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Description of document: Department of State Bureau of Public Affairs Rapid Response Hot Topics Newsletter, 2013

Request date: 05-January-2014

Released date: 20-June-2014

Posted date: 11-August-2014

Source of document: Freedom of Information Act Request
Office of Information Programs and Services
A/GIS/IPS/RL
US Department of State
Washington, DC 20522-8100
Fax: (202) 261-8579
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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

JUN 20 2014

Case No. F-2014-00422

Segment: PA

In response to your request dated January 5, 2014 under the Freedom of Information Act (Title 5 USC Section 552), we initiated a search of the Department of State record system in the Bureau of Public Affairs (PA).

The search of the records of PA has been completed and has resulted in the retrieval of 61 documents responsive to your request. After reviewing these documents, we have determined that all 61 may be released in full, and all released material is enclosed.

We have now completed the processing of your case. If you have any questions, you may write to the Office of Information Programs and Services, SA-2, Department of State, Washington, DC 20522-8100, or telephone us at (202) 261-8484. Please be sure to refer to the case number shown above in all correspondence about this case.

Sincerely,

Anita L. Boone for

John F. Hackett, Acting Director
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosures:

As stated.



RAPID RESPONSE

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HOT TOPICS
TUESDAY 10/01/2013

US-Iran Reset Under Threat: International observers warn that a US-Iran rapprochement could lead to a deterioration in US-Israel relations, with many cautioning that “reconciliation” will not come easily. Lebanon’s *Al-Nahar* worries about Iranian domestic resistance to Rouhani’s outreach and Netanyahu’s attempts to ‘undercut’ a US-Iran rapprochement, and asks “has the killing of the newborn deal begun ahead of its birth?” Israel’s *Haaretz* deems Netanyahu’s visit a success as he “came out of the White House with what he wanted - renewal of the American threat of a military attack on Iran.” Conversely, Germany’s *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* mocks Netanyahu as a “Cassandra” and warns that the Israeli leader is “making a mistake if he thinks he can survive as the last cold warrior during this thaw.” Russia’s *Novyye Izvestiya* cautions all opponents of a warming that “the most disappointing thing is the fact that there is no alternative to it.” Meanwhile, the UK’s *Times* warns President Obama that he may one day soon “wake up and realise that he is still dealing with the gritty, treacherous Middle East.” Russia’s *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* foresees the possibility of Israel “resorting to blackmail by threatening to strike a blow at Iran once they decide that it is close to building an A-bomb.” *Oman Daily* dismisses such a scenario, arguing that “notwithstanding any fallacies or desperate Israeli attempts, the world has become keen on marching towards more peace, security, stability, closeness and whatever is beneficial to countries and people across the world.”

Message:

- ✓ ***“Prime Minister Netanyahu and I agree that it is imperative that Iran not possess a nuclear weapon.” (President Obama)***
- ✓ ***“That is important for American security; it is important for Israeli security; it’s important for world security, because we do not want to trigger a nuclear arms race in the most volatile region in the world.” (President Obama)***
- ✓ ***“Given the statements and actions from the Iranian regime in the past – the threats against Israel, the acts against Israel -- it is absolutely clear that words are not sufficient, that we have to have actions that give the international community confidence that they are meeting their international obligations fully, and that they are not in a position to have a nuclear weapon.” (President Obama)***
- ✓ ***“Because of the extraordinary sanctions that we have been able to put in place over the last several years, the Iranians are now prepared, it appears, to negotiate.” (President Obama)***
- ✓ ***“We have to test diplomacy. We have to see if, in fact, they are serious about their willingness to abide by international norms and international law and international requirements and resolutions.” (President Obama)***

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Robert Strand, Senior Reviewer

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'Closing Time in Washington': International commentators blame the US government shutdown on extreme Congressional partisan divisions over the budget, with many warning that the crisis could affect the global economy. Germany's *Spiegel Online* headlines, "Congress Failed to Agree in Budget Dispute – US Government Paralyzed." Spain's *El Pais* criticizes "all the accumulated animosity and partisan polarization" has "finally pushed the country to an extreme situation that has clearly shown the degree of inefficiency reached in Washington." A *BBC* correspondent laments the "bravado-fuelled game of chicken." Meanwhile, Norway's *Aftenposten* chides "American politicians are creating uncertainty that could manifest itself in the global economy." Spain's *Ondacero* radio speculates Congressional "arm wrestling" could "affect the US and the rest of the world's finances." Russia's *Izvestiya* cautions that "in the longer term, the US' problems may slow the recovery of the global economy." India's *Hindustan Times* fears the shutdown "may hit emerging economies." *The Australian* chides, "The US will doubtless get through this crisis; it has done so before. But at a time when the global economy remains fragile, the world would be better off without more instability and uncertainty."

Message:

- ✓ *"You don't get to extract a ransom for doing your job; for doing what you're supposed to be doing anyway; or just because there's a law there that you don't like." (President Obama)*
- ✓ *"An important part of the Affordable Care Act takes effect October 1st no matter what Congress decides to do. The Affordable Care Act is moving forward. That funding is already in place. You can't shut it down." (President Obama)*
- ✓ *"I'm always willing to work with anyone of either party to make sure the Affordable Care Act works better, to make sure our government works better." (President Obama)*
- ✓ *"I'm always willing to work with anyone to grow our economy faster, or to create new jobs faster, to get our fiscal house in order for the long run." (President Obama)*
- ✓ *"But one faction of one party, in one house of Congress, in one branch of government doesn't get to shut down the entire government just to refight the results of an election." (President Obama)*

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HOT TOPICS

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WEDNESDAY 10/02/2013

'Israel Plays Spoiler in US-Iran Talks': While several international commentators think PM Netanyahu attempted to "block the nascent dialogue" between Washington and Tehran during his UNGA speech, many believe the Israeli leader is merely "isolating himself" as a US-Iran rapprochement gets under way. Poland's *Rzeczpospolita* depicts Netanyahu "warning against Iran's deceptions" at the UN, while Israel's *Yisrael Hayom* thinks "he sought to tell the world the truth." Hong Kong's *Sun* supposes "Israel is not happy with the ice-breaking between the US and Iran." The UK's *Independent* suspects "Israel will do everything it can to cut down Mr. Rouhani's overtures." But Israel's *Maariv* worries "the Iranians have succeeded in changing the international discourse," and "the world has turned its back on Israeli interest." Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* chides the Israeli leader for his "unconstructive" comments, speculating that "Netanyahu is having problems facing the new realities in Iran and the new US-Iranian relationship." The UK's *Guardian* contends "Netanyahu is feeling the squeeze of Tehran's charm offensive," having no alternative but to "go along with the US Administration" for now. Iran's *Javan* suspects Netanyahu is worried that "once Iran's nuclear case is no longer on the world's agenda, it will be replaced by [Israel's] weapons of mass destruction." Pan-Arab *Al-Hayat* dismisses Netanyahu as a "professional liar" and insists Iran poses no threat to the US. Israel's *Ynet* argues "Israel should have cautiously embraced the change in Iranian rhetoric." Meanwhile, Japan's *Sankei* posits that "differences" over Iran sanctions have "cast a shadow" over US-Israel relations. Lebanon's *Daily Star* judges "we are perhaps witnessing a recalibration of power relationships between the US and Israel."

Message:

- ✓ **"We are in lockstep agreement with Israel that we are not going to allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)**
- ✓ **"Diplomacy is the preferred path...[but] we are going into any diplomatic path forward with eyes open." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)**
- ✓ **"Iran remains in noncompliance with its obligation to suspend all enrichment activity on an immediate basis. There are more steps that can be taken." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)**
- ✓ **"This is perhaps the best diplomatic opening we've had in some time, and that's why we're pursuing it." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)**
- ✓ **"We see an opening, but they need to back up their words with actions. So we will see what proposal they come up with." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)**

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Robert Strand, Senior Reviewer

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'Political Deadlock Closes Down the US': Global observers see the "impasse" in Congress as a "enormous blow" to the American "model of democracy," and fear its impact on the global economy as the deadline for raising the debt limit looms. *The Australian Financial Review* exasperatedly proclaims "what a mess!" Saudi Arabia's *Al-Madina* worries the deadlock will "push the world to the edge." Qatar's *Peninsula* wonders at the "strange ways of the United States," contending the current crisis "violates the principles dreamt of by the framers of the constitution." Russia's *Vedomosti* argues "the current shutdown reflects structural problems of the US' representative democracy." The UK *Times* depicts "a shameful spectacle: Each side in the showdown paralyzing Washington claims the moral high ground, but neither one deserves it." For South Korea's *Dong-a Ilbo*, the US crisis "shows the importance of a social consensus and cooperation between ruling and opposition parties." India's *Hindustan Times* stresses "the world should live with the fact that the sole superpower will remain inwardly focused for a few more years." France's *Le Monde* posits "this is bad for the economy, but what is worse is the possibility that America could default." *The Hong Kong Economic Times* portrays "US politicians adding gunpowder to the US debt bomb, and once it explodes, it will become a major threat to the global economy." The UK's *Guardian*, however, describes a "democracy imperfect but alive. America is not broken. It is merely having one of its periodic nervous breakdowns."

Message:

- ✓ ***"I urge House Republicans to reopen the government, restart the services Americans depend on, and allow the public servants who have been sent home to return to work." (President Obama)***
- ✓ ***"As I've said repeatedly, I am prepared to work with Democrats and Republicans to do the things we need to do to grow the economy and create jobs, and get our fiscal house in order over the long run." (President Obama)***
- ✓ ***"My basic message to Congress is this: Pass a budget. End the government shutdown. Pay your bills. Prevent an economic shutdown. Don't wait. Don't delay." (President Obama)***

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THURSDAY 10/03/2013

Americans 'Held Hostage' by Congress: Global media warn that the continuing government shutdown could do grave damage to the US' international image and standing, with some remaining cautiously optimistic that the deadlock will soon be resolved. For Austria's *Oesterreich*, the "tug of war" is reminiscent of "children bickering in the sandbox." Singapore's *Business Times* begs "will the grown-ups finally please stand up?" *The Indian Express* laments the US "lurches from crisis to crisis." New Zealand's *The Dominion Post* is bemused that "a country that purports to be the world's beacon for democracy can have come to such a sorry state of affairs." Poland's *Rzeczpospolita* emphasizes that the real threat comes not from the economy but the "devastation of 'the American Dream'." The Czech Republic's *Respekt* regrets that "unfortunately, those who say that Moscow or Beijing have a better model of governance cannot now be blamed as the US is a real mess." Russia's *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* mocks the shutdown as "clearly illustrating the thesis of America's 'exceptionalism'," as it could never have arisen in any other country but the US. *The Times of India* advises international policymakers that they "can ill afford complacency when dysfunctional US politics threatens to casually experiment with a deliberate default of sovereign financial obligations." Meanwhile, South Africa's *Business Day* argues "we remain optimistic: the US will do the right thing in the end, though not before first exhausting all the alternatives."

Message:

- ✓ **The President made clear to the Leaders that he is not going to negotiate over the need for Congress to act to reopen the government or to raise the debt limit to pay the bills Congress has already incurred. (Readout of President's Meeting with Congressional Leaders)**
- ✓ **The President reinforced his view that the House should put the clean government funding bill that has been passed by the Senate up for a vote - a bill that would pass a majority of the House with bipartisan support. (Readout of President's Meeting with Congressional Leaders)**
- ✓ **The House could act today to reopen the government and stop the harm this shutdown is causing to the economy and families across the country. (Readout of President's Meeting with Congressional Leaders)**
- ✓ **The President remains hopeful that common sense will prevail, and that Congress will not only do its job to reopen the government, but also act to pay the bills it has racked up and spare the nation from a devastating default. (Readout of President's Meeting with Congressional Leaders)**

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'Hints of New Spirit' from Tehran: International observers continue to express some optimism about the opportunity for a US-Iranian rapprochement while stressing the tough road ahead as some ponder the resulting changes in regional alliances. Italy's *La Repubblica* approves: "Rouhani seems serious. His overtures were backed up by the conservative parliament - a sign that he continues to have the support of the Supreme Leader Khamenei." Israel's *Yediot Aharonot* thinks the "new situation entails more positive developments than risks," but emphasizes: "The process of clarifying the real intentions of Iran should be exhausted." Austria's *Falter* believes "it would be fatal to pass up this historic chance," though it will be "a difficult and lengthy process with many ups and downs." Japan's *Mainichi* calls on Tehran to "provide satisfactory explanations," as otherwise "trust in the country will plunge further if its approach turns out to be just a desperate bid to get rid of UN economic sanctions." Israel's *The Jerusalem Post*, however, fears "Iranian concession would be a temporary tactical adjustment in the face of biting sanctions - not a deep ideological and strategic change of direction." France's *Les Echos* concludes that Iran's "two imperative objectives" of "softening economic sanctions" without "appearing too obliging to the West" are "hardly reconcilable." Meanwhile, the UAE's *Khaleej Times* depicts "unease in Israel on seeing its arch rival mend fences with the US and Europe." Lebanon's *Daily Star* expects a "recalibration of power relationships between the US and Israel," to come with the opening of US-Iranian relations. *Al-Nahar* questions Washington's risking "its regional historic, strategic and economic relations [with Gulf countries] in order to earn Tehran's satisfaction."

Message:

- ✓ *"We are willing to meet one-on-one with the Iranians when they're ready to do so." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"I think we are all on the same page here with our partners in the region, that Iran cannot be allowed to acquire a nuclear weapon." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"We've also been very clear that we all prefer a diplomatic resolution to this crisis because, while all options remain on the table, diplomacy is certainly the preferred one." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"We're hopeful that we can continue working to get a diplomatic resolution to this issue going forward." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*

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HOT TOPICS
FRIDAY 10/04/2013

'Obama Pivot Hits a Divot': East Asian and Pacific media view the US government shutdown and the subsequent cancellation of President Obama's APEC trip as a symbol of the US' declining ability to successfully complete the planned turn towards Asia. Taiwan's *United Daily News* declares that the US, "once a model of democracy, is now caught in a quagmire." Thailand's *The Nation* sees US "gridlock" as "blurring President Obama's Asia focus." Singapore's *Today* warns that the "unfortunate twist in the US pivot" will "not be without costs" and questions if "American politicians will be consistent about faraway Asia" if they are unwilling to manage their own country. Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* sees the President's cancellation as an "unwitting show of weakness," as "America's troubles give a sense to outsiders that its political system is flawed, and standing up regional leaders suggests its foreign policy is broken... Events this week seem to show China stealing a march." Malaysia's *Sin Chew Daily* announces Chinese President Xi's South Asian tour, exclaiming "Obama isn't coming, but Xi Jinping is here!" A second piece from *South China Morning Post* skewers: "Even if Obama were to be invited to give a speech to the Indonesian parliament, he would be the second foreign leader to do so, not the first one." Meanwhile, Taiwan's *Want Daily* contends that "it is of no real importance that Obama scuttled the trip" as a number of Southeast Asian nations, specifically the Philippines, still "heartily welcome" the US pivot as a counterbalance to China.

'US Budget Stalemate Lingers On': Observers in the rest of the world regret the continuing "paralysis" over the US budget but are more afraid that the looming debt ceiling crisis will have "disastrous consequences," though a few are optimistic that compromise is possible. France's *Le Point* resignedly comments "the shutdown will enter its fourth day without any forecast of a quick settlement." Poland's *Nasz Dziennik* sees all sides "far from a compromise." Spain's *El Pais* worries that "politics of hate overwhelm us these days...pushing the country to the brink of economic collapse." Mexico's *La Jornada* chides, "By putting at risk the already precarious stability of the financial markets, American political groups are playing with fire." Austria's *Der Standard* warns the "hardened fronts do not bode well for the next more important drama that is on the horizon": the debt ceiling. Germany's *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* cautions that a US default would be a "monstrous breach of a taboo with unpredictable consequences." *The New Indian Express* asserts "a situation in which the US is unable to honor its financial commitments is something the world shudders to think about." *Ganashakti* judges "the US is set to lose its superiority on the global stage" if the stalemate is not resolved soon. Germany's *Handelsblatt*, however, suspects that the risk of the economy "plunging into disaster" will lead Republicans and Democrats to "come together and vote in favor of higher debts." France's *Le Figaro* is hopeful that "a vast compromise is still possible."

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Message:

- ✓ *Due to the government shut-down, President Obama's travel to Indonesia and Brunei has been cancelled. (White House Statement)*
- ✓ *The President made this decision based on the difficulty in moving forward with foreign travel in the face of a shutdown, and his determination to continue pressing his case that Republicans should immediately allow a vote to reopen the government. (White House Statement)*
- ✓ *This completely avoidable shutdown is setting back our ability to create jobs through promotion of US exports and advance US leadership and interests in the largest emerging region in the world. (White House Statement)*
- ✓ *The President looks forward to continuing his work with our allies and partners in the Asia-Pacific and to returning to the region at a later date. (White House Statement)*

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HOT TOPICS
MONDAY 10/07/2013

'APEC Without Obama': East Asian observers warn that despite positive assurances from Secretary Kerry about the importance of APEC, President Obama's absence from the summit sends a worrying message about the US' commitment to the region and allows China to "steal the show." *Radio New Zealand* hears the Secretary reassuring "the US is not neglecting its responsibilities, including those in Asia." Indonesia's *Kompas* interprets his comments to mean "the US is still committed" as he assured Washington's "commitment to APEC and the international community is still strong." But *The Jakarta Globe* thinks the "shutdown and Syria are overshadowing APEC." *Kompas* argues that while "Obama's absence...does not have a significant impact" because Secretary Kerry is attending, "psychologically it has great significance." Taiwan's *Taipei Times* complains "Kerry...does not carry the same weight." Japan's *Sankei* warns "skepticism is mounting as to whether the US, which cannot deal with issues even at home, will be able to become the world's leader." Hong Kong's *Sun* frets the President's cancellation means "Asia is still not the most important target in US global strategy." Meanwhile, Indonesia's *Jakarta Post* cautions his absence could "open up opportunities for other world powers to steal the limelight" and "reinforce questions over the US rebalancing policy." Malaysia's *New Straits Times* depicts the President "handing over the diplomatic floor to China." Taiwan's *Commercial Times* wonders whether the APEC summit will be "a turning point for the two great powers vying for supremacy in the Asia-Pacific region." But an analyst tells China's *Beijing Times* that "the issue should not be viewed with Cold War zero-sum thinking." *World News Journal* doubts "Obama's absence will make much difference to the APEC meetings."

Allies Remain Concerned Despite Secretary's 'Guarantees': While international media highlight the Secretary's varied remarks on the sidelines of the APEC Summit, analysts worry the President's absence "leaves the limelight" to China and gives US allies the feeling Washington "is not a reliable partner." Pan-Arab *Al-Jazeera* expresses surprise at the Secretary's "open praise" for the Asad regime for "so far complying" on destroying its chemical weapons arsenal. *Al-Arabiya* notes him describing as "fitting and legal" recent US operations against terrorists in Libya and Somalia. Spain's *Cuatro* TV depicts his words as "a clear and blunt message from the American power about international terrorism." The UK's *Guardian*, however, sees a "macho bombast" that "shows utter thoughtlessness" and invites "further retaliation and escalation," while "doing nothing to address the causes." Meanwhile, Italy's *Corriere della Sera* portrays US diplomacy as "halved" with summits "cancelled in Asia and Europe" and sees the Secretary's assurances as "no more than a Band-Aid placed on America's wounds." Germany's *Handelsblatt* posits that the "charm offensive race" has been won, for now, by China's President Xi Jinping. The UK's *BBC* stresses the President's absence will "jeopardize" the Trans-Pacific Partnership talks. France's *Le Figaro* describes "a

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quasi-desertion” that “accentuates the increased fragility of America.” *Les Echos* believes that the US’ “traditional regional allies such as South Korea and Japan are starting to wonder if Washington is ready to defend their positions in the region.”

Message:

- ✓ *“None of what is happening in Washington diminishes one iota our commitment to our partners in Asia, including our efforts to promote trade and investment throughout the region.” (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *“The relationship between the United States and the Asia Pacific has really never been more important than it is now.” (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *“President Obama began a rebalance to this region in the course of his first four years, and we intend to continue that over the course of his second term.” (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *“APEC matters because it provides a very critical platform for government and private sector partners to be able to come together and break down the barriers to commerce.” (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *“It is very clear that most of the economic issues that we face today require the kind of cooperation that APEC makes possible.” (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *“The United States views APEC as its premier forum for economic and development issues in this region.” (Secretary Kerry)*

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HOT TOPICS
TUESDAY 10/08/2013

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'Obama Not Present, Xi Conquers the Pacific':

International observers, particularly East Asian and Pacific media, view President Obama's absence at the APEC summit as a "grave strategic error" which has left China as the "only superpower at the table," with US security and economic goals in the region seemingly losing ground.

Italy's *La Stampa* observes "Obama's defection from APEC allowed Xi to wear the hat of the regional leader" and close the APEC summit as "the protagonist." *The Australian* warns "there can be no doubt that in the US-China tug-of-war for influence in the region, the pull of China's economy is proving increasingly difficult for many countries to resist. America could pay a high price for its short-sightedness."

Taiwan's *Apple Daily* explains "the truth is China is in the vicinity while the US is far away. ASEAN knows that the United States is mindful but powerless." An analyst tells *The Australian* "the goings-on in Washington make the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) look suspiciously more and more like a dead cat that no one in Congress will want to pick up." Hong Kong's *Ta Kung Pao* likens TPP negotiations without President Obama to "an orchestra without a conductor." China's *Global Times* derides the TPP as enforcing pro-US "rules of the game" and rails against "developed countries which have enjoyed their prestigious position for too long. They need to accept the new realities of the 21st century."



Source: *Khaleej Times*, UAE

Message:

- ✓ "There is nothing that will shake the commitment of the United States to the rebalance to Asia that President Obama is leading." (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ "We are inextricably linked to this region by ties of geography, of history, culture, economics, and frankly the blood and the treasure that we expended to help lay the framework for the architecture on which prosperity is now being built." (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ "Today, American exports and American trade with APEC stand at record levels." (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ "We have a stake in each other's success. And that's one of the reasons why multilateral fora like APEC and ASEAN are so important in this modern context." (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ "And it's why we are working to complete the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations by the end of this year." (Secretary Kerry)

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- ✓ ***“At its core, TPP is about generating growth for our economies and jobs for our people by unleashing a wave of investment and entrepreneurship all across the Asia-Pacific.”***
(Secretary Kerry)

Chemical Weapons Destruction, Geneva II but ‘No Final Solutions’: While some global observers view a US-Russian rapprochement on Syria as a positive step, others express concern the two major powers are striking deals that ignore the bloodshed and the suffering of Syrians. Spain’s *TVE* reports “Secretary Kerry and his Russian counterpart agree the Geneva Peace Conference should be convened as soon as possible, in November.” Germany’s *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* is hopeful as “international politics is slowly making a move,” and sees good prospects for a “successful Geneva II.” France’s *Les Echos* stresses that “while the players in the Syrian crisis remain at an impasse, there has been change with regard to the major powers.” *Le Figaro* depicts “a real change of tone on the part of Barack Obama’s team” as Secretary Kerry “congratulates the Asad regime on beginning the dismantling of its chemical arsenal.” Germany’s *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, however, argues that although Syria’s destruction of its chemical arsenal is “good news,” it does not bring a solution of the conflict “an inch closer.” Lebanon’s *Al-Nahar* questions the US “delight” with the chemical weapons deal when it “does nothing to end the fighting.” Saudi Arabia’s *Al-Madina* laments that taking the military option off the table means “killing and genocide by the tyrant Asad regime will continue.” Pan-Arab *Al-Hayat* is incredulous that the US, after long maintaining Asad must go, now gives him “testaments of good behavior.” Turkey’s *Zaman* regrets that chemical disarmament “does not say anything about the massacres, torture, rape and other war crimes committed by the regime or its opponents.”

