aims To Turn Over The War To The Afghan Army By The End Of 2014.” (Editorial, “The President May Be Sabotaging His Own Afghanistan Strategy,” [The Washington Post](#), 6/22/11)

- **Obama’s Plan Is Based On What Is “Politically Acceptable.”** “By all accounts, Obama appears more comfortable with a military strategy that relies heavily on drone aircraft strikes in neighboring Pakistan and nightly raids by special operations forces against Afghan militants, while trimming the American military presence and budget to politically acceptable levels.” (David S. Cloud, “Pentagon To Drastically Cut Spending On Afghan Forces,” [Los Angeles Times](#), 8/12/11)

The 2011 And 2012 Troop Reductions Occur When Violence In Afghanistan Is At Its Peak. “Both the 2011 and 2012 timeframes for troop reductions coincide with the fighting season in Afghanistan. Troops will begin leaving Afghanistan next month as violence in that country is at its worst in nine years and the Taliban reasserts itself in territories U.S. forces have abandoned.” (Ahmad Majidyar, “Obama Fails to Learn From His Mistakes In Afghanistan,” [FOX News](#), 6/23/11)

- **Obama’s Withdrawal Timetable “Increases The Risk Of Failure.”** “But Mr. Obama’s withdrawal decision, with no clear basis in strategy, increases the risk of failure.” (Editorial, “The President May Be Sabotaging His Own Afghanistan Strategy,” [The Washington Post](#), 6/22/11)

Military Commanders Disagree With Obama’s “Gradual Pace” Of Troop Withdrawal And “Have Indicated That They Would Prefer That All 68,000 Troops Remain Through Most Of 2013 For An Additional Summer Of Fighting.” “During a news conference last week, President Obama called for a ‘gradual pace’ that ‘doesn’t result in a steep cliff at the end of 2014.’ Allen and other commanders have indicated that they would prefer that all 68,000 troops remain through most of 2013 for an additional summer of fighting. Administration critics, including the leading Republican presidential contenders, have accused Obama of undermining the war effort by signaling withdrawal plans at all, of following the political winds in heading for an early exit, and of not listening to the advice of military commanders.” (Karen DeYoung, “U.S. General Suggests Afghan Force Should Stay Level After ‘12 Drawdown,” [The Washington Post](#), 3/20/12)

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta Sees “Little Sign That The Taliban Will Be Decisively Defeated” And Calls 2013 A “Critical Year” For Transition. “Panetta called 2013 a critical year for the Afghanistan mission that has dragged on for more than a decade with little sign that the Taliban will be decisively defeated. He noted that NATO and the Afghan government intend to begin a final phase of transitioning sections of the country to Afghan security control in mid-2013. ‘Hopefully by the mid to latter part of 2013 we’ll be able to make a transition from a combat role to a training, advise and assist role,’ he said. He added that this “doesn’t mean we’re not going to be combat-ready,’ but rather that the U.S. and other international forces will no longer be in ‘the formal combat role we’re in now.’” (Robert Burns, “Panetta: US Combat In Afghanistan To End Next Year,” [The Associated Press](#), 2/1/12)

III. LEADING FROM BEHIND: THE ARAB SPRING

Obama Ignored Protests In Tunisia

During The Tunisian Protests, “The Only Official Statement From President Obama Came After Ben Ali Had Been Ousted.” “Meanwhile, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who was on a tour of Gulf countries, lectured Arab states about the need for democratic reforms but scrupulously refrained from mentioning the Tunisian protests. The only official statement from President Obama came after Ben Ali had been ousted.” (Laila Lalani, “Tunisia Rising,” [The Nation](#), 1/20/11)

- **Secretary Of State Hillary Clinton Refrained From Mentioning The Protests In Tunisia While Touring The Middle East To Promote Democratic Reforms.** “Meanwhile, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who was on a tour of Gulf countries, lectured Arab states about the need for democratic reforms but scrupulously refrained from mentioning the Tunisian protests.” (Laila Lalani, “Tunisia Rising,” [The Nation](#), 1/20/11)

Obama Supplied No Assistance In The First Sixty Days After The Tunisian Dictator Fell And Did Not Provide Sufficient Resources To The U.S. Embassy In The Country. “So far, the West has been slow to respond, and the United States has provided nothing. The U.S. government has so far neglected to contribute material assistance to the task of democratization in Tunisia, adding to uncertainty about American intent in the country...The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has been especially slow off the mark. Despite convening a meeting to discuss emergency priorities in early January, no emergency aid has yet reached Tunis. A number of American nongovernmental organizations on the ground in Tunis told me that they've now been informed they may not get anything at all in 2011...The U.S. Embassy in Tunis was staffed to manage a sleepy relationship with a dictator -- it is too small to handle the demands of a country in the midst of radical change. For example, the entire political section comprises only a handful of people. Nearly incessant information requests from Washington, as well as preparations for high-level visits, preclude the small staff from actively mapping who's who in the new Tunisia and building relationships with those people. But there is no sign that the State Department is planning to add staff or resources, despite an urgent need.” (J. Scott Carpenter, “Help Tunisia First,” [Foreign Policy](#), 2/24/11)

Obama Refused To Lead In Libya

The Washington Post: “Once Again, An Arab Dictator Is Employing Criminal Violence In A Desperate Effort To Remain In Power - And Once Again, The Obama Administration Has Been Slow To Find Its Voice.” (Editorial, “Why Was President Obama Last To Speak Up On Libya?” [The Washington Post](#), 2/23/11)

Obama’s Reaction To The Libyan Uprising “Raised Anew Questions About His Leadership.” “Still, the president’s actions and style have raised anew questions about his leadership. Is his oft-stated patience a virtue, as his advisers claim, or does his down-stated approach convey tentativeness and uncertainty?” (Dan Balz, “Big Stakes For Obama In Monday’s Libya Speech,” [The Washington Post](#), 3/26/11)

- **The Washington Post: “Mr. Obama Appeared Eager To Make The Point That The United States Was Not Taking The Lead In Opposing Mr. Gaddafi's Crimes.”** (Editorial, “Why Was President Obama Last To Speak Up On Libya?” [The Washington Post](#), 2/23/11)

Obama Followed Europe’s Lead On The No-Fly Zone And Even On Calling For Gaddafi To Step Down. “European nations have taken the lead in drafting a no-fly zone resolution, and Obama has yet to say whether he favors one. He followed France in calling for Gaddafi's ouster.” (Scott Wilson, “On Libya, Obama Willing To Let Allies Take The Lead,” [The Washington Post](#), 3/10/11)

- **Obama Was The Only Major Western Leader Who Didn’t “Speak Up On Libya” Right Away.** “Governments around the world have been condemning this appalling stance and the terrible

slaughter it has caused. The European Union has agreed in principle to impose sanctions, and the Arab League has said Libya will be excluded from its meetings. British Prime Minister David Cameron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi all condemned the regime's violence. Said French President Nicolas Sarkozy: 'The continuing brutal and bloody crackdown against the Libyan civilian population is revolting. The international community cannot remain a spectator to these massive violations of human rights.' By late Wednesday only one major Western leader had failed to speak up on Libya: Barack Obama." (Editorial, "Why Was President Obama Last To Speak Up On Libya?" [The Washington Post](#), 2/23/11)

Obama's Mixed Messages On Egypt

Distracted By Other Conflicts, The Obama Administration Had A Steep Learning Curve On Egypt.

"The administration's learning curve on Egypt was made steeper because the foreign policy team has been consumed with the war in Afghanistan and the risks of a nuclear Iran." (Indira A.R. Lakshmanan And Hans Nichols, "Obama Administration Team Looked Unsteady in Response to Egypt Protesters," [Bloomberg](#), 2/14/11)

- **The Obama Administration Admitted It Was "Caught By Surprise" And Unprepared To Respond To The Egyptian Revolution.** "'This is what happens when you get caught by surprise,' said one American official, who would not speak on the record. 'We've had endless strategy sessions for the past two years on Mideast peace, on containing Iran. And how many of them factored in the possibility that Egypt,' and presumably whatever dominoes follow it, 'moves from stability to turmoil? None.'" (David E. Sanger, "As Mubarak Digs In, U.S. Policy In Egypt Is Complicated," [The New York Times](#), 2/5/11)

The White House Had A "Muddled" Message On Egypt. "Part of the muddled messaging over the last couple weeks in Egypt seems to have had to do with the fact that people in and around the State Department weren't entirely clear on what the White House was trying to say." (Ben Smith, "Obama's Freedom Agenda," [Politico](#), 2/13/11)

- **"The Mixed Messages Have Been Confusing And At Times Embarrassing — A Reflection Of A Policy That, By Necessity, Has Been Made Up On The Fly."** (David E. Sanger, "As Mubarak Digs In, U.S. Policy In Egypt Is Complicated," [The New York Times](#), 2/5/11)

Obama And His Administration Officials Were Not On The Same Page During The Egyptian Protests. "While Obama's words have been clear and consistent, the message was muddled by multiple U.S. officials who reacted to confusing events in sometimes contradictory language. On Jan. 25, Clinton said the Egyptian government was 'stable.' Two days later, Biden declared Mubarak was not a dictator and needn't resign." (Indira A.R. Lakshmanan And Hans Nichols, "Obama Administration Team Looked Unsteady In Response To Egypt Protesters," [Bloomberg](#), 2/14/11)

- **When Tahrir Protests First Began, Clinton Said That "Our Assessment Is That The Egyptian Government Is Stable And Is Looking For Ways To Respond To The Legitimate Needs And Interests Of The Egyptian People."** "When the first protesters appeared in Tahrir Square, Mrs. Clinton, working off the traditional American script that portrays Mr. Mubarak as a reliable ally in need of quiet, sustained pressure on human rights and political reform, said, 'Our assessment is that the Egyptian government is stable and is looking for ways to respond to the legitimate needs and interests of the Egyptian people.'" (David Sanger, "As Mubarak Digs In, U.S. Policy In Egypt Is Complicated," [The New York Times](#), 2/5/11)
- **In January 2011, Biden Said Of Mubarak, "I Would Not Refer To Him As A Dictator."** PBS' JIM LEHRER: "The word -- the word to describe the leadership of Mubarak and Egypt and also in Tunisia before was dictator. Should Mubarak be seen as a dictator?" BIDEN: "Look, Mubarak has been an ally of ours in a number of things and he's been very responsible on, relative to geopolitical interests in the region: Middle East peace efforts, the actions Egypt has taken relative

to normalizing the relationship with Israel. And I think that it would be - I would not refer to him as a dictator.” (PBS’ [“NewsHour.”](#) 1/27/11)

Obama Missed The Opportunity To “Support Civil Society” In Egypt After Mubarak’s Ouster. “The United States has built its relationship with Egypt around the Army, which it has supported with more than \$39 billion in military aid over the last three decades. Egypt’s year-old, pro-democracy revolution gave Washington a chance — and a reason — to alter that relationship to support civil society. The Obama administration made a serious error in choosing not to do so. Even worse, the purpose was largely to protect American arms manufacturers who produce the weapons sent to Egypt.” (Editorial, “Enabling Egypt’s Military Rulers,” [The New York Times](#), 3/26/12)

- **Despite Evidence That The Military-Led Government Was “Backsliding On Commitments It Made To Democratic Governance And Rule Of Law,” The Obama Administration Decided To Waive “Democracy Requirements” And Allow Egypt To Receive \$1.3 Billion Of Military Aid** “The Obama administration has waived democracy requirements to release up to \$1.5 billion in aid to Egypt despite concerns that the country is backsliding on commitments it made to democratic governance and rule of law, congressional sources said Thursday. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton determined that it was in the U.S. national interest to allow \$1.3 billion in military assistance to flow, they said. She also certified that Egypt is meeting its obligations to the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, which frees up an additional \$200 million in economic aid, they said.” (Donna Cassata, US OKs Egypt Aid Despite Congressional Concerns,” [The Associated Press](#), 3/22/12)

The Egyptian Public Feels Betrayed By The Obama Administration’s Slow Response To The Revolution. “Hamid called Egypt ‘quite possibly the most anti-American country in the Arab world. There is already resentment just below the surface ready to come out,’ he says. ‘I know people in the U.S. think that Obama sided with the Egyptian revolution, but in Egypt, that is not the narrative you hear. There is a sense that the U.S. was late to the game and stood with [former President Hosni] Mubarak until the very end.’” (Scott Neuman, “An Ally Or Not? The White House Seeks To Nuance Obama’s Remarks On Egypt,” [NPR](#), 9/14/12)

- **Obama’s “Careful Approach” To The Egyptian Revolution “Pleased No One.”** “Obama’s careful approach pleased no one. To Egyptians in Tahrir Square, it was wishy-washy. One activist I spoke with later balked at the notion that the US government had been supportive, and asserted, ‘We got no solidarity with Obama.’ To other leaders in the region, however, Obama’s decision to pressure Mubarak at all was a sign of weakness, and perhaps a troubling indication that the president would willingly abandon a longtime ally.” (David E. Sanger, *Confront And Conceal*, 2012, p. 293)
- **Obama Was Seen By Young Egyptians As “A Fair-Weather Friend” Who Could Not Be Trusted.** “Yet the message that the United States chose to be on the side of the protestors was not clearly conveyed, particularly in Egypt. In Cairo in the days leading up to the first anniversary of the uprising, many young Egyptians told me that Obama was a fair-weather friend who did not declare clearly enough that Mubarak had to go. ‘Obama changed his decisions,’ one activist told me. ‘Once he knew the revolution would win, he sided with the revolution. I don’t trust a man like that.’” (David E. Sanger, *Confront And Conceal*, 2012, p. 302-03)

IV. LEADING FROM BEHIND: CHINA

Obama's Pivot To Asia Has Stalled

Obama's "Pivot To China's Neighborhood" Has "Produced Limited Results." "President Barack Obama's 'pivot' to China's neighborhood and the 'reset' in relations with Russia have produced limited results for signature foreign policy initiatives designed to improved America's standing with its former Cold War rivals." ("Limited Success For Obama's Russia, China Approach," [The Associated Press](#), 4/28/12)

In Response To Obama's "Soft" Approach, China "Spurned The United States On Climate Change Standards, Dragged Its Feet On Efforts To Pressure Iran And Began Bullying Its Neighbors Over Territorial Claims In The South China Sea." "Mr. Obama's turn to Asia was not precisely what he had in mind when he entered office. The shift emerged in fits and starts, after a first year in which critics, including the president's aides, concluded that the United States had been too soft on China. In interviews, a dozen current and former administration officials described a White House that struggled to find the right tone with Beijing. From his decision not to meet with the Dalai Lama in 2009 to his tightly constrained first trip to China, the president accommodated Chinese leaders in the hopes that the moves would translate into good will on issues like climate change or Iran's nuclear program. They did not. China spurned the United States on climate change standards, dragged its feet on efforts to pressure Iran and began bullying its neighbors over territorial claims in the South China Sea. That last development, in particular, persuaded the administration that the time for accommodation had come to an end." (Mark Landler, "Obama's Journey To Tougher Tack On A Rising China," [The New York Times](#), 9/20/12)