Message:

- ✓ ***“There are missile warheads and other instruments that were destroyed on October 6th, so the process has begun in record time.”*** (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ ***“We strongly support the recent United Nations Security Council statement urging unhindered access to enable humanitarian aid providers to immediately reach parts of the country where the need is most urgent.”*** (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ ***“Foreign Minister Lavrov and I discussed our mutual goal, which we are extraordinarily focused on, of ending the war in Syria through a political transition to a more broadly acceptable democratic government, under the terms of the Geneva communique.”*** (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ ***“We agreed, again, that there is no military solution.”*** (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ ***“We share an interest in not having radical extremists on either side of any kind assuming a greater status or position in Syria.”*** (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ ***“We recommitted to move the Geneva process forward as rapidly as possible.”*** (Secretary Kerry)

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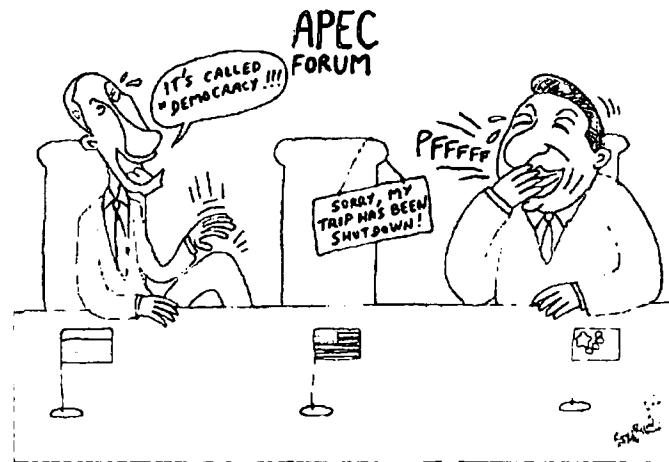
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HOT TOPICS
WEDNESDAY 10/09/2013

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'The US Sneezes and the World Gets the Flu':

International observers warn of catastrophic consequences as US debt default edges closer, while some debate the ramifications of the shutdown for US-style democracy. The UK's *Telegraph* forecasts "sooner or later, the US government is going to default on its debts." France's *Les Echos* hears "investors sounding the alarm" as "default becomes a real possibility." Italy's *La Repubblica* senses "the fear is becoming more tangible." China's *21st Century Business Herald* urges China and other US creditors to "take precautions against the US taking risks out of desperation." India's *The Hindu* derides "Washington's partisan squabble that could bruise the world" and warns that debt default could trigger "shock waves of such speed and magnitude that would dwarf other multidimensional domino effects." Meanwhile, *Beijing Youth Daily* argues "China's holding of long-term American debt is relatively safe. There is almost zero probability that the US will default on its debt." France's *LCI* has faith in the "realist position" that debt default would be so catastrophic, it "seems impossible for sensible people to make decisions that would lead to it." Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* scorns the shutdown as an "embarrassment for America and for democracy, at a time when democracy is being dangled in front of, and debated within" Arab and Asian nations. Conversely, Taiwan's *Apple Daily* contends that US government shutdowns have "never caused social disturbances," meaning the fierce political standoffs could be "viewed as an advantage of the US political system!" *China Youth Daily* suggests that a bright side to the "shutdown drama" is the "commendable transparency that has been shown since the beginning."



Source: *Korea Times*, South Korea

Message:

- ✓ "This morning, I had a chance to speak with Speaker Boehner, and I told him what I've been saying publicly, that I am happy to talk with him and other Republicans about anything—not just issues I think are important, but also issues that they think are important." (President Obama)
- ✓ "But I also told him that having such a conversation, talks, and negotiations, shouldn't require hanging the threats of a government shutdown or economic chaos over the heads of the American people." (President Obama)

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- ✓ *"Either my Chief of Staff or I have had serious conversations on the budget with Republicans more than 20 times since March." (President Obama)*
- ✓ *"So my suggestion to the Speaker has been and will continue to be let's stop the excuses. Let's take a vote in the House...There are enough reasonable Republicans and Democrats in the House who are willing to vote yes on a budget that the Senate has already passed." (President Obama)*
- ✓ *"And this is not just for me. It's also for my successors in office, whatever party they're from—they shouldn't have to pay ransom either for Congress doing its basic job." (President Obama)*

'Power Struggle in the Pacific': Global commentators describe a "race for leadership" between the US and China at APEC as each pits its respective regional trade regime against the other's, with many concluding that China benefitted from President Obama's absence. Germany's *Handelsblatt* opines "a tough competition has developed between the two major powers. China and the US want to safeguard their access to the emerging markets in the region and are fighting for their supremacy in Asia." *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* sees Secretary Kerry and President Xi "advocating regional free trade zones under the leadership of their countries – by excluding the other side." Japan's *Nikkei* regrets that the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations "had difficulty building consensus," which shows "the US paid the price for the President's last-minute cancellation of his trip to Asia." Spain's *TVE* cautions the President's absence "makes [the TPP] difficult to finalize before the end of the year." In contrast, Austria's *Der Standard* surmises "the Chinese are happy." *The Hong Kong Economic Times* thinks President Xi "took the initiative to propose the establishment of a free trade area with its neighbors." China's *Beijing News* claims "APEC needs a new leader." The UAE's *Gulf News* believes the US must now "accept [China] as an equal stakeholder" in Asia. But Poland's *Rzeczpospolita* assures that "in spite of China's diplomatic offensive, the Americans do not have to be afraid that their influence in the region will significantly diminish." Indonesia's *Jakarta Globe* concludes "China and the US cannot exclude each other from being involved in determining the roadmap for the region."

Message:

- ✓ *"There is nothing that will shake the commitment of the United States to the rebalance to Asia that President Obama is leading." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"We are inextricably linked to this region by ties of geography, history, culture, economics, and frankly the blood and the treasure that we expended to help lay the framework for the architecture on which prosperity is now being built." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"We have a stake in each other's success. And that's one of the reasons why multilateral fora like APEC and ASEAN are so important in this modern context." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"And it's why we are working to complete the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations by the end of this year." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"At its core, TPP is about generating growth for our economies and jobs for our people by unleashing a wave of investment and entrepreneurship all across the Asia-Pacific." (Secretary Kerry)*

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HOT TOPICS
THURSDAY 10/10/2013

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'Unending Impasse' Threatens 'Global Chaos': International observers continue to stress the "immeasurable impact" of the US government "impasse" on world economies and depict a "wave of disappointment" among Washington's allies due to President Obama's no-show at regional gatherings. France's *Direct Matin* headlines "America on the Verge of Bankruptcy," and Germany's *Tagesspiegel* believes "nothing works any more in Washington." *The Times of India* expects disaster: "As the US Treasury runs out of money, it brings the global economy to the edge of a cliff." Norway's *VG* sees "American politicians playing with fire," and warns they "could provoke a worldwide crisis of confidence in the financial markets." Poland's *Gazeta Wyborcza* laments "for more than a week, the US government has been paralyzed with no prospects for coming out of the gridlock." The UAE's *Khaleej Times* fears the "confusing signals being sent to the world economy" and possible "ensuing public chaos." South Korea's *Hankook Ilbo* is dismayed, portraying "US political circles gripped by partisan interests and indifferent to the international community's repeated appeals for a compromise."

Meanwhile, Russia's *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* posits that the President not attending the ASEAN Summit is "taken in Asia as more evidence of Washington putting its domestic problems ahead of its international obligations." For Hong Kong's *Macau Daily News*, it "highlights that the US influence in the international arena continues to weaken with the intensification of internal conflicts." Vietnam's *Tuoi Tre Daily* argues the President's absence makes "countries see the US as a weakening or unstable partner and question Washington's real commitment to Asia after so many declarations about the 'pivot' and 'rebalancing' in the region." *The Australian* describes "a clear impact" of the US budgetary "woes" on the President's Asian engagement policy but concludes that "American power will endure and the US alliance system will remain the bedrock of Asian security and geopolitics."

Message:

- ✓ **"We hope that the reality of the consequences of shutdown and of potentially threatening default or allowing us to cross that line will compel members of Congress to do the simple thing, the least that they could do." (White House Spokesman Carney)**
- ✓ **"This is to reopen the government and ensure that we will pay our bills on time, as we always have." (White House Spokesman Carney)**
- ✓ **"The President expressed his view that in the end he believes Congress will do the right thing." (White House Spokesman Carney)**
- ✓ **The President discussed his desire, once the threat of default is removed and the government is reopened, to engage with both sides on a discussion of how we achieve a broader budget**

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FRIDAY 10/11/2013

Post-Qaddafi Libya Hits 'New Low': International observers bemoan Prime Minister Zeidan's abduction as an indication of Libya's descent into lawlessness and chaos, while blaming US and Western intervention for fostering the current power vacuum. China's *People's Daily* asserts Zeidan's abduction "epitomizes the chaos in the country split by conflicts of interests, impotent government, and rampant militias." Italy's *La Stampa* agrees, describing Libya as an "immense 'hotel' for Jihadist groups and criminals who have obtained a passport to impunity." Pan-Arab *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* contends it was "a result of two predicaments: the revolutionary legitimacy that puts itself above the state, and the US which put itself above the rest of the world" by "kidnapping" Abu Anas al-Libi. Saudi Arabia's *Arab News* rails against Washington's "foolish arrogance" as it "once again acted entirely in what it perceives to be in its own best interests and ignored the impact of its actions." Germany's *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* interprets Zeidan's kidnapping as a reminder from radical militia groups to the US and Europeans that "you break it, you bought it." Lebanon's *Daily Star* urges "the countries which leapt behind the Libyan revolution must now step up and do their part to help Libya create a strong, representative government." Meanwhile, the UK's *Daily Telegraph* warns that while Libya's government is too weak to fix the nation on its own, "a careful balance must be struck" as "unilateral American or European steps – or assistance that is too public – risks tainting the government further in the eyes of Islamists and nationalists." Austria's *Salzburger Nachrichten* in turn insists "the West is not allowed to act selectively in the fight against anarchism. The time of downplaying the situation in Libya is clearly over."

Message:

- ✓ *"While we were pleased to hear of Prime Minister Zeidan's release, the United States condemns the events of the last twenty four hours that captured the attention of the world." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"Libyans did not risk their lives in their 2011 revolution to tolerate a return to thuggery. If a free people are going to succeed in forging a democratic, secure, and prosperous country with a government based on the rule of law and respect for human rights, then there can be no place for this kind of violence in the new Libya." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"The United States will continue to work with the Libyan government to build its capacity to deliver security and good governance to its people." (Secretary Kerry)*

'Signs of a US Debt Fix'? While several international commentators are hopeful that negotiations in Washington increase the likelihood of short-term debt ceiling relief, others remain skeptical of the "half-solution" that could still jeopardize global markets. Austria's *Die Presse* is optimistic that "chances for raising the debt ceiling are improving," and *The Australian* sees "Washington talks

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lifting hopes of a deal." Spain's *La Vanguardia* depicts US leaders "searching for an exit from the gridlock" amid rumors of a possible deal to lift the debt ceiling for six weeks. France's *Le Figaro Economie* comments the "markets are starting to believe there will be an exit to the crisis." The UK's *Daily Telegraph* positively writes of "glimmers of hope" with a deal that "gives everyone space to talk." China's *People's Daily* is confident that "the US, aware of the potential damage, will try to avert the worst scenario." France's *Les Echos*, however, warns that raising the debt ceiling for six weeks while maintaining the shutdown is "only a half-solution that temporarily removes the specter of a default." Italy's *La Repubblica* laments "the prospect of gaining only six weeks is not exciting," finding it "inconceivable that the world's largest economy doesn't have real economic governance." Mexico's *La Jornada* chides, "Being the leading world economic power brings with it responsibilities that are not always taken on by legislators and officials in Washington." Sri Lanka's *Island* complains that there is still potential for a "mega economic tsunami" in the case of a US default, just as "Washington continues to pontificate to the rest of the world on the virtues of...consensus, compromise, and above all, reconciliation!"

Message:

- ✓ *"The President is happy that cooler heads at least seem to be prevailing in the House, that there at least seems to be a recognition that default is not an option." (White House Spokesman Jay Carney)*
- ✓ *The President looks forward to making continued progress with members on both sides of the aisle. (White House Statement)*
- ✓ *The President's goal remains to ensure we pay the bills we've incurred, reopen the government and get back to the business of growing the economy, creating jobs and strengthening the middle class. (White House Statement)*

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TUESDAY 10/15/2013

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'Looming X Day Forces US Rivals Towards Deal': Global observers depict a world economy held "hostage by partisan interests," with some raising questions about US democracy and governance practices, as media note "growing hopes" that Senators are inching closer to a deal on the debt ceiling. Spain's *COPE* radio opines "the US breathes easier today with some optimism." South Korea's *Hankyoreh Shinmun* pleads: "The US government and political circles should stop holding their citizens and the world economy hostage and immediately end their ceaseless confrontation." France's *Le Monde* describes a "pitiful spectacle," and *L'Opinion* portrays "growing tensions around the globe as the fateful October 17 date approaches." Spain's *El Pais* believes "the damage caused is already irreparable as images of lawlessness and anxiety arise from the capital of the world's most powerful nation." The UK's *Daily Telegraph* perceives "the sun setting on dollar supremacy, and with it, American power... The US is recklessly throwing away its future." Italy's *Corriere della Sera* agrees that "Washington's and the dollar's old and solid credibility are dimming." China's *Jingji Ribao* argues the US "debt farce" is another reason to "seek a substitute scheme for the dollar, so as to avoid future unforeseeable risks." Pakistan's *Ausaf* sees the "deadlock" as "falsifying the US claim that the survival of humanity depends on capitalism." The UAE's *Gulf News* wonders how "US allies can keep the faith" as a "superpower that lectures the world on good governance is acting recklessly and seems incapable of sorting out its problems." Colombia's *El Espectador* concludes "the current crises could be the path for a nation in search of a lost focus. But nobody knows how deep a crisis it must go through first."

Message:

- ✓ ***Congress must do its job and raise the debt limit to pay the bills we have incurred and avoid default. (White House Statement)***
- ✓ ***It is unfortunate that the common sense, clean debt limit increase proposed by Senate Democrats was refused a yes or no vote on October 13th. (White House Statement)***
- ✓ ***This bill would have taken the threat of default off the table, and given our nation's businesses and the economy the certainty we need. (White House Statement)***
- ✓ ***With five days until the government runs out of borrowing authority, Congress needs to move forward with a solution that reopens the government and allows us to pay our bills so we can move on to the business of achieving a broader budget deal that creates jobs, grows the economy and strengthens the middle class. (White House Statement)***

'Rouhani's Moment': International commentators express cautious optimism ahead of the P5+1 talks in Geneva and see "room for compromise" on Iranian enrichment, but several warn against harboring "excessive expectations" as a resolution will not come "overnight." Iran's *IRINN TV*

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describes a "quite positive atmosphere" ahead of the talks. Pan-Arab *Al-Jazeera* is hopeful because Washington is engaging in a discussion about "whether Iran will enrich at the end of the process...which would satisfy legitimate proliferation concerns of the international community as well as the Iranian bottom line." Japan's *Yomiuri* believes "the economic sanctions' growing impact on the Iranian economy is behind Tehran's desperate efforts to move the talks forward." Qatar's *Peninsula* thinks Geneva is Iran's "best opportunity to put forward responsible proposals that are acceptable to the West." Iran's *Javan* urges the West "not to lose the opportunity for reaching an agreement." *Arman* sees room for the two sides to "come to a compromise on preliminary issues" and thereby "pave the way for future talks." But Poland's *Gazeta Wyborcza* wonders: "Are both sides ready to make sufficiently serious concessions?" Italy's *La Stampa* believes "everything depends on Iran's concrete steps." Israel's *Yisrael Hayom* warns "Iran must not be believed." Iran's *Press TV* calls for concessions from both sides, otherwise "this will be another round of talks for talks' sake." *Keyhan* suspects Washington "does not seek reconciliation" but "wants to shatter [Iran's] pride and dignity." Meanwhile, China's *People's Daily* cautions an "overnight" solution is "unrealistic." The UK's *Financial Times* foresees a "complex technical negotiation" that will require a "sustained and strategic shift in the US-Iran relationship" and "courageous" talks by negotiators.

Message:

- ✓ "I think we are all on the same page here with our partners in the region, that Iran cannot be allowed to acquire a nuclear weapon." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)
- ✓ "We've also been very clear that we all prefer a diplomatic resolution to this crisis because, while all options remain on the table, diplomacy is certainly the preferred one." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)
- ✓ "We're hopeful that we can continue working to get a diplomatic resolution to this issue going forward." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)

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WEDNESDAY 10/16/2013

'Superpower is Ungovernable': European observers depict doomsday scenarios as time runs out on raising the US debt ceiling, mostly blaming partisan politics and a "broken" system. The UK's *Daily Telegraph* views the US as "teetering on the brink of disaster," Spain's *Antenna 3* reports on a "political disaster," and Austria's *Wiener Zeitung* portrays a country "on the decline." Poland's *Gazeta Wyborcza* is baffled by the "politicians who could prevent US bankruptcy but remain at odds with each other," reminding that debts "are to be paid." Spain's *La Vanguardia* prods "Tick Tock. Congress and the White House have a day to prevent the US from heading towards a possible default." Italy's *Corriere della Sera* believes the "avalanche has already begun." *La Repubblica* headlines: "America toward Default. Fitch Warns of Possible Downgrading." France's *Le Figaro* stresses a "US default needs to be avoided at all costs because repercussions would be terrible for the country and the rest of the world." Austria's *Salzburger Nachrichten* blames a "self-crippling political system" for putting "the world economy in danger." The UK's *Guardian* laments "the erosion of American power is happening faster than most of us predicted - while the politicians in Washington behave like rutting stags with locked antlers." Meanwhile, *The Independent* argues for "scrapping" the "redundant and dangerous" US debt ceiling, calling it "not necessary." Italy's *La Stampa* contends that "bankruptcy is a bluff, as money can be found without raising the debt ceiling." Russia's *Izvestiya* is certain "the parties will reach an agreement at the very last moment in a typical Hollywood manner."

'US Armageddon Awaits': Global media forecast continuing political and economic instability despite a likely last-minute deal to avoid US debt default, as some observers assert the US political system "isn't working." Australia's *Sydney Morning Herald* warns "the US is recklessly throwing away its future." *The New Zealand Herald* welcomes the "dreadful and absurd situation" as "adding fuel to a major shift in global trade already under way where a new international currency—maybe even the Chinese renminbi—is poised to supplant the US dollar as the world's sole reserve currency." Pakistan's *Dawn* senses a growing international perception of the US as a "potentially failed state." *Daily Times* wonders if these problems will continue to recur and asks "has American 'exceptionalism' run its course, with the US' power slipping?" *China Daily* cautions: "The likely last-minute compromise may avoid an immediate economic earthquake, but it will only prolong the chronic illness that is the US' debt addiction." India's *First Post* dismisses the entire debate as "hogwash," asserting "the truth is the US government has been surreptitiously defaulting for almost all of the last 70-plus years...the day of reckoning cannot be far off." *The Pakistan Observer* declares it a "clear reflection that even in the US, personal animosities and ideological divisions are so deep that they are eroding democratic values and traditions." For *China Daily*, the US

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government shutdown and looming debt default “speak volumes about why universal suffrage, if not implemented with care, might bring more harm than good.”

Message:

- ✓ *“There is no question that we are very close to a very important deadline and time is of the essence.” (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *“I think that is why you see some very serious-minded efforts being undertaken in the Senate.” (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *“We would hope that the House would also approach this important deadline with the same understanding of just how serious it is.” (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *“We know from past experience, the difficult lessons learned from 2011, that the serious flirtation with default that House Republicans engaged in two years ago led to some pretty negative consequences for our economy, including the United States being downgraded for the first time.” (White House Spokesman Carney)*

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THURSDAY 10/17/2013

'Back from the Brink': International commentators welcome an overnight deal that will reopen the government and raise the debt ceiling, but warn that the measure is only temporary and neither stabilizes the US' long-term finances nor ensures continuing US global leadership. Greece's *Ta Nea* finds "Obama's victory a breath for markets." *The Times of India* thinks "the world heaved a sigh of relief that some resolution, even if it is a temporary fix, is in the works." Italy's *La Repubblica* is relieved that "America stopped at the brink of a cliff and finally decided not to jump." But Qatar's *Peninsula* warns "all the damage suffered is not reparable." Canada's *Globe and Mail* asks: "What was it all for, and what will keep it from happening again?" Germany's *Mannheimer Morgen* predicts that unless "a miracle happens, Congress, the country and the global economy will be confronted with the same situation at the beginning of 2014." Austria's *Die Presse* expects "in February we will enter the next round." The UK's *Daily Telegraph*, meanwhile, is depressed about "how Washington's broken politics continues to undermine confidence in the US economic recovery and raise questions about the long-term viability of the dollar as the world's reserve currency." Germany's *Handelsblatt* worries the crisis "has shaken the US reputation in the world as a reliable debtor." *The Australian* condemns the "high-stakes bickering in Washington," which "invites international contumely and contempt for America's political system." *China Daily* chides, "As long as the US keeps using cheap money as a painkiller to delay hard and necessary economic restructuring, it is more than likely that senseless political brinksmanship...will repeat itself sooner or later."

Message:

- ✓ "We'll begin reopening our government immediately, and we can begin to lift this cloud of uncertainty and unease from our businesses and from the American people." (President Obama)
- ✓ "I've got some thoughts about how we can move forward in the remainder of the year." (President Obama)
- ✓ "I am willing and eager to work with anybody -- Democrat or Republican, House or Senate members -- on any idea that will grow our economy, create new jobs, strengthen the middle class, and get our fiscal house in order for the long term." (President Obama)
- ✓ "In fact, there are things that we know will help strengthen our economy that we could get done before this year is out." (President Obama)
- ✓ "We now have an opportunity to focus on a sensible budget that is responsible and fair." (President Obama)

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Hope and Skepticism in Geneva: While international media widely extol the Iran-P5+1 talks as “opening a path to real compromise,” some observers point to long-lasting divisions and distrust as they call for maintained vigilance. Saudi Arabia’s *Al-Watan* hails the talks as a success and a “vital investment in the future of a country which stands on the brink of extremism.” Iran’s *Sharq* describes “Geneva smiles” and *E’temad* extols the “luminous lights of Geneva.” Spain’s *El Pais* sees “a clear turning point after years of complete paralysis.” China’s *People’s Daily* warns though “irreversible,” this will be a long and difficult process as “the concerns of Israel and Arab nations will not be dispelled by a couple of meetings.” Japan’s *Sankei* forecasts the US and Western nations will not accommodate Iran’s request for immediate removal of sanctions, but “plan to gradually close the gap with Iran while giving consideration to Israel and the US Congress, which have strong distrust of Tehran.” A cynical *Yisrael Hayom* in Israel notes “despite the smiles, the enthusiasm, and the serious detailed talks, no one has promised us progress next month.” Russia’s *Kommersant* sees the “Iranian atom splitting the P5+1 group,” as the US and UK adopt moderation in their Iran policy, while France is distrustful and “takes the role of the bad policeman.” France’s *Liberation* in turn warns that the “Iranians are masters in the art of playing on the divisions among the major powers.” Meanwhile, China’s *Xinhua* urges the US to “accept Iran’s olive branch with sincerity and free both sides from binary opposition.” The UK’s *Guardian* insists that inspections and monitoring are key to controlling proliferation, which means “an imperfect agreement may indeed be better than none.”

Message:

- ✓ ***“For the first time, the P5+1 and Iran had very technical discussions, and we found the Iranian presentation very useful.” (White House Spokesman Carney)***
- ✓ ***“The Iranians presented a new proposal with a level of seriousness and substance that we had not seen before.” (White House Spokesman Carney)***
- ✓ ***“No one should expect a breakthrough overnight...As the President has said, the history of mistrust is very deep.” (White House Spokesman Carney)***
- ✓ ***“The onus remains on Iran to come into compliance with its international obligations.” (White House Spokesman Carney)***
- ✓ ***“Any deal must prove to the international community that its program will be used for exclusively peaceful purposes.” (White House Spokesman Carney)***
- ✓ ***“The P5+1 remains united in its approach, and I understand that High Representative Ashton announced that the next meeting will take place in Geneva November 7th and 8th.” (White House Spokesman Carney)***

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FRIDAY 10/18/2013

'Until the Next Crisis': European commentators worry that the US budget and debt ceiling deal is merely a "stay of execution," with many denouncing the "broken US political system" whose dysfunction jeopardizes US global credibility. France's *Liberation* is grateful "Washington closes the chapter on the shutdown." The UK's *Guardian* hails the US for "fighting its battles in full view, democracy red in tooth and claw." But Italy's *Il Sole 24 Ore* warns "after January 15 the spectacle will begin again: a new repeat of a political confrontation which will risk paralyzing the federal machine and conjure up the specter of default." Germany's *Tagesspiegel* asks: "Should we really believe that the hostile camps will be willing to make the compromises they refused to make this time?" Russia's *Kommersant* worries President Obama "will have far less room for maneuver" in January. Finland's *Aamulehti* foresees "new, nerve-racking disputes." The UK's *Daily Telegraph* finds this shutdown "embarrassing enough, but the wider problem is that this keeps happening." Austria's *Salzburger Nachrichten* chides: "Stubborn and short-sighted politicians have driven the country up the wall. The world shakes its head in disapproval." Finland's *Helsingin Sanomat* grumbles that US and global economic stability "should not be made to play hostage to such a sorry spectacle and political blackmail." Spain's *La Vanguardia* thinks Washington has "suffered substantial financial damage and damage to its world image." Germany's *Handelsblatt* cautions "the poker game about the default must be a clear alarm call for the US and the world ... Only if the US succeeds in a long-term policy of fiscal consolidation can it maintain its role as the leading economy." Otherwise, Norway's *Dagens Næringsliv* admonishes, "No one will take the US seriously."

'Debt Pact Does Not Solve Problems': Other international observers acknowledge the global sigh of relief with the last minute Congressional deal but worry that another crisis looms, counseling against political partisanship and for a "permanent" fix for the US debt. Guatemala's *Prensa Libre* welcomes the accord that "brought some tranquility and eliminated the possibility of a new recession." The UAE's *National* is glad "US lawmakers ended their theatre-of-the-absurd showdown," as "without the deal, America's dysfunctional politics would have propelled the global economy into uncharted waters." China's *Daily* writes of the "last-gasp deal," but warns with "crisis-driven politics becoming the new norm in Washington, there is little chance for the US economy to emerge out of its financial crisis." India's *Business Standard* depicts Congress "papering over the cracks," as "the US budget compromise is far from permanent." Malaysia's *Sin Chew Daily* sees the US "financial crisis as a global financial time bomb." Japan's *Sankei* urges Washington to "take the international community's concerns seriously," as "a crisis in America can shake the world not just on the economic but also the security front." South Korea's *JoongAng Ilbo* believes "some serious soul-searching" is in order as "America is abusing its superpower privilege to nudge the world

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economy into chaos and confusion.” Japan’s *Asahi* advises Congress “to face reality squarely.” The UAE’s *Gulf News* reminds that governing is “inclusive not divisive; respectful, not derisive; caring, not abusive.” China’s *Global Times* recaps that “without compromise, democracy is meaningless.”

Message:

- ✓ ***“Because Democrats and responsible Republicans came together, the first government shutdown in 17 years is now over. The first default in more than 200 years will not happen.” (President Obama)***
- ✓ ***“The good news is we’ll bounce back from this. We always do.” (President Obama)***
- ✓ ***“America is the bedrock of the global economy for a reason.” (President Obama)***
- ✓ ***“We are the indispensable nation that the rest of the world looks to us as the safest and most reliable place to invest -- something that’s made it easier for generations of Americans to invest in their own futures.” (President Obama)***
- ✓ ***“We have earned that responsibility over more than two centuries because of the dynamism of our economy and our entrepreneurs, the productivity of our workers, but also because we keep our word and we meet our obligations.” (President Obama)***
- ✓ ***“I want our people and our businesses and the rest of the world to know that the full faith and credit of the United States remains unquestioned.” (President Obama)***

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MONDAY 10/21/2013

Fractures to Shape Geneva Conference: Global observers debate the chances for success at upcoming Geneva peace talks on Syria, pointing to a “credibility deficit” among participating groups and railing against major powers’ refusal to compromise as the Syrian bloodshed continues. Lebanon’s *Daily Star* sees the “mixed signals” on setting a date for the conference as “perhaps the clearest evidence that the talks will be full of solemn affirmations as well as posturing, conditions and counter-conditions, measured criticism and exasperated rage.” *Jordan Times* laments: “Russia and the US have the will to meet but no concrete plan to form the basis for a possible solution.” Pakistan’s *Dawn* warns that since the “entire plan depends on the willing participation of all the principal elements...the next conference is doomed to fail unless the US relents” on its “adamant” stance on regime change. Meanwhile, Italy’s *Il Giornale* grimly notes the irony that by keeping his commitments, “Asad has become a reliable partner” and “is likely to be the only dictator who survives the Arab Spring.” Germany’s *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* asks: “The Syrian regime could call on its troops to respect a truce, but who will put pressure on the numerous Islamist militia groups?” France’s *RFI* forecasts continued maneuvering and instability as “Russia is increasing tension by insisting that several factions of the opposition should be present at Geneva II.” Italy’s *La Stampa* declares “the rebels’ problem is discord.” The UK’s *Independent* warns against the international community “washing their hands of responsibility” for ending the suffering in Syria. Meanwhile, Indonesia’s *Kompas* maintains “the attempt for peace must be made despite harsh realities.”

Message:

- ✓ “The purpose of a Geneva conference is to discuss the issues where we agree and disagree, including with the regime and with the opposition, and to move towards creating a transitional governing body.” (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)
- ✓ “We haven’t set a date yet for a conference, so that’s the next step. We’ll take it step by step from there.” (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)

‘Nawaz Sharif in Washington’: While most Pakistani observers welcome the proposed release of US aid to Pakistan and express hope Prime Minister Sharif’s visit will resolve outstanding bilateral issues, Afghan and Indian analysts worry their nations’ interests will be ignored. In Pakistan, *Jang* depicts the proposed release of military aid amounting to \$1.6 billion as “a positive development.” *The Daily Express* believes it is an “indication Washington wants peace in the region and an end to terrorism in Pakistan.” *Nawa-i-Waqt*, however, argues that “instead of relying on US aid we should focus on best using our own resources.” *The Times of India* scoffs at the “State Department narrative that Pakistan has somehow changed its military-dominated policy outlook and its use of

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terrorism as tool." Meanwhile, *Pakistan Today* describes an "air laden with 'with optimism and hope'," as "the belligerence between Islamabad and Washington has gradually been replaced by a calmer outlook." *The News* feels "political issues may seem too vexing to solve but the Washington trip could still be a success on the economic front." *The Express Tribune* portrays a "difficult visit," but sees both sides' desire to "maintain active bilateral relations despite mutual complaints" as a "redeeming feature." *The Daily Times* stresses that a "reduction, let alone a cessation of drone attacks will remain contingent on Pakistan coming up with a credible plan or strategy for tackling its terrorist safe havens in the tribal areas on its western borders." Afghanistan's *Arman-e Melli* fears a change in the drone policy because it will result in "strengthening Al-Qaida-related terrorist networks in the region." A political analyst expresses to *Channel One TV* his concern that the "Pakistanis will take advantage of current problems between Washington and Kabul." Expecting Prime Minister Sharif to ask for US intervention on Kashmir, India's *The Urdu Times* is looking for Washington to again "refuse."

Message:

- ✓ *"I'm really pleased to welcome Prime Minister Sharif." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"We're very anxious to have a series of high-level, important discussions with Prime Minister Sharif over the course of the next few days." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"We have a lot to talk about and our relationship with Pakistan could not be more important." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"Pakistan is a democracy that is working hard to get its economy moving and deal with insurgency, and is important to regional stability." (Secretary Kerry)*

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TUESDAY 10/22/2013

'Fighting Big Brother': International observers widely decry US "spying" on France and Mexico as an "unacceptable breach of trust" and reject US assertions that the data collection is aimed at fighting terrorism. Austria's *Der Standard* accuses the US of being a "police state, which wickedly deceives its allies because it only follows one rule—national security." A *Le Monde* journalist tells *France 3* television, "This is not the traditional fight against terrorism that the US always uses as justification since 9/11; it is spying, diplomatic, economic and political spying." *Les Echos* suggests France "could theoretically retaliate using the TTIP negotiations." Poland's *Gazeta Wyborcza* chuckles that "it looks as though Snowden allowed himself some degree of malice" by releasing the information just as Secretary Kerry visits Paris. The UAE's *Khaleej Times* calls on the NSA, "which has become synonymous with Peeping Tom," to do "some soul-searching on how it breeds discontent." Mexico's *Excelsior* demands to know why there has been no investigation into the data collection and accuses the US of having "no desire whatsoever to repair the damage of its actions." For the UK's *Guardian*, "while the economic and security fallout has yet to crystallize fully, there is little doubt that the US and Britain's soft power, their ability to build alliances on the claim of moral leadership for example, have suffered a tangible blow." Meanwhile in the UK, an unrepentant *Telegraph* mocks French "shock" and urges everyone to "grow up about all this. We live in a world where nations compete" economically and routinely spy on each other. Germany's *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* chides that regardless, "this is not the way you deal with friends."

Message:

- ✓ *The United States and France are allies and friends, and share a close working relationship on a wide range of issues, including security and intelligence. (White House Statement)*
- ✓ *The President and President Hollande discussed recent disclosures in the press – some of which have distorted our activities and some of which raise legitimate questions for our friends and allies about how these capabilities are employed. (White House Statement)*
- ✓ *The President made clear that the United States has begun to review the way that we gather intelligence, so that we properly balance the legitimate security concerns of our citizens and allies with the privacy concerns that all people share. (White House Statement)*
- ✓ *The two Presidents agreed that we should continue to discuss these issues in diplomatic channels moving forward. (White House Statement)*

'Syria: Grand Compromise or Total War?' While some international commentators hope that the Geneva II conference will represent a "small step" towards a political settlement of the Syria crisis, many warn that a fractured opposition could be overrun by extremists. Lebanon's *Al-Nahar* hopes Geneva will "rescue Syria from an evil grip." Iran's *Javan* is optimistic that "the ground has

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been paved for [UN Syria envoy] Lakhdar Brahimi to succeed in his mission.” The UK’s *Independent* depicts “an opportunity for progress at last,” even if “hammering through tricky diplomatic issues...presents a formidable challenge.” But *France Inter* radio foresees a “very long road” to the Geneva II conference, since “the Syrian National Coalition (SNC) is divided and weak and will not go to Geneva at any cost.” Japan’s *Sankei* warns the SNC may boycott “out of concern that a political resolution would help the Asad regime survive longer.” At the same time, China’s *Global Times* warns, “Washington also knows that the divided Syrian opposition is not reliable. There are members of al-Qaida within the opposition, and the US does not want to be their protector.” The UK’s *Independent* contends “the SNC no longer represents the majority of rebel fighters.” Pan-Arab *Al-Hayat* frets “even if the task of toppling the regime were accomplished...[the revolution] would still be fighting other enemies controlling key parts of power and territory.” Lebanon’s *Al-Akhbar* argues “the Syrian conflict long ago ceased to be a purely national one, and therefore any sovereign decision to solve the matter internally is next to impossible.” Pan-Arab *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* laments the deteriorating Syria situation “has given terrorism and Al-Qaida an alarming opportunity to regroup...This is exactly what Asad wants.”

Message:

- ✓ ***“Those who support the implementation of Geneva I should come to Geneva and be part of the process of building a new future for the people of Syria.” (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***“There’s a human catastrophe awaiting the world without a negotiated solution, because there are more and more refugees, more and more displaced people, more and more destruction.” (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***“The potential of the absolute implosion of the state of Syria is what lies in front of everybody without a negotiated solution.” (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***“I would hope that ultimately Asad himself, and certainly his supporters like the Russians and the Iranians, will understand that if you want peace in the region, it’s not going to come by prolonging the war with the presence of Bashar al-Asad.” (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***“It’s time for the United Nations and for others to consider the appropriateness of their activity and the need to try to press towards the negotiated solution that is critical to the people of Syria and to its future.” (Secretary Kerry)***

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WEDNESDAY 10/23/2013

'Friends of Syria Back to Square One': Global observers portray a dialogue of the deaf as the Syrian opposition insists President Asad be excluded from any transitional government while Asad talks of running for re-election, and analysts see dim chances for a successful Geneva II citing the US-Saudi "drift" as another complication. Qatar's *Al-Raya* stresses that agreement by all parties at the Friends of Syria meeting to exclude Asad from future governing "opens the way to Geneva II." Japan's *Yomiuri*, however, believes that since the regime is "bound to react sharply to the opposition's clear-cut policy of 'excluding Asad,' a Geneva II this year has become more uncertain." *France Inter* radio stresses "nothing guarantees that Geneva II will indeed take place, much less lead to the end of the war." Poland's *Rzeczpospolita* laments that "any ember of hope on starting negotiations was stifled" by Asad announcing his intention to run again. Pan-Arab's *Al-Jazeera* depicts Saudi Arabia's "break with US policy" as another "obstacle to peace." Saudi Arabia's *Al-Watan* insists "ending the Syrian crisis will not be through holding conferences and negotiations, rather by taking action on the ground." Lebanon's *Daily Star* fears that "both sides are setting their conditions in a way that suggests they and their backers are content to let events on the ground settle things." *The Jordan Times* reminds that while there will be "no end to the Syrian ordeal through Geneva II, the real losers are the Syrian people...and Al-Qaida-linked groups continue to make gains." Pan-Arab *Al-Hayat* argues that "pushing for the convening of Geneva II is more about the US and Russia cementing their new relationship than in the interest of the actual parties on the ground in Syria." Italy's *Corriere della Sera* opines: "A way out does not seem near for Obama and Kerry... In London, Kerry managed to buy time."

Message:

- ✓ **"We believe that the path of war will simply lead to the implosion of the state of Syria."**
(Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ **"Our job as the 11 states that form the core group of the Friends of Syria is to do everything in our power to help the opposition to come together with a strong, unified position and a representative body at Geneva so that they can negotiate effectively."** (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ **"Removing the chemical weapons does not remove the crisis."** (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ **"Innocent men, women, and children are starving while the Asad regime continues to block humanitarian access."** (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ **"What we seek is a unified, pluralistic Syria, one that is representative of all of its people's aspirations, one that protects minority and majority alike, all religions, all points of view, all politics, all sectarian affiliations – Kurds, Christians, Druze, Ismaili, Alawi, and any other minority group must be protected."** (Secretary Kerry)

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‘The Big Brother Threat’: While some global observers downplay the significance of alleged US data collection excesses, most commentators especially in Europe are indignant at the growing number of countries reportedly caught in the “NSA surveillance net” and call for stricter data privacy regulations. France’s *Courrier International* dismissively asks: “Washington is spying on Paris, so what?” Italy’s *La Stampa* argues “everyone tries to do the same thing.” But Spain’s *El Pais* is frustrated that the “US eludes clarifying massive spying in the EU and Spain.” Italy’s *La Stampa* describes a “chill between France and the US.” *La Repubblica* expects Prime Minister Letta to “ask for explanations” from Secretary Kerry during their meeting in Rome. The UAE’s *Gulf News* fumes “US moral fiber is seriously lacking.” Spain’s *La Vanguardia* calls for Washington to “be made publicly accountable” for its spying activities and demands that “these practices be curbed immediately and in a verifiable manner.” France’s *Les Echos* threatens a halt in TTIP discussions “to make the US realize the damage it has caused,” and Austria’s *Wiener Zeitung* advises considering a “suspension of the SWIFT agreement.” Poland’s *Rzeczpospolita*, however, expects “no decision” that will torpedo TTIP negotiations. France’s *Le Figaro* predicts “John Kerry will try to calm the storm of outrage,” but doubts that Washington will “make any changes to the [NSA’s] astonishing practices.” Italy’s *La Stampa* nonetheless calls for a “US-EU agreement on data, with clear boundaries and established methods” to be reached. Germany’s *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* urges “a reform of the 1995 European data privacy regulations.”

Message:

- ✓ *The United States and France are allies and friends, and share a close working relationship on a wide range of issues, including security and intelligence. (White House Statement)*
- ✓ *The President and President Hollande discussed recent disclosures in the press – some of which have distorted our activities and some of which raise legitimate questions for our friends and allies about how these capabilities are employed. (White House Statement)*
- ✓ *The President made clear that the United States has begun to review the way that we gather intelligence, so that we properly balance the legitimate security concerns of our citizens and allies with the privacy concerns that all people share. (White House Statement)*
- ✓ *The two Presidents agreed that we should continue to discuss these issues in diplomatic channels moving forward. (White House Statement)*

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THURSDAY 10/24/2013

'The White House's Great Embarrassment': European observers depict an "NSA out of control" and a "serious rupture" of US-European relations with reported allegations of "US surveillance of Chancellor Merkel's cell phone." Spain's *El Mundo* headlines "Merkel confronts Obama: White House denies surveillance of the Chancellor." *ABC* questions the "NSA justification of its activities" since the Chancellor is not a "security threat." In Germany, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* indignantly announces: "A greater affront by a friendly country is not conceivable... An attack on Merkel's telephone would be an attack on her political heart." *ARD-TV* contends "this would certainly inflict serious damage on the confidential relationship between Merkel and Obama and also on German-US relations." *General Anzeiger* describes "a scandalous treatment of transatlantic partners," and *Braunschweiger Zeitung* opines "Stalinist regimes, not allies, partners, and friends in the family of democracies, act this way." Italy's *La Repubblica* portrays "US arrogance" and wonders at the "lack of united European protest." Norway's *VG* argues "the continuous disclosures paint a very serious picture of an American intelligence industry without political control, which breaks written and unwritten rules of cooperation among close allies." The UK's *Guardian* believes that "with each leak, American soft power is hemorrhaging, and hard power threatening to seep away with it." France's *Le Monde* sees the "NSA scandal...once again electrifying the EU agenda," and notes the adoption of a "non-binding resolution calling for the suspension of the Terrorist Finance Tracking System Agreement (SWIFT)." Italy's *Il Giornale* contends that despite "US efforts to put the problem into perspective...the controversy between the US and Europe has re-exploded so as for the EU Parliament to approve a motion to suspend SWIFT."

US 'Stoops to Snooping': Other international observers are alarmed by the US' "unapologetic" willingness to monitor the communications of its friends and allies, extrapolating what such behavior means for US treatment of non-friendly states and warning that "resistance is futile." Indonesia's *Kompas* is shocked that the US could "commit such acts against a friendly country and its own ally." China's *Guangming Daily* finds the alleged espionage particularly surprising considering that "in the Syrian chemical weapons incident, France was the only ally that followed the US." Mexico's *Crónica* lashes out at President Obama for "showing no signs of repentance" and warns that he is "rapidly losing all international prestige." Qatar's *Peninsula* berates the US as "overtly paranoid about security," rebuking the snooping as an "audacious" act that "points to the desperation of the Administration." Hong Kong's *The Sun*, however, scoffs at France's "quiet grumbling" and contends that "the two sides are obviously well aware that they are just putting on a show." Vietnam's *Tuoi Tre* judges the Snowden case to be more serious than WikiLeaks, "as no country knows if it has been exposed. The US has never been isolated by its allies like this before." Algeria's *L'Expression* fears if a US ally such as France "is being treated in this way, what has been

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inflicted on Algeria, which is known not to be the Americans' special economic, political, and military partner?" For Mexico's *Excelsior*, "it's infantile and above all useless to believe any official protest can end surveillance programs - they're spying on us and they'll keep on spying."

Message:

- ✓ *"The President assured Chancellor Merkel that the United States is not, and will not monitor the communications of the Chancellor." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"The United States greatly values our close cooperation with Germany on a broad range of shared security challenges." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"We are reviewing the way that we gather intelligence to ensure that we properly balance the security concerns of our citizens and allies with the privacy concerns that all people share." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"Both leaders agreed to intensify further the cooperation between our intelligence services, with the goal of protecting the security of both countries and of our partners, as well as protecting the privacy of our citizens." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"We gather foreign intelligence just like similar agencies of other countries." (White House Spokesman Carney)*

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FRIDAY 10/25/2013

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'An Unprecedented Affront': European observers vehemently rail against the widening scope of US monitoring programs, with some urging their leaders to take collective assertive action against the US, while others lament the "hypocrisy" of leaders' indignation. The UK's *Guardian* expresses contempt for national defense agents "drunk on their access to secrets yet unable to keep these secrets secure or subject them to prudent oversight." Germany's *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* depicts the US as a "hegemon who treats its allies as vassals." France's *Le Monde* observes "the NSA spying issue governs the rhythm of the European Council" and the UK's *Guardian* declares "today is the day when Europe should call America back and speak with one voice." Rejecting calls for attacks on TTIP, the Czech Republic's *Hospodarske Noviny* laments the "bitter irony" of the scandal threatening to destroy mutually beneficial security and economic agreements. Germany's *Münchner Merkur* offers an alternative, urging "the strongest possible answer to Obama's affront would be to grant Edwards Snowden a safe refuge in the EU." Meanwhile, the UK's *Independent* assures that Europe and the US "will weather this spat," but urges nations to realize that they "should be getting their policy right over Iran, Syria and Egypt, not getting bogged down" by the dispute. Germany's *Bild* derides the German government's "credulity" as ridiculous since it is naïve to believe "that a technically omnipotent intelligence service does not monitor everything it would be capable of." The Czech Republic's *Pravo* reminds that while "Presidents change, Big Brother stays" and it is the leader of a country "who has to adjust to powerful intelligence structures, not the other way around." Italy's *Corriere della Sera* insists "America should go beyond Obama's semantic alchemy and Kerry's banality on the need for a balance between counterterrorism and allies' privacy." Germany's *ZDF-TV* proclaims: "One thing is clear: warm words will not be enough to overcome this."

'US Interests Above the Law?' Commentators in the rest of the world condemn alleged US eavesdropping on world leaders, predicting serious damage to US-EU ties and berating Washington for putting security interests "above the trust of its allies," though some doubt there will be any lasting fallout. Japan's *Nikkei* thinks the "alleged phone tapping in Germany creates another source of friction" with Europe. China's *People's Daily* contends the reported surveillance has "once again jeopardized the transatlantic alliance" and "deepened international society's suspicions over the US government's credibility." Mexico's *Crónica* asserts: "Thanks to [Snowden's] work, we know that President Obama is spying on all his allies and the strategic businesses of other countries for his own advantage." Egypt's *Al-Jumhuriyah* argues "the lie of preserving democracy and human rights has once again been exposed through the US crimes." *China Daily* finds it problematic that "US security concerns, real or otherwise, always outweigh everything else." Saudi Arabia's *Arab News* insists "the battle against international terror... cannot be fought with such a draconian violation of

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the rights of ordinary people...No argument, however well-meaning, can justify what the NSA has done." *Al-Sharq*, however, suspects that regardless of the consequences, "it is not expected that the US will retreat from its intelligence actions as long as it possesses the more developed technology, the more devastating military power, and the strongest economy in the world." Hong Kong's *Oriental Daily News* opines that "no matter how angry [Chancellor] Merkel is, making a protest is all she can do. She has to continue to cooperate with Obama."

Message:

- ✓ *"We have made clear that the United States gathers foreign intelligence of the type gathered by all nations." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"The President spoke with Chancellor Merkel, reassured her that the United States is not and will not monitor the Chancellor's communications." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"We are reviewing the way that we gather intelligence to ensure that we properly balance the security concerns of our citizens and allies with the privacy concerns that all people share." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"When it comes to specific allegations about intelligence matters, we have diplomatic relations and channels that we use in order to discuss these issues that have clearly caused some tension in our relationships with other nations around the world, and that is where we are having those discussions." (White House Spokesman Carney)*

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MONDAY 10/28/2013

'Spying on Friends': As European commentators continue to condemn alleged NSA surveillance of international phone calls as an "outrage" that will put transatlantic relations to the test, some observers demand a "tough response" while others downplay chances of any substantive US-Europe clash. Austria's *Die Presse* finds it "difficult to believe that the NSA automatically spies on other governments without informing President Obama. If they do, Obama arguably has an even bigger problem than calming Merkel's rage." Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* contends "Obama did nothing to stop the global data collection craze ... [and now] the world is revolting against Big Brother Obama." The UK's *Times* worries the NSA scandal proves "an increased capacity for surveillance will always be abused by those who control it." France's *Le Monde* additionally fears it has "put to the test the allied countries' trust in the US." Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* depicts a dangerous cycle of "mistrust generating more mistrust." *Die Welt* urges the US to "learn to treat its well-minded partners fairer and in a more decent way." Spain's *El Mundo* calls for a "strong response from authorities" to allegations of NSA wiretapping in Spain, and *Antena 3* TV demands a "satisfactory explanation" from the US Ambassador. But Russia's *Izvestiya* warns that "the US is determined to maintain its leadership in information technology" and "will not bind itself to any commitments." France's *Liberation* downplays any chance of Europe "angering the US" by "suspending TTIP negotiations or the Swift agreement." Austria's *Die Presse* doubts there will be any "countermeasures against bugging" and calls the whole scandal "much ado about nothing." Italy's *Europa* recommends that "rather than whine about an intercepted cell phone, we would do better to organize our defense."

'Surveillance Gone Wrong': Other international observers describe a crisis of trust between the US and its allies, with some expressing outrage at Washington while others depict a known fact whose revelation causes "short-lived and muted criticism." *The Hong Kong Economic Times* portrays a "snowballing" crisis that will "weaken the US' soft power." Mexico's *Crónica* objects to "illegal US action" that is imposing "a more dangerous scenario on humankind." Pan-Arab *Al-Hayat* opines the "surveillance scandals expose the extent of the Administration's deception," and have "caused the most profound crisis of trust between Washington and its allies." Japan's *Asahi* argues they "undermine the US' credibility," and prove Washington is not conforming to "its cherished principles of democracy, transparency, and respect for human rights." Saudi Arabia's *Al-Watan* reminds that "respecting the other side's interests is an important principle of international alliances." Thailand's *Krungthep Turakit* emphasizes "spying on friends is not acceptable, especially when they are jointly fighting international terrorism." Taiwan's *United Evening News* jeers "why not just [let human beings] return to barbarism, where the weak are the prey of the strong?" The UAE's *Khaleej Times* writes of "concerns that President Obama may not be on board,

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as powerful invisible characters comb America's allies and adversaries for their little known agenda." *The India Tribune* advises the President to "rein in the NSA and allied agencies, and then start the delicate task of rebuilding trust." Israel's *Yisrael Hayom*, however, sees a "great deal of hypocrisy in the reactions." Singapore's *Straits Times* stresses that "although the outrage is real, none of what has been revealed comes as a surprise." India's *The Pioneer* assures the Americans "are not entirely wrong, except that they got caught and the others didn't." *The Australian* warns of a "greater danger" that "the Snowden hyperbole propagates the false view the NSA operations are a threat to freedom. Surveillance is essential for protecting freedom against terrorism and criminality."