- **White House Officials Admit That Obama's First Trip To China Gave The Appearance Of "A Fast-Rising Power — The Holder Of \$1 Trillion In American Debt — Pushing Back On A Beleaguered United States."** "The optics did not improve on Mr. Obama's trip, which the Chinese stage-managed, allowing no questions after a joint news conference with Mr. Hu. White House officials said the trip was more successful than the news coverage suggested, but they do not dispute that the lasting impression was of a fast-rising power — the holder of \$1 trillion in American debt — pushing back on a beleaguered United States." (Mark Landler, "Obama's Journey To Tougher Tack On A Rising China," [The New York Times](#), 9/20/12)
- **"Even Some Of Mr. Obama's Own Current And Former Aides Acknowledge That Mr. Obama Went Too Far To Accommodate China's Leaders During His First Year In Office."** "Even some of Mr. Obama's own current and former aides acknowledge that Mr. Obama went too far to accommodate China's leaders during his first year in office. The White House hardened its approach after the Chinese gave the cold shoulder to the United States on issues ranging from climate change to Iran's nuclear program." (Sharon LaFraniere, "China And Its Trade Practices Are Coming To The Debates," [The New York Times](#), 10/15/12)

Top Military Official In Asia-Pacific Says China Is "Growing Bolder" And "Continues To Challenge The United States And Our Partners In The Region In The Maritime, Cyber, And Space Domains." "Last year, Beijing said it would increase military spending to 601.1 billion yuan (\$95.43 billion) in 2011, a 12.7 percent rise on the previous year, resuming double-digit growth after a dip to 7.5 percent growth in 2010. China is 'growing bolder with regard to their expanded regional and global presence, and China continues to challenge the United States and our partners in the region in the maritime, cyber and space domains,' said Willard. He repeated a long-standing Pentagon lament that U.S.-China military-to-military relations are 'not where we want them to be,' despite high-level pledges to deepen those ties." (Paul Eckert, "China's Military Build-Up Seen Independent Of U.S. Moves," [Reuters](#), 2/28/12)

- **"China May Have Broken A Security Council Resolution By Providing 16-Wheel Missile-Launching Vehicles" To North Korea.** "Some analysts said on Tuesday that China may have

broken a Security Council resolution by providing 16-wheel missile-launching vehicles that were seen in a military parade in Pyongyang, the North's capital, on Sunday carrying a new type of missile. Ted Parsons of IHS Jane's Defense Weekly pointed out similarities to a known Chinese vehicle: 'The same windscreen design, the same four windscreen wiper configuration, the same door and handle design, a very similar grill area. Almost the same front bumper lighting configuration, and the same design for the cabin steps.' He added that the involvement of a Chinese vehicle builder 'in North Korea's missile program would require approval from the highest levels of the Chinese government and the People's Liberation Army.'" (Choe Sang-Hun, "North Korea Says It Will Abandon Deal With U.S.," [The New York Times](#), 4/17/12)

- **China Has Maintained Warm Relations With North Korea Despite Going Along With U.N. Rebuke Of Its Missile Launch.** "Though China joined in the United Nations' rebuke of North Korea after its missile launching, President Hu Jintao later welcomed a top official of the ruling Workers' Party to Beijing, while another senior Chinese official hailed the relationship between Beijing and Pyongyang as a 'precious gem.'" (Mark Landler and Steven Lee Myers, "U.S. Sees Positive Signs From China On Security Issues," [The New York Times](#), 4/26/12)

China Continues To Assert Its Claim To The South China Sea As Its "Sovereign Territory." "China is locked in a series of overlapping territorial disputes with the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei, who claim either all or part of the South China Sea as their sovereign territory. The dispute has flared in recent months as the region's potential energy reserves begin to draw growing attention. Over the past year, Vietnam and the Philippines have accused Chinese navy craft of harassing oil-exploration vessels operating in their United Nations-defined maritime economic zones. Beijing has denied that, but has warned Vietnam and the Philippines from prospecting in the area without its permission." (James Hookway, "Philippine Warship In Standoff With China Vessels," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 4/11/12)

- **Robert Romulo, Former Foreign Secretary Of The Philippines, Said "China Is Eating America's Lunch In Southeast Asia."** "'We're just pawns,' said Roberto Romulo, a former foreign secretary of the Philippines who argues that China is flexing its muscles in a bid to gain unimpeded access to vast reserves of natural gas and oil believed to be buried under the South China Sea. 'China is testing the United States, that's all it is. And China is eating America's lunch in Southeast Asia.'" (Jane Perlez, "Beijing Exhibiting New Assertiveness In South China Sea," [The New York Times](#), 5/31/12)
- **Senior Chinese Officials Have Warned Against U.S. Activity In The South China Sea, Saying "The South China Issue Is Not America's Business."** "More recently, a senior Chinese military officer even dismissed any legitimate role for the United States in the South China Sea. 'The South China issue is not America's business,' Gen. Ma Xiaotian, the deputy chief of general staff of the People's Liberation Army, said in an interview broadcast Monday by Phoenix TV in Hong Kong. 'It's between China and its neighbors.'" (Jane Perlez, "Beijing Exhibiting New Assertiveness In South China Sea," [The New York Times](#), 5/31/12)

President Hu Hosted A Regional Security Summit And Bilateral Talks With Russian President Putin Aimed At Countering U.S. Influence In Central Asia. "The talks between Mr. Putin and Mr. Hu, along with the two-day Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit meeting, are fraught with the symbolism of two major powers interested in further developing a multilateral organization that does not include the United States, and where Iran plays a role, if only as observer. 'Iran, too, is very keen on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization,' said Vali Nasr, an Iran expert and former State Department official in the Obama administration. 'That it is happening in China reflects China's increasing interest in Central Asia and also its desire to lead international and regional alliances without the U.S.'" (Jane Perlez, "Putin Arrives In China, Seeking Stronger Ties," [The New York Times](#), 6/5/12)

China Will Build Two Nuclear Reactors At A Pakistani Nuclear Power Plant, Despite Western Concerns Over Pakistan's "History Of Spreading Nuclear Arms Technology." "Western states

pressured China at closed-door talks last week to address concerns about its plans to expand a nuclear power plant in Pakistan and provide more information, but were rebuffed, two diplomatic sources said on Wednesday. Beijing's atomic relations with Islamabad have caused unease in Washington, Delhi and other capitals due to Pakistan's history of spreading nuclear arms technology and fears about the integrity of international non proliferation rules. ... But China showed no sign of reconsidering its position on building two more reactors at the Chashma nuclear power complex in Pakistan's Punjab region, the official and another source said, a stance Beijing also took when the issue was raised in last year's NSG talks in the Dutch city of Noordwijk." (Fredrik Dahl, "West Worried By China-Pakistan Atomic Ties: Sources," [Reuters](#), 6/27/12)

- **Pakistan Has Moved Closer To China As Its Relationship With The U.S. Falters.** "As its ties with the United States have suffered, Pakistan has been trying to move closer to Asian powerhouse China, which has welcomed Islamabad's overtures." (Fredrik Dahl, "West Worried By China-Pakistan Atomic Ties: Sources," [Reuters](#), 6/27/12)

Cyber Attacks On The American Military And Defense Firms Increased In 2011, With No Response From Obama. "Cyber attacks on U.S. military and defense industry computer systems are increasing, and many of the attacks are coming from China, a U.S. government commission says. 'China has recognized the importance of cyber operations as a tool of warfare,' the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission says in a report released Nov. 20." (William Matthews, "Chinese Cyber Attacks On Rise: U.S. Report," [Defense News](#), 11/20/11)

- **China Even Attacked The Email Accounts Of Senior U.S. Officials.** "Google said Wednesday a hacker in China obtained access to hundreds of Gmail accounts, including those of senior U.S. government officials, military personnel, Chinese political activists and journalists." (Cecilia Kang, "Google: Hundreds Of Gmail Accounts Hacked, Including Some Senior U.S. Government Officials," [The Washington Post](#), 6/1/11)

Chinese Hackers Are Erasing The Global Advantage For American Firms. "Senior U.S. officials know well that the government of China is systematically attacking the computer networks of the U.S. government and American corporations. Beijing is successfully stealing research and development, software source code, manufacturing know-how and government plans. In a global competition among knowledge-based economies, Chinese cyberoperations are eroding America's advantage." (Richard Clarke, Op-Ed, "China's Cyberassault On America," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 6/15/11)

- **Approximately A Dozen Chinese Gangs Are Responsible For Most Of The Cyber Theft In The U.S., Stealing Billions Of Dollars Of Data.** "As few as 12 different Chinese groups, largely backed or directed by the government there, commit the bulk of the China-based cyberattacks stealing critical data from U.S. companies and government agencies, according to U.S. cybersecurity analysts and experts." (Lolita Baldor, "A Few Hacker Teams Do Most China-based Data Theft," [The Associated Press](#), 12/12/11)

Obama Reserves "Tough Talk" On China's Currency Manipulation For The Campaign Trail

PROMISE: In 2008, Obama Said He Had A "Pretty Straightforward Proposition" For China, "You Guys Keep On Manipulating Your Currency, We Are Going To Start Shutting Off Access To Some Of Our Markets." OBAMA: "Now look, here's the thing I think people don't understand. China needs our market. Their economy is dependent on exports to the United States and we have bargaining power. The problem that we've got with China is not that we couldn't work out a deal in which they are benefitting and we are benefitting. The problem is that through all the tough talk of George W. Bush, he is a patsy when it comes to negotiating these agreements. And, what we need to do is to just be better bargainers that say, 'Look, here's the bottom line, you guys keep on manipulating your currency, we are going to start shutting off access to some of our markets. If you are doing the right thing and not trying to manipulate your currency to disadvantage us, then you will have access.' It's a pretty, pretty straightforward proposition." (Senator Barack Obama, Q&A At The AAM Forum, [Pittsburgh, PA](#), 4/14/08)

- **Obama In 2008: If China Is “Devaluing Their Currency To Make Their Goods Cheaper And Our Goods More Expensive And We’re Not Challenging Them ... Dumping Cheap Steel And Cheap Goods Into This Country Because They’re Subsidized By The Chinese Government And We’re Not Challenging Them, That’s Just Not Fair. It’s Not Right...”** “This was Obama campaigning in Malvern, Pa., on Wednesday: “If they’re devaluing their currency to make their goods cheaper and our goods more expensive and we’re not challenging them, if they’re stealing our intellectual property, our copyrights and we don’t say anything about it, we don’t take them before the World Trade Organization, if they’re dumping cheap steel and cheap goods into this country because they’re subsidized by the Chinese government and we’re not challenging them, that’s just not fair. It’s not right, and it’s going to undermine our economic condition over the long term.” (Craig Gilbert, “Candidates Berate China,” [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#), 4/14/08)

BROKEN: In May 2012, The Treasury Department Said That China “Did Not Meet The Definition Of A Currency Manipulator Under Its Standards.” “The Treasury Department on Friday once again declined to name China a currency manipulator despite bipartisan calls for action from Congress. Treasury noted that China’s currency has appreciated against the dollar since June 2010, and said it did not meet the definition of a currency manipulator under its standards.” (Julian Pecquet, “Treasury: China Not Manipulating Currency,” [The Hill’s Global Affairs](#), 5/25/12)

- **The Treasury Department Announced It Will Delay Its Semi-Annual Currency Report, Which “Makes It Unlikely The Report Will Be Released Before The U.S. Presidential Election On November 6.”** “The U.S. Treasury on Friday said it would delay a semi-annual currency report until after a meeting of the Group of 20 finance ministers in Mexico on November 4-5, which makes it unlikely the report will be released before the U.S. presidential election on November 6.” (“Romney Hits Obama On China Policies,” [Reuters](#), 10/13/12)

Once In Office, Obama Retreated From His “Tough Talk” On The Campaign Trail And Decided Not To Label China A Currency Manipulator. “The Treasury Department on Wednesday declined to label China a currency manipulator, retreating from tough talk last year when a campaigning Barack Obama said Beijing had kept its currency’s exchange rate unfairly low.” (Glenn Somerville and Doug Palmer, “U.S. Again Declines To Brand China Currency Manipulator,” [Reuters](#), 4/25/09)

- **Asked About China’s Currency Manipulation And Unfair Trade Practices, Obama Said That He Did Not Want To “Embarrass” China.** “President Barack Obama, addressing questions Wednesday about China’s alleged trade abuses and currency manipulation, said the United States must push back against unfair practices but not ‘go out of our way to embarrass’ the country. Doing so would risk ‘an all-out trade war,’ Obama told The Plain Dealer in an exclusive interview.” (Henry Gomez, “President Barack Obama Warns Against Embarrassing China On Trade Complaints: Plain Dealer Interview,” [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#), 9/27/12)
- **Obama Claimed That Labeling China As A Currency Manipulator Would Have No Effect On Their Trade Practices.** “Asked if the tag would present the embarrassment he is hoping to spare China, Obama suggested that the designation would accomplish little. ‘They’d have to push back, and there’s no automatic trigger that results from it,’ Obama said. ‘So the only thing that happens is we then have to go back and negotiate with them. The key here is just constant pressure, and that’s what we’ve applied in a much more aggressive way than the previous administration.’” (Henry Gomez, “President Barack Obama Warns Against Embarrassing China On Trade Complaints: Plain Dealer Interview,” [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#), 9/27/12)

The Washington Post: “China’s Policy Has Probably Cost Americans Hundreds Of Thousands Of Jobs And Contributed To China’s Destabilizing Pile Of Trillions Of Dollars In Reserves.” “China’s undervalued renminbi is a long-standing, bipartisan concern, and it is not a phony one: In pursuit of growth led by exports, China has held the renminbi down in relation to the dollar, rendering its goods

artificially cheap in the U.S. market. The renminbi would gain about 20 percent against the dollar if it were allowed to float freely like other currencies, according to the Peterson Institute for International Economics. China's policy has probably cost Americans hundreds of thousands of jobs and contributed to China's destabilizing pile of trillions of dollars in reserves." (Editorial, "Breaking China? Last Thing Needed Is A Trade War," *The Washington Post*, 9/1/11)

- **Obama's Failure To Confront China Cost The United States 450,000 Jobs From 2008 To 2010.** "American jobs have been shifting to low-wage countries for years, and the trend has continued during Obama's presidency. From 2008 to 2010, U.S. trade with China alone cost about 450,000 American jobs because of the growth of Chinese exports, said Robert E. Scott, a pro-labor advocate at the liberal Economic Policy Institute. That figure was less than in previous years, but the decrease was probably tied to the U.S. economic slowdown, which crimped demand for imports. 'I think he has walked away from the campaign commitments,' said Scott, the institute's director of trade and manufacturing policy research. 'He has done far too little to improve U.S. trade.'" (Tom Hamburger, Carol D. Leonnig and Zachary A. Goldfarb, "Obama's Record On Outsourcing Draws Criticism From The Left," *The Washington Post*, 7/9/12)
- **"Obama's Critics, Primarily On The Political Left, Say He Has Repeatedly Failed In Other Ways To Protect American Jobs From Being Moved Overseas" Including Confronting China.** "While White House officials say they have been waiting on Congress to act, Obama's critics, primarily on the political left, say he has repeatedly failed in other ways to protect American jobs from being moved overseas. They point to a range of actions they say he should have taken: confronting China, reining in unfettered trade and reworking a U.S. visa program that critics say ends up sending high-tech jobs abroad." (Tom Hamburger, Carol D. Leonnig and Zachary A. Goldfarb, "Obama's Record On Outsourcing Draws Criticism From The Left," *The Washington Post*, 7/9/12)

Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH): "Once Again, The U.S. Treasury Department Has Given China A Free Pass When It Comes To Its Currency Manipulation." "Once again, the U.S. Treasury Department has given China a free pass when it comes to its currency manipulation,' Brown said. 'While we're seeing American manufacturing rebound, China is stepping up its efforts in a number of critical sectors, including clean and solar energy, advanced manufacturing, and auto parts. Addressing China's currency manipulation is critical to our economic recovery and for job gains, and despite wide bipartisan support in the Senate for legislation that tackles this issue, the U.S. House has failed to act. Speaker Boehner should bring the Currency Exchange and Oversight Reform Act to the floor as soon as possible.'" (Sen. Sherrod Brown, "Treasury Giving China A 'Free Pass' On Currency Manipulation," *Press Release*, 5/25/12)

Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY): "The Administration Continues To Let China Get Away With Flouting Trade Rules Just For The Sake Of Diplomacy." Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), who has been sponsored legislation that would punish Chinese imports for the undervalued currency, also criticized the administration's report. 'The administration continues to let China get away with flouting trade rules just for the sake of diplomacy. Calling out China as a manipulator may be awkward, but it is time to take off the kid glove,' he said in a statement. 'With the administration continuing to balk on this, it's up to Congress to act. The Senate has passed bipartisan legislation to confront China and stand up for American workers, and Speaker Boehner needs to stop sitting on it and give it a vote.'" (Julian Pecquet, "Treasury: China Not Manipulating Currency," *The Hill's Global Affairs*, 5/25/12)

- **Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) In 2010: "China's Currency Manipulation Is Like A Boot To The Throat Of Our [Economic] Recovery And This Administration Refuses To Try And Take That Boot Off Our Neck."** (Committee On Banking, Housing, And Urban Affairs, U.S. Senate, *Hearing*, 9/16/10)

Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH) And Rep. Mike Michaud (D-ME) To Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner: "China Continues To Flout International Trade Laws By Manipulating Its Currency Value To Increase Its Trade Advantages. ... This Is Completely Unacceptable. All That Our People Are Asking For Is A

Level Playing Field. “In March, U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan, D-Niles, and Congressman Mike Michaud, D-Maine, drafted a letter to U.S. Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner and U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke to address China’s continued currency manipulation. ‘China continues to flout international trade laws by manipulating its currency value to increase its trade advantages,’ Ryan said. ‘This is completely unacceptable. All that our people are asking for is a level playing field.’” (Editorial, “Cheating Robs U.S., Area Of Jobs,” [Tribune Chronicle](#), 6/15/12)

V. LEADING FROM BEHIND: IRAN

Obama Reached Out To The Regime In Tehran, But Ignored Iranian Dissidents

In 2008, Obama Promised To “Stand For The Human Rights” Of Iranian Dissidents. OBAMA: “Will we stand for the human rights of the dissident in Burma, the blogger in Iran, or the voter in Zimbabwe? Will we give meaning to the words ‘never again’ in Darfur?” (Senator Barack Obama, [Address At The Victory Column](#), Berlin, Germany, 7/24/08)

At The Beginning Of His Administration, Obama Reached Out To Iran On Their New Year In A Taped Message And Offered “A New Beginning.” “President Barack Obama reached out to Iran on Friday -- the start of the Iranian New Year -- in a video message offering ‘the promise of a new beginning’ that is ‘grounded in mutual respect.’” (“Obama Offers Iran ‘The Promise Of A New Beginning,’” [CNN](#), 3/20/09)

- **Obama: “My Administration Is Now Committed To Diplomacy That Addresses The Full Range Of Issues Before Us.”** OBAMA: “So in this season of new beginnings I would like to speak clearly to Iran's leaders. We have serious differences that have grown over time. My administration is now committed to diplomacy that addresses the full range of issues before us, and to pursuing constructive ties among the United States, Iran and the international community. This process will not be advanced by threats. We seek instead engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual respect. You, too, have a choice. The United States wants the Islamic Republic of Iran to take its rightful place in the community of nations. You have that right -- but it comes with real responsibilities, and that place cannot be reached through terror or arms, but rather through peaceful actions that demonstrate the true greatness of the Iranian people and civilization. And the measure of that greatness is not the capacity to destroy, it is your demonstrated ability to build and create.” (President Barack Obama, [Videotaped Remarks In Celebration Of Nowruz](#), 3/20/09)
- **Iran Issued Its Response In The Form Of Long-Range Missile Tests.** “Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced Wednesday that his country had successfully test-fired a medium-range solid-fuel missile apparently capable of striking Israel and U.S. bases in the Persian Gulf region.” (Thomas Erdbrink, “Iranian Missile Launch Confirmed; Ahmadinejad Ties Test To Nuclear Program,” [The Washington Post](#), 5/21/09)

Obama’s Response To The 2009 Green Revolution Was “Strained” In An Attempt To Maintain A Dialogue With The Iranian Government. “The result has been a gradually evolving message that at times has seemed strained, drawing some of the harshest criticism, especially from conservatives, since he took office. . . . Understanding clearly why Mr. Obama is still taking such pains to keep the door open to the Iranian government requires rewinding back to July 23, 2007, and Charleston, S.C. During a Democratic presidential debate at the Citadel, Mr. Obama and the other candidates were asked if, during their first year as president, they would be willing to meet without preconditions with the leaders of Iran, Syria, Venezuela, Cuba and North Korea. ‘I would,’ Mr. Obama replied.” (Helene Cooper, “Bit By Careful Bit, Obama Toughens Stance On Iran,” [The New York Times](#), 6/24/09)

- **The Wall Street Journal: “Throughout This Turbulent Year In Iran, The White House Has Been Behind The Democratic Curve.”** “Throughout this turbulent year in Iran, the White House has been behind the democratic curve. When the demonstrations started, Mr. Obama abdicated his moral authority by refusing to take sides, while pushing ahead with plans to negotiate a grand diplomatic bargain with Mr. Ahmadinejad that trades recognition for suspending the nuclear program.” (Editorial, “The Peoples’ Revolt in Iran,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 12/22/09)

Iran’s Nuclear Program Has Expanded Under Obama’s Weak Policies

“Iran Has Made Substantial Progress In Producing Enriched Uranium In Recent Years — From About One Bomb’s Worth When Mr. Obama Took Office In 2009 To The Equivalent Of About Five Bombs’ Worth Today.” “Mr. Obama and his staff have been trying to avoid a crisis over Iran that would unfold in the last months of the presidential election. But the report, expected to be the last by the I.A.E.A. before Election Day, will lay out a stark reality: Despite increasingly painful sanctions, and a covert program called Olympic Games that aimed to slow the Iranian program with cyberattacks, Iran has made substantial progress in producing enriched uranium in recent years — from about one bomb’s worth when Mr. Obama took office in 2009 to the equivalent of about five bombs’ worth today.” (David E. Sanger, “Signs Suggest Iran Is Speeding Up Work On Nuclear Program,” [The New York Times](#), 8/23/12)

- **Despite Sanctions, Iran Has “Virtually Completed” An Underground Enrichment Plant, Putting Itself Closer To A Nuclear Bomb And In A Stronger Negotiating Position With The West.** “Intelligence officials from several countries say Iran in recent weeks has virtually completed an underground nuclear enrichment plant, racing ahead despite international pressure and heavy economic sanctions in what experts say may be an effort to give it leverage in any negotiations with the United States and its allies. The installation of the last of nearly 3,000 centrifuges at a site called Fordo, deep under a mountain inside a military base near the holy city of Qum, puts Iran closer to being able to build a nuclear weapon, or come up to the edge, if its leaders ultimately decide to proceed.” (David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, “Iran Said To Nearly Finish Nuclear Enrichment Plant,” [The New York Times](#), 10/25/12)
- **A Former State Department Official Said That “Iran Typically Likes To Pick Up The Pace Of Its Enrichment Work” When Facing Increased Sanctions To Show It Won’t Succumb To International Pressure.** “The prospect of a renewed round of diplomacy may explain the pace of activity at the underground site. The fact that the Fordo plant is approaching full operation, shortening the amount of time it would need to build a weapon, gives Iran added ability to exert pressure on the United States and its allies. ‘When slapped with new sanctions,’ said Mark Fitzpatrick, a former State Department official who now studies the Iranian program at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, “Iran typically likes to pick up the pace of its enrichment work to try to show that it can’t be pressured into submission.” (David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, “Iran Said To Nearly Finish Nuclear Enrichment Plant,” [The New York Times](#), 10/25/12)

Fearing Higher Oil Prices And “Political Trouble In An Election Year,” The Obama Administration Continues To Resist Stronger Actions Against Iran’s Nuclear Program. “Officials fear that too powerful a blow to the world’s third-largest oil exporter could cause an oil price increase, damaging the global economic recovery, undermining international support for the sanctions campaign and creating political trouble in an election year.” (Paul Richter, “Obama Administration Takes Back Seat On Iran Sanctions,” [Los Angeles Times](#), 2/17/12)

- ***The Wall Street Journal*: “The Current U.S. Approach To Sanctions ... Is Destined To Become Increasingly Ineffective Over Time. It Also Doesn’t Help That The Administration Is Waging A Behind-The-Scenes Campaign To Water Down Existing Sanctions.”** “All of this means that the current U.S. approach to sanctions, which depends on the ability and willingness of the Administration to go after individual Iranian or foreign companies, is destined to become increasingly ineffective over time. It also doesn’t help that the Administration is waging a behind-the-scenes campaign to water down existing sanctions by granting nearly every available waiver to countries that continue to buy Iranian oil.” (Editorial, “Iran Sanctions Test,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 7/30/12)

Obama “Has Consistently Resisted Previous Congressional Attempts To Impose The Harshes Possible Sanctions,” Including Granting Waivers To Countries That Have Not Significantly Cut Back Their Oil Purchases From Iran. “Congress can also curtail the Administration’s practice of granting sanctions’ waivers to countries that have modestly cut back their imports of Iranian energy. That means setting a threshold—say, a 40% reduction—for any country that finds it still must import

Iranian oil. The Administration will resist these stiffer penalties, as it has consistently resisted previous Congressional attempts to impose the harshest possible sanctions. But that's all the more reason for the conferees to present the President with the toughest bill possible, and see where he really stands." (Editorial, "Iran Sanctions Test," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 7/30/12)

- **The Obama Administration Has Now Granted Waivers To "All Twenty Of Iran's Major Trading Partners," Including China, For Their Efforts To Reduce Iranian Oil Imports Ahead Of The Sanctions.** "Though economic sanctions still haven't slowed or stopped Iran's nuclear drive, the Obama Administration has decided to make them even weaker. The Iran sanctions regime is looking like the U.S. tax code—filled with loopholes. It's so weak, in fact, that all 20 of Iran's major trading partners are now exempt from them. We've arrived at a kind of voodoo version of sanctions. They look real, insofar as Congress forced them into a bill President Obama had to sign in December. The Administration has spoken incantations about their powers. But if you're a big oil importer in China, India or 18 other major economies, the sanctions are mostly smoke." (Editorial, "Obama's Iran Loopholes," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 7/2/12)
- **Iran "Portrayed The Exemptions As A Win For Iran," Calling Them An "Overt Retreat" By The U.S.** "Iranian officials portrayed the exemptions as a win for Iran, despite the fact that the countries were explicitly exempted because they had begun weaning themselves off Iranian oil. Fars News headlined its story on the sanctions, 'U.S.A. backs down against Iran.' 'Such a move is an overt retreat from their earlier stances,' the head of the parliament foreign policy commission, Aladin Borujerdi, told the Iranian Students News Agency. He said it was 'due to decisive stances taken by the Islamic Republic' defending its nuclear program." ("Iran Claims Victory After U.S. Exempts Countries From Oil Sanctions," [Los Angeles Times](#), 3/21/12)

Iran "Continues To Find New Ways To Circumvent" Key US Sanctions. "Sanctions are a key element of the president's strategy to neutralize the Iranian threat. But the Iranian regime continues to find new ways to circumvent U.S. strictures, moving billions of dollars through the global financial system. This has afforded Tehran more time and space to advance its dangerous program." (Mark Dubowitz And Jonathan Schanzer, "Closing Tehran's Sanctions Loopholes," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 3/8/12)

- **Iran Has Cushioned Its Exports Through Bartering Systems With India And China.** "Bartering with India and China is already cushioning Iran exports against further decline. Flows of Indian rice, medicine and steel to Iran have surged in recent weeks after Tehran's private banks were able to use the rupees gained from oil sales and were even allowed to pay for the goods 100% upfront, one Iran trade professional said." (Benoît Faucon, "Iran Barters And Bargains To Help Oil Sales," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 8/7/12)
- **Iran Is Using Sanctions To Become More Self-Sufficient In Technology, Replacing Western Software, Cement And Equipment With Domestic Products.** "To offset the decline in output, Iran is replacing Western technologies with domestic ones. According to a study published in Iran's oil ministry in-house magazine, Iran is now self-sufficient in technologies such as seismic-exploration software and most drilling cement and wellhead equipment." (Benoît Faucon, "Iran Barters And Bargains To Help Oil Sales," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 8/7/12)

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta Acknowledged That "International Sanctions Have Yet To Compel Iran To Give Up Its Nuclear Ambitions." "U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta acknowledged Monday that increasingly stiff international sanctions have yet to compel Iran to give up its nuclear ambitions. But he argued that more pressure eventually would lead Iran to 'do what's right.'" ("Panetta: Sanctions Not Moving Iran Away From Nukes," [The Associated Press](#), 7/30/12)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu: "We Have To Be Honest And Say That All The Sanctions And Diplomacy So Far Have Not Set Back The Iranian Program By One Iota." "Mr.