Message:

- ✓ *While we are not going to comment publicly on every specific alleged intelligence activity, as a matter of policy we have made clear that the United States gathers foreign intelligence of the type gathered by all nations. (State Department Guidance)*
- ✓ *We know these disclosures have created significant challenges in our relationships with some of our closest foreign partners. (State Department Guidance)*
- ✓ *As the President has said, the United States is reviewing the way that we gather intelligence to ensure that we properly balance the security concerns of our citizens and allies with the privacy concerns that all people share. (State Department Guidance)*
- ✓ *We want to ensure we are collecting information because we need it and not just because we can. (State Department Guidance)*
- ✓ *We are going to continue to address these issues with our partners in diplomatic channels. (State Department Guidance)*

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TUESDAY 10/29/2013

'The Americans Cannot Be Trusted': While European observers continue to express outrage over NSA surveillance, most believe their officials' fury will die down without significant reprisals and some deride "hypocritical" leaders who became outraged only when they learned they were "being personally targeted." In Germany, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* is indignant at the "breach of trust that may no longer be repaired." *Die Welt* sees a "problem" in the US "not doing justice to its role as a global power," arguing that by "not controlling his intelligence services," President Obama "weakened" himself and the country. Poland's *Rzeczpospolita* suggests that "politicians who are outraged at US surveillance fell into the trap they set for themselves by allowing the surveillance of citizens." Spain's *Ondacero* radio is furious: "It is now, when NSA activity has been revealed about (European) politicians...that the governments pretend to be offended, surprised and hurt." Austria's *Salzburger Nachrichten* calls for "legal leverage so the US will comply with Europe's privacy protection regulations." Germany's *NDR* radio proposes that Berlin "finally take action and invite Edward Snowden to participate in a German witness protection program." Meanwhile, Spain's *El Mundo* stresses that "everyone is ripping their hair out, but the impression is that blood will not be shed." Austria's *Profil* roots for "a swift de-escalation," especially as President Obama is "in the eyes of many Europeans, the most civilized and rational American president they've seen in a long time." France's *Le Monde* believes "Americans and Europeans will remain united in the fight against terrorism... but politically and trade wise, the loss of confidence...will do harm." Russia's *Izvestiya* contends the crisis "will soon blow over."

Cyber Wars and the Surveillance State: Other international observers foresee continuing fallout from US surveillance programs, as some urge global leaders to take concrete action to curtail the US' technological reach, while others bemoan the inevitability of digital world wars. Taiwan's *Apple Daily* lambasts President Obama as "uninterested in foreign policy." South Korea's *Hankyoreh Shinmun* advises Washington to "seek forgiveness from all concerned." According to India's *Deccan Herald*, "development of legal and technological barriers will be more effective than depending on US assurances." China's *People's Daily* in turn rallies support for "the UN's leading role in cyber security and the establishment of a code of conduct in cyber space." *Hong Kong Economic Journal* bemoans the current era "full of lies, hatred, emptiness, cheating, and hypocrisy" and expects the "arrival of the New Cold War." India's *Daily News and Analysis* argues "with the global war on terrorism and resultant emphasis on national security by any means, hyper-surveillance based on digital communication was inevitable." For the UAE's *Khaleej Times*, "the storm is not over yet" and it could affect critical "big-ticket projects such as the US missile defense shield in the heart of Europe." Malaysia's *Sin Chew Daily* warns that the scandal "jeopardizes US

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diplomatic efforts, including its vow to revive the 'Asian rebalancing' strategy. If more scandals are to be exposed, this could be the straw that breaks Obama's back."

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HOT TOPICS

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WEDNESDAY 10/30/2013

'Spy vs. Spy vs. Spy': European observers widely question the extent of involvement in NSA surveillance by President Obama and European governments, as some lament the lack of viable solutions to the trust deficit. Germany's *Straubinger Tagblatt* doubts President Obama's attempt at "playing the role of the innocent," demanding: "Has Obama never wondered where the precise dossiers on Merkel's policy come from?" Russia's *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* senses that "something is rotten in the US kingdom." *Izvestiya* declares "when Big Brother behaves like a naughty pupil, this means that the end is near." Austria's *Wiener Zeitung* laments that the EU's "hands are tied," and with "virtually no way of putting pressure on the US, nothing apart from a bit of transatlantic disgruntlement" will result from the scandal. Citing NSA Director Alexander, Spain's *El Mundo* argues that the "intrusion" into the lives of private citizens "was more a result of cooperation between both countries than an abuse of the North American power." Italy's *Il Giornale* fumes: "Rome knew everything, European leaders are hypocrites." Meanwhile, France's *Le Figaro* criticizes European leaders as "wanting to keep the goose that laid the golden egg" while they calm public opinion, "the idea being less to weaken Big Brother than to take advantage of him." *L'Opinion* wonders if the vocal outrage is "a sign of populism or outright ignorance" as "those who really understand what is going on have shut their mouths." Italy's *La Repubblica* lauds President Obama's consideration of prohibiting telephone surveillance of allied leaders as "a strong change, but the only one that guarantees an effective outcome." Poland's *Gazeta Wyborcza*, however, notes the announced change would only apply to a "handful of people. Everyone else will have to remember that Big Brother is still watching."

'Watch Out, Obama Is Watching You!' While commentators in the rest of the world still protest that the US has broken the trust of its allies by spying on them and demand an apology, some suspect the US will continue its surveillance programs and others foresee no lasting damage to transatlantic ties. Sri Lanka's *Island* chides, "Obama's Snoop-gate has ruined America's international image irreparably; he has incurred the wrath of US allies and their opprobrious rebuke amounts to an impeachment of sorts." Qatar's *Peninsula* argues that "by bugging phones and offices of its close friends, the US may not only earn the mistrust of allies, but also inflict damage on the battle against terrorism and extremism." Hong Kong's *The Sun* opines "the surveillance saga is a textbook example that there is no such thing as permanent friendship between countries, only self-interest." Pan-Arab *Al-Hayat* mockingly advises Arab leaders to "revert to the time of carrier-pigeons to communicate." Indonesia's *Kompas* calls on Washington to be "open and honest" and offer a "detailed explanation." Lebanon's *Daily Star* demands an "unequivocal apology by Obama." But Hong Kong's *Ming Pao* wonders: "Who would dare believe the US after what happened!" China's *Global Times* contends "the US is not likely to end its spying operations. Even if it does, it

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will restart the programs later.” Pakistan’s *Daily Times* expects the US “will do what it wants but more covertly.” Meanwhile, South Korea’s *Korea Herald* acknowledges that “as long as the technological feasibility is there, few could resist the temptation to snoop on the conversations of top officials of another country.” China’s *Beijing Youth Daily* is confident the scandal will “only temporarily cause trouble for US-Europe diplomacy and will not fundamentally destroy bilateral political and economic cooperation.”

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THURSDAY 10/31/2013

'Reining in the Spies': While many European commentators continue to berate the US over recent NSA wiretapping allegations, a growing number of observers debate the extent of European government cooperation and even argue the positive points of "embracing espionage." A cynical *Die Rheinpfalz* in Germany derides, "The US is losing its leadership role in the world because it has become egocentric and increasingly snubs its allies." Poland's *Gazeta Wyborcza* thinks the Congressional testimonies of US intelligence chiefs "raised more questions than answers." Russia's *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* depicts the President "facing an extremely unpleasant choice: either to listen to the accusations that he is treating facts too frivolously...or to admit that he fully lost control over the secret services." France's *Le Monde* rejects "Washington's unacceptable offhandedness," and Spain's *El Mundo* argues "the scandal is of such proportions that Obama will have to offer more than explanations." Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, however, thinks US intelligence claims that "it was the relevant countries that monitored millions of telephone calls" means that "Europeans should not make such a fuss!" Italy's *Il Sole 24 Ore* wonders whether "it is all just a show put on deliberately for the benefit of public opinion." Meanwhile, Spain's *Ondacero* radio considers it "logical, understandable and even positive that our country exchanges information with other countries for our security." *ABC* agrees the only thing the NSA allegations have demonstrated is that "our services are doing the work they should do." The UK's *Financial Times* urges Germany to "stop moralizing and embrace espionage" as the "price of their nation's power." *The Guardian* argues that the work of intelligence agencies "help to keep us safe," but recommends that politicians "give a clear framework to operate in and provide proper oversight, scrutiny and evaluation to keep them on track."

'The US is Out of Control': Other international observers admit that "spying on friends and foes" is a known fact but criticize the NSA's "sweeping scope," depicting "paranoia" in Washington and counseling restraint. Singapore's *Business Times* argues "the outrage is more about the scope and a sense that the Americans have taken things to a new and dangerous level." Australia's *Sydney Morning Herald* acknowledges "reading everyone else's mail can be pretty handy, but whether free-range espionage is the best way of winning friends and influencing people in the long term is more debatable." Bahrain's *Al-Wasat* describes a "storm of cosmic proportions," and Japan's *Asahi* laments the "bleak reality," that although the US "advocates democracy and freedom, it wiretaps other nations, including its allies, to pursue its own national interests." South Korea's *JoongAng Ilbo* condemns the "brazen infringements," opining "Washington can hardly ease its allies' concerns with arguments that they also benefitted from this intelligence gathering." *The Hong Kong Economic Journal* believes "the war on terror has gone off the track." Indonesia's *Jakarta Globe* portrays "hypocrisy that could create serious distrust," and calls on Washington to "start acting as an

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example for the world to follow.” *The Jordan Times* scoffs at the NSA for “continuing to expand its operations simply because it could and had the technological ability to do so.” Saudi Arabia’s *Arab News* contends it is “high time the NSA was forced to obey the letter and the spirit of the law.” Pakistan’s *Dawn* does not expect any change despite the “fury,” contending “what ultimately counts is the risk of being found out. More elaborate and foolproof cover-ups will likely ensue.” South Korea’s *Chosun Ilbo* agrees noting “the reason Russia and China have not protested very loudly is that they are doing the same.”

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HOT TOPICS
FRIDAY 11/01/2013

'Spying Saga Spicy on a Heart-Attack Scale': While many East Asian observers decry the "catastrophic conditions" of US diplomacy in the region as new allegations surface of its data collection via Australian embassies, others defend the strategic importance of surveillance with the caveat that the scope of programs and access to information must be controlled. China's *People's Daily* depicts the scandal as a "large scale political tsunami" from which "American exceptionalism" offers no shield. Australia's *Sydney Morning Herald* chides "denial of the obvious just makes matters worse. Sometimes smart diplomacy requires a partial retreat to recognize the importance of personal relationships, and the US has belatedly recognised that." *China Daily* lashes out over alleged US use of Australian embassies for Asia-Pacific espionage, stressing "the White House has some explaining to do. Decision-maker ignorance...will not be an acceptable excuse." Hong Kong's *Ta Kung Pao* warns of the disastrous consequences of "doing nothing to stop the US and letting them continue" to use Hong Kong as a transit corridor for the collection of PRC secrets and as a training ground for anti-China dissidents. Meanwhile, *The Australian* declares the global uproar "excruciatingly naïve and plain silly," scoffing: "All countries with the capacity to do so spy on each other, just as all embassies have an intelligence-gathering role." In Vietnam, a suspicious *Tuoi Tre* sees a "conspiracy" behind the "Snowden Bomb" calling it "a scripted act...that has immeasurable consequences." Japan's *Yomiuri* grudgingly admits that "restricting eavesdropping will benefit the Russians, the Chinese, and the terrorists who fear US surveillance." China's *Xinhua*, however, reproaches "Janus-faced America" for its "nonsensical approach [to surveillance], relentless and indiscriminate like a vacuum cleaner...[The US] should be wise enough to know that to trust nobody is no less dangerous than to trust everybody."

'Spying Scandal Continues to Snowball': Some international observers see Secretary Kerry's remark that "US spying has gone too far in some cases" as an "attempt to show some contrition," while others survey the "damage" and question the NSA's mission. India's *The Hindu* depicts an "unprecedented admission by the Obama Administration," and notes the Secretary asserting "innocent people have not been 'abused' through the surveillance program." The UK's *Independent* stresses the Secretary's admission came as "furor over America's alleged eavesdropping on their allies continues." The UAE's *Al-Bayan* depicts an intensifying predicament for Washington, "adding to the multitude of internal and external crises." *The Gulf News* argues that although it is "easy to paint the White House as being the culprit in this entire espionage network...[its] allies are involved...the world is a small place. Business is globalized. And so too is spying." Jordan's *Al-Rai* dismisses the concept of "allies" on the global arena as "interests reign in relations among countries." Germany's *Die Tagespost* argues that "intelligence services who carried out such operations without the government's knowledge would have evaded controls to such a degree that it

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would be appropriate to question their existence.” India’s *Loksatta* portrays President Obama as being “trapped,” opining that “it is hardly possible he did not know that the NSA was snooping on foreign allies. His situation is indeed a tricky one at this point.”

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MONDAY 11/04/2013

'Morsi in Mubarak's Dock': As pro-government Egyptian press hail the start of ousted President Morsi's trial, others warn the case constitutes "political revenge" against the Muslim Brotherhood, and some wonder if Secretary Kerry's simultaneous "fence-mending" visit to Cairo was a mere "coincidence." Egypt's *Al-Shuruq* asserts "Morsi's major crime" is that "he was never a president for all Egyptians and by his bias towards his people and clan he sowed the seeds of division." *Al-Wafd* asserts "the entire [Muslim Brotherhood] group... must be tried for stupidity because of all the catastrophes they caused for Egypt." *Al-Ahram* argues "no one is above the law." But pro-Muslim Brotherhood *Freedom and Justice* rejects the "farcical trial of the legitimate president." France's *Le Monde* expresses concern that the "trial of Morsi and his friends is very likely to look like political revenge rather than the necessary assessment of a year of (bad) power by the Muslim Brotherhood." Meanwhile, Egypt's *Cairo Post* wonders whether "it is not a coincidence that [Secretary Kerry's visit] comes just before" the trial. Pan-Arab *Al-Quds al-Arabi* depicts the Secretary "giving the green light to the Egyptian authorities to go ahead with the trial." One analyst tells China's *Xinhua* that "Kerry came to find an exit for Morsi and his group," but another insists the US is "just looking for ways to restore normal ties with Egypt." Saudi Arabia's *Al-Sharq* describes a "shift in Kerry's remarks" as proof of Washington's effort to "ease tensions." Lebanon's *Daily Star* rejects the "patently obvious attempt to salvage relations" as "reeking of desperation and hypocrisy." In contrast, the UAE's *National* thinks "Kerry's trip marks a step in the right direction," and hopes both sides will soon realize that "calling into question such a vital strategic partnership" amounts to "catastrophic folly."

Message:

- ✓ ***"The United States is a friend of Egypt and its people, and we are a partner to your country." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"We know full well – and President Obama is completely committed to the idea – that the path forward is ultimately in the hands of the Egyptian people." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"We are confident that Egyptians will overcome the challenges that are facing them and we are committed to continuing our cooperation with the interim government." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"The United States will continue to provide support that directly benefits the Egyptian people in health, in scholarships, and private-sector development, and we are continuing assistance to help secure Egypt's borders, to work with the military, to work on counterterrorism and proliferation, and to ensure security in the Sinai." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"I reaffirmed to Minister Fahmy that the United States will work very closely with Egypt in the months ahead and with our own Congress on our bilateral assistance." (Secretary Kerry)***

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- ✓ ***"President Mansour wrote to President Obama some time ago suggesting a strategic dialogue between our countries, and I am pleased on behalf of President Obama to say that we accept that invitation." (Secretary Kerry)***

'Talking to Snowden': As international media debate the ramifications of a possible German asylum offer to NSA "whistleblower" Edward Snowden, observers question the "parental" benevolence of surveillance while widely dismissing the likelihood of concluding a "No Spy" agreement between the US and European allies. Germany's *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* depicts discussion of extending asylum to Edward Snowden as "forcing Germany to make a far-reaching political decision: with or against the US." *Die Tageszeitung* welcomes the possibility as an opportunity to "signal that Germany is not America's poodle." *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, on the other hand, warns that "Washington will not forget Snowden. In the long run, no country in which Snowden lives can expect US benevolence." *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* dismisses the suggested "No Spy Agreement" as "no more than a placebo for Europeans and not worth the paper on which it was written." Singapore's *The Straits Times* declares it "highly unlikely that other countries will be admitted into the Five Eyes arrangement." China's *21st Century Business Herald* forecasts that the "US will only give consideration to the protection of its own citizens," giving rise to "the horrors of cyber protectionism." Conversely, the UK's *Times* interprets US intelligence officials' message as "We are spies. We spy. Deal with it," cheering: "Attaboys!" Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* defends limited governmental surveillance by comparing it to that of a parent "spying on kids for their own good and protection." The UAE's *Gulf News*, on the other hand, rails against "US fantasies about security" and demands to "see proof—in numbers—of how many crimes or terrorist acts were prevented by listening to the private conversations of officials and private citizens." *Khaleej Times* warns: "The mills of God grind slow but they grind exceedingly just and someday, the men behind NSA's controversial act may find themselves on the receiving end."

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TUESDAY 11/05/2013

'Egypt Sinking into Quagmire': International media widely deride the "farcical" trial of former Egyptian President Morsi as increasing political instability and ideological polarization in Egypt and the region, as some observers dismiss US attempts to ease tensions as "futile." France's *Liberation* calls the trial a "time bomb" and *Le Figaro* notes concerns that the "trial will further sweep under the rug all hopes for democracy sparked by the revolution." France 3 television observes a "struggling" Muslim Brotherhood movement that "obviously had trouble mobilizing people" for the threatened major demonstrations. Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* argues that "regardless of how you view Morsi politically, he deserves a fair trial" as without justice, new Egyptian leaders will continue to lose credibility. For Austria's *Der Standard*, the trial "reinforces the continuing polarization in Egypt between the religious right and the security state." Pan-Arab *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* laments "no one has learned the harsh lessons" of "suicidal" leaders like Saddam and Qaddafi, and wonders: "When will people learn that the region is in need of a politician who will take us forward and establish stability?" Japan's *Asahi* contends "Egypt's destabilization will continue to intensify 'turmoil and divisions' in the Middle East. The UK's *Independent* dismisses the "positive noises from the US" as "saying more about Washington's keenness to mend fences than about actual progress." The UAE's *Gulf News* declares that the Secretary's overall "fence-mending tour of the Middle East will be proven futile by its inability to control its closest ally — Israel." Meanwhile, Spain's *El Pais* scorns the "feigned democracy" of the trial, which is merely a "required step" towards regaining US military aid. Regardless of the outcome, China's *Xinhua* warns that "Morsi's trial is not a panacea for Egypt," as "any strategy, if it cannot solve the issue of economic stagnation quickly, will lose popular support and come to nothing."

Message:

- ✓ ***"The United States is committed to supporting Egypt as it moves forward with its democratic transition." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"We want to see Egypt pursue a transition to a stable, inclusive, and democratic civilian-led government that respects and protects the rights and freedoms of all Egyptians." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"We encourage credible progress on Egypt's political roadmap as set forth and efforts to address the Egyptian people's political aspirations to establish the conditions for a stronger and more prosperous economy in Egypt." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"The Egyptian people desperately need economic transformation, and we have agreed, with our friends in Saudi Arabia and with others, to work as hard as we can to help effect this transformation." (Secretary Kerry)***

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'Asylum for Snowden?' As international commentators continue to berate the US for its "shameful" surveillance, many European observers debate offering asylum to Edward Snowden, while others urge the US to "come clean" and do more to protect privacy. Zimbabwe's *Herald* accuses President Obama of "abusing his country's complex spy network against even those who thought they were his allies... Shame on the US. Shame!" India's *Anandabazar Patrika* considers it "unthinkable that an advanced country can violate all sorts of diplomatic norms and decorum in such a way during peacetime." Australia's *Sydney Morning Herald* finds the NSA's "overreach proving costly," while Taiwan's *United Evening News* sees it "nibbling away at...the US' soft power." Austria's *Oesterreich* proposes "Europeans should now set an example: [Edward Snowden] deserves to be given asylum." Germany's *ARD-TV* claims "granting asylum to Snowden would be a strong and decisive signal to our American friends: stop it." *Saarbrucker Zeitung* contends there should be no "subjugation to an arrogant superpower that no longer knows any legal or moral limits." Meanwhile, *Bild* urges President Obama to "take action again and restore trust among his friends." South Korea's *Hankyoreh Shinmun* demands that the US "come clean on eavesdropping" and introduce "measures to dispel any concerns its allies and the world have." *The Times of India* calls for "legislation that would protect the sanctity of private information and limit when and how such information can be gathered." But *Hong Kong Daily News* insists "there is really no need for the world to complain too much... isn't this something that everyone is doing? The key issue is... whether this is the best method of surveillance and if the price of such espionage, if exposed, is worth paying."

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- ✓ *The review should be completed by the end of the year. (State Department Guidance)*
- ✓ *US intelligence activities are focused on national security objectives and have evolved alongside the rapidly changing communications technologies. These capabilities have helped us foil numerous terrorist plots, and adapt to a post-9/11 security environment. (State Department Guidance)*
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HOT TOPICS**WEDNESDAY 11/06/2013**

'Geneva Summit on Syria Slips': International observers lament the alleged delay in convening Geneva II peace talks, with some blaming the fractured Syrian opposition for the deadlock, while others point to international disagreements such as the US-Saudi rift which continues despite Secretary Kerry's "fence-mending." *France Info* radio announces: "No international conference in Geneva on Syria, at least for the time being." Poland's *Nasz Dziennik* sees the Geneva talks "receding further and further away," since "the Syrian opposition will not take part in the talks without a timetable for Asad's removal from power." China's *Xinhua* in turn points to "opposition divisions" as the cause of the delay. Spain's *El País* observes that while the Secretary's trip attempted to "soothe Saudi distrust of US policy in the region" and "both have expressed willingness to continue working together, differences between the two friendly countries remain over Syria." A more optimistic *Khaleej Times* in the UAE hails Secretary Kerry's visit as "laying the groundwork for a broad-based understanding on divisive issues" and hopes "rejuvenated Saudi diplomacy can play a greater role in urging the Syrian opposition to enter into meaningful talks at Geneva later this month." *China Daily*, however, argues that "without any significant policy changes, Kerry's intensive diplomacy will bear little fruit." Highlighting Secretary Kerry's assurance to King Abdullah that "Asad would not be part of the transition in Syria," Italy's *La Stampa* warns that the Secretary has likely "irritated Moscow" by "playing this card."

Meanwhile, the UAE's *Gulf News* bemoans that while the bickering continues, "the Syrian people remain mere statistics that are being tossed around so conveniently by media 'experts' in an endless propaganda war." The UK's *Financial Times* rails against the Asad regime's "slow, silent massacre" of the Syrian people through starvation, and warns that despite cooperation with Arab nations, "the Arab peoples are unlikely to forgive the disaster now threatening to submerge the Syrians if no one lifts a finger to stop it."

Message:

- ✓ **"One thing is certain: There is no military solution to the conflict in Syria. It can only be resolved through political negotiation." (Secretary Kerry)**
- ✓ **"The framework for that negotiation has been accepted by the international community. It is a Geneva II to implement the Geneva Communiqué." (Secretary Kerry)**
- ✓ **"The Asad regime knows full well that the purpose of Geneva II is to implement Geneva I. That has always been true. The Russians have accepted that. Every support group of the Syrian opposition has accepted that." (Secretary Kerry)**
- ✓ **"Geneva I calls for the installation of a transition government with full executive authority by mutual consent." (Secretary Kerry)**

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- ✓ *"We hope the Asad regime will live up to its already stated promise to be there and to negotiate... I hope the Russians, Iranians, and others who support the regime will make certain it will live up to its obligations." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"The opposition received a very significant boost from the Arab League, which overwhelmingly stated in a very strong resolution that the opposition must go to Geneva." (Secretary Kerry)*

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THURSDAY 11/07/2013

'Geneva II a Fig Leaf for Inaction': While some global observers see failure to set a date for talks on Syria as a "disappointing setback," others depict "all-around skepticism" for diplomatic success, and some plead for attention to the humanitarian crisis. The UAE's *Al-Bayan* speculates that Geneva II may not be held until next year because "circumstances are not yet ripe, inside Syria or on the regional and international level." Japan's *Yomiuri* agrees, arguing that although Special Envoy Brahimi "is expected to meet with US and Russian officials again on November 25 with the goal of convening a peace conference this year, it is uncertain whether that will be possible." Russia's *Kommersant* sees "more obstacles on the way to dialogue," including "the presence of Iran" and "a divided opposition." *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* compares convening a Geneva II to a "complicated math problem with multiple unknown quantities." The UAE's *Gulf News* dismisses "international consensus in favor of Geneva II," as a "convenient excuse to avoid taking any action to stop the fighting." Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's *Al-Madina* is bothered by "the absence of the possibility of a political solution, and by Washington abandoning the military option and plans to supply the opposition with quality weapons." An analyst on India's *ETV* opines that "until and unless foreign support to the Syrian government and the opposition is stopped, peace cannot be restored." Jordan's *Al-Rai* hopes the "massive scale of destruction, killings and human tragedies will weigh on the world's conscience, especially in the US and Russia." *Jordan Times* stresses that since it is clear "preparations for Geneva II are not going well" all stakeholders "should focus now on the Syrian refugee crisis and its impact on neighboring countries... The situation as is cannot continue."

Source: *The National*, UAE

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- ✓ *"I hope the Russians, Iranians, and others who support the regime will make certain it will live up to its obligations." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"The opposition received a very significant boost from the Arab League, which overwhelmingly stated in a very strong resolution that the opposition must go to Geneva." (Secretary Kerry)*

Iran 'Agreement Still Difficult': International commentators expect a "moment of truth" and a test of political will in Geneva as P5+1 talks with Iran get under way, with observers split between hope and caution over prospects. France's *Les Echos* describes "negotiations fraught with hope and danger...No doubt it is now or never for an agreement on the Iranian nuclear program." Israel's *Haaretz* posits that "having conditioned the world to a newly positive atmosphere, an Iranian return to a hardline approach of rejection and defiance would be far more difficult to pull off now." Spain's *El Pais* insists "despite all difficulties...negotiation and diplomacy are the only sure way to solve the Iranian nuclear issue." Pan-Arab *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* thinks it's possible that the "long cold war" between Iran and the US is "showing signs of ending." But a skeptical *Times of Israel* argues, "Trust? No, verify," insisting international powers "cannot ignore or sanitize Iran's history of negotiating in bad faith and thereby allow hope for a positive outcome to override the imperative of demanding concrete, verifiable, and comprehensive action." France's *Le Figaro* worries "the climate has chilled somewhat...The obstacles are numerous...and the Iranian negotiators are under pressure from the regime's hardliners." Austria's *Der Standard* warns "the devil is in the details." Japan's *Nikkei* believes "chances are still slim that the P5+1 will make a major concession and ease sanctions to seal an accord with Iran," while Ayatollah Khamenei "is set to maintain his cautious line toward the US." Iran's *Khorasan* pessimistically expects "difficult and complicated negotiations in Geneva." *Javan* cynically opines that "the great powers...not only have no belief in Iran's development but they also...will not be satisfied by anything less than [turning Iran] into an isolated, discredited, and disrespected nation."

Message:

- ✓ *"Our goal is an Iran that has only a peaceful nuclear program, and it is an incumbent responsibility for the world to know with certainty that it is a peaceful program and there is no capacity to produce a weapon of mass destruction." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"On Iran, our eyes are wide open." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"Our hope is that Iran will understand that this is a simple obligation: Show the world that you are pursuing a peaceful program. It's not that hard. Lots of other nations do it." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"So we will remember our friends and their interests, and we will be very thoughtful and careful as we proceed." (Secretary Kerry)*

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HOT TOPICS
FRIDAY 11/08/2013

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'Nuke Deal Nears with Iran': While some international observers eagerly await "impending" breakthroughs from the latest round of P5+1 talks in Geneva, others warn against undue optimism, pointing to a myriad of possible obstacles to the negotiations and expressing concern over the geo-strategic implications of US-Iran rapprochement. Spain's *TVE* hails Secretary Kerry's "unexpected" participation in Geneva as an "unprecedented decision" which "reinforces the hypothesis of an historic agreement after years of confrontation." For Japan's *Asahi*, "the chances are high that an agreement will be reached on relaxing sanctions" as "moves for rapprochement appear to be accelerating." Russia's *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* contends "little shifts are not enough" and it "will take years and more talks to solve the Iran nuclear problem. There is no need to hurry or insist on Iran taking radical steps to meet its opponents." On the other hand, Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* demands "as long as there is no guarantee that Iran will renounce its military nuclear program, the UNSC and Germany should not deliver anything in advance." Italy's *Corriere della Sera* argues that sanctions "can always be re-implemented. They are not 'irreversible'." France's *Le Figaro* warns that "France and Europe will have to avoid being excluded from talks to which they contributed alongside Washington." Italy's *Corriere della Sera* sees any agreement as confirmation that the US "no longer wants to be the world cop and that its iron pact with Saudi Arabia is no longer indispensable," but warns it may be time for US allies "to begin discussing how they will take care of themselves once America has less need for NATO." Meanwhile, the UAE's *National* thinks "Iranians would be right to factor in" possible derailment by a "dysfunctional US Congress."

Message:

- ✓ ***"Iran needs to prove that its program is peaceful." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"We will not make a deal that's a bad deal, that leaves any of our friends or ourselves exposed to a nuclear weapons program." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"President Obama has made it clear: Iran will not get a nuclear weapon." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"We are serious about that, and we will not undo the major sanctions regime until we have absolute clarity about what is happening." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"We're asking them to step up and provide a complete freeze over where they are today." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"The President has taken no option off the table. We are prepared to do what is necessary." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***In an effort to help narrow the differences in negotiations, Secretary Kerry will travel to Geneva, Switzerland at the invitation of EU High Representative Ashton to hold a trilateral***

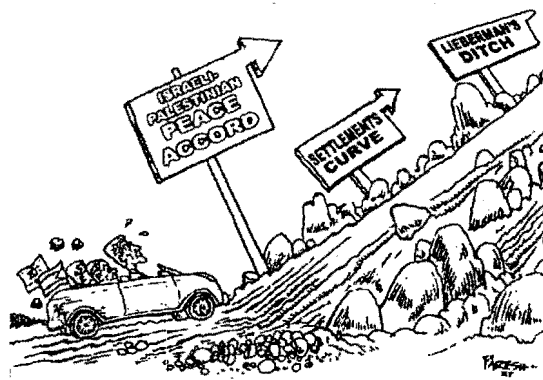
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- ✓ *meeting with High Representative Ashton and Foreign Minister Zarif on the margins of the P5+1 negotiations. (State Department Statement)*

Secretary Kerry 'Plodding On' Towards Middle East Peace:

Global observers see minimal chances for Washington brokering a viable Israeli-Palestinian deal and fear that the Arafat polonium poisoning claim and recent return of Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman to the political scene will further threaten the "faltering" negotiations. Pan-Arab *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* argues that US "expectations of progress on core issues have given way to simply trying to keep both sides at the table," but notes "hints of a new US initiative." Israel's *Yediot Aharanot* takes offense at the Secretary warning of another intifada if no agreement is reached, writing: "curb your enthusiasm... The level of expectations of both sides is so low that freezing them will not leave traumatic scars." Palestinian *Al-Quds*, however, urges Washington to "clearly blame Israel for hindering the so-called peace process for effective, serious and fair negotiations to take place." *The Jordan Times* sees the "need for political will on the Israeli side and a more forceful approach by the US, which must speak the same language with the two sides so as to make Washington's stand unequivocal." *Al-Dustour* dismisses the \$75 million aid to Palestinians as "a bribe" that will not "keep Palestinians at the negotiating table." Meanwhile, Hong Kong's *Sun* laments that "at this sensitive moment, the forensic report on Arafat's death will stir up another wave, adding more uncertainties to the peace talks." The UAE's *Al-Bayan* depicts the Israeli court decision to acquit the "ultra-rightwing leader Lieberman" of corruption charges as "yet another blow to the peace process and to American endeavors." Lebanon's *Al-Nahar* believes his "return to the political arena makes the possible failure of reaching an agreement much higher."



Source: *Khaleej Times*. UAE

Message:

- ✓ *"President Obama and the United States are deeply committed to this peace effort and to a peaceful, prosperous future for the people of Israel and the people of Palestine." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas reaffirmed their commitment to these negotiations despite the fact that at moments, there are tensions over one happening or another in one place or another, whether it's in Israel or in the territories." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"[Peace] is important not just for the Palestinian Territories or for Israel, but to people all through the region, which is why there is an Arab Peace Initiative." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"The possibility of a peace agreement with 22 Arab countries and 35 Muslim nations, 57 countries in all, brings a whole new economic possibility to this region." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"The stakes here are huge and the lack of peace confronts everybody with choices, frankly, that nobody wants to contemplate." (Secretary Kerry)*

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TUESDAY 11/12/2013

'The Nuclear Tango': While some international commentators are optimistic about an Iran nuclear deal ahead of November 20th negotiations, most observers remain skeptical and suspect that "France, Israel, and Saudi Arabia all seek to scupper" any agreement. Austria's *Salzburger Nachrichten* contends "an agreement appears to be within reach." The UAE's *Khaleej Times* is hopeful that "talks are making headway with differences whittled down." Pan-Arab *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* expects Tehran's true intentions "will be revealed in the November 20th meeting." But the UAE's *Gulf News* warns "there is still a long way to go." Iran's *Keyhan* rejects the West's "ransom-seeking behavior and illegal expectations." *E'temad* blames "France's obstruction," while Russia's *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* thinks Paris' "political greediness" derailed an otherwise "perfect agreement." France's *Le Figaro* insists Paris "simply defended what has been the international community's position...the complete cessation of the Iranian nuclear program." Meanwhile, India's *Loksatta* believes "Israel is consciously trying to ruin the agreement so that Iran's nuclear capabilities are damaged forever." The UK's *Guardian* writes, "Confused and not forewarned by their American ally, France, Israel, and Saudi Arabia are lashing out in wild and undiplomatic terms." Singapore's *Straits Times* asserts "Washington is facing a mutiny from its allies," concluding that "no deal between Iran and the West will ever work unless the US succeeds in reassuring its allies." For Israel's *Yediot Aharonot*, "The bad news for our region is that it seems Washington has accepted that Iran will have a nuclear facility." The UK's *Daily Telegraph*, however, insists that "America and Iran need each other to achieve their respective goals. And no one – not even Mr. Netanyahu – can change that reality."

Message:

- ✓ "While we made very significant progress in narrowing the gaps between our partners in the P5+1 and Iran, this is not a race to complete just any agreement." (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ "We have an absolute responsibility to pursue an agreement through diplomacy." (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ "President Obama has said clearly since day one that he will not allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon, and that the United States is committed to protecting our security and the security of our allies from the unthinkable consequence of what might happen were they to secure such a weapon." (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ "There is still a gap between what language may be appropriate that Iran is prepared to accept, but the P5+1 has absolute unity on our core concept." (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ "Iran cannot have a weapons program." (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ "We must have guarantees that are absolutely clear with a road ahead that is well defined and can protect the interests of everybody." (Secretary Kerry)

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'Devastation in the Philippines': As international observers mourn the loss of life wrought by Typhoon Haiyan and urgently call for greater attention to climate change, the expressions of sympathy from East Asian observers are marred by regional disputes and accusations of ill-will. The UAE's *Khaleej Times* laments the "utter devastation" while *Gulf News* reassures the "Filipino community will survive Typhoon Haiyan." South Korea's *JoongAng Ilbo* extends its most "heartfelt condolences" over the "cataclysmic typhoon." *Kyunghyang Shinmun* warns the disaster is not just a mere "fire across the river," as climate change-induced disasters "represent a danger all humanity faces in common." Germany's *Suedwest Presse* demands that nations such as the US, China, India, and Russia, which have avoided signing the Kyoto Protocol, absolutely "have to move." The Philippines' *Daily Tribune* expresses gratitude for the speedy aid response from the "American Alliance" of nations, but pointedly wonders what "valuable, immediate assistance" would have been sent "had [regional] relations been cordial." Singapore's *Straits Times* chides Beijing for its "belated aid offer," and notes suggestions that the late aid could be related to regional territorial disputes. China's *Global Times* argues that aid should be sent regardless of the state of regional relations, as "China's international image is of vital importance to its interests, [and] if it snubs Manila this time, China will suffer great losses." Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* urges all to "let kindness prevail in the face of disaster" despite continuing tensions over the Manila bus hostage shootings which took the lives of eight Hong Kong citizens.

Message:

- ✓ *I want to assure the people of the Philippines and the many Americans of Filipino heritage that we are working as hard as possible to provide essential assistance to help the Philippine people and their government to recover from this tragedy. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)*
- ✓ *Since the start of this calamity, the United States has been working closely with our partners in the Philippines to provide rapid and effective relief. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)*
- ✓ *The State Department is working with Team Rubicon to deploy a team of incredible, courageous American veterans to the Philippines and all the areas damaged by Typhoon Haiyan. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)*
- ✓ *The State Department also is cooperating with the Philippines Typhoon Disaster Relief Fund established by The mGive Foundation, a US nonprofit organization, to coordinate donations via mobile phones to benefit victims of the typhoon. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)*
- ✓ *Our embassies in the Philippines and Palau are in close and constant contact with their partners in local governments to direct aid to the right places. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)*
- ✓ *Secretary Kerry's Statement*

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WEDNESDAY 11/13/2013

'Philippines Tragedy Continues': As international observers call for additional assistance for the Philippines and criticize China's meager aid offering, many argue that poor infrastructure exacerbated the disaster and demand that President Aquino step up his response effort. France's *Liberation* depicts a "race against time to help the 11.3 million Filipinos hit by Haiyan." Germany's *Bild* pleads, "There is a shortage of food and drinking water. Two million people are starving. Please help!" France's *Les Echos* sees "the world coming to the Philippines' rescue." *The Philippine Star* asserts "time is obviously of the essence," and is grateful that "Uncle Sam immediately deployed aircraft and ships from the US Pacific Command." Japan's *Yomiuri* judges "all-out support by the international community is necessary." In contrast, Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* finds China's \$100,000 aid offer "dwarfed by other countries' pledges," which Poland's *Gazeta Wyborcza* thinks "testifies to not so good relations between the countries." *The Saudi Gazette* chides "China's reaction looks mean-spirited" and warns it is "perhaps a bad mistake." Meanwhile, China's *Haiwai Wang* observes "the capacity of the Philippines to prevent and tackle disasters is very weak." The Philippines' *Manila Bulletin* decries the "key weakness: fragile and patchy infrastructure after decades of neglect and corruption." *The Manila Standard* condemns the government's "woefully inadequate" response to the disaster, urging President Aquino to "start by acknowledging how bad the situation is, instead of pretending that everything is just fine and dandy." Hong Kong's *Ta Kung Pao* knocks Aquino for "achieving nothing whatsoever" on corruption, poverty, or unemployment – problems that were "highlighted en masse when the super typhoon struck." The Philippines' *Manila Times* advises Aquino: "Ignore your critics and just work. Work as you have never worked before."

Message:

- ✓ **President Obama spoke with President Aquino of the Philippines to express deep condolences on behalf of the American people for the lives lost and damage caused by Super Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda, one of the strongest storms to ever hit land. (Readout of the President's Call)**
- ✓ **Over the weekend, the President directed the Administration to mount a swift and coordinated response to save lives and provide assistance to alleviate the suffering of so many Filipinos. (Readout of the President's Call)**
- ✓ **President Obama discussed with President Aquino the need for a speedy assessment of what further American resources would be most helpful to assist in the Philippine recovery effort. (Readout of the President's Call)**
- ✓ **In the days ahead, the United States will continue to work with the Philippines to deliver whatever help we can, as quickly as possible. (Readout of the President's Call)**

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- ✓ *The President affirmed that the thoughts and prayers of the American people go out to the millions of people in the Philippines affected by this devastating storm. (Readout of the President's Call)*
- ✓ *Readout of the President's Call to President Aquino*

How They're Playing—China's 'Economic Overtures, Political Lock-Down': While Chinese analysts gush over the economic and national security reforms put forward by the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, other global observers lament the lack of specificity and describe a "consolidation of authority" by President Xi Jinping. China's *People's Daily* boasts the session "ended in victory," and *China Daily* depicts a "reassuring balance of resolve and prudence...a determination to leave no stone unturned." *The Beijing News* sees the creation of a reform panel as the "biggest breakthrough." India's *Hindustan Times* emphasizes that President Xi "has taken direct interest in economic policy which was traditionally left to the Premier." Spain's *El Pais* welcomes China's urging of "a decisive role for the private sector in the economy." Poland's *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna* argues the reforms announced are "indispensable but they may prove insufficient." Italy's *Corriere della Sera* contends it is "difficult to decipher how much of the 'New Red Doctrine' is concrete." Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post*, however, complains the final communique "stopped short of giving details of financial reforms, merely acknowledging the importance of the market in allocating resources." For Japan's *Asahi*, the establishment of a National Security Council is the highlight of the Plenum and speculates it will be accountable for "dealing with problems affecting domestic social stability, such as terrorism and insurgency." Hong Kong's *Apple Daily* envisions a "KGB-style security agency," surmising that "Xi may be copying the strongman politics of Russian President Vladimir Putin to secure greater control in an internal party power struggle."

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THURSDAY 11/14/2013

'Testing Times for Washington': While some global observers believe a US-Iranian nuclear agreement is within sight, others portray the Obama Administration fighting opposition domestically and from regional allies on its handling of the negotiations. Iran's *VIRI* announces Secretary Kerry "urged the Senate to halt additional sanctions against Iran as it would scuttle the talks." Lebanon's *Al-Nahar* depicts Washington advocating "less stick and more carrots" as the White House warns Congress that not reaching an agreement will mean war. The UAE's *National* stresses "a nuclear deal with Iran is now a real possibility as fresh IAEA access to the Arak heavy-water plant may allay French fears," but argues that "any success in Geneva will be followed by bruising battles," in several capitals around the world. Pan-Arab *Al-Hayat* thinks the "US will make a 'historic breakthrough' with Iran, even if this means going back on its past position and abandoning its friends."

Meanwhile, *The Times of Israel* conjectures that "Kerry's emotional appeal against sanctions flopped." The UK's *Daily Telegraph* contends "the plea for patience was also questioned by several senior Democrats in Congress who argued that the White House was cutting a bad deal." Saudi Arabia's *Arab News* describes "a major shift in approach that has irked some US allies and may result in a political backlash for the Administration." Saudi Arabia's *Al-Madina* worries the West will reward Tehran by "giving Iran a regional role" in addition to easing sanctions which will be a "major challenge to Arab countries." Israel's *Haaretz* reminds the Administration of its allies including the GCC countries, Israel and Turkey who "feel cheated, betrayed and threatened," stressing "they will do all they can to trip up Obama's journey to Rouhani." Pan-Arab *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* accuses President Obama of "behaving like Mother Teresa" instead of a "global power leader" and fears he is "letting Iranians get away with their plans as he did with the Syrian regime." Israel's *Jerusalem Post* complains that since "Israeli lives" are in the balance "keeping Tel Aviv out of the loop is a flawed US strategy." Germany's *Tageszeitung* agrees the "existential fears triggered in Israel" are "legitimate."

Message:

- ✓ **"The President has led an effort that has resulted in the most punishing set of comprehensive sanctions ever put together in history." (White House Spokesman Carney)**
- ✓ **"Those sanctions and the isolation that the United States has led in creating have forced Iran to the negotiating table." (White House Spokesman Carney)**
- ✓ **"The price for their intransigence has been very high for the Iranian economy." (White House Spokesman Carney)**

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- ✓ *"The new leadership in Iran as well as the Supreme Leader have indicated a willingness to engage in serious negotiations for the first time in a very long time." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"It is the responsibility of the President, on behalf of the American people, to see whether or not this can be resolved diplomatically, because the alternative to preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon... is military action." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"The President is very serious that the military option remains on the table. He's also very serious about the fact that the window of opportunity to pursue a diplomatic solution is open but will not stay open forever." (White House Spokesman Carney)*

World Cartoon: Typhoon Haiyan



Source: Arab News, Saudi Arabia

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FRIDAY 11/15/2013

'The Diplomacy of Disaster': International observers analyze the geopolitical significance of the international community's response to the devastation caused by Typhoon Haiyan, criticizing Philippine President Aquino's "disappointing" management of the disaster and depicting a successful soft power play by the US to regain its stature in the Pacific. Poland's *Gazeta Wyborcza* sympathizes with the "despair and hope" of the Philippines, as the typhoon "laid bare the country's ailments: poverty, high crime rate, and weakness of the authorities." Hong Kong's *Macau Daily News* criticizes Philippine President Aquino as "utterly confused and irresponsible." *The Philippine Daily Inquirer* worries about "compassion fatigue" among the global community as "in the face of all this generous humanitarian effort, the anarchy by Filipinos in Leyte and Samar looks very ugly." For France's *Le Monde*, "Today Filipinos in Tacloban are pinning their hopes on the Americans." Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* observes geopolitical effects of Typhoon Haiyan, "with a quick and generous response from the US shoring up its influence and China's sluggish and modest aid effort making a dent in Beijing's soft power." Japan's *Yomiuri* suggests the robust US response is an attempt to "make up for the blunder" of canceled visits by President Obama and Secretary Kerry and has brought about "growing trust in the US." *Nikkei* picks at China for its notable decision to "hold off on offering physical support." China's *Global Times* in turn calls for PRC warships to be dispatched to the Philippines, arguing that if "Manila refuses the gesture, it will only underscore its narrow-mindedness and will be of no loss to China." *China Daily* rails against the gathering "storm of China-bashing" and argues that as a developing country, "China can only provide aid within its capability" and "the helping hand it has extended should not be undervalued."

Message:

- ✓ **"USAID and the Department of Defense are on the ground helping provide assistance to the people of the Philippines in some of the hardest hit areas." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)**
- ✓ **"The USS George Washington carrier strike group arrived in the Philippines which will help expand search-and-rescue operations, provide medical care and logistical support, and deliver supplies to remote areas." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)**
- ✓ **"The George Washington brings with it 21 helicopters, significantly enhancing airlift capability to transport emergency supplies." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)**
- ✓ **"The first airlift of USAID heavy-duty plastic sheeting and hygiene kits has arrived in Manila, and our disaster response experts working with the US military dispatched these much-needed supplies." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)**

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- ✓ *"After arrival, USAID's emergency relief commodities, including hygiene kits and plastic sheeting to help 10,000 families, were flown from the airport directly out to storm-affected communities." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)*
- ✓ *"Additional airlifts of US supplies and food aid will arrive in the coming days." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)*

'Return of the Bear'? While many international commentators express concern that a high-level Russian delegation's visit to Egypt signals an effort by Moscow to "fill the vacuum" left by the US, others suspect Cairo merely aims to "send a message" to Washington. Egypt's *Al-Ahram* thinks the visit, together with Secretary Kerry's previous trip, are "proof that Egypt was and will remain the cornerstone" for major powers in the Middle East. Russia's *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* assures, "Now that Egypt badly needs a reliable and authoritative partner, Russia...is ready to play that role." *Komsomolskaya Pravda* believes "the new Egyptian authorities have turned towards our country in search of a pivot that would...prevent further disarray in the region." Jordan's *Al-Dustour* speculates that "difficulties in Washington's ties with its major allies have resulted in a vacuum," prompting Russia to "step forward." Pan-Arab *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* warns "America is repeating its 1956 mistake in Egypt by leaving the country to the Russians; instead of red lines, it is laying out the red carpet." Israel's *Jerusalem Post* foresees "a return...to the days of the Cold War," with Russia "eager for a toehold in Egypt" and Egypt "playing along to spite US President Obama and Kerry," in what constitutes "yet another spectacular US foreign policy flop." The UAE's *Al-Bayan*, however, dismisses talk of "a shift in the Egyptian compass from West to East." Austria's *Kurier* argues "turning to Moscow is less of a new strategic orientation and more a signal to Washington." Germany's *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* contends "Cairo can neither afford a rift with Washington nor with Russia." The UAE's *Gulf News* cautions, "Egypt may welcome moving out of the direct American sphere, but in the long term, it will need to maintain all its relationships very carefully."