Romney's warnings on Iran's nuclear capability came after a day of meetings with Israeli officials here in which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called existing Iran sanctions ineffective. 'We have to be honest and say that all the sanctions and diplomacy so far have not set back the Iranian program by one iota,' Mr. Netanyahu said. 'That's why I believe that we need a strong and credible military threat coupled with the sanctions to have a chance to change that situation.'" (Sara Murray, "Romney Talks Tough," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 7/30/12)

- **Netanyahu: "Right Now The Iranian Regime Believes That The International Community Does Not Have The Will To Stop Its Nuclear Program."** "Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu signaled that such declarations were of little comfort. 'However forceful our statements, they have not convinced Iran that we are serious about stopping them,' Netanyahu said, standing next to Panetta at the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem. 'Right now the Iranian regime believes that the international community does not have the will to stop its nuclear program. This must change, and it must change quickly because time to resolve this issue peacefully is running out.'" (Phil Stewart and Dan Williams, "Israel Tells U.S. Time Is Running Out In Iran Nuclear Dispute," [Reuters](#), 8/1/12)

On Obama's Watch, Iran Has Worked To Destabilize The Region

"U.S. Military Commanders In Iraq Say Iranian-Made Weaponry Is Killing American Troops There At An Unprecedented Pace, Posing New Dangers To The Remaining Forces And Highlighting Tehran's Intensifying Push To Gain Influence Over Post-U.S. Iraq." (Yochi J. Dreazen, "Record Number Of U.S. Troops Killed By Iranian Weapons," [National Journal](#), 7/29/11)

- **Iranian-Made Rockets, Anti-Vehicle Bombs, And Mortars Killed U.S. Troops In Iraq.** "Military officials said six of the 14 dead troops were killed by so-called 'explosively formed penetrators,' or EFPs, a sophisticated roadside bomb capable of piercing through even the best-protected U.S. vehicles. Five other troops were killed earlier in the month when a barrage of rockets slammed into their base in Baghdad. It was the largest single-day U.S. loss of life since April 2009, when a truck bomb killed five soldiers. The remaining three troops killed in June died after a rocket known as an 'improvised rocket-assisted mortar,' or IRAM, landed in a remote U.S. outpost in southern Iraq. U.S. officials say the EFPs, rockets, and IRAMs all come from neighboring Iran. Tehran denies providing the weaponry to Shia militias operating in Iraq." (Yochi J. Dreazen, "Record Number Of U.S. Troops Killed By Iranian Weapons," [National Journal](#), 7/29/11)
- **Iran Has Supplied Rockets To The Taliban In Afghanistan That Double The Range At Which The Taliban Can Attack American Forces.** "In Afghanistan, the Pentagon has in recent months traced to Iran the Taliban's acquisition of rockets that give its fighters roughly double the range to attack North Atlantic Treaty Organization and U.S. targets. U.S. officials said the rockets' markings, and the location of their discovery, give them a 'high degree' of confidence that they came from the Revolutionary Guard's overseas unit, the Qods Force." (Jay Solomon, "Iran Funnels New Weapons To Iraq And Afghanistan," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 7/2/11)

In 2012, General Allen "Specifically Noted" That Iranian Support To The Taliban Continues To Be A Threat To Stability In Afghanistan. "Allen also specifically noted Iranian aid to the Taliban, something that administration and military officials have played down in the past, and cited a continuing threat posed by al-Qaeda. 'We know that Iran continues to support the insurgency and fuels the flames of violence,' he said." (Karen DeYoung, "Gen. Allen Says Afghan War 'On Track' Despite Violence, Setbacks," [The Washington Post](#), 3/20/12)

- **"Iran Secretly Ordered Its Agents Operating Inside Afghanistan To Exploit The Anticipated Outrage" Over The Koran Burnings.** "Just hours after it was revealed that American soldiers had burned Korans seized at an Afghan detention center in late February, Iran secretly ordered its agents operating inside Afghanistan to exploit the anticipated public outrage by trying to instigate

violent protests in the capital, Kabul, and across the western part of the country, according to American officials. For the most part, the efforts by Iranian agents and local surrogates failed to provoke widespread or lasting unrest, the officials said.” (Thom Shanker, Eric Schmitt and Alissa Rubin, “U.S. Sees Iran In Bids To Stir Unrest In Afghanistan,” [The New York Times](#), 4/4/1)

Iran Has “Increased Its Political Outreach And Arms Shipments To Rebels” In Yemen And Continues To Arm The Assad Regime In Syria. “Iran has denied any government-backed effort to foment unrest in Afghanistan, but American officials see a pattern of malign meddling to increase Iran’s influence across the Middle East and South Asia. Iran appears to have increased its political outreach and arms shipments to rebels and other political figures in Yemen, and it is arming and advising the embattled government of President Bashar al-Assad of Syria.” (Thom Shanker, Eric Schmitt and Alissa Rubin, “U.S. Sees Iran in Bids To Stir Unrest In Afghanistan,” [The New York Times](#), 4/4/12)

VI. LEADING FROM BEHIND: IRAQ

Violence Has Escalated After Obama's Disengagement

"In Iraq, The Prospect Of A Flourishing Democracy Built On Eight Years Of U.S. Investment Of Money And Lives Is Fading." "In Iraq, the prospect of a flourishing democracy built on eight years of U.S. investment of money and lives is fading. Just a few months after the last U.S. soldier left, 'the country has become something close to a failed state,' Ned Parker of the Council on Foreign Relations in New York wrote in an analysis in the March/April issue of Foreign Affairs magazine." (Terry Atlas, "Obama's 'Pretty Strong Teflon' Deflects Foreign Policy Criticism," [Bloomberg](#), 2/28/12)

- **"In Iraq, The Dream Of A Peaceful And Democratic Ally In The Arab World Is Giving Way To A Renewal Of Violence And An Authoritarian Government That Lists Toward Iran."** (Alissa Rubin, "Retiring Envoy To Afghanistan Exhorts U.S To Heed Its Past," [The New York Times](#), 7/28/12)

"The White House Failed To Persuade Iraqi Leaders To Allow A Stay-Behind Force Of U.S. Troops To Remain In Iraq At The End Of Last Year." (Josh Gerstein, "World's Obama Fever Cools," [Politico](#), 9/21/12)

- **Iraq "Appears To Teeter On The Edge Of A New Outbreak Of Sectarian Violence" After Obama Either "Was Unwilling Or Unable ... To Extend A Security Agreement."** "Yes, U.S. troops have left Iraq, in part because the Obama administration was unwilling or unable — take your pick — to extend a security agreement with Iraq. Since the U.S. departure, Iraq has descended into violence as the government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has targeted Sunni opposition figures. The country at times appears to teeter on the edge of a new outbreak of sectarian violence." (Glenn Kessler, "Fact-Checking The 2012 State Of The Union Speech," [The Washington Post's "Fact Checker"](#), 1/25/12)

"As Syria's Civil War Worsens And The U.S. Watches Mostly From The Sidelines, Violence Is Escalating Again In Another Middle East Country From Which President Obama Has Disengaged," Iraq. "Meanwhile, back in Iraq. As Syria's civil war worsens and the U.S. watches mostly from the sidelines, violence is escalating again in another Middle East country from which President Obama has disengaged. At least 115 Iraqis died on Monday in terrorist strikes on military and police posts and Shiite civilians. The al Qaeda affiliate in Iraq on Saturday all but announced what was coming, but Iraqi security forces were unable to stop some 40 coordinated and deadly attacks. Monday was the bloodiest day of the year, and June the second deadliest month since U.S. forces left in December." (Editorial, "Iraqi Distress Signals," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 7/26/12)

- **"The Abandonment Of Iraq Is Consistent With The Administration's Response To The 17-Month Conflict In Syria," And Part Of The "Arc Of Instability That Is Forming From Lebanon, Through Syria, Iraq And Into The Persian Gulf."** "Iraq has to find its own democratic way, and the U.S. can't serve as mediator forever. But Mr. Obama took the U.S. out of the country cold turkey and has since shown no interest in a crucial Middle East country where so much American blood was shed. The last ambassador left Baghdad in early June, and the Administration has no replacement on deck. The abandonment of Iraq is consistent with the Administration's response to the 17-month conflict in Syria. President Obama says 'the tide of war is receding,' but you wouldn't know it from the arc of instability that is forming from Lebanon, through Syria, Iraq and into the Persian Gulf." (Editorial, "Iraqi Distress Signals," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 7/26/12)

Obama's "Abdication In Iraq" Has Fueled Sectarian Conflict And Instability "As The Factions Compete For Power And Self-Preservation In A Region Where Iran Now Counts For More Than America Does." "The U.S. abdication in Iraq has compounded those fissiparous tendencies. The Obama Administration last year made little serious effort to keep a smaller contingent of noncombat troops in Iraq beyond the 2011 withdrawal deadline. An American presence had calmed sectarian fevers and gave

Mr. Maliki more confidence to share power. But the White House priority was a total withdrawal it could point to as a promise kept to the political left as the re-election campaign neared. Now the U.S. has little leverage as the factions compete for power and self-preservation in a region where Iran now counts for more than America does.” (Editorial, “Iraqi Distress Signals,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 7/26/12)

- **Iran Is Using Iraqi Airspace To Ship Military Equipment To The Assad Regime In Syria.** “Iran has resumed shipping military equipment to Syria over Iraqi airspace in a new effort to bolster the embattled government of President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, according to senior American officials.” (Michael R. Gordon, “Iran Supplying Syrian Military Via Iraq Airspace,” [The New York Times](#), 9/4/12)
- **Iran’s Use Of Iraqi Airspace Shows The Limitations Of U.S. Influence In Iraq, “Despite Its Assertion That It Is Building A Strategic Partnership With The Iraqis.”** “And Mr. Maliki’s tolerance of Iran’s use of Iraqi airspace suggests the limits of the Obama administration’s influence in Iraq, despite the American role in toppling Saddam Hussein and ushering in a new government. The American influence also appears limited despite its assertion that it is building a strategic partnership with the Iraqis.” (Michael R. Gordon, “Iran Supplying Syrian Military Via Iraq Airspace,” [The New York Times](#), 9/4/12)

Al-Qaeda Violence Has Resumed In Iraq And Al-Qaeda “Smuggling Routes” Are Being Used To Funnel Fighters And Weapons Into Syria. “The network’s once-dormant franchise in Iraq has carried out a string of deadly attacks across the country. It has also reversed smuggling routes that used to bring fighters and weapons in through Syria but are now being used to export violence to the uprising against that country’s president, Bashar al-Assad.” (Greg Miller, “Al-Qaeda Is Weaker Without Bin Laden But Its Franchise Persists,” [The Washington Post](#), 4/27/12)

- **Despite Obama’s Claims To Have Decimated Al-Qaida, It “Remains Fully Capable Of Creating Chaos In The Foreseeable Future.”** “Al-Qaida has been seeking to re-assert its might in the security vacuum left by the departing Americans, seizing on Baghdad’s fragmented government and the surge of Sunni rebels in neighboring Syria to sow instability across Iraq. U.S. and Iraqi officials insist that the terror network’s Iraqi wing, known as the Islamic State of Iraq, is nowhere as strong as it was when the nation threatened to fall into civil war between 2006 and 2008, and the Iraqi government is better established. Still, the huge death toll Monday and an almost-daily drumbeat of killings last month show al-Qaida remains fully capable of creating chaos in the foreseeable future.” (“Officials: Onslaught Of Shootings, Bombings Across Iraq Kill 93 In Bloodiest Day Of Year,” [The Associated Press](#), 7/23/12)

Obama Tried And Failed To Negotiate A Status Of Forces Agreement That Would Have Allowed Thousands Of U.S. Troops To Remain In Iraq After 2011

Obama Tried To Deny That He Proposed A Status Of Forces Agreement That Would Have Left Thousands Of Troops In Iraq. ROMNEY: “You didn’t want a status of forces agreement?” OBAMA: “What I would not have done is left 10,000 troops in Iraq that would tie us down. That certainly would not help us in the Middle East.” ROMNEY: “I’m sorry. You actually -- there was an effort on the part of the president to have a status of forces against, and I concurred in that and said we should have a number of troops that stayed on. That was something I concurred with. That was your posture and mine as well. You thought it should have been 5,000 troops and I thought it should have been more troops.” OBAMA: “Governor, this was done a few weeks ago. A few weeks ago you indicated we should still have troops in Iraq.” ROMNEY: “No, I didn’t. Sorry, I indicated that you failed to put in place a status of forces agreement at the end of the conflict that existed.” (2012 Presidential Debate, Lynn University, Boca Raton, FL, 10/22/12)

- **“Obama Suggested That Mr. Romney Was Mistaken In Seeking To Keep 10,000 American Troops In Iraq. But The Obama Administration Initially Sought To Do Just That.”** “President Obama suggested that Mr. Romney was mistaken in seeking to keep 10,000 American troops in

Iraq. But the Obama administration initially sought to do just that — and ultimately never managed to negotiate an agreement to allow any American troops in Iraq.” (Michael Gordon and Scott Shane, “Fact Check: A Status Of Forces Agreement?” [The New York Times](#), 10/22/12)

“Actually, The Obama Administration Tried For Many Months To Win Iraqi Agreement To Keeping Several Thousand American Troops There Beyond 2011 To Continue Training And Advising The Iraqi Armed Forces.” “Obama was suggesting that he had never favored keeping U.S. troops in Iraq beyond the December 2011 withdrawal deadline that the Bush administration had negotiated with the Iraqi government. Actually, the Obama administration tried for many months to win Iraqi agreement to keeping several thousand American troops there beyond 2011 to continue training and advising the Iraqi armed forces. The talks broke down over a disagreement on legal immunity for U.S. troops.” (Calvin Woodward, “FACT CHECK: Missteps In Final Presidential Debate,” [The Associated Press](#), 10/22/12)

- **NBC’s Richard Haass: “Even The Administration I Think Has Kept Open The Possibility Of A So Called Residual Force There.”** NBC’s RICHARD HAASS: “Even the administration I think has kept open the possibility of a so called residual force there, and that was an odd counterpoint to the conversation about Iraq, where it was almost confusing. Governor Romney was saying we should have kept some forces there, and the president was talking about how good it was we had gotten all of our forces out when in fact, the United States did try to negotiate some sort of an arrangement with the Iraqis where some forces could stay. So I found all of this somewhat, somewhat odd. But again, to me the larger, the larger bottom line of the night was that on foreign policy issues actually, there was much more agreement than disagreement.” (NBC’s “[2012 Presidential Debate](#),” 10/22/12)
- **“Obama Sought To Negotiate A Status Of Forces Agreement That Would Have Allowed United States Troops To Stay In Iraq After 2011.”** “Mr. Obama sought to negotiate a Status of Forces Agreement that would have allowed United States troops to stay in Iraq after 2011. Initially, the Obama administration was prepared to keep up to 10,000 troops in Iraq. Later, the Obama administration lowered the figure to about 5,000 troops — some 3,500 of which would be continuously based in the country while the remainder would periodically be rotated through. The role of the American forces would be to train Iraqi troops, patrol Iraq’s skies and help Iraqi commandos fight Al Qaeda.” (Michael Gordon and Scott Shane, “Fact Check: A Status Of Forces Agreement?” [The New York Times](#), 10/22/12)
- **Obama “Tried To Negotiate A Status Of Forces Agreement With The Iraqi Government To Allow A Residual U.S. Force There.”** “Obama also wanted to leave several thousand U.S. troops in Iraq. He tried to negotiate a status of forces agreement with the Iraqi government to allow a residual U.S. force there, but the Iraqi government refused to grant legal immunity to any remaining U.S. troops. The last troops pulled out in December 2011.” (Brooks Jackson, “Homestretch Fact-Stretchers,” [FactCheck.Org](#), 10/22/12)
- **“The Obama Administration Says That It Was Willing To Keep Some Troops In Iraq, But The Iraqis, Reflecting Their Concerns Over Sovereignty, Failed To Agree To The Necessary Immunities.”** “The Obama administration says that it was willing to keep some troops in Iraq, but the Iraqis, reflecting their concerns over sovereignty, failed to agree to the necessary immunities. After the talks broke down, the Obama administration withdrew the remaining American troops in December 2011, the deadline set for withdrawing all American forces from Iraq under the Status of Forces Agreement that was concluded by George W. Bush and Mr. Maliki in 2008.” (Michael Gordon and Scott Shane, “Fact Check: A Status Of Forces Agreement?” [The New York Times](#), 10/22/12)

“Romney’s Right—Obama Did Try To Get A Status Of Forces Agreement, But Could Not Get An Agreement With The Government Of Iraq.” “Romney’s right—Obama did try to get a status of forces agreement, but could not get an agreement with the government of Iraq. So now he stresses the fact that

he has removed all troops from Iraq, while knocking Romney for supporting what he originally had hoped to achieve.” (Glenn Kessler, “Fact Check: Debate Over Iraq Withdrawal,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/22/12)

VII. LEADING FROM BEHIND: ISRAEL

After Four Years Of Mismanagement And Delay, Obama Has Failed To Move The Middle East Peace Process Forward

In 2008, Obama Said As President He Would Make Middle East Peace A Top Priority. OBAMA: "As president, I will work to help Israel achieve the goal of two states, a Jewish state of Israel and a Palestinian state, living side by side in peace and security. And I won't wait until the waning days of my presidency. I will take an active role, and make a personal commitment to do all I can to advance the cause of peace from the start of my administration." (Senator Barack Obama, [Remarks At The AIPAC Policy Conference](#), Washington, D.C. 6/4/08)

Obama In 2012: "I Have Not Been Able To Move The Peace Process Forward In The Middle East The Way I Wanted." OBAMA: "Well, you know, the truth is that the things I can do, um, without Congress tend to be in the foreign policy area. And, you know, in that area I have not been able to move the peace process forward in the Middle East the way I wanted. It's something we focused on very early. But the truth of the matter is, is that the parties, ultimately, they've got to want it as well." ([WILA-ABC](#) 7/15/12)

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Though Obama Claimed To "Understand The Nuances" Of The Middle East Peace Process, "His Attempts To Bring The Two Sides Together Failed In His First Term." "According to three people who were at the meeting, and to notes recounted by one of them, Obama sought to reassure the skeptical attendees, telling them, 'Don't think we don't understand the nuances of the current issues. We do.' But it was his response a few minutes later that came to define his administration's relationship with Israel — and the reason many in the room that day, and even more outside of it, believe that his attempts to bring the two sides together failed in his first term." (Scott Wilson, "Where Obama Failed On Forging Peace In The Middle East," [The Washington Post](#), 7/14/12)

- **The Obama Administration Is "Either Unwilling Or Unable To Push The Two Sides To The Bargaining Table Or Stop Them From Taking Actions That Further Damage The Prospects For Relaunching Moribund Peace Talks."** "Palestinians are pressing their bid for recognition at the United Nations and membership in U.N. agencies. The Israelis respond by accelerating settlement activity and withholding Palestinian tax revenue. The Obama administration is either unwilling or unable to push the two sides to the bargaining table or stop them from taking actions that further damage the prospects for relaunching moribund peace talks." (Matthew Lee, "Analysis: Obama Mideast Policy Adrift Amid Crises," [The Associated Press](#), 11/3/11)
- **Obama's Political Mistakes And "Outdated View" Of The Conflict Contributed To His Failure To Move The Peace Process Forward.** "The way Obama managed the Israeli-Palestinian issue exhibited many of the hallmarks that have defined his first term. It began with a bid for historic change. But it foundered ultimately on his political and tactical misjudgments, on a lack of trusted relationships and on an outdated view of a conflict that many of his closest advisers imparted to him. And those advisers — veterans of the Middle East peace issue — clashed among themselves over tactics and turf." (Scott Wilson, "Where Obama Failed On Forging Peace In The Middle East," [The Washington Post](#), 7/14/12)

Obama's Strategy For The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict "Has Been Stalled And Sometimes Poorly Executed." "Even the most sympathetic observer of the administration's efforts on the Israel-Palestinian issue would have to concede the diplomacy has been stalled and sometimes poorly executed." (Glenn Kessler, "Obama and Israel: Stalled Diplomacy Or 'Suspicion And Distrust'?" [The Washington Post's "Fact Checker"](#), 7/11/11)

- **Obama's First Year Peace Process Lacked Any Foresight, He Took On Israeli Settlements Before Securing A Deal With Israel.** "Peacemaking takes strategic skill. But we see no sign that

President Obama and Mr. Mitchell were thinking more than one move down the board. The president went public with his demand for a full freeze on settlements before securing Israel's commitment. And he and his aides apparently had no plan for what they would do if Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said no." (Editorial, "Diplomacy 101," [The New York Times](#), 11/27/09)

- ***The Washington Post*: "The Administration Has Few, If Any, Achievements To Brag About Despite Having Invested Significant Diplomatic Capital In The Israeli-Palestinian Issue."** "After 2 ½ years, the administration has few, if any, achievements to brag about despite having invested significant diplomatic capital in the Israeli-Palestinian issue. If anything, one could make a case that the two sides are further apart because of the administration's actions, though, to be fair, ultimately it is up to the Israelis and Palestinians to make peace, not the United States." (Glenn Kessler, "Obama and Israel: Stalled Diplomacy Or 'Suspicion And Distrust'?" [The Washington Post's "Fact Checker"](#), 7/11/11)
- **"Even Some Of The President's Closest Foreign Policy Allies Concede There Is Little, If Anything, To Show For The Administration's Intense Early Efforts To Broker Peace."** (Josh Gerstein, "Obama Shifts Mideast Message," [Politico](#), 5/18/11)
- ***The New York Times*' Helene Cooper Said Obama's Plan For The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process Over The Last Two Years Has Been To "Kick The Can Down The Road."** THE NEW YORK TIMES' HELENE COOPER: "For President Obama, I would ask him -- he criticized Mitt Romney for saying that the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks should be kick the can down the road. I would ask President Obama whether he has not just done that exactly for the last two years." (NBC's "Meet The Press," 10/21/12)

The Obama Administration's "Tough Love" Policy Toward Israel Was Not "As Grounded In The Realities Of The Current Conflict As It Should Have Been." "I have some very smart people advising me on this,' Obama told the Jewish leaders in that first meeting at the White House in July 2009, turning to Emanuel. 'We understand there is a profound political edge to Israeli politics. Rahm understands the politics there and he explains them to me.' To many in the administration, Emanuel's instinct was one of 'tough love' toward Israel. 'But his depth may not have been as grounded in the realities of the current conflict as it should have been,' said a senior administration official, who worked on the Israeli-Palestinian issue." (Scott Wilson, "Where Obama Failed On Forging Peace In The Middle East," [The Washington Post](#), 7/14/12)

- **Obama's Pressure On Israel "Backfired" And "Appeared To Let The Palestinians Off The Hook."** "U.S. pressure at the time also backfired because it appeared to let the Palestinians off the hook. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas refused to enter into direct talks before a settlement freeze, even though he had done so before. The administration had to settle for indirect talks, with Mitchell shuttling back and forth. The recent disagreement has set back that effort." (Glenn Kessler, "Dispute With Israel Underscores Limits Of U.S. Power, A Shifting Alliance," [The Washington Post](#), 3/24/10)
- **Obama Caused The "Biggest Strains In A Decade" Between Israel And U.S.** "Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking is a major part of Obama's effort to repair America's image in the Muslim world... But his administration has made little headway in clearing obstacles to the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip... Relations between Washington and close ally Israel are under the biggest strains in a decade." (Matt Spetalnick and Jeffrey Heller, "Hopes Low For Obama-Led Mideast Summit In New York," [Reuters](#), 9/22/09)

"Obama's Lack Of Progress In Changing The U.S. Image In The Region Stems From His Inability" To Resolve The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. "In part, Obama's lack of progress in changing the U.S. image in the region stems from his inability to make headway on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, despite promises to make it a priority." (Karen DeYoung And Scott Wilson, "Libya Attack Represents Challenge For Obama," [The Washington Post](#), 9/13/12)

VIII. LEADING FROM BEHIND: THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

***The Wall Street Journal*: “The Fires Across The Middle East, From Libya To Syria To Iran, Rage In A Vacuum Created By The Perception That The U.S. Is Withdrawing From The Region.”** “The boys in Chicago will keep saying that Mr. Obama has ‘strengthened our alliances and restored our standing.’ But come again? Ask Israel, Poland or Saudi Arabia how confident they are of America's friendship and resolve these days. The fires across the Middle East, from Libya to Syria to Iran, rage in a vacuum created by the perception that the U.S. is withdrawing from the region. Weakness emboldens adversaries, as Mr. Romney put it, whether Russia's Vladimir Putin, violent Arab Islamists or Iran's mullahs.” (Editorial, “Romney's World,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 10/8/12)

Anti-American Protests “Represent The Most Serious Challenge Yet” To Obama’s Attempt To Improve America’s Relationship With The Middle East. “The assault Tuesday evening on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi and an earlier attack on the U.S. Embassy in Cairo represent the most serious challenge yet to Obama’s attempt to transform a traditionally anti-American region into one that is more trusting of U.S. intentions and can serve as a counterweight, with Israel, to Iran’s ambitions.” (Karen DeYoung and Scott Wilson, “Libya Attack Represents Challenge For Obama,” [The Washington Post](#), 9/12/12)

Obama Described Terrorist Attack In Libya And Unrest Throughout The Middle East As “Bumps In The Road.” CBS’s STEVE KROFT: “Have recent events in the Middle East given you any pause about your support for the governments that have come to power following the Arab Spring?” OBAMA: “Well, I'd said even at the time that this is going to be a rocky path. The question presumes that somehow we could have stopped this wave of change. I think it was absolutely the right thing for us to do to align ourselves with democracy, universal rights-- a notion that-- people have- to be able to-- participate-- in-- their own governance. But I was pretty certain and continue to be pretty certain that there are going to be bumps in the road because-- you know, in a lot of these places-- the one organizing principle-- has been Islam. The one part of society that hasn't been controlled completely by the government. There are strains of extremism, and anti-Americanism, and anti-Western sentiment. And you know can be tapped into by demagogues. There will probably be some times where we bump up against some of these countries and have strong disagreements, but I do think that over the long term, we are more likely to get a Middle East and North Africa that is more peaceful, more prosperous and more aligned with our interests.” (CBS’s “[60 Minutes](#),” 9/23/12)

Obama Says One Thing, His State Department Says Another

Obama Said He Would Not Consider Egypt An Ally. TELEMUNDO/NBC’s JOSE DIAZ-BALART: “Would you consider the current Egyptian regime an ally of the United States?” OBAMA: “I don’t think that we would consider them an ally, but we don’t consider them an enemy. They’re a new government that is trying to find its way.” (President Barack Obama, Interview With Jose Diaz-Balart, [Telemundo/NBC News](#), 9/12/12)

- **“Technically, Egypt Was Designated As A Major Non-NATO Ally In 1989.”** “That comment had Egypt watchers scratching their heads, especially since technically, Egypt was designated as a Major Non-NATO Ally in 1989 when Congress first passed the law creating that status, which gives them special privileges in cooperating with the United States, especially in the security and technology arenas.” (Josh Rogin, “White House Clarifies Obama’s Statement That Egypt Is Not An ‘Ally,’” [Foreign Policy’s “The Cable”](#), 9/13/12)
- **Egypt Is Still Listed As A Major Non-NATO U.S. Ally.** “Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Saturday formally designated Afghanistan a ‘major non-NATO ally,’ setting the stage for tighter military cooperation even as international troops are on a path to withdraw from the war-torn country by the end of 2014. ... The list of major non-NATO allies includes Argentina, Australia,

Bahrain, Egypt, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand.” (Olivier Knox, “U.S. Anoints Afghanistan A ‘Major Non-NATO Ally,’” [Yahoo! News](#), 7/6/12)

The Next Day, Obama’s State Department Clarified That Egypt Is Still An Ally, Despite What Obama Said. “The State Department affirmed Egypt’s legal status as an ally Thursday — an apparent contradiction to what President Obama said in a Wednesday interview. Asked repeatedly if the State Department still considered Egypt a major non-NATO ally — a designation they were awarded in 1989 — State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said simply: ‘Yes.’” (Byron Tau, “State Dept: Egypt’s Still An Ally,” [Politico](#), 9/13/12)

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The Obama Administration Is Scrambling To Explain The Security And Intelligence Breakdowns In Libya

“The Obama Administration’s Shifting Accounts Of The Fatal Attack On The American Diplomatic Compound In Benghazi, Libya, Have Left President Obama Suddenly Exposed On National Security And Foreign Policy.” “The Obama administration’s shifting accounts of the fatal attack on the American diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya, have left President Obama suddenly exposed on national security and foreign policy, a field where he had enjoyed a seemingly unassailable advantage over Mitt Romney in the presidential race. After first describing the attack as a spontaneous demonstration run amok, administration officials now describe it as a terrorist act with possible involvement by Al Qaeda.” (Mark Landler, “Shifting Reports On Libya Killings May Cost Obama,” [The New York Times](#), 9/28/12)

- **The Obama Administration’s Explanation Of The Benghazi Attack Has Been “Evolving And At Times Muddled.”** “Her remarks added to the administration’s evolving and at times muddled explanation of what happened on the evening of Sept. 11 and into the next morning. Republicans in Congress have accused President Obama of playing down possible terrorist involvement in the midst of a re-election campaign in which killing Osama bin Laden and crippling Al Qaeda are cited as major achievements.” (Steven Lee Myers, “Clinton Suggests Link To Qaeda Offshoot In Deadly Libya Attack,” [The New York Times](#), 9/26/12)
- **NBC’s David Gregory:** “They’re just sowing more confusion about this rather than resolving the issue, which is creating more of an issue.” (MSNBC’s “Andrea Mitchell Reports,” 10/12/12)

“Some Analysts Argue That The White House, Meanwhile, Sought To Play Down Any Potential Characterization Of The Assault As A Qaeda Attack, Because That Would Undercut Its Claims To Have Crushed Al Qaeda.” (David D. Kirkpatrick, “Election-Year Stakes Overshadow Nuances Of Libya Investigation,” [The New York Times](#), 10/15/12)

- **The Obama Administration Focused On The Protests For As Long As Possible After The Benghazi Attack Because “It Certainly Was In The White House’s Interests To Not Portray The Attack As A Terrorist Incident.”** “In any kind of confused overseas event, initial reports are often wrong. But the Sept. 11 attack on the U.S. diplomatic post in Benghazi, Libya, in which four Americans were killed, including the ambassador, is a case study of how an administration can carefully keep the focus as long as possible on one storyline — and then turn on a dime when it is no longer tenable. For political reasons, it certainly was in the White House’s interests to not portray the attack as a terrorist incident, especially one that took place on the anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks. Instead the administration kept the focus on what was ultimately a red herring — anger in the Arab world over anti-Muslim video posted on You Tube. With key phrases and message discipline, the administration was able to conflate an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Egypt — which apparently was prompted by the video — with the deadly assault in Benghazi.” (Glenn Kessler, “From Video To Terrorist Attack: A Definitive Timeline Of Administration Statements On The Libya Attack,” [The Washington Post’s Fact Checker](#), 9/27/12)

***The Wall Street Journal*: “Rather Than Accept Responsibility, The Administration Has Tried To Stonewall And Blame Others.”** “Four Americans lost their lives in Benghazi in a terrorist attack that evidence suggests should have been anticipated and might have been stopped. Rather than accept responsibility, the Administration has tried to stonewall and blame others. Congress should call hearings to hold someone accountable for this debacle.” (Editorial, “The Libya Debacle,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 9/26/12)

- **Intelligence Officials Say “The White House Is Placing Blame On CIA.”** “Many intelligence officials are concerned by signs that the White House is placing blame on CIA, officials said. Comments during the Oct. 11 vice presidential debate by Vice President Joe Biden, who said that the White House presented information as provided by the intelligence community, were seen as criticism of the CIA. ‘Biden threw it at the agency in the debate,’ said a former CIA official. ‘We’re the whipping boy again.’” (Adam Entous and Siobhan Gorman, “Intelligence Stressed Libya Protest Scenario,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 10/21/12)

“The Benghazi Attack Calls Into Question The Accuracy Of Intelligence-Gathering And Whether Vulnerable American Personnel Overseas Are Receiving Adequate Protection.” “But the questions are likely to come not just from partisan Republicans. The Benghazi attack calls into question the accuracy of intelligence-gathering and whether vulnerable American personnel overseas are receiving adequate protection. Even allies of the president like Senator John Kerry, a Massachusetts Democrat and the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, have petitioned the White House for more information about how the government protects diplomatic installations abroad.” (Mark Landler, “Shifting Reports On Libya Killings May Cost Obama,” [The New York Times](#), 9/28/12)