Message:

- ✓ *The US-Egypt relationship is longstanding. (State Department Guidance)*
- ✓ *We remain committed to that relationship and to seeing the transition in Egypt succeed. (State Department Guidance)*
- ✓ *Its success is important not only for Egyptians, but for the region and the United States. (State Department Guidance)*
- ✓ *We believe that the US and Egypt partnership is strongest when Egypt is represented by an inclusive, democratically elected, civilian government based on the rule of law, fundamental freedoms, and an open and competitive economy. (State Department Guidance)*
- ✓ *We look forward to the interim government working with a broad cross section of Egyptian society and to move forward on an inclusive path to democracy and economic stability. (State Department Guidance)*
- ✓ *We are encouraging the interim government to help address the aspirations of the people and we look to the government to demonstrate progress on its political roadmap, development of democratic institutions, respect for human rights, and accountability under the rule of law for violence committed by any party. (State Department Guidance)*

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HOT TOPICS

MONDAY 11/18/2013

'Thank God for the United States!' International commentators hail the generosity of US aid to the Philippines and contrast it to China's "token" offering, but some reject talk of a regional superpower rivalry when people's lives are at stake. *The Philippine Daily Inquirer* commends Washington's "stellar role in the relief-and-rehabilitation effort" after deploying "an entire carrier group...as well as military personnel to help restore and maintain operations at the Tacloban airport and distribute 55 tons of emergency food supplies." *The Philippine Star* praises the US' "rapid response," which has "sent a clear message...that the US can flex its muscle in the Asia-Pacific region at short notice." The UK's *Daily Telegraph* observes that "once again it is the Americans who have come to the rescue" in a disaster that "offers the perfect opportunity to demonstrate American soft power." Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* asserts that for some, "it is an affirmation of US commitment," while for others it is "a not-so-subtle message that the US remains the biggest power in the region." Singapore's *Straits Times* finds Washington "quick to arrive" while China's "token donation was not in keeping with the international role the superpower aspires to," cautioning that "disaster diplomacy ought to be based on good neighborliness and not be too calculating or tardy." China's *Global Times* suggests "encouraging non-governmental groups to take up more relief work" in the Philippines, which could "boost understanding." Taiwan's *China Post* claims "short-term relief efforts won't be enough; we should commit to providing assistance during the long reconstruction process." Meanwhile, *The Philippine Star* thanks "every country, every institution, every organization" equally, contending that while "the Philippines benefits from the superpowers' competition, we must handle it judiciously instead of favoring one or the other."

Message:

- ✓ "A USAID flight carrying heavy-duty plastic sheeting and family hygiene kits arrived in Manila." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)
- ✓ "The supplies, which will help 10,000 families in need, are being transported to Tacloban and other hard-hit areas by DOD." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)
- ✓ "This is the third airlift of USAID supplies to arrive in the Philippines." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)
- ✓ "The US Government is providing more than \$22 million in humanitarian assistance to help those affected by this crisis." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)
- ✓ "Our assistance includes emergency shelter assistance and water sanitation and hygiene supplies, as well as support for humanitarian coordination, procurement, and distribution of relief supplies, and logistic support." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)
- ✓ "We continue to explore what more we can do to help the people of the Philippines." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)

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'Push' for Nuclear Agreement: Global observers ponder the chances of reaching a deal with Iran at the November 20th talks noting moves by parties including Iran's conservatives, Israel, Saudi Arabia and France may thwart such efforts. Saudi Arabia's *Arab News* expects that despite the "charged atmosphere, the P5+1 and Iran are gearing up to reach an interim deal." Pan-Arab *Al-Hayat* believes "all participants want a swift agreement as Iran is desperate to be free of sanctions and Western countries are desperate to avoid a preemptive war." Iran's *E'temad* describes resolving the nuclear issue as a "great task, which can eventually save the country from a dangerous war and crippling sanctions." Spain's *La Vanguardia* cites "important incentives" for Washington and Tehran. Meanwhile, *The Times of Israel* announces the "Geneva talks are just a façade as the US and Iran worked secretly on a deal for the past year." Iran's *Keyhan* warns that "recent concessions made can only be termed as paying ransom." Russia's *Komsomolskaya Pravda* depicts the "Israelis as outraged and strongly opposed to any agreement with Iran other than its unconditional capitulation." Iran's radio *VIRI* accuses France of "again playing a discordant tune... taking steps in the direction of complete fulfillment of the Zionist interests." The Czech Republic's *Lidove Noviny* dismisses a broadly circulated *New York Times* report claiming that Israel and Saudi Arabia are cooperating on an attack on Iran as just "another Israeli attempt to dissuade the West... Riyadh's active help to the Jewish state would be difficult to justify in the Arab and Muslim world." Russia's *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, however, disagrees saying "the Israeli-Saudi alliance is no myth."

Message:

- ✓ ***"The President's policy is that under no circumstances will Iran get a nuclear weapon."***
(Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ ***"The sanctions are working. We're now able to negotiate."*** (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ ***"The core sanctions regime does not really get eased. Ninety-five percent or more of the current sanctions will remain in place."*** (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ ***"I respect completely Prime Minister Netanyahu's deep concerns as a Prime Minister of Israel about the existential nature of this threat to Israel."*** (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ ***"We understand that, which is why President Obama has made this firm commitment that Iran will never get a nuclear weapon."*** (Secretary Kerry)

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TUESDAY 11/19/2013

Hollande, Netanyahu Complicate Iran Talks: While some international observers debate French President Hollande's motives in visiting Israel for discussions on Iran, other commentators warn that competing interests among the P5+1 could easily derail negotiations. France's *Le Monde* interprets Hollande's trip as a "warning" to the US from PM Netanyahu. Pan-Arab *Al-Hayat* meanwhile dismisses his tour as a "public relations exercise and a tourism trip that would soon be forgotten." India's *Aalami Samay* blames France for purposefully "trying to complicate the matter." Pan-Arab *Al-Hayat* denounces, "Imperialism and Satan are [now] French, not American." China's *People's Daily* sidesteps questions of blame, but warns the talks "are already mixed up among too many stakeholders." Iran's *Mardom Salari* accepts that any number of parties involved in the nuclear talks could "influence the process of the negotiations and even change the game's course." For Poland's *Rzeczpospolita*, clashes among diplomats and "tensions between Western allies are not the only problem, [as] the US Congress considers tightening sanctions on Iran." Iran's *Keyhan* scoffs at the prospects for "full-fledged agreement in Geneva," doubting "how can one come to the conclusion that there was consensus on 90 per cent of issues in Geneva" when diplomats hold contradictory positions. *Javan* therefore warns "if the P5+1 group remains under the influence of some countries, including the US and France, the result will certainly not be constructive." China's *People's Daily* dismisses hopes for real progress, contending that the US and Iran will use the meeting to "buy time" with a "provisional agreement [that] is likely to last six months or so."

Message:

- ✓ "Since the goal that we all share is making sure Iran does not and cannot acquire a nuclear weapon, we need to pursue the possibility that we can achieve that goal peacefully through diplomacy." (White House Spokesman Carney)
- ✓ "The surest way to ensure that Iran does not have a nuclear weapon and does not have it for the long term is an agreement and a decision by Tehran to give up pursuit of a nuclear weapon." (White House Spokesman Carney)
- ✓ "The end goal here is shared by everyone, and there is no daylight between the United States and Israel, nor among the members of the P5+1." (White House Spokesman Carney)
- ✓ "We believe there is the potential to initiate the first phase of an agreement that would see Iran halting progress on its nuclear program and rolling back certain aspects of it as we pursue a more comprehensive agreement." (White House Spokesman Carney)
- ✓ "Sanctions relief that would accompany an agreement for this first phase would be modest and eminently reversible." (White House Spokesman Carney)
- ✓ "We've described it as the kind of relief that we could provide by turning down or off a spigot, and then cranking it back up pretty seriously if needed." (White House Spokesman Carney)

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Haiyan Aid 'Boosts US Troops' Image': Global observers continue to applaud the "leadership" relief role Washington assumed in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan, though some question its real intentions and others deride China for its failure to offer "serious help." Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* welcomes "the US going big with their 'catastrophe diplomacy'," and sending a message: "You can rely on America, the trustworthy partner." *The Saudi Gazette* stresses Washington has "once again demonstrated it has the logistical muscle to reach out and bring succor to stricken communities anywhere in the world," adding that "By contrast, the Chinese, who now see themselves as the real regional power, have failed quite spectacularly." The Philippine's *Malaya* thanks "Uncle Sam" and is confident "our American friends are assisting us solely for altruistic reasons this time." *The Manila Standard Today* is relieved "the US has chosen to send its military forces," adding "if foreign military presence is the price we must pay to save our countrymen, so be it." For *ABS-CBN*, "the accelerating relief efforts underscore a fast-expanding US-Philippine military alliance that could grow even stronger." *The Philippine Daily Inquirer* expresses gratitude but contends that "staging massive humanitarian relief missions isn't just about being a good neighbor. They can be a strategic and publicity goldmine for US troops whose presence in Asia isn't always portrayed in such a favorable light." Meanwhile, *The Hong Kong Daily News* advises Beijing to learn from Washington as "relief efforts may become a 'diplomatic lubricant' to push for the warming of Sino-Philippine relations." Taiwan's *Apple Daily* finds it a "pity that Beijing sees the government as its target audience for diplomatic efforts and rarely thinks of the people, thus missing a good opportunity to win Filipinos' hearts."

Message:

- ✓ ***"A USAID flight carrying heavy-duty plastic sheeting and family hygiene kits arrived in Manila." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)***
- ✓ ***"The supplies, which will help 10,000 families in need, are being transported to Tacloban and other hard-hit areas." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)***
- ✓ ***"The US is providing more than \$22 million in humanitarian assistance to help those affected by this crisis." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)***
- ✓ ***"Our assistance includes emergency shelter assistance and water sanitation and hygiene supplies, as well as support for humanitarian coordination, procurement, and distribution of relief supplies, and logistic support." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)***
- ✓ ***"We continue to explore what more we can do to help the people of the Philippines." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)***
- ✓ **USAID Typhoon Haiyan Relief**

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WEDNESDAY 11/20/2013

'Battlefield Beirut, Target Geneva': International observers see the Beirut suicide bombings as "revenge" for Iranian support of President Asad and warn of an "imminent regional war between Sunni and Shia" as the Syrian war spills over into neighboring countries. France's *Le Figaro* asserts that "by targeting the Iranian Embassy, Al-Qaida is punishing Tehran for its support for the Syrian regime." Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* sees the attack as yet another "clear indication" that "the war in Syria is a transnational war." Poland's *Rzeczpospolita* suggests it "may be a prelude to the last battle of the Syrian rebels" as opposition groups "search out new fronts" to compensate for their dwindling ability to fight against the regime in Syrian territory. Germany's *Die Welt* in turn demands that the US "reconsider [its position on the Middle East] and increase confidence in its policy towards the Saudis and the US military presence in the Gulf." The UK's *Times* fears the attack could be the catalyst for an "outright war between Shia and Sunni...an ideological struggle that could devastate global Islam." Austria's *Der Standard* warns of the "Iraqization of Lebanon." Saudi Arabia's *Arab News* forecasts "Beirut will tomorrow turn into a city of barriers and military barracks, and the climate of terror will spread across Lebanon." Meanwhile, pan-Arab *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* reproaches Iran and its allies for "thinking that they could play with fire in Syria and not get burned." *The Times of Israel* thinks the bombing was "anything but a surprise" as Iran finally "learns the bitter lesson it taught Israel - explosives plus a highly motivated terrorist make for a devastating weapon." Iran's *Sharq*, however, defiantly vows that the attack cannot change Iran's "unwavering and steady" policy on Syria.

Message:

- ✓ ***The United States strongly condemns the senseless and despicable terrorist bombings at the Iranian Embassy in Beirut. We extend our condolences to the victims and their families. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)***
- ✓ ***We urge all parties to exercise calm and restraint to avoid inflaming the situation further. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)***
- ✓ ***The United States knows too well the cost of terrorism directed at our own diplomats around the world, and our hearts go out to the Iranian people after this violent and unjustifiable attack claimed the life of at least one of their diplomats. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)***
- ✓ ***We call on all parties to cooperate with the Lebanese government's investigation of this crime and urge that those responsible are brought to justice. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)***
- ✓ ***Acts of terror only reinforce our determination to support the institutions of the Lebanese state, including the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Internal Security Forces, to ensure a stable, sovereign, and secure Lebanon. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)***
- ✓ **Secretary Kerry's Statement**

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'Back to Geneva': While many international commentators see hope for an Iran nuclear accord ahead of Geneva talks and reject Israeli efforts to "undercut" negotiations, Iranian observers insist on their "legal rights" while other global analysts warn of a "bad deal." *Iran* opines "the ground has been paved for the parties to reach an agreement," and calls for "prudent" talks that will "open the doors to the lifting of unjust sanctions." The UAE's *Khaleej Times* sees "a chance to ink an agreement" and claims "it's time to seize the moment by exhibiting genuine leadership." Singapore's *Straits Times* advises, "Focus should be fixed on the big prize...If they can meet one another halfway on divergent interests, it would be an accomplishment enough." The UK's *Independent* is confident "the remaining issues can be ironed out in the coming days," but warns that "repudiating diplomacy at this delicate juncture...only prolongs a nuclear stand-off that has festered for more than a decade." Canada's *Toronto Star* cautions against instituting additional US sanctions, asserting that "striking out at Iran now would be perverse [and] would undercut [Presidents] Obama and Rouhani." The UK's *Financial Times* chides: Israel's "interventions are not only damaging a testy relationship with the White House but also flying in the face of an international consensus that overwhelmingly favors diplomacy." Germany's *Berliner Zeitung* recommends that PM Netanyahu "be more relaxed" since Israel is "able to pursue a nuclear counterattack." Iran's *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* insists Tehran "wants nothing more than its legal rights", and contends that "if the P5+1 acts within the framework of law, it will naturally be able to sign an agreement with the Iranian delegation." The UK's *Times*, however, argues that "the proposed deal...is a bad one, negotiated at reckless speed," and hands Iran a "Get Out of Jail Free card."

Message:

- ✓ *"The essence of the deal would be that Iran would halt advances on their nuclear program; they would roll back some elements that get them closer to what we call breakout capacity, where they could [complete] a weapon before the international community has a chance to react." (President Obama)*
- ✓ *"They would subject themselves to more vigorous inspections than the ones that are currently there, including in some cases, daily inspections." (President Obama)*
- ✓ *"In return, we would open up the spigot a little bit for a very modest amount of relief that is entirely subject to reinstatement if, in fact, they violated any part of this early agreement." (President Obama)*
- ✓ *"It would purchase a period of time – let's say, six months – during which we could see if they could get to the end state of a position where we, the Israelis, the international community could say with confidence Iran is not pursuing a nuclear weapon." (President Obama)*

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THURSDAY 11/21/2013

Iran Negotiations 'Face Strong Headwind': While some international observers widely dismiss Israeli PM Netanyahu's visit to Russia as a "vain attempt" to influence Iranian nuclear negotiations, others warn of obstacles posed by increased Russian involvement in the Middle East, opposition from France, and the possible imposition of new US sanctions. *The Times of Israel* demands that full transparency and unconditional monitoring "is the only way anyone should be convinced that the honey-laced words of Iran are anything more than an elaborate and dangerous game of high stakes misdirection." Meanwhile, *Jordan Times* is shocked by Netanyahu's "unbending and abrasive" attempts to bypass the US by striking a deal with Russia, commenting, "He sure is pushing it." Russia's *Kommersant* scoffs at Netanyahu's gambit to "disrupt the deal with Iran... The negotiation process has passed the point of no-return." However, Taiwan's *Apple Daily* lambasts the US outreach to Iran as "disrupting the entire chess game in the Middle East" and sparking a massive regional "strategic structural reorganization" which may be exploited by Russia. Russia's *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* contends "the success or failure of the talks fully depend on France's stance." France's *Le Figaro* wonders, "Can France once again take the risk of blocking the progress made and becoming isolated." Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* defends France as "right to be skeptical" considering Iran has yet to make clear whether it "is willing to make substantial concessions apart from exchanging friendly notes." India's *Hindustan Times* praises President Obama for "making the right move...[by] sticking his neck out to stress the need for talks and the easing of sanctions."

Message:

- ✓ **"The President made clear that achieving a peaceful resolution that prevents Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon is profoundly in America's national security interest." (White House Spokesman Carney)**
- ✓ **"The initial six-month step of the P5+1 proposal would halt progress on the Iranian nuclear program and roll it back in key respects, stopping the advance of the program for the first time in nearly a decade." (White House Spokesman Carney)**
- ✓ **"It would introduce unprecedented transparency into Iran's nuclear activities while we negotiate a long-term, comprehensive solution." (White House Spokesman Carney)**
- ✓ **"The President underscored that in the absence of a first step, Iran will continue to make progress on its nuclear program by increasing its enrichment capacity, continuing to grow its stockpile of enriched uranium, installing advanced centrifuges, and making progress on the plutonium track at the Arak reactor." (White House Spokesman Carney)**
- ✓ **"The President noted that the relief we are considering as part of a first step would be limited, temporary and reversible." (White House Spokesman Carney)**

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- ✓ ***"He emphasized that we will continue to enforce sanctions during the six-month period."***
(White House Spokesman Carney)

Beirut Bombings 'Bad Omen for Region': Some international commentators interpret the bombing of the Iranian embassy as a "regionalization" of the Syrian crisis, with many others fearing Lebanon's "fragile peace" is now at risk. Germany's *Tagesspiegel* heralds a "Sunni-Shiite rivalry among the terrorists" that will "stir up a denominational war." Pakistan's *Nation* warns the "Syrian spillover has started," and has the "potential to strangle the entire region." *The Daily Times* thinks the bombing serves as a "message to Iran that its support of the Asad regime will be confronted brutally." Iran's *Javan* blames "other people" besides Al-Qaida for the attack, speculating that it may serve as a "new impetus for terrorists and losers in the plot to overthrow the Syrian government to continue their dirty games." Indonesia's *Kompas* hopes "rivalries between outside forces will not drag Lebanon back into a civil war." The UAE's *National* wonders: "Can Lebanon's delicate peace survive Syria? ... The worst-case scenario will be the nation sinking back into the dark abyss of domestic conflict they have just begun to overcome." Pan-Arab *Al-Hayat* fears "there are those who want to make the dream of a Lebanese state impossible to achieve." *The Saudi Gazette* contends "this is now a battle that all Lebanese must fight to drive out the violent interlopers in their midst." Lebanon's *Daily Star* laments "the simple truth is Lebanon's debilitating political divisions will continue to present an attractive option for a whole range of parties to stir up trouble."

Message:

- ✓ ***"The United States strongly condemns the terrorist bombings in Beirut, which occurred near the Iranian embassy."*** ***(White House Spokesman Carney)***
- ✓ ***"We extend our condolences to the victims of this tragic event and to their families."*** ***(White House Spokesman Carney)***
- ✓ ***"We call on all parties to exercise calm and restraint to avoid enflaming the situation further."*** ***(White House Spokesman Carney)***
- ✓ ***"We support the government of Lebanon's commitment to conduct a thorough investigation into this attack."*** ***(White House Spokesman Carney)***
- ✓ ***"We look to all parties to cooperate with the investigation, and urge that those responsible are brought to justice."*** ***(White House Spokesman Carney)***
- ✓ ***"Acts of terror only reinforce our determination to work with the institutions of the Lebanese state, including the Lebanese armed forces and the internal security forces, to ensure a stable, sovereign and secure Lebanon."*** ***(White House Spokesman Carney)***

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HOT TOPICS
FRIDAY 11/22/2013

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'The Longest War Continues': International commentators describe a "tense atmosphere" as the Afghan Loya Jirga debates the US-Afghanistan Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA), with some insisting a continued NATO presence is necessary while others warn that any further foreign presence will only prolong the conflict. France's *Le Monde* observes "this pact was the outcome of harsh and sometimes conflicting negotiations," but predicts "delegates should approve the document on Sunday." Austria's *Kurier* outlines the "blueprint for the mandate of a potential follow-up mission," which will allow "US troops to be granted immunity." Afghanistan's *Channel One TV* interviews a civil society activist who warns that "if the BSA is not signed, the world will stop providing aid to Afghanistan." Austria's *Der Standard* judges, "No matter how you look at it, after 13 years the US will continue to have combat troops stationed in Afghanistan for an indefinite period of time past 2014. The concern is that the high cost of lives and money will have been in vain" if Afghanistan succumbs to "Al-Qaida and the likes again." Germany's *Norddeutscher Rundfunk* radio argues "a successive NATO mission is urgently necessary. It would be disastrous to leave Afghanistan to itself...the West must regain lost ground after 2014. Not with weapons, but with intelligence and honest cooperation." An economic analyst tells Afghanistan's *Tolo News* that a signed BSA "will bring peace and security" as well as "regional traders ready to invest in Afghanistan." But Japan's *Yomiuri* cautions that a continued troop deployment is a "double-edged sword," since "if Kabul strikes a security agreement with Washington, it is certain that the Taliban will react strongly." China's *People's Daily* speculates "the US military's continuing presence in Afghanistan will rouse suspicions of regional nations and strengthen their rivalries." Germany's *Berliner Zeitung* doubts the BSA is "the solution for Afghan misery...As long as foreign soldiers are deployed in Afghanistan, the Taliban and other insurgents will fight against them."

Message:

- ✓ **"Broadly speaking, when we signed the strategic partnership agreement last year, both countries committed to concluding the BSA within one year." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)**
- ✓ **"We believe that signing the BSA sooner rather than later is essential to give Afghans certainty about their future before the upcoming elections, and enable the United States and other partners to plan for a US presence after 2014." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)**
- ✓ **"We respect the role of the Loya Jirga." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)**
- ✓ **"When its work is complete, we must move forward as quickly as possible to sign an agreement." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)**

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✓ *"We need a timely conclusion of this in order to plan for any potential post-2014 presence, which means signing it by the end of the year." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)*

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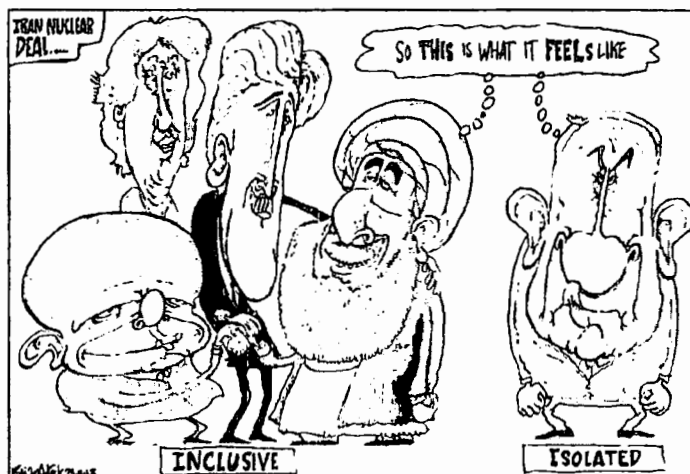
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MONDAY 11/25/2013

'New Leaf But...' While some Middle East observers hail the "win-win" nuclear agreement with Iran, others see "no consolation" and "little cause for celebration" as Tehran gains "breathing space" to continue with its nuclear ambitions. In Iran, *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* describes a "victory of logic" and a "success for the Iranian people." *E'temad* posits that "although Iran's nuclear issue has not been resolved fully, the country's political and economic environment has been relieved of anxiety and concerns of a serious conflict."

Hemayat portrays "an important success" but awaits the publication of the full details of the agreement. *Javan*, however, reminds the "deal is limited to nuclear issues and does not extend to foreign policy... The people of Iran still view America as their foremost enemy." Elsewhere, the UAE's *Khaleej Times* applauds the "triumph in Geneva" and gives credit to Presidents Obama and Rouhani "who walked the extra mile to strike a note of confidence despite the countries' checkered history." Qatar's *Al-Raya* is glad for the "beginning of an historic deal that can contribute to ensuring nuclear non-proliferation in the region." *The Jordan Times* welcomes the "deal at last," saying it "may not be the pact of the century, but it is important." Meanwhile, the UAE's *Gulf News* urges Tehran to "make clear that it is genuine about its peaceful intentions." Lebanon's *Daily Star* advises "one should be cautious in talking about a significant achievement," adding that "nothing comprehensive will be in the offing unless Iran repairs its relations with its neighbors." Saudi Arabia's *Al-Riyadh* portrays "worry in the GCC because the agreement provides Tehran with a larger regional role." Israel's *Yediot Aharonot* argues the agreement reached in Geneva is "far from securing the liquidation of the Iranian nuclear program. It is as full of holes as Swiss cheese." *The Jerusalem Post* contends it "will provide the US and other western nations with a false impression that headway has been made while providing cover for the Iranians as they plod forward toward nuclear capability." Pan-Arab *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* warns "the agreement will spark a regional nuclear arms race and has therefore made the situation more dangerous."