- **Even Obama Supporters Like Sen. John Kerry Have Questioned The White House On Whether American Personnel Abroad Are Adequately Protected.** “The Benghazi attack calls into question the accuracy of intelligence-gathering and whether vulnerable American personnel overseas are receiving adequate protection. Even allies of the president like Senator John Kerry, a Massachusetts Democrat and the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, have petitioned the White House for more information about how the government protects diplomatic installations abroad.” (Mark Landler, “Shifting Reports On Libya Killings May Cost Obama,” [The New York Times](#), 9/28/12)

“Deteriorating Security Was No Secret” In The Months Leading Up To The Attack. “Deteriorating security was no secret. On April 10, for example, an explosive device was thrown at a convoy carrying U.N. envoy Ian Martin. On June 6, an improvised explosive device exploded outside the U.S. consulate. In late August, State warned American citizens who were planning to travel to Libya about the threat of assassinations and car bombings.” (Editorial, “The Libya Debacle,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 9/26/12)

- **“A Stream Of Diplomatic And Intelligence Reports” And “A String Of Assassinations As Well As Attacks” In The Months Before The Benghazi Attack Revealed The Deteriorating Security Situation And The Rise Of Al Qaeda-Leaning” Extremist Groups.** “In the months leading up to the Sept. 11 attacks on the American diplomatic mission in Benghazi, the Obama administration received intelligence reports that Islamic extremist groups were operating training camps in the mountains near the Libyan city and that some of the fighters were ‘Al Qaeda-leaning,’ according to American and European officials. The warning about the camps was part of a stream of diplomatic and intelligence reports that indicated that the security situation throughout the country, and particularly in eastern Libya, had deteriorated sharply since the United States reopened its embassy in Tripoli after the fall of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi’s government in September 2011. By June, Benghazi had experienced a string of assassinations as well as attacks on the Red Cross and a British envoy’s motorcade.” (Michael R. Gordon, Eric Schmitt and Michael S. Schmidt, “Libya Warnings Were Plentiful, But Unspecific,” [The New York Times](#), 10/29/12)

- **Ambassador Chris Stevens Had Warned Of “A Security Vacuum” In Benghazi.** “Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens, who was killed in the September attack, e-mailed his superiors in Washington in August alerting them to ‘a security vacuum’ in the city. A week before Mr. Stevens died, the American Embassy warned that Libyan officials had declared a ‘state of maximum alert’ in Benghazi after a car bombing and thwarted bank robbery.” (Michael R. Gordon, Eric Schmitt and Michael S. Schmidt, “Libya Warnings Were Plentiful, But Unspecific,” [The New York Times](#), 10/29/12)

“Despite All This, U.S. Diplomatic Missions Had Minimal Security.” “Despite all this, U.S. diplomatic missions had minimal security. Officials told the Journal that the Administration put too much faith in weak Libyan police and military forces. The night of the Benghazi attack, four lightly armed Libyans and five American security offices were on duty. The complex lacked smoke-protection masks and fire extinguishers. Neither the consulate in Benghazi nor the embassy in Tripoli were guarded by U.S. Marines, whose deployment to Libya wasn't a priority.” (Editorial, “The Libya Debacle,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 9/26/12)

- **U.S. Officials “Had Not Reinforced The U.S. Diplomatic Outpost There To Meet Strict Safety Standards For Government Buildings Overseas. Nor Had They Posted A U.S. Marine Detachment, As At Other Diplomatic Sites In High-Threat Regions.”** “On the eve of his death, U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens was ebullient as he returned for the first time in his new role to Benghazi, the eastern Libyan city that embraced him as a savior during last year’s civil war. He moved around the coastal town in an armored vehicle and held a marathon of meetings, his handful of bodyguards trailing discreetly behind. But as Stevens met with Benghazi civic leaders, U.S. officials appear to have underestimated the threat facing both the ambassador and other Americans. They had not reinforced the U.S. diplomatic outpost there to meet strict safety standards for government buildings overseas. Nor had they posted a U.S. Marine detachment, as at other diplomatic sites in high-threat regions.” (Ernesto Londoño and Abigail Hauslohner, “In Libya, Security Was Lax Before Attack That Killed U.S. Ambassador, Officials Say,” [The Washington Post](#), 9/29/12)

The House Oversight Committee Spokesman Criticized The “State Department’s Naive Determination To Follow Rigid Bureaucratic Policies” And Failure To Recognize “The Serious Threat Of Terrorism Conveyed By Those On The Ground.” “Told of the State Department’s explanation, the House Oversight Committee spokesman said the ‘State Department’s naive determination to follow rigid bureaucratic policies, instead of making common sense decisions that took the serious threat of terrorism conveyed by those on the ground into account, appears to have been a significant factor in the Benghazi Consulate’s lack of preparedness.’” (Jake Tapper, “Email Shows State Department Rejecting Request Of Security Team At US Embassy In Libya,” [ABC’s The Note](#), 10/5/12)

- **Less Than Two Months Before The Benghazi Attack, The State Department Determined That “The Risk Of U.S. Mission Personnel, Private U.S. Citizens And Businesspersons Encountering An Isolating Event As A Result Of Militia Or Political Violence Is HIGH.”** “Less than two months before the fatal attack on the U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi, Libya, the State Department concluded that the risk of violence to diplomats and other Americans in Libya was high and that the weak U.S.-backed government in Tripoli could do little about it. ‘The risk of U.S. Mission personnel, private U.S. citizens and businesspersons encountering an isolating event as a result of militia or political violence is HIGH,’ a State Department security assessment from July 22 concludes.” (Anne Gearan, “Before attack on U.S. mission in Libya, State Dept. concluded risk of violence was high,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/9/12)

State Department Officials Told Congress That They Had Rejected Requests For Increased Security Personnel In The Months Before The 9/11 Benghazi Attack. “Senior State Department officials acknowledged to Congress on Wednesday that they had turned down requests to send more U.S. military personnel to guard diplomatic facilities in Libya shortly before the Sept. 11 attack that killed the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans. ... Wood's team left Libya in August after Lamb had refused to

approve extending its assignment for a second time. She said the State Department planned to turn over most basic protective duties to a Libyan guard force, part of a decade-long shift away from using U.S. Marines to protect embassies. Lamb said the mix of State Department officers, Libyan guards and militiamen 'could do the same function' as the U.S. military." (Ken Dilanian and Kathleen Hennessey, "U.S. Declined Requests To Boost Security In Libya, Congress Told," [Los Angeles Times](#), 10/10/12)

- **House Oversight And Government Reform Committee Spokesman: "Ambassador Stevens And The Diplomatic Mission In Libya Made Multiple Security Related Requests That Were Turned Down By Washington Based Officials."** "Shown the email uncovered by ABC News, a spokesman for the committee said the 'document is consistent with what the Oversight Committee has been told by individuals who worked in Libya. Ambassador Stevens and the diplomatic mission in Libya made multiple security related requests that were turned down by Washington based officials. Security related transportation has been identified as one of the particular items where embassy personnel did not receive the support they sought.'" (Jake Tapper, "Email Shows State Department Rejecting Request Of Security Team At US Embassy In Libya," [ABC's The Note](#), 10/5/12)
- **"Eric Nordstrom, Who Was The Top Security Official In Libya Earlier This Year, Testified He Was Criticized For Seeking More Security."** "Eric Nordstrom, who was the top security official in Libya earlier this year, testified he was criticized for seeking more security. He said conversations he had with people in Washington led him to believe that it was 'abundantly clear we were not going to get resources until the aftermath of an incident. How thin does the ice have to get before someone falls through?'" (Calvin Woodward, "FACT CHECK: Slips On Libya, Syria, Auto Bailout," [The Associated Press](#), 10/11/12)

Despite Rising Violence In Benghazi, The State Department Remained "Committed To A Security Strategy Formulated In A Very Different Environment A Year Earlier." "What is clear is that even as the State Department responded to the June attacks, crowning the Benghazi compound walls with concertina wire and setting up concrete barriers to thwart car bombs, it remained committed to a security strategy formulated in a very different environment a year earlier." (Michael R. Gordon, Eric Schmitt and Michael S. Schmidt, "Libya Warnings Were Plentiful, But Unspecific," [The New York Times](#), 10/29/12)

- **"The State Department Was Eager For The American Diplomatic Presence In Libya To Reduce Its American Security Footprint And To Rely More On Locals."** "Eric Nordstrom, the former Regional Security Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Libya, told congressional investigators looking into the murder of four Americans in Benghazi, Libya, on Sept. 11, that the State Department was eager for the American diplomatic presence in Libya to reduce its American security footprint and to rely more on locals, sources tell ABC News. A senior State Department official denies the charge." (Jake Tapper, "Security Officer in Libya Refers to Post Being Directed to 'Normalize' Operations and Reduce U.S. Security Presence," [ABC News](#), 10/9/12)
- **Libyan Security Contractors Were Used To Reduce Costs.** "A U.S. military team assigned to establish security at the new embassy in Tripoli, in a previously undisclosed detail, was never instructed to fortify the temporary hub in the east. Instead, a small local guard force was hired by a British private security firm as part of a contract worth less than half of what it costs to deploy a single U.S. service member in a war zone for a year." (Ernesto Londoño and Abigail Hauslohner, "In Libya, Security Was Lax Before Attack That Killed U.S. Ambassador, Officials Say," [The Washington Post](#), 9/29/12)

More Than Three Weeks After The Attacks That Killed U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens, FBI Agents Finally Visited The U.S. Consulate In Benghazi For The First Time. "A team of FBI agents arrived in Benghazi, Libya, to investigate the assault against the U.S. Consulate and left after about 12 hours on the ground as the hunt for those possibly connected to the attack that killed Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans narrowed to one or two people in an extremist group, U.S. officials said Thursday. Agents arrived in Benghazi before dawn on Thursday and departed after sunset, after weeks of waiting

for access to the crime scene to investigate the Sept. 11 attack.” (Eileen Sullivan and Lolita C. Baldor , “FBI Came To Benghazi And Left In Past 24 Hours,” [The Associated Press](#), 10/4/12)

- **For Weeks After The Attack, No U.S. Security Forces Were Guarding The Compound.** “No government-provided security forces are guarding the compound, and Libyan investigators have visited just once, according to a member of the family who owns the compound and who allowed the journalists to enter Wednesday. Two private security guards paid for by the compound’s Libyan owner are the only people watching over the sprawling site, which is composed of two adjoining villa complexes and protected in some places by a wall only eight feet high.” (Michael Birnbaum, “Sensitive Documents Left Behind At American Mission In Libya,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/3/12)
- **“Sensitive Documents Remained Only Loosely Secured” At The Benghazi Compound More Than Three Weeks After The Attack.** “More than three weeks after attacks in this city killed the U.S. ambassador to Libya and three other Americans, sensitive documents remained only loosely secured in the remains of the U.S. mission here on Wednesday, offering visitors easy access to delicate details about American operations in Libya. Documents detailing weapons collection efforts, emergency evacuation protocols, the full internal itinerary of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens’s trip and the personnel records of Libyans who were contracted to secure the mission were among the items scattered across the floors of the looted compound when a Washington Post reporter and a translator visited Wednesday.” (Michael Birnbaum, “Sensitive Documents Left Behind At American Mission In Libya,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/3/12)

IX. LEADING FROM BEHIND: SYRIA

Obama: “Some nations may be able to turn a blind eye to atrocities in other countries. The United States of America is different. And as President, I refused to wait for the images of slaughter and mass graves before taking action.” (President Barack Obama, Address to the Nation on Libya, [Washington, DC](#), 3/28/11)

With Tens Of Thousands Dead In Syria, Obama Still Will Not End His Policy Of Inaction

Obama’s Response To The Violence In Syria “Can Be Summed Up In One Word: Nothing.” “It seems fair to ask what Mr. Obama has done in response, given his pledge to employ all of the ‘tools’ at the administration’s disposal. The answer can be summed up in one word: nothing. Apart from a passing reference at a May 25 news conference, the president has not spoken in public about Syria since his May 19 address. The token U.S. sanctions applied to the Assad regime at the time of the speech have not been stepped up.” (Editorial, “Silence On Syria,” [The Washington Post](#), 6/15/11)

- ***The Washington Post: “Obama Has Been Passive Throughout The Syria Crisis.”*** “This is the sort of situation in which the United States has historically stepped in to exercise leadership. But Mr. Obama has been passive throughout the Syrian crisis. He has spoken about it in public only twice in five months, while the State Department has performed an excruciating rhetorical striptease. It started with describing Mr. Assad as ‘a reformer’; a month ago the rhetoric finally progressed to calling the dictator ‘illegitimate.’ But the last handkerchief — a demand that he leave office — has yet to drop. The time for those words is long overdue — and Mr. Obama should utter them, in person and in public.” (Editorial, “Stopping Syria’s Slaughter Starts With President Obama,” [The Washington Post](#), 8/10/11)

With The Death Toll Climbing In Syria, Obama’s Policy Of “Leading From Behind” Is “Heightening Suspicions That America Is Not Serious About Supporting The Protests.” “Washington has instead continued to pursue a strategy of ‘leading from behind.’ It does so in part out of a belief that a more gung-ho approach may in fact deflect from efforts by members of the opposition’ and paint them as the West’s stooges, as the government has claimed. But as the killings mount, this policy is merely heightening suspicions that America is not serious about supporting the protests and preparing for a post-Assad Syria.” (Salman Shaikh, Op-Ed, “Preventing A Syrian Civil War,” [The New York Times](#), 10/12/11)

- **Sources Estimate That Over 30,000 People Have Died During The 19-Month Conflict.** “It’s estimated that more than 30,000 people have died in the past 19 months of civil war. On Saturday alone, 123 people were killed in areas across Syria, according to the Local Coordination Committees of Syria, a network of opposition activists. CNN is unable to independently verify these numbers because of Syrian government restrictions and the intensity of the fighting.” (“Envoy Talks Possible Cease-Fire With Syrian Foreign Minister,” [CNN](#), 10/20/12)
- **The U.S. “Increasingly Is Being Viewed With Suspicion And Resentment” Because Of Obama’s Refusal To Act.** “America, once regarded by the Syrian opposition as a natural friend in its struggle for greater freedoms against a regime long at odds with the West, increasingly is being viewed with suspicion and resentment for its failure to offer little more than verbal encouragement to the revolutionaries.” (Liz Sly, “Syrian Rebels Feel Abandoned, Betrayed By U.S.,” [The Washington Post](#), 8/7/12)

The Washington Post: “The Grim Reality Is That The Regime And The Brutal War It Is Waging In Syria’s Cities Is Likely To Go On And On — Unless The United States Abandons Its Policy Of Passivity.” “The defection of Syria’s prime minister to Jordan on Monday prompted yet another White House declaration that the regime of Bashar al-Assad is ‘crumbling.’ While we hope that this is the case, it seems more likely that the administration’s prediction will prove as premature as its previous

announcements of Mr. Assad's imminent downfall, dating back a year. The grim reality is that the regime and the brutal war it is waging in Syria's cities is likely to go on and on — unless the United States abandons its policy of passivity." (Editorial, "Getting Around A Dead-End In Syria," [The Washington Post](#), 8/8/12)

- ***The New York Times' David Sanger:*** "In Syria, you've seen very little activity because the U.S. won't go into the lead." (CBS's "Face The Nation," 6/3/12)
- ***Obama's Silence On Syria Prompts Questions From International Community On His Commitment To "Repairing America's Moral Leadership."*** "But in the furious aftermath of a massacre in Syria that resulted in the deaths of 108 civilians, most of them women and children, Obama has remained quiet. The reticence from a president who has made repairing America's moral leadership in the region a central premise of his administration, and who delivered a speech from the heart of the Arab world three years ago designed to do just that, has disturbed those pressing for stronger international response to the crisis." (Scott Wilson, "On Foreign Policy, Obama Focuses On Economic Issues, Not On Syrian Turmoil," [The Washington Post](#), 6/2/12)

The Obama Administration's Wishful Thinking On Syria

In March 2011, Secretary Of State Hillary Clinton Said Assad Was A "Different Leader" From His Autocratic Father And Called Him A "Reformer." CBS' BOB SCHIEFFER: "But I mean, how can that be worse than what has happened in Syria over the years, where Bashar Assad's father killed 25,000 people at (inaudible). I mean, they opened fire with live ammunition on these civilians. Why is that different from Libya? This is the friend of Iran, an enemy of Israel?" SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY CLINTON: "Well, if there were a coalition of the international community, if there were the passage of a security council resolution, if there were a call by the Arab League, if there was a condemnation that was universal. But that is not going to happen because I don't think that it's yet clear what will occur, what will unfold. There is a different leader in Syria now. Many of the members of congress of both parties who have gone to Syria in recent months have said they believe he's a reformer. What's been happening there the last few weeks is deeply concerning. But there's a difference between calling out aircraft and indiscriminately strafing and bombing your own cities than police actions which frankly have exceeded the use of force that any of us would want to see." (CBS' "Face The Nation," 3/27/11)

Obama "Initially Eased Some Trade Sanctions On Damascus In A Bid To Woo Mr. Assad." "Mr. Obama sent Mr. Ford to Damascus in January 2011 as the first U.S. ambassador in Syria in over five years. The Obama administration also initially eased some trade sanctions on Damascus in a bid to woo Mr. Assad." (Jay Solomon, "U.S. Moves To Shut Embassy In Syria," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 1/21/12)

In 2009, Obama Decided To Restore The U.S. Ambassador To Syria After A 4-Year Hiatus.