'An Agreement Worth a Try': While many international observers welcome the deal between Iran and P5+1 as a "historic" agreement that may help to "prevent war," others worry that the interim accord is weak and could be easily sabotaged by dissatisfied parties. Italy's *Corriere della Sera*

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welcomes the deal as “a chance for the entire Middle East” to move towards peace. The UK’s *Independent* lauds it as a sign of the end of a Cold War between the West and Iran. Germany’s *Berliner Zeitung* sees President Obama as finally “on the best track to earn” the Nobel Peace Prize he was awarded four years ago. For Spain’s *El Pais*, the deal is the best chance for a US “redesign of global geopolitics since the fall of the Berlin Wall.” According to the UK’s *Times*, the regime’s insistence on its right to enrich uranium is “highly suggestive that it wishes to retain freedom of manoeuvre to develop nuclear weapons.” Australia’s *The Sydney Morning Herald* warns the deal is “fragile and ripe for sabotage” by a multitude of involved actors. Hong Kong’s *Oriental Daily News* foresees pressure from lobbies associated with Israel and Gulf countries which could drive “hawkish congressmen” to scuttle the deal. *The Beijing News* worries “backlash from Iranian hardliners may simply make any long-term deals impossible.” The UK’s *Daily Telegraph* fears “the Sunni world may be on the verge of falling out of the American orbit” and convinced that it can no longer trust the US, Saudi Arabia could “go nuclear.” The Czech Republic’s *MF Dnes* points out that the agreement is “tentative” and “doesn’t say what will happen after six months when the treaty expires.” Singapore’s *Straits Times* questions if President Obama “will be able to resist the temptation of concluding another temporary deal to ‘avert a war’” if the interim agreement falls through. *The Australian* urges “there must be no let-up in pressure” as the deal “will only be effective if Tehran is in no doubt about the consequences if it fails to meet the terms.” For Austria’s *Der Standard* however, the “risks are calculable. It is worth a try.”

Message:

- ✓ ***“We are taking [first steps] with an agreement that impedes Iran’s progress in its principal enrichment facilities and parts of its nuclear program.” (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***“It ensures they cannot advance in a way that will threaten our friends in the region, other countries, and the world.” (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***“While we have profound differences with Iran yet to be resolved, the fact is that this agreement could not have been reached without the decision of the Iranian Government to come to the table and negotiate.” (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***“With this first step, we have created the time and the space to pursue a comprehensive agreement, and to ensure that Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon.” (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***“Making sanctions the sum total of our policy will not strengthen the international coalition that we have built in order to bring Iran to the negotiating table...The goal of the sanctions was always to have negotiations.” (Secretary Kerry)***

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TUESDAY 11/26/2013

'A New Dawn in Iran?' While Middle East observers disagree as to whether Iran can be trusted to follow through with the terms of the P5+1 agreement and debate the geopolitical repercussions of Tehran's "reemergence," commentators are widely suspicious of the "secret talks" between Iran and the US and forecast a reshuffling of regional structures. The UAE's *Gulf News* lauds, "Diplomacy has been vindicated." Iran's *Sharq* hails "the positive result of changing discourse." *NOW Lebanon*, however, contends "the Geneva agreement amounts to a capitulation by the Obama Administration." Pan-Arab *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* maintains that Iran's primary objective is to acquire nuclear arms, a danger that is "significant and exceeds 9/11." Israel's *Arutz Sheva* declares the world must be reminded that "muscular reactions to evil regimes are often truly necessary" and "common sense points toward" an Israeli attack on Iran. Iran's *Resalat* accuses the West of ignoring the "Israeli threat," complaining: "So what security guarantees does the agreement give the Islamic Republic?" Saudi Arabia's *Al-Watan* argues "the balance of power in the region will not change much even if Iran were to achieve" rapprochement. Meanwhile, Israel's *Jerusalem Post* laments that "with the stroke of a pen in Geneva, the world has entered an alarming new phase" in which the US "turns it back on its allies." Saudi Arabia's *Okaz* denounces the deal as "a new chapter in the series of re-planning, dividing, and demarcation of the area under the scheme 'new Middle East', dictated by the developed and powerful countries." Lebanon's *Daily Star* thinks that after the revelation of "US-Iran secret meetings," "it would be naive to think that the two countries haven't begun discussions on other, longer-term arrangements in the Middle East" unrelated to the nuclear pact. Israel's *Ynet* accuses the US of using the Geneva talks as a "façade to provide international legitimacy for Obama's secret deal with Iran."

'Reprieve From the Nuclear Noose': While many commentators in the rest of the world hail the "victory for peace" achieved by the P5+1 and Iran and hope it bodes well for other Middle East conflicts, several envision a long road to a permanent nuclear deal. Indonesia's *Jakarta Post* offers "kudos to Iran" and the P5+1 countries "for their patience and perseverance in reaching a compromise." *The New Zealand Herald* credits the "new leadership and new attitude in Tehran." Pakistan's *Daily Times* positively asserts "the fact that the US and Iran are turning over a new leaf...may just be a sign of better things to come." The UK's *Times* predicts that an Iran "reset" would be the "greatest vindication of Obama's long-term, slowly-slowly" foreign policy approach. Greece's *Ta Nea* gushes "Obama's 'soft power'...is producing results." Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* hails the "triumph of diplomacy over belligerence." *The Times of India* is optimistic about a "new balance of forces between Shias and Sunnis and Muslims and Jews," while Italy's *Il Sole 24 Ore* foresees: "From Lebanon to Syria, all the way to Afghanistan, the agreement will give way to a long process of change." Canada's *Ottawa Citizen* claims "it is a deal the world must

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embrace – with eyes wide open of course.” Poland’s *Rzeczpospolita* is wary of the “big responsibility,” warning “the whole thing will either end up with a Nobel Peace Prize or a bloody catastrophe.” *China Daily* expects “the next six months will be crucial [and] will be a test of the political wisdom, patience and sincerity of both countries.” For the UK’s *Financial Times*, “striking a nuclear deal with Iran may turn out to be the easy part. The President’s biggest struggle now is facing down Israel and its supporters in the US as they attempt to rally opposition to the deal.”

Message:

- ✓ *“The President believes that we should begin consulting with our Israeli allies immediately as we prepare for the talks with the Iranians toward a comprehensive solution.” (Deputy White House Spokesman Earnest)*
- ✓ *“We’re also ready to begin further conversations with the Iranians through the P5+1, to talk about resolving the international community’s differences with Iran as it relates to their nuclear program.” (Deputy White House Spokesman Earnest)*
- ✓ *“The goal here is to make sure that Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon.” (Deputy White House Spokesman Earnest)*
- ✓ *“The goal for the Iranian regime is to have access to a nuclear program of some kind. There should be an opportunity for us to find some common ground there.” (Deputy White House Spokesman Earnest)*
- ✓ *“If there is a mutual agreement between the P5+1 and Iran about what the path is moving forward, and if there are mutually agreed upon verification measures through intrusive inspection, that’s the way that we can resolve this situation diplomatically and welcome the people of Iran back into the international community.” (Deputy White House Spokesman Earnest)*

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HOT TOPICS

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WEDNESDAY 11/27/2013

‘Tactical Maneuver or Strategic Change?’ Global observers continue to debate the merits of the Iran nuclear deal with most depicting a “tortuous” path to a comprehensive agreement, as some express skepticism about Tehran’s readiness to comply. In Iran, *E’temad* describes a “turning point” in relations with the US. *Khorasan*, however, believes the “main challenge will be in the achievement of a comprehensive solution,” advising the government to refrain from “much self-praise as it has already lost all its trump cards.” Elsewhere, Kuwait’s *Al-Qabas* portrays “a diplomatic and tactical game par excellence,” and India’s *Urdu Times* sees “defeat for war mongers.” Lebanon’s *Daily Star* congratulates the US and Iranian leadership for “conducting policies that reflect the sensible, nonviolent preferences of their people.” For Singapore’s *Business Times*, “the pact reflects recognition in Washington that any serious strategy aimed at restructuring US policy in the Middle East and maintaining influence would require cooperation with Iran.” Italy’s *Corriere della Sera* contends “the road to a final agreement is completely uphill and full of unknowns on all fronts.” The Czech Republic’s *Lidove Noviny* stresses that if the Geneva deal were to be a “historical milestone in nuclear security it would have to demonstrate clarity, openness and transparency, which Iran lacks.” Israel’s *Jerusalem Post* laments that by signing this agreement, “Iran may have achieved legitimacy for enriching uranium...as well as an extended insurance policy against an attack.” Pan-Arab *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* derides the Obama Administration for looking at Tehran only through the nuclear issue ignoring “hostile behavior against [fellow] Iranians and the country’s neighbors.” Australia’s *The Strategist* questions the wisdom of “Washington and its P5+1 chums...overlooking Iran’s sponsorship of terrorism and interference in Syria.”

Message:

- ✓ *“Over the coming months, we’re going to roll up our sleeves and keep working with the parties at the table in order to reach a final, comprehensive agreement that ensures Iran will not acquire a nuclear weapon and that the nuclear program that they do have will be entirely peaceful.” (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *“That has to be absolutely verifiable.” (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *“This agreement that we’ve just signed is the first in almost a decade to put any kind of meaningful limits on Iran’s nuclear program.” (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *“We’re not just slowing down its progress; we’re actually halting it and even rolling it back in some key areas.” (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *“[The agreement] does not lift the current architecture of our sanctions.” (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *“We all know that if the agreement falls apart, Iran is going to quickly face even tougher sanctions.” (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ Secretary’s video on Iran

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'America Defies China in the Pacific': International commentators fret over rising tensions as US B-52 bombers "defy" China's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ), with pro-China and pro-Japan observers respectively defending their countries' stances while others call for dialogue to keep the situation from "spiraling out of control." Spain's *El Mundo* calls the East China Sea flyover by the two B-52 bombers "an explicit challenge to the regime in Beijing." Austria's *Die Presse* depicts Washington "demonstratively ignoring the air defense zone." Italy's *La Repubblica* worries it represents "a new step in the escalation of geostrategic tension in the East China Sea." Japan's *Sankei* declares the ADIZ "cannot be tolerated." Taiwan's *United Evening News* acknowledges Beijing's "need for national defense," but rejects the threat of force "as a tool to strong-arm other countries to make concessions." In contrast, China's *People's Daily* insists the ADIZ "complies with international laws and practice and will help maintain order in the air above the East China Sea." *Global Times* warns that "any moves that ignore the regulations and warnings will probably trigger defensive emergency measures," while Hong Kong's *Sing Pao* claims "the Chinese military is duty-bound to ensure the security of [its] sea and airspace." *The Hong Kong Economic Journal*, meanwhile, fears that the situation may "become critical and dangerous," and *The Standard* wonders: "Will there be actual confrontations or even conflicts in the air?" Indonesia's *Jakarta Post* is concerned "the escalating tension...will spread to neighbors." Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* calls for "patient, reasoned diplomacy" to resolve the "territorial disputes and historical grievances" between China and Japan. China's *Beijing Youth Daily* advises the two countries to "strengthen communication and maintain flight security together."

Message:

- ✓ ***"Our view is that the policy [on the ADIZ] announced by the Chinese over the weekend is unnecessarily inflammatory and has a destabilizing impact on the region." (Deputy White House Spokesman Earnest)***
- ✓ ***"These are the kinds of differences that should not be addressed with threats or inflammatory language, but rather can and should be resolved diplomatically." (Deputy White House Spokesman Earnest)***
- ✓ ***"It's in the interest of all of the parties in the region to do that." (Deputy White House Spokesman Earnest)***

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FRIDAY 11/29/2013

'Clash of the Titans': East Asian observers deride as "foolish" China's "purposeful instigation" of tensions through the establishment of an ADIZ and forecast a new opening for an increased US role in the region, which some fear could lead to an all-out US-China clash in the Asia Pacific. For Malaysia's *Sin Chew Daily*, the move turned "past commitments between China and Japan to make the East China Sea a peaceful area into tenuous doublespeak." Singapore's *Straits Times* calls the ADIZ a "diplomatic disaster" for China, warning that "growing Chinese aggression in the region—or even just the appearance of it—could greatly aid Washington in revitalizing its pivot" to Asia. For *The Australian*, "China has gone too far" and "Vice President Joe Biden must leave Chinese leaders in no doubt that aggression" in any territorial dispute will gain them nothing. Taiwan's *Want Daily* wonders, "Is Biden's East Asia trip a move to pour oil on the fire or put out the fire?" South Korea's *Hankyoreh Shinmun* meanwhile blames the US' "military build-up in Northeast Asia and its stronger alliance with Japan" for "plunging the region into tension." Japan's *Nikkei*, however, lauds, "Washington has finally become serious about responding to China's provocations." Singapore's *Straits Times* describes a "game of chicken between the US and China" where "it appears as if China was first to blink. But no one has yet ruled out future retaliation." Taiwan's *China Times* praises the Washington and Beijing for "stopping where they should stop" and argues "it is unlikely that there will be more intense developments upcoming." What South Korea's *Kyunghyang Shinmun* fears most is that the dispute will lead to "a hegemonic competition between the US and China over Northeast Asia" as a whole, which would be "all but disastrous."

'Saber-Rattling Over a Couple of Rocks': Other international observers are dismayed by China's "daring" announcement of an ADIZ, expressing concern over growing tensions and hoping Vice President Biden's regional trip will help calm the situation. Germany's *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* finds the "chutzpah Beijing used remarkable." Poland's *Rzeczpospolita* portrays China "flexing its muscles," and Denmark's *Politiken* finds Beijing "scoring yet another foreign policy goal." France's *Liberation* contends "China has just reached a dangerous threshold in its strategy for conquering the seas, and Tokyo and Washington have reacted strongly." *Le Monde* argues the "American shift towards Asia is threatened by the tensions on the China Sea." Italy's *La Repubblica* fears the confrontation "could get out of hand with devastating consequences for countries in the area and beyond." Austria's *Kurier* laments a "growing concern of a military confrontation," and India's *Rashtriya Sahara* believes the US "has come into the picture to contain China's ambition." Germany's *Die Welt* describes a "brewing storm," but speculates "war is rather unlikely because China's relative strength lags behind the US." Meanwhile, France's *Les Echos* notes Vice President Biden "is traveling to the region and will attempt to calm tensions." The UK's *Times* urges the Vice President to avoid "unnecessary saber-rattling," and calls on the US and Japan to "think more

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carefully about how to co-ordinate their strategic approach to China.” Italy’s *Corriere della Sera* hopes his visit “will contribute to bringing a dispute that is dangerously slipping toward confrontation back to the diplomatic path.”

Message:

- ✓ *“The United States is deeply concerned about China’s announcement that they’ve established an ‘East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone’.” (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *“We have urged China to exercise caution and restraint, and we are consulting with Japan and other affected parties, throughout the region.” (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *“Freedom of over-flight and other internationally lawful uses of sea and airspace are essential to prosperity, stability, and security in the Pacific.” (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *Secretary Kerry and Japanese Foreign Minister Kishida spoke by telephone to discuss China’s November 23 establishment of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). (Readout of Secretary’s Call)*
- ✓ *Secretary Kerry reiterated his own and Secretary Hagel’s recent statements on China’s ADIZ designation expressing concern about this action. (Readout of Secretary’s Call)*

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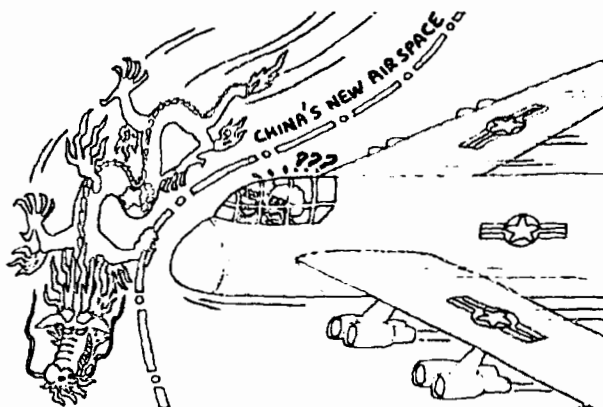
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HOT TOPICS
MONDAY 12/02/2013

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'Biden to Calm Turbulence': Many international commentators hope that Vice President Biden's visit to Asia may deescalate tensions in the area, though some East Asian media deride the US' alleged contradictory decision to "order civilian airlines to comply" with China's ADIZ. Chile's *El Mercurio* senses "storm winds blowing over the waters of East Asia." Germany's *Frankfurter Rundschau* warns that the East China Sea crisis "has the potential to become as dangerous for the world" as Iran's nuclear ambitions and forecasts that Biden is "unlikely to succeed... because Beijing is afraid of losing face." In contrast, *China*



Source: *Gulf News*, UAE

Daily, along with several other Chinese outlets, stresses US leaders must "honor the 1943 Cairo Declaration" and blame tensions on "Japan's attempts to rewrite the international rulebook." Austria's *Die Kleine Zeitung* describes a "balancing act Biden must master," reassuring Japan that the US will continue to stand by its side while convincing China the US has no desire to escalate the crisis. France's *Le Monde* fears the diplomatic tightrope is suspended above an "explosive cocktail." Meanwhile, Japan's *Mainichi* is alarmed by "the unexpected 'blurring' of the US policy line" after Washington allegedly "directed American airliners to comply with China's ADIZ," and warns the move could cause a schism between the US and Japan. According to *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*, "between Beijing's increasingly rash decisions and Washington's inconsistent policies, regional capitals find themselves at a loss." Taiwan's *Want Daily* suggests the move was an "olive branch" extended to Beijing. China's *Global Times*, meanwhile, lauds the order as a "return to sensible and rational" policy, as well as a sign that a supportive US "thinks China obeys the rules" and has acted within its rights.

Message:

- ✓ **"The United States is deeply concerned about China's announcement that they've established an 'East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone'." (Secretary Kerry)**
- ✓ **"We have urged China to exercise caution and restraint, and we are consulting with Japan and other affected parties, throughout the region." (Secretary Kerry)**
- ✓ **"Freedom of over-flight and other internationally lawful uses of sea and airspace are essential to prosperity, stability, and security in the Pacific." (Secretary Kerry)**

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- ✓ *Secretary Kerry and Japanese Foreign Minister Kishida spoke by telephone to discuss China's November 23 establishment of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). (Readout of Secretary's Call)*
- ✓ *Secretary Kerry reiterated his own and Secretary Hagel's recent statements on China's ADIZ designation expressing concern about this action. (Readout of Secretary's Call)*

'Ukraine Out of Control': Global observers express dismay over domestic "turmoil" with some expecting "another Orange Revolution" after President Viktor Yanukovych refused to sign an EU agreement and pro-EU protestors were violently dispersed from Kiev's Independence Square. In Ukraine, *Delovaya Stolitsa* stresses that with the use of "brutal force against protestors...the authorities passed a point of no return." *Segodnya* worries about "what comes next," and *Vecherniye Vesti* wonders if a "state of emergency will be introduced or if troops will be deployed in the city." The UAE's *Gulf News* cautions "use of force against protestors is not the answer." Spain's *El País* sees the "revolution setting roots in Ukraine again." Russia's *Nezavisimaya* believes "the Ukrainian opposition is ready for a serious confrontation with the authorities." France's *Le Figaro* depicts a sticky situation as the government "navigates without a compass" and the opposition movement is "unpredictable." The UK's *Guardian* is not sure whether the "energy on the streets can be maintained and whether it can be channeled into a more meaningful political form." Germany's *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* contends "the demonstrations by European advocates may be impressive, but it is likely that they will not turn into a second Orange Revolution." *Die Welt* concludes: "It is up to the Ukrainians to argue with each other on whether they want to sit at Brussels hearth or want to be eaten by the Russian bear." Canada's *Globe and Mail* laments, "Yanukovych has unwisely allowed Ukraine to tilt toward Putin's Russia rather than the EU. It was a choice between becoming another prosperous, democratic Poland or another basket-case, dictatorial Belarus." *France Inter* radio contends the "crisis will continue if Ukraine does not manage to be what it should: a bridge between the EU and the Russian Federation."

Message:

- ✓ *The United States condemns the violence by government authorities against peaceful demonstrators in Kiev. (State Department Statement)*
- ✓ *We urge Ukraine's leaders to respect their people's right to freedom of expression and assembly. (State Department Statement)*
- ✓ *These are fundamental to a healthy democracy and the respect for universal values on which the US' partnership with Ukraine depends. (State Department Statement)*
- ✓ *We call on the Government of Ukraine to foster a positive environment for civil society and to protect the rights of all Ukrainians to express their views on their country's future in a constructive and peaceful manner in Kiev and in other parts of the country. (State Department Statement)*
- ✓ *We continue to support the aspirations of the Ukrainian people to achieve a prosperous European democracy. (State Department Statement)*
- ✓ *State Department Statement*

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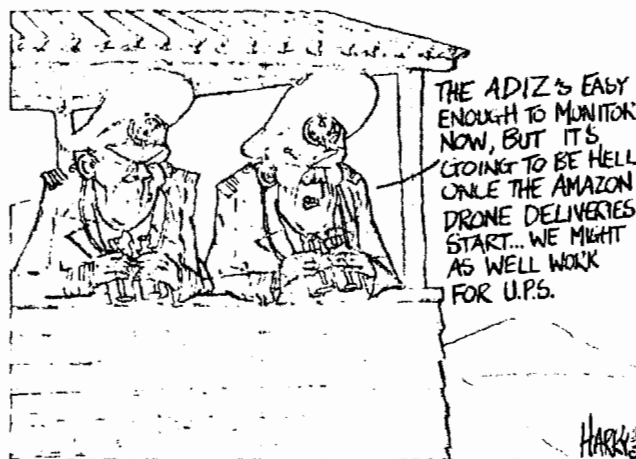
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HOT TOPICS
TUESDAY 12/03/2013

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'Biden Under Pressure to Calm Tensions':

International commentators debate whether Vice President Biden will successfully maintain a "delicate balance" between US friendships and its security interests when addressing China's ADIZ during his East Asia trip. *China Daily* hopes the Biden trip will "function as one that personifies the usual US call for restraint on the part of each of the three Northeast Asian capitals, rejecting conflict." *The Hong Kong Commercial Daily* expects "on the one hand, he will try to defuse Sino-US military tensions. On the other, he has to support his ally – Japan – in dealing with Beijing's threat." China's *Beijing Times* thinks he will "take the chance to pacify Japan and South Korea, and consolidate the US-South Korea-Japan alliance." Taiwan's *Want Daily* predicts "Biden's diplomatic finesse and mediation skills will face a significant test this time." Meanwhile, Japan's *Sankei* urges PM Abe and the Vice President to "reconfirm a coordinated strategy toward China" and hopes "Biden will strongly urge China to retract its reckless designation of an air zone." But China's *Global Times* warns "the only way for Biden to ensure the success of his trip is to remain 'neutral'." *Xinhua* recommends that Washington "play a constructive role in the region [and] stop indulging Japan's recklessness." Austria's *Die Presse* worries "the US is anything but neutral." Iran's *Siyasat-e Ruz* suspects the Vice President is "trying to justify America's interference in the East." Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* is nonetheless confident that "diplomacy and common sense will restore some perspective" to the region because the US and China are both "focused on the bigger picture."



Source: *South China Morning Post*, Hong Kong

Message:

- ✓ **"We remain deeply concerned by China's announcement of a new Air Defense Identification Zone." (Vice President Biden)**
- ✓ **"This latest incident underscores the need for agreement between China and Japan to establish crisis management and confidence building measures to lower tensions." (Vice President Biden)**
- ✓ **"I am reaffirming the strength of our alliance commitments and emphasize the importance of avoiding actions that could undermine peace, security and prosperity in the region." (Vice President Biden)**

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- ✓ *"We do not accept the legitimacy of China's requirements for operating in the newly declared ADIZ." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"The fact that China's announcement has caused confusion and increased the risk of accidents only further underscores the validity of our concerns and the need for China to rescind the procedures." (White House Spokesman Carney)*

'Putin's Pyrrhic Victory in Ukraine': International observers express alarm over the prospect of "violent revolution" in Ukraine, warning that Russia's "triumph" may be short-lived and calling on the EU to take concrete steps to reinvigorate its courtship of Eastern Europe. According to Russia's *Moscow Times*, "the current political instability in Kiev undoubtedly rivals the 2004 crisis, which led to the Orange Revolution," and could present a serious threat to wider European security. India's *The Telegraph* thinks "Kiev's Independence Square now resembles Egypt's Tahrir Square." Spain's *El Mundo* depicts "the floor opening up" under President Yanukovich's feet as Prime Minister Azarov fears "the shadow of a coup." ABC mourns a "broken" Ukraine, warning that "what has been a cold war between Europeans and Russians could end in tragedy and with the country in flames." While Germany's *Die Welt* opines that "for the time being, Russia has won," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* cautions "the Kremlin's delight at Ukraine's turning away from the EU could quickly turn into a headache." The UK's *Financial Times* sees the protests as "a humiliation and a threat to Putin" personally, and *The Guardian* warns "a street victory in Kiev would be a defeat for the Kremlin." Meanwhile, *The Independent* holds on to hope that "Putin's brand of diplomatic thuggery" may lose its once-certain victory in Ukraine if Europe is willing to "tweak its 'either/or' approach" to prospective member nations. Poland's *Rzeczpospolita* suggests the EU could "boldly show its moral and political power" by "lifting visa requirements for Ukrainians." France's *Liberation* calls on Europe to "maintain its offer of an association agreement" and "to loudly proclaim... its support for the peaceful European aspirations of the Ukrainian people. Europe cannot lose this battle."