"President Obama has decided to return a U.S. ambassador to Syria after an absence of more than four years, marking a significant step toward engaging an influential Arab nation long at odds with the United States. The acting assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, Jeffrey D. Feltman, informed Syria's U.S. ambassador, Imad Mustafa, Tuesday night of Obama's intention, according to a senior administration official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the decision had yet to be made public." (Scott Wilson, "Obama Will Restore U.S. Ambassador To Syria," [The Washington Post](#), 6/24/09)

- ***In October 2011, Obama Was Forced To Withdraw U.S. Ambassador Robert Ford From Syria Due To "Threats Against His Personal Safety."*** "The Obama administration has temporarily withdrawn its ambassador to Syria, citing threats against his personal safety following his outspoken criticism of the country's brutal crackdown on pro-democracy protesters. Ambassador Robert S. Ford returned to Washington because of what U.S. officials called a campaign of 'malicious and deceitful propaganda' in Syria's state-run news media, which they feared could

incite violence against the career diplomat.” (Paul Richter and Patrick McDonnell, “U.S. Pulls Its Ambassador From Syria,” [Los Angeles Times](#), 10/4/11)

The Wall Street Journal: “It Took Months For The President To Call For Mr. Assad To Go—And That’s Despite The Assad Family’s 40-Year Track Record Of Hostility To The U.S. And Its Support For Terrorism.” “That’s one of the many mysteries of the Administration’s policy toward Syria. Unlike with Egypt, where Mr. Obama was quick to call for Hosni Mubarak’s departure despite his 30-year alliance with the U.S., it took months for the President to call for Mr. Assad to go—and that’s despite the Assad family’s 40-year track record of hostility to the U.S. and its support for terrorism.” (Editorial, “If Assad Survives,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 4/9/12)

Obama Is Sitting By While The Syrian Conflict Threatens To Destabilize The Broader Middle East

The Wall Street Journal: “The Longer We Fail To Step In, The Harder It Becomes To Shape The Outcome In Syria.” “The cost of U.S. inaction carries a fast-rising price. Saudi Arabia and Qatar, two of our closer Arab partners, are arming the rebels and eager to see Assad go. They’d rather defer to American leadership but may be forced to act more robustly on their own. The same goes for Turkey, which must deal with a refugee flood. Israel worries about the loose WMD and may act to secure it. The longer we fail to step in, the harder it becomes to shape the outcome in Syria.” (Editorial, “The Syrian Civil War,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 7/17/12)

- ***The Washington Post: “By Refusing To Step In, The Obama Administration Is Merely Ensuring That Syria’s Future Leaders Will Be More Resistant To The West And Perhaps More Open To Groups Such As Al-Qaeda.”*** “By refusing to step in, the Obama administration is merely ensuring that Syria’s future leaders will be more resistant to the West and perhaps more open to groups such as al-Qaeda. It is also giving the enduring hard core of the Assad regime the space and the opportunity to fight on.” (Editorial, “Getting Around A Dead-End In Syria,” [The Washington Post](#), 8/8/12)

“Syrians Involved In The Armed Struggle Say It Is Becoming More Radicalized,” As Jihadists And Al Qaeda Fighters Take A Larger Role And “Even Less-Zealous Resistance Groups Are Adopting A Pronounced Islamic Aura Because It Attracts More Financing.” “As the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad’s government grinds on with no resolution in sight, Syrians involved in the armed struggle say it is becoming more radicalized: homegrown Muslim jihadists, as well as small groups of fighters from Al Qaeda, are taking a more prominent role and demanding a say in running the resistance. The past few months have witnessed the emergence of larger, more organized and better armed Syrian militant organizations pushing an agenda based on jihad, the concept that they have a divine mandate to fight. Even less-zealous resistance groups are adopting a pronounced Islamic aura because it attracts more financing.” (Neil MacFarquhar and Hwaida Saad, “As Syrian War Drags On, Jihadists Take Bigger Role,” [The New York Times](#), 7/29/12)

- ***The Washington Post: Obama’s “Shortsighted Policy” In Syria “Has Had No Effect In Either Country Other Than To Empower U.S. Enemies And Jihadist Groups.”*** “The State Department subsequently softened that stance, saying that it would support a ‘process leading to a new government.’ But in Lebanon as well as Syria, the Obama administration is pursuing the shortsighted policy of seeking to restrain anti-Assad forces. That strategy has had no effect in either country other than to empower U.S. enemies and jihadist groups, whose foreign sponsors are showering them with weapons and cash.” (Editorial, “Syria’s War Spills Into Lebanon,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/24/12)
- ***Prolonged Fighting Is Likely To Lead “To Sectarian War An A Destroyed Civil Society,” And “The Obama Administration Is Helping To Ensure That Outcome.”*** “Mr. Hassan warned us that the prolongation of the fighting in Syria would lead ‘to sectarian war and a destroyed civil society.’ He added: ‘The [Syrian] Army will disintegrate, and after its collapse there will be chaos.’

By refusing to arm or protect secular and liberal forces, the Obama administration is helping to ensure that outcome.” (Editorial, “Syria’s War Spills Into Lebanon,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/24/12)

U.S. Officials Fear Assad’s Chemical Weapons Stockpile May Be Seized By Terrorist Organizations If The International Community Does Not Intervene. “Further feeding fears is the potential for Syria’s large stockpile of chemical weapons to fall into the hands of Hezbollah or al Qaeda, as Mr. Assad’s forces are no longer able to secure arms depots. Such a threat, combined with the spreading violence, is causing some U.S. and allied officials to conclude that an intervention into Syria is inevitable at some juncture.” (Jay Solomon and Nour Malas, “U.S. Bolsters Ties To Fighters In Syria,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 6/13/12)

A Refugee Crisis Is Developing In Syria And The Surrounding Middle Eastern States. “More than 78,000 Syrians have fled to Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, the U.N. refugee agency says. At least 500,000 Syrians are internally displaced in their country and many have lost their homes, according to the Syrian Red Crescent.” (Mariam Karouny and Erika Solomon, “Syria Bars Diplomats, Gunships In Action,” [Reuters](#), 6/5/12)

Syrians Believe Obama Is More Focused On Reelection Than Protecting The Syrian People. “‘This intervention cannot be happened without the participation and the leadership of the United States,’ Akil Hashem, who retired as a Syrian brigadier general in 1989, said Thursday morning on CNN’s ‘Starting Point.’ ‘And Mr. Obama, unfortunately, whom I voted for him in 2008, and I volunteered in his campaign, he doesn’t care about the Syrian people. He cares right now about one thing: reelection. That’s it.’ ‘So we get people killed every single day by the hundreds,’ Hashem continued. ‘Yesterday, over 200 people. The day before, more than that. And nobody is moving to intervene.’” (Kevin Robillard, “Syrian Officer: Obama ‘Doesn’t Care,’” [Politico](#), 7/19/12)

X. LEADING FROM BEHIND: RUSSIA

“Since Obama Took Office, Russia Has Thrown Out The U.S. Agency For International Development And Vetoed U.N. Sanctions On Syria Three Times Even As It Continues To Arm The Regime Of Bashar Assad.” (Julian Pecquet, “Libya Will Play Starring Role In Debate,” [The Hill's Global Affairs](#), 10/22/12)

***The Wall Street Journal*: “One Of The Foreign Policy Priorities Of The Obama Administration Was To ‘Reset’ Relations With Russia. How’s That Working Out?”** “One of the foreign policy priorities of the Obama Administration was to ‘reset’ relations with Russia. How's that working out? Dmitry Medvedev, the placeholder for Vladimir Putin in the presidency, gave one indication last week. He declared that Russia may deploy ‘strike forces’ and aim mid-range Iskander missiles at Europe. He also threatened to pull out of the 2010 New Start arms accord, which is supposed to be the hallmark achievement of the ‘reset.’” (Editorial, “Our Friends The Russians,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 12/5/11)

***The Washington Post*: “Mr. Obama’s Apparent Faith That Mr. Putin Is Ready To Do Business With Him Is At Odds With The Strongman’s Recent Behavior.”** “Mr. Obama’s apparent faith that Mr. Putin is ready to do business with him is at odds with the strongman’s recent behavior — including his abrupt cancellation of a planned visit to Camp David.” (Editorial, “Time For U.S. Leadership On Syria,” [The Washington Post](#), 5/29/12)

- **Russia’s Ambassador To NATO Threatened “To Close The Transport Route Through Russia That The U.S. And Its Allies Use To Supply Troops In Afghanistan.”** “Moscow's ambassador to NATO this week amplified this message by threatening to close the transport route through Russia that the U.S. and its allies use to supply troops in Afghanistan. This so-called northern corridor was another touted achievement of the ‘reset.’” (Editorial, “Our Friends The Russians,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 12/5/11)
- **Putin Rejected Obama’s Offer For “Landmark Bilateral Talks At The White House” Earlier This Month.** “Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier this month rejected an offer from United States (US) President Barack Obama for landmark bilateral talks at the White House, the Kremlin revealed on Tuesday.” (“Putin Rejected Obama's White House Talks Offer: Kremlin,” [AFP](#), 5/29/12)
- **Putin Did Not Attend The Summit Of World Leaders That Obama Hosted At Camp David, Underscoring The “Difficult Start To Their Relationship.”** “Russia's newly inaugurated president, Vladimir V. Putin, will not attend a summit meeting of world leaders in Maryland next week, the White House said on Wednesday, postponing until June the much-anticipated first meeting of President Obama and Mr. Putin as the leaders of their respective countries. The surprising White House announcement, which came after a telephone call between the men, serves to underscore what appears to be a difficult start to their relationship.” (Helene Cooper and Ellen Barry, “Putin To Skip Group Of 8 Session, Delaying Postelection Meeting With Obama,” [The New York Times](#), 5/9/12)
- **Russia Has “Soundly Rejected U.S. Calls For Increased Pressure On Syrian President Bashar Assad To Relinquish Power.”** “Russia on Saturday soundly rejected U.S. calls for increased pressure on Syrian President Bashar Assad to relinquish power. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton tried to prod Moscow into supporting U.N. action to end the crisis in Syria and she expressed hope that Congress would repeal Cold War-era trade restrictions on Russia. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, after meeting Clinton on the sidelines of a meeting of Pacific Rim leaders, told reporters that Moscow is opposed to U.S.-backed penalties against the Assad government, in addition to new ones against Iran over its nuclear program, because they harm Russian commercial interests.” (“Russia Rebuffs Clinton On Syria, Iran Penalties,” [The Associated Press](#), 9/7/12)

***The Washington Post*: “Return Of Vladimir Putin To The Russian Presidency Ought To Have Caused The Obama Administration To Reshape Its Policy Toward The Kremlin” But “Obama Has Decided To Bet On Deal-Making With Mr. Putin Rather Than On Democratic Change In Russia.”** “The return

of Vladimir Putin to the Russian presidency ought to have caused the Obama administration to reshape its policy toward the Kremlin. Putin based his election campaign in large part on anti-Americanism; he has increasingly pursued policies contrary to vital U.S. interests, such as his military support for the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad and his threats against NATO's European missile-defense system. Most important, Mr. Putin's decade-old autocratic regime is looking shaky. Hundreds of thousands of Russians have turned out to demonstrate against fraud in the presidential and parliamentary elections, and to demand political reform. ... Remarkably, however, President Obama has responded to Mr. Putin's return to the presidency by strongly affirming his commitment to partnering with the strongman. His meant-to-be-confidential assurance to outgoing President Dmitry Medvedev on Monday, that 'after my election I have more flexibility' to solve 'all these issues, but particularly missile defense,' was only the latest sign that Mr. Obama has decided to bet on deal-making with Mr. Putin rather than on democratic change in Russia." (Editorial, "President Obama's Bad Bet On Vladimir Putin," [The Washington Post](#), 3/28/12)

- ***Time's Mark Halperin: "Between The Soviet-Style Crack-Down On Opposition Leaders And Russia's Role In Propping Up The Syrian Regime With Helicopters, Maybe Colin Powell Owes Mitt Romney An Apology?"*** (Mark Halperin, "Russian Roulette," [Time's "The Page" Blog](#), 6/12/12)

Obama's "Flexibility" Has Been Met With Russian Intransigence

"In A Private Conversation About The Planned U.S.-Led NATO Missile Defense System In Europe, Obama Asked Outgoing Russian President Dmitri Medvedev For Space On The Issue." (Brianna Keilar, "Open Mic Catches Obama Asking Russian President For Space On Missile Defense," [CNN](#), 3/26/12)

- **Obama To Russian President Medvedev: "After My Election I Have More Flexibility."**
OBAMA: "On all these issues, but particularly missile defense, this, this can be solved but it's important for him to give me space." PRESIDENT DMITRI MEDVEDEV: "Yeah, I understand. I understand your message about space. Space for you..." OBAMA: "This is my last election. After my election I have more flexibility." MEDVEDEV: "I understand. I will transmit this information to Vladimir." (Jake Tapper, "[President Obama Asks Medvedev For 'Space' On Missile Defense - 'After My Election I Have More Flexibility.'](#)" [ABC News](#), 3/26/12)
- [Click To Watch](#)

Obama's Message To Russia On Missile Defense: "Let Me Get Reelected First...Then I'll Have A Better Chance Of Making Something Happen." "In their joint statement to reporters here, President Obama and Russian President Dmitri Medvedev spoke carefully about continuing discussions on the sensitive issues of European missile defense. But in an unscripted moment picked up by camera crews, the American president was more blunt: Let me get reelected first, he said, then I'll have a better chance of making something happen." (David Nakamura and Debbi Wilgoren, "Obama Tells Medvedev Solution On Missile Defense Is Unlikely Before Elections," [The Washington Post](#), 3/26/12)

- ***The Washington Post: "Obama's Assurance To Mr. Medvedev ... Raised A Reasonable Question: What 'Flexibility' Will Mr. Obama Be Prepared To Offer On Missile Defense" Given Putin's Opposition.*** "Mr. Obama's assurance to Mr. Medvedev, meanwhile, has raised a reasonable question: What 'flexibility' will Mr. Obama be prepared to offer on missile defense, given that Mr. Putin surely will not be satisfied with anything short of scrapping the system or giving Russia a veto over its use?" (Editorial, "President Obama's Bad Bet On Vladimir Putin," [The Washington Post](#), 3/28/12)
- ***The Wall Street Journal: Worries Over "What Mr. Obama Might Do In A Second Term Once He Is Unchecked By Any Future Electoral Constraints" Are "Especially Apt On National Security."*** "One of the big issues of this election will be what Mr. Obama might do in a second term once he is unchecked by any future electoral constraints. Would he unleash the EPA and other regulators that he has restrained somewhat (the ozone rule) this past year before an election

campaign? Would he use his executive powers to further empower labor unions? The worry is especially apt on national security, where Congress has far less power to limit Presidential policies. Mr. Putin wants to limit or kill U.S. missile defenses in Europe and elsewhere. Mr. Obama hasn't dared to cut such an arms control deal in his first term, but what about in a second? In 2001, he told a Chicago TV station that 'I don't agree with a missile defense system.'" (Editorial, "The Open-Mic Second Term," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 3/27/12)

Vice President Biden Agreed That Obama's Hot Mic Comment On "Flexibility" Is Legitimate Basis To Raise Questions About Obama's 2013 Agenda. CBS' BOB SCHIEFFER: "You know, but doesn't it play to the Republican allegations because I hear this from conservatives all the time. 'If you don't like Barack Obama now, wait until he gets reelected because he'd be - he's free to do whatever he wants to do. He's going to raise our taxes. He's going to put in gun control. He's going to do everything from, you know, authorize gay marriage to whatever. Just once he gets past that election.'" BIDEN: "Well, look, every opportunity they get to try to seed that argument, they do. So I agree with you that anything that is said that allows them even the, you know, the patina of saying that's what he's doing, they use it." (CBS's ["Face The Nation"](#), 4/1/12)

Sen. Joe Lieberman (ID-CT): "I Thought That President Obama's Statement To President Medvedev Was Disconcerting." (Emily Schultheis, "Lieberman: Obama's Hot Mic Comments 'Disconcerting,'" [Politico](#), 3/28/12)

- **Sen. Lieberman (ID-CT) Calls Missile Defense "Critically Important To The Security Of The American People" And Says "The President Really Ought To Reassure All Of Us That He's Going To Stick With The Program."** "'I don't know what the president meant when he said he'd be more flexible,' Lieberman added. 'The president really ought to reassure all of us that he's going to stick with the program that we're on now because that program is, in my opinion, is critically important to the security of the American people for years and years to come.'" (Emily Schultheis, "Lieberman: Obama's Hot Mic Comments 'Disconcerting,'" [Politico](#), 3/28/12)

In May 2012, Russia Threatened To "Carry Out Pre-Emptive Strikes" If NATO Missile Defense Systems Are Built In Europe. "Russia's military chief of staff said on Thursday that Moscow could carry out pre-emptive strikes on future NATO missile defense installations in Europe to protect its security - a stark warning against a system the Kremlin sees as a threat." (Adrian Croft and Steve Gutterman, "Russia Says It Could Pre-Emptively Strike Missile Shield," [Reuters](#), 5/3/12)

Vladimir Putin Traveled To China For Meetings With Hu Jintao "Aimed At Strengthening A Partnership Between The Two Countries And Offsetting The Influence Of The United States." "The Russian president, Vladimir V. Putin, arrived in China on Tuesday for meetings aimed at strengthening a partnership between the two countries and offsetting the influence of the United States. Admired by the Chinese for his staying power as leader of Russia for 12 years, Mr. Putin discussed with President Hu Jintao their common approaches to Syria, according to state television. They appeared certain to deal with their mutual interests in Iran and their efforts to squeeze the United States out of Central Asia, Chinese and American analysts said. Both Beijing and Moscow also oppose an American plan for a missile- defense system in Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe that is intended as protection against Iran." (Jane Perlez, "Putin Arrives In China For Regional Talks," [The New York Times](#), 6/5/12)

- **Putin's Participation In The Regional Security Summit "Stood In Stark Contrast To His Decision Not To Attend A Summit Meeting Hosted By President Obama Last Month."** "Mr. Putin's visit, during which he will participate in a summit meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a regional security organization that includes Russia, China and former Soviet republics in Central Asia, stood in stark contrast to his decision not to attend a summit meeting hosted by President Obama last month in the United States." (Jane Perlez, "Putin Arrives In China For Regional Talks," [The New York Times](#), 6/5/12)

Despite The “Reset,” Russia Continues To Support Regimes In Syria And Iran. “Then there's Russia's veto of a Security Council resolution to sanction Syria and its continuing arms sales to the regime of Bashar Assad. Moscow also resists putting any new pressure on Iran's nuclear bomb makers.” (Editorial, “Our Friends The Russians,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 12/5/11)

- **Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov Said Russia Is “Fundamentally Against” America’s “Prevailing Tendency To Threaten And Increase Pressure, Adopt Ever More Sanctions Against Syria And Against Iran.”** ““Our American partners have a prevailing tendency to threaten and increase pressure, adopt ever more sanctions against Syria and against Iran,’ Lavrov said. ‘Russia is fundamentally against this, since for resolving problems you have to engage the countries you are having issues with and not isolate them.’” (“Russia Rebuffs Clinton On Syria, Iran Penalties,” [The Associated Press](#), 9/7/12)

Reuters: “Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov Has Said ‘No’ To The West So Many Times Over Syria That He May Come To Rival A Cold War Predecessor For The Title Of ‘Mr Nyet.’” (Timothy Heritage, “Russia’s Lavrov Perfects The Art Of Saying ‘Nyet,’” [Reuters](#), 8/6/12)

- **In February 2012, Russia Blocked U.N. Security Council Resolution Condemning “The Brutal Crackdown On Protestors” In Syria.** “Russia blocked an attempt earlier this month by the U.N. Security Council to take actions against the brutal crackdown on protestors by the Syrian regime.” (Corey Boles, “White House Pushes For Russia Trade Agreement,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 2/29/12)
- **Syria’s “Strong Diplomatic Alliance” With Russia Continues To Blunt The Impact Of Western Sanctions Against The Syrian Regime.** “The documents, which span a period from March until early July, also underscore the difficulties facing Western governments in sustaining comprehensive sanctions against Syria, as long as Damascus keeps its strong diplomatic alliance with Moscow. Earlier this month, Russia received a delegation of top Syrian economic officials, including its oil and finance ministers, to discuss the possibility of government loans and long-term oil deals, Syrian Deputy Prime Minister Qadri Jamil said in a news conference.” (Margaret Coker and Jennifer Valentino-Devries, “Syria's Russian Connection,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 8/14/12)

Russia Called The New U.S. Sanctions Against Iran “Covert Blackmail” And Warned That They Would Harm U.S.-Russian Relations. “Russia sharply criticized new U.S. sanctions against Iran on Monday, saying the measures to punish banks, insurance companies and shippers that help Iran sell its oil would harm Moscow’s ties with Washington if Russian firms are affected. Russia, which has long opposed sanctions beyond those approved by the U.N. Security Council to pressure Tehran over its nuclear program, called the measures ‘overt blackmail’ and a ‘crude contradiction of international law.’” (“Russia Says New U.S. Sanctions On Iran Could Affect Ties,” [Reuters](#), 8/13/12)

Russia Has Rejected Cooperation With The U.S.

In A “Blow” To Obama’s Reset And Pro-Democracy Organizations, Moscow Demanded That The U.S. Cease All USAID Operations In Russia. “The United States said Tuesday it is ending the U.S. Agency for International Development’s operations in Russia after a Kremlin demand that the aid organization leave the country, dealing a blow to President Barack Obama’s policy of ‘resetting’ relations between Washington and Moscow. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland told reporters that Russia sent a letter last week saying it didn’t need Washington’s help anymore. She didn’t cite a political reason for the closure, but President Vladimir Putin has long complained about U.S. democracy and human rights promotion efforts.” (“USAID Work Halted In Russia, Dealing Blow To Obama’s ‘Reset’ In US-Russian Relations,” [The Associated Press](#), 9/18/12)

“The Move Comes As The ‘Reset’ In Relations Between The Obama Administration And The Kremlin Has Reached Either A Turning Point Or The End Of The Road, Depending On Who’s Talking.” (Natasha Abbakumova and Will Englund, “Russia Boots Out USAID,” [The Washington Post](#), 9/18/12)

- **Putin “Spent Most Of The Spring Attacking The U.S. Government For Supporting Civil Society Organizations In Russia.”** “After he spent most of the spring attacking the U.S. government for supporting civil society organizations in Russia, President Vladimir Putin is expelling the American aid agency USAID, the State Department announced Tuesday.” (Natasha Abbakumova and Will Englund, “Russia Boots Out USAID,” [The Washington Post](#), 9/18/12)

USAID Will Leave In The Midst Of Russia’s Crackdown On NGOs And Political Dissenters. “The Kremlin has taken a number of actions in recent months to bring pressure on nongovernmental groups and clamp down on political dissent, including a new law requiring any organization receiving aid from abroad to register with the justice manager as ‘acting as a foreign agent.’ Russia also increased the penalties for libel and slander — a step that seemed intended to intimidate critics of government officials.” (David M. Herszenhorn and Ellen Barry “Russia Demands U.S. End Support Of Democracy Groups,” [The New York Times](#), 9/18/12)

- **The Kremlin’s “Provocative” Decision To Force USAID Out Of Russia Will Cut Off About \$50 Million In Funding For Pro-Democracy Groups And Other Aid Organizations.** “The Kremlin’s provocative decision to end two decades of work in post-Soviet Russia by the United States Agency for International Development — with little warning ahead of an Oct. 1 deadline — was announced on Tuesday by the State Department in Washington. The move stands to cut off aid that currently totals about \$50 million a year, a relatively small sum but a potentially devastating blow for groups that came to rely on foreign money as domestic controls over politics tightened.” (David M. Herszenhorn and Ellen Barry “Russia Demands U.S. End Support Of Democracy Groups,” [The New York Times](#), 9/18/12)
- **David Kramer, President Of Freedom House: “This Decision Sets A Dangerous Precedent And Suggests That U.S. Support For Civil Society Ends When Repressive Governments Apply Pressure.”** “‘For USAID to up and leave Russia simply because Vladimir Putin asked us to do so is a betrayal of our decades-long support not only for grassroots human rights defenders, civil society, and development of the rule of law in Russia but also for assistance in areas like improving public health and the environment,’ David J. Kramer, president of the democracy advocacy organization Freedom House, said in a statement Tuesday. ‘This decision sets a dangerous precedent and suggests that U.S. support for civil society ends when repressive governments apply pressure.’” (Natasha Abbakumova and Will Englund, “Russia Boots Out USAID,” [The Washington Post](#), 9/18/12)

The Wall Street Journal: “The Obama Administration Responded To The Expulsion With What Has Become A Familiar Nonchalance.” “The Obama Administration responded to the expulsion with what has become a familiar nonchalance. ‘It’s their sovereign decision to make,’ said State’s spokeswoman. Team Obama won’t admit that its ballyhooed ‘reset’ in relations with Russia has been a failure.” (Editorial: “Putin Does His Own ‘Reset’: The Russians Expel A U.S. Agency, Proving Mitt Romney Had A Point,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 9/21/12)

- **State Department Spokesperson Victoria Nuland “Didn’t Criticize Russia For Its Action.”** “Nuland didn’t criticize Russia for its action. But she said the money went to a wide variety of initiatives, such as combatting AIDS and tuberculosis, helping orphans and victims of trafficking, and improving the protection of wildlife and the environment. About a third of annual funds go to governance, human rights and democracy programs, she said.” (“USAID Work Halted In Russia, Dealing Blow To Obama’s ‘Reset’ In US-Russian Relations,” [The Associated Press](#), 9/18/12)
- **The Washington Post: “Perhaps This Laconic Response Can Be Attributed To The Administration’s Election-Eve Unwillingness To Acknowledge A Setback In One Of Its Signature Foreign Policies.”** “Perhaps this laconic response can be attributed to the administration’s election-eve unwillingness to acknowledge a setback in one of its signature foreign policies; challenger Mitt Romney has been a trenchant critic of the ‘reset.’ Still, it’s disheartening to hear officials describe support for democracy as marginal to U.S. relations with

Russia, at the very moment when pressure for political change there is greater than it has been in more than a decade.” (Editorial, “U.S. Should Redouble Effort To Boost Russian Democracy,” [The Washington Post](#), 9/19/12)

Russia Announced It Will Not Renew The 21-Year-Old Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Agreement On Nuclear Weapons When It Expires In May 2013. “Russia has told the United States that it will not extend the Nunn-Lugar weapons reduction and security agreement after it expires at the end of May, saying it no longer needs to receive foreign aid and is concerned about leaks of nuclear security information. The 21-year-old cooperative program was designed to help secure the nuclear and chemical weapons arsenal of the Soviet Union after the bloc’s collapse. At a cost of about \$500 million a year, it has ensured the shipment of nuclear weapons out of Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus, deactivated more than 7,600 nuclear warheads, destroyed 902 intercontinental ballistic missiles and 33 submarines and secured 24 nuclear weapons storage sites.” (Will Englund, “Russia No Longer Wants U.S. Aid On Nuclear Arms Security,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/10/12)

- **Russia’s Refusal To Renew The Nunn-Lugar Agreement Is A “Potentially Grave Setback In The Already Fraying Relationship Between The Former Cold War Enemies.”** “The Russian government said Wednesday that it would not renew a hugely successful 20-year partnership with the United States to safeguard and dismantle nuclear and chemical weapons in the former Soviet Union when the program expires next spring, a potentially grave setback in the already fraying relationship between the former cold war enemies.” (David M. Herszenhorn, “Russia Won’t Renew Pact ON Weapons With U.S.,” [The New York Times](#), 10/10/12)
- **“The Plan To End The Nunn-Lugar Program Appears To Be The Latest Step By The Russian Government In An Expanding Effort To Curtail American-Led Initiatives.”** “The plan to end the Nunn-Lugar program appears to be the latest step by the Russian government in an expanding effort to curtail American-led initiatives, and especially the influence of American money, in various spheres of Russian public policy.” (David M. Herszenhorn, “Russia Won’t Renew Pact ON Weapons With U.S.,” [The New York Times](#), 10/10/12)
- **The Announcement Came Shortly After Russia Expelled USAID And As “The Kremlin Has Been Hewing To A Distinctly Anti-American Tone” In Its Domestic Politics.** “The move comes just a few weeks after Russia announced it was expelling the U.S. Agency for International Development, the American foreign-aid program. Earlier this week, UNICEF also announced that it will wind up its operations in Russia by the end of the year. On Wednesday evening, Interfax quoted Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying there was no connection between the shutdown of the aid programs and the end of the weapons agreement. But the Kremlin has been hewing to a distinctly anti-American tone as it attempts to portray its domestic opponents as agents of the United States.” (Will Englund, “Russia No Longer Wants U.S. Aid On Nuclear Arms Security,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/10/12)