Message:

- ✓ *"Violence by government authorities against peaceful demonstrators in Kiev is unacceptable." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"We note there have been a number of disturbing reports of journalists and members of the media being targeted and assaulted by security forces." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"We urge Ukraine's leaders to respect their people's right to freedom of expression and assembly." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"These are fundamental to a healthy democracy and the respect for universal values on which the United States' partnership with Ukraine depends." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"Consistent with the principles embodied by the OSCE, we call on the government of Ukraine to foster a positive environment for civil society and to protect the rights of all Ukrainians to express their views on their country's future in a constructive and peaceful manner in Kiev and in other parts of the country." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"We continue to support the aspirations of the Ukrainian people to achieve a prosperous European democracy." (White House Spokesman Carney)*

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WEDNESDAY 12/04/2013

'US-Japan Unity Being Tested' Over ADIZ: East Asian media attempt to determine Washington's intentions in the region, with Japanese commentators urging Vice President Biden to "be stern" with Beijing while pro-China observers expect the US will forego "mollifying" Japan in favor of securing its own interests. Japan's *Tokyo Shimbun* would like the Vice President to "directly convey to the Chinese the strong concern held" by Japan and the US on the ADIZ. *Mainichi* urges Tokyo and Washington to "work closely to urge China to refrain from taking such provocative acts." But *China Daily* warns Biden "should not expect any substantial headway if he comes simply to repeat his government's previous erroneous and one-sided remarks." Hong Kong's *Ta Kung Pao* recommends that he "coordinate with China and Japan on how to effectively manage the risk, but not join hands with Japan to press China to cancel the ADIZ." *Ming Pao Daily News* suspects Washington "has its own calculations" and will not "allow itself to be used by Japan while its own interests are being hurt." Malaysia's *Sin Chew Daily* cautions "the US has always been a country that puts its interests ahead, and if Japan believes the US will take its side and protest together against China's new air defense zone, then Japan is seriously misjudging the situation." China's *Global Times* contends that "the US does not want to dance to Japan's beat" on the ADIZ issue. *21st Century Business Herald* muses "this is a test to see if the US really wants to build a new relationship" with China. *The Hong Kong Economic Journal* contends that Biden may "enable China and Japan to sit down and have a dialogue" if he can manage to "strike a balance" between the two Asian powers.

'Biden's Delicate Task': Other international observers depict a trip "fraught with tensions" as the Vice President tries to defuse friction arising from China's ADIZ and protect US allies while preserving civil strategic ties with Beijing. Pan-Arab *Al-Jazeera* notes that although Washington "prefers not to get involved in a territorial spat," the Vice President's meetings in China "will primarily focus on bridging the widening gulf over the airspace dispute that has put Asia on edge." Poland's *Gazeta Wyborcza* believes he wants to convince Tokyo and Beijing to "establish a dialogue as one wrong step may cause a disaster." Iran's *Hemayat* predicts he "will try to depict China's sensitivity as unreasonable." *The Indian Express* describes a "big problem" as the Vice President needs to "affirm American commitment to defend its longstanding military allies without invoking Beijing's wrath." *France 24* warns he "needs to be careful" in Beijing, as he will be "talking to his banker." The UAE's *Khaleej Times* argues "his biggest challenge will be to cool tempers and persuade all regional stakeholders to work out an open and competitive aviation policy and desist from enforcing militarism." Russia's *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* describes his mission as "all but impossible." Meanwhile, Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* portrays "irritation creeping" into relations with Tokyo and the Vice President "in a dilemma" with an "indispensable alliance

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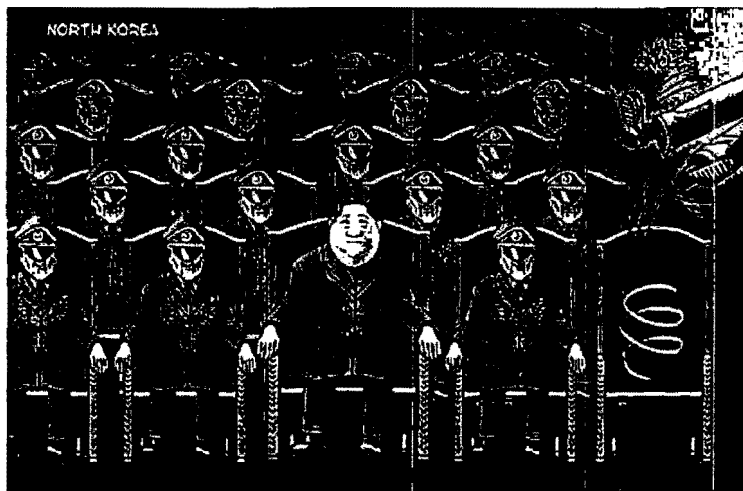
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partner” as Prime Minister Abe is “responsible for mounting tensions with his nationalist agenda.” Italy’s *La Repubblica* contends Tokyo expected a “stronger defense” by Washington. Austria’s *Die Presse* portrays the Vice President “walking on a tight rope.”

Message:

- ✓ *“We, the United States, are deeply concerned by the attempt to unilaterally change the status quo in the East China Sea.” (Vice President Biden)*
- ✓ *“This action has raised regional tensions and increased the risk of accidents and miscalculation.” (Vice President Biden)*
- ✓ *“We are closely consulting with our allies on this matter.” (Vice President Biden)*
- ✓ *“The world should not forget that our alliances have been critical for the stability that has made this region’s remarkable progress possible. We will remain steadfast in our alliance commitments.” (Vice President Biden)*
- ✓ *“The United States has an interest in the lowering of tensions in this vital region, and I believe all the countries of Northeast Asia share that same interest with us.” (Vice President Biden)*
- ✓ *“This underscores the need for crisis management mechanisms and effective channels of communication between China and Japan to reduce the risk of escalation.” (Vice President Biden)*

World Cartoon: North Korea



Source: *The National*. UAE

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HOT TOPICS
THURSDAY 12/05/2013

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US 'Pragmatic Crisis Management Strategy' in East Asia: While most East Asian observers are gratified the ADIZ was only one facet of Vice President Biden's talks in China, others worry the US is "stepping back from flexing its muscles." Hong Kong's *Wen Wei Po* describes the visit as focused on "exploring ways to promote a new type of great power relationship between the US and China." *Ming Pao Daily* notes him talking of the "need to increase mutual trust," and Indonesia's *Koran Tempo* announces he "did not discuss the air zone." China's *Global Times* stresses the ADIZ is "naturally one of the focal points, but is only one," and "cannot reverse the focus of US-Sino relations." *Beijing Times* believes both sides have learned how to "not let disagreements on specific issues affect their cooperation." For Taiwan's *United Daily News*, "it goes without saying that US national interests are Washington's key concern behind Biden's decision not to create more trouble for Xi Jinping." *China.org* is glad that "Beijing and Washington understand the significance of maintaining what Biden called 'high-level engagement,' and are indeed capable of managing their occasionally volatile ties." *China Daily* counsels that "candid and constructive dialogue is the only approach for Washington to convince Beijing of the nature of its pivot to the Asia-Pacific." Japan's *Asahi* accepts the Vice President "apparently chose not to overreact to China's provocations and instead tried to assist Japan, China, and South Korea in an effort to build confidence." South Korea's *Dong-a Ilbo*, however, laments that "Washington seems to have decided it is more realistic to maintain regional order with a reasonable compromise than to risk a military clash with Beijing," concluding this means the ROK "should build its power to defend its own national interests."

'Poker in the Pacific': Some global observers depict the Vice President's visit as a step towards "crafting a cooperative relationship between great powers," while others highlight his "calls for Chinese youth to challenge the status-quo" and emphasize the difficult path ahead for the tense region. Germany's *Tagesspiegel* casts the meeting as a "visit from an old friend." According to Spain's *La Vanguardia*, Vice President Biden "made it clear to China that there will be no cooperation without trust." Russia's *Kommersant* lauds the Vice President's visit to Beijing as a step towards a scenario in which the US and China "act as equal players" and "convert the idea of global governance into reality." Austria's *Die Presse* disagrees, depicting the Vice President as "going for confrontation in Beijing." Germany's *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* describes the talks as occurring through "clenched teeth," where "neither leader gives up his position, only expressing criticism through the grapevine." Spain's *ABC* criticizes the Vice President as "completing the tense atmosphere" by "urging young Chinese to question their academic or religious authorities." Austria's *Wiener Zeitung* lambasts Vice President Biden's "diplomacy of pinpricks" through "outright blunt stabs at the Chinese government's authoritarian regime." Spain's *El Mundo* headlines "Biden calls Chinese youth to rebellion." Germany's *Die Tageszeitung* explains that

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while the ADIZ and territorial conflicts are “only a pretext...with only one shot, the powder keg in East Asia could explode—with devastating consequences for the whole world.” Italy’s *La Repubblica* contends that Vice President Biden has already “surrendered to China. This marks the first Chinese victory in its first global confrontation with Washington.”

Message:

- ✓ *The United States and China have a robust economic relationship, and as the world’s two largest economies, we have a stake in each other’s success and prosperity. (White House Fact Sheet)*
- ✓ *Building on President Obama and President Xi’s shared commitment to create a new model of major country relations, Vice President Biden discussed with President Xi and senior Chinese officials ways to strengthen US-China cooperation to benefit the citizens of both of our countries and address global challenges. (White House Fact Sheet)*
- ✓ *They decided to expand US-China cooperation in addressing climate change, enhancing transparency and resilience in global energy markets, and ensuring safe and well-regulated bilateral trade in food and pharmaceuticals. (White House Fact Sheet)*
- ✓ *Both countries reaffirmed their commitment to fully implement the measures they pledged during the Economic Track of the US-China Strategic & Economic Dialogue (S&ED). (White House Fact Sheet)*
- ✓ *They reaffirmed commitment to further support strong domestic and global growth, promote open trade and investment, enhance international rules and global economic governance, and foster financial market stability and reform. (White House Fact Sheet)*

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FRIDAY 12/06/2013

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'Biden Calms Allies': International commentators see Vice President Biden balancing Japanese and Chinese interests as he reassures Tokyo while utilizing "hard words but soft actions" with Beijing over its ADIZ. Singapore's *Straits Times* speculates "the US sees the need to play the role of an honest broker in the territorial dispute so as not to worsen tensions, even though it has a security treaty with Japan." *China Daily* depicts the Vice President "striking a balance between Japan and China" in an effort to "not let his long-planned visit to Asia be hijacked by the ADIZ." The UK's *Daily Telegraph* finds the dual challenge of "deterring China and restraining Japan exceptionally difficult, but it is the only way to avoid tensions spiraling out of control." Japan's *Yomiuri* is grateful for the Vice President's "strong concern" and insists "China should take the clear message expressed by the US and Japan seriously." But Thailand's *The Nation* urges Washington to "apply that same message to its ally, Japan," asserting that "the challenge is to find ways to protect Japan's interests while at the same time not antagonizing China." Meanwhile, Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* lauds Biden's decision to "remain quiet in public" on the ADIZ while he was in Beijing. Italy's *Corriere della Sera* sees him "attempting to open a new channel of communication" with Beijing. Taiwan's *Want Daily* believes that Washington would not "sit back and allow Sino-US relations deteriorate" in spite of its alliance with Tokyo. China's *Global Times* is relieved that while "the US is certainly not satisfied with China's establishment of the zone, it doesn't intend to have a confrontation with Beijing." *People's Daily* lauds "the maturity of US-China relations."

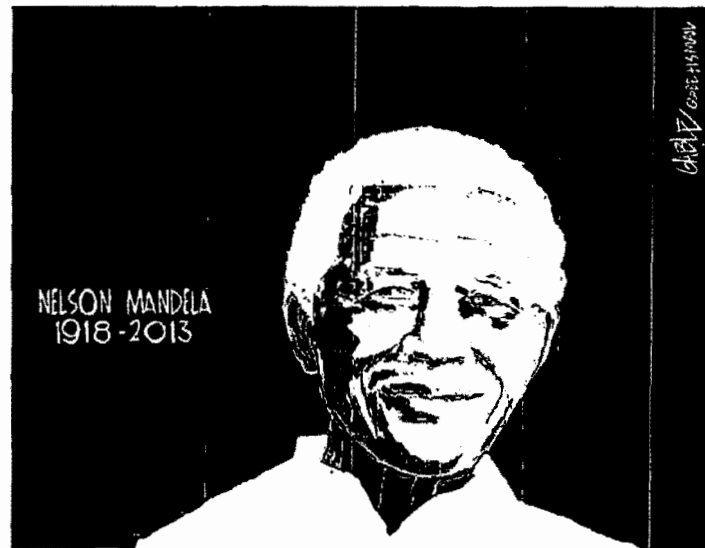
Message:

- ✓ "It is a fact that if we get this relationship right, together China and America, the prospects for the 21st century being peaceful, secure and everyone sharing in the growing prosperity is real." (Vice President Biden)
- ✓ "That's why China will bear increasing responsibility to contribute positively to peace and security." (Vice President Biden)
- ✓ "That means taking steps to reduce the risk of accidental conflict and miscalculation, and reaffirming that we want to have better predictability and refraining from taking steps that will increase tension." (Vice President Biden)
- ✓ "The United States has a profound stake in what happens in China because we are, and will remain a Pacific power diplomatically, economically, and militarily. That's just a statement of fact." (Vice President Biden)
- ✓ "To move this relationship [with China] forward, there is no substitute for direct and personal engagement between leaders." (Vice President Biden)

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World Cartoon: South Africa



Source: *The Globe and Mail*, Canada

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HOT TOPICS

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MONDAY 12/09/2013

'Seoul Ups the Ante': International observers warn of a vicious cycle of escalation as South Korea expands its air defense identification zone and question how the US will react as the region "edges towards the brink of armed conflict." China's *Global Times* dismisses the expanded South Korea KDIZ as "harmless." South Korea's *JoongAng Ilbo* defends the expanded KDIZ as an update to properly "reflect the extension of the baseline of territorial seas and Japan's declaration of its own air defense zone." *Dong-a Ilbo* meanwhile urges Seoul to "face the reality that neighboring countries are not supporting its move." Hong Kong's *Ta Kung Pao* condemns, "South Korea has gone too far." China's *Beijing News* speculates the expansion could "be a pre-emptive move lest Japan expands its air defense zone again" as regional tensions reach fever-pitch. Taiwan's *Apple Daily* argues that Seoul's expanded KDIZ "must be a move endorsed or encouraged by the United States and can thus be viewed as a sub-strategy" of the US' "grand rebalance" in East Asia. A worried *Manila Times* forecasts the Philippines will soon be the "new West Germany," caught in the middle of a clash between blocs and "a frontline state in Washington's effort to counter Beijing" in the air and on the seas. Singapore's *Straits Times* calls for calm and contends that while Vice President Biden "may have succeeded in steadying the frayed nerves" of allies, he "did not shed much light" on how the US will respond to the increasing complex tensions. Germany's *Handelsblatt* maintains that while "America is weary [and] is wrestling with itself... [t]he exhausted States of America may flirt with isolationism but it will not succumb to it" in the Asia-Pacific.

Message:

- ✓ **"The Vice President made clear during his trip that we don't recognize [China's] ADIZ."**
(Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)
- ✓ **"We feel that the way that China did this raises tensions in an already tense region, there was no consultation, this is one of the world's most geopolitically sensitive areas, and we don't believe they should implement it."** (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)
- ✓ **"China should refrain from taking similar actions elsewhere in the region."** (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)
- ✓ **"China should work with other countries, including Japan and South Korea, to establish confidence-building measures, including emergency communications channels to address the dangers that its recent announcement has created; and to immediately lower tensions."**
(Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)

Ukraine 'On A Razor's Edge Between Dictator and Democracy': International commentators express concern over continuing protests against President Yanukovych, as many ponder the future of Ukrainian leadership and weigh possible responses by Russia and Europe. Poland's

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Rzeczpospolita describes “hundreds of thousands of protesters” demonstrating Sunday in Kiev while *The Macau Daily News* frets about “the most serious political crisis in Ukraine in ten years.” The UK’s *Daily Telegraph* highlights the toppling of a giant statue of Vladimir Lenin in Kiev as proof that “Yanukovych has lost control of the heart of the capital.” Poland’s *Polska* observes, “They overthrew Lenin, now they want to overthrow Yanukovych.” *Gazeta Wyborcza* speculates that Yanukovych now faces a choice between “seeking a compromise with the pro-European oppositionists” and “assuming a wait-and-see attitude in the hope the protests will ultimately fade away.” Russia’s *Vedomosti*, however, warns that the Ukrainian leader’s “political career is coming to an end.” Meanwhile, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* suspects that many Ukrainians consider European integration “the only chance to change the system of power.” But *France Inter* radio warns Brussels “cannot encourage the hopes of the Ukrainian demonstrators if it is not completely prepared to welcome the country in the Union.” The Czech Republic’s *Respekt* worries the opposition movement “that is able to cooperate now” is a rather “heterogeneous crowd,” and “no one can imagine their broader accord in more peaceful times.” France’s *Direct Matin* contends “neither the Europeans nor the Americans consider Ukraine a vital interest while it is an obsession for Moscow.” Russia’s *Novyye Izvestiya* expects that “since Russia needs Ukraine...its pressure on Kiev will continue.”

Message:

- ✓ *“We don’t think it’s a zero sum game.” (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *“We encourage Ukraine to continue to develop normal relations with its neighbors, but we also believe the European integration provides the surest path towards Ukraine’s democratic future and economic prosperity.” (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *“We call on the government to listen to their people and continue on the path towards European integration.” (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *“They’ve made a lot of progress in terms of reforms, and hopefully they will continue to do so.” (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*

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WEDNESDAY 12/11/2013

'Ukraine at a Crossroad': International media depict unstable Ukrainian leadership with President Yanukovych "flip-flopping" in attempts to extricate the nation from political deadlock, as many observers question whether EU and US representatives can aid in restoring order. Russia's *Kommersant* depicts Yanukovych "retreating through the back door" with his new demands for EU integration, putting the "ball in the opposition's court" but leaving them limited choices. France's *Le Figaro* derides the Ukrainian leader as "continuing to blow hot and cold," and *France 2* television cringes at the "bad publicity for the president" as police attack Independence Square overnight. Russia's *Novyye Izvestiya* grimly forecasts round-table meetings with EU High Representative Ashton, Assistant Secretary Nuland, international mediators, and the opposition "will not be the end of the crisis." Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* warns Ashton and Nuland of the "difficult task to repair the damage in Kiev," though *Neue Osnabruecker Zeitung* contends that "as long as President Yanukovych receives guests from the US and the EU, there is still hope it will not end in an escalation of violence." However, Russia's *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* argues "the US and EU delegations have nothing to offer Ukraine...One should not expect the West to take any action now." Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* maintains "negotiations for a lasting peace have to be driven by the EU and Moscow...as they are ultimately the reason for the unrest." Poland's *Rzeczpospolita* however, argues "Europe does not want to support the totally corrupted Ukraine."

Message:

- ✓ *[While in Moscow] Assistant Secretary Nuland expressed deep US concern to Russian officials about the situation in Ukraine, and urged Russia to use its influence to press for peace, human dignity and a political solution. (State Department Statement)*
- ✓ *Assistant Secretary Nuland made clear to Russian counterparts that the US supports Ukraine's European choice, a non-violent and just political resolution to the current standoff, and a return to economic health with the support of the International Monetary Fund. (State Department Statement)*
- ✓ *In a phone call with Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych, Vice President Biden expressed his deep concern about the situation in Ukraine and the growing potential for violence. (Readout of the Vice President's Call)*
- ✓ *The Vice President underscored the need to immediately de-escalate the situation and begin a dialogue with opposition leaders on developing a consensus way forward for Ukraine. (Readout of the Vice President's Call)*

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- ✓ *The Vice President reaffirmed the strong support of the United States for Ukraine's European aspirations and welcomed President Yanukovich's commitment to maintaining this path. (Readout of the Vice President's Call)*

China's ADIZ 'Catches Region Unaware': Asian observers continue to speculate on Beijing's intentions behind the creation of a new Air Defense Identification Zone and complain that China's lack of transparency is increasing regional tensions. For India's *Hindustan*, "by declaring a new ADIZ, China has made it clear that it has not changed, or liberated its policies" as the Communist Party announced after its recent plenary session. Singapore's *The Straits Times* worries because "there was neither warning nor consultation on China's plans. More troubling was that precisely what Beijing would choose to do to enforce implied restrictions was left more than a little vague." Australia's *The Strategist* argues "China's neighbors will assume the worst... The secrecy which maintains the façade of party unity and control at the domestic level costs China in international trust." Singapore's *Business Times* contends that "if the unilateral creation of an ADIZ was an attempt to pander to the party elite who want to see China restored to its historical greatness, it was misconceived." Taiwan's *Apple Daily* affirms that China "sees its expanded ADIZ as a concrete announcement of the rise of a big country, a solemn rite... something for which it does not hesitate to go to war." Meanwhile, *Liberty Times* concludes that "Beijing has seen through the double-dealing method of the Obama Administration and has thus decided to alter the status quo unilaterally." India's *The Hindu*, however, opines that China's decision "could have more to do with bigger maritime security issues than with any dispute over islands administratively controlled by Japan."

Message:

- ✓ *"The Vice President made clear during his trip that we don't recognize [China's] ADIZ." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"We feel that the way that China did this raises tensions in an already tense region, there was no consultation, this is one of the world's most geopolitically sensitive areas, and we don't believe they should implement it." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"China should refrain from taking similar actions elsewhere in the region." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"China should work with other countries, including Japan and South Korea, to establish confidence-building measures, including emergency communications channels to address the dangers that its recent announcement has created; and to immediately lower tensions." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*

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THURSDAY 12/12/2013

'Standoff in Kiev': Many international commentators criticize President Yanukovich for refusing to compromise, with some expressing broader concerns about a "power struggle over Ukraine's future" between the EU and Russia, and others joining US and EU leaders in condemning Kiev's violent dispersal of protesters. Russia's *Kommersant* notes a "special operation" undertaken by riot police in Kiev's Independence Square "provoked strong condemnation in the West" and could "bring to naught efforts to organize a roundtable discussion" between government and opposition. The UK's *Guardian* warns "the danger is that the government...will go for harsh measures, with tragic consequences." The UAE's *Khaleej Times* urges Yanukovich to "play it cool." Spain's *La Vanguardia* worries "every time Yanukovich tries to resolve the political crisis in Ukraine by force he plunges a little deeper." For Poland's *Rzeczpospolita*, "It is hard to understand what Yanukovich aims at aside from trying to maintain power." Spain's *El Mundo* cautions "the use of force has eliminated the possibility of an agreement between government and opposition forces," and concludes "the President should resign." Meanwhile, the UK's *Times* wonders: "Who will win the Ukrainian tug-of-war? The country really is at a crossroads: one path points to the EU, the other to one dictated by Russia." Germany's *ARD-TV* laments "Europe underestimated Russia's determination to maintain its influence on its neighbor." Poland's *Rzeczpospolita* thinks "it's high time for the EU to make an offer that goes beyond expressions of moral support for the opposition." Italy's *Il Foglio* recommends that Europe "take a firmer stand towards Russia." *France Inter* radio, however, contends that while the "EU supports Ukrainian democrats," it doesn't in fact "want to open its doors to Ukraine."

Message:

- ✓ *"Assistant Secretary Nuland met with President Yanukovich and with opposition and civil society leaders." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)*
- ✓ *"She made it clear that violence against demonstrators is absolutely impermissible in a European democratic state." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)*
- ✓ *"She also made clear that we believe there is still a way forward for Ukraine, that it is still possible to save Ukraine's European future." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)*
- ✓ *"We want to see President Yanukovich lead his country back onto that path, and this is a pivotal moment to either meet the aspirations or disappoint the voices of the people." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)*
- ✓ *"Our view is this is not a zero-sum game, that there can be relationships, friendships and partnerships with a range of countries." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)*
- ✓ *"The people of Ukraine have spoken and have made clear their support for an interest in European integration." (State Department Spokesperson Psaki)*

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Iran's Evolving Geopolitics: Some global observers see the interim nuclear agreement empowering Tehran and boosting its international standing as others doubt a final agreement will be reached. Russia's *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* is amazed by Iran's turn from a "global outcast into one of the most intriguing interlocutors in a matter of a few months." *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* depicts Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov in Tehran to assert Moscow's "position" and "influence," as "the West is becoming more interested." In Iran, *Sharq* compares the interim deal to a "cease fire agreement" where if both sides fulfill their promises "a peace deal" will ensue. *Keyhan*, however, describes Secretary Kerry's recent testimony as the "latest sign of Washington's lack of trust and blackmailing efforts." Israel's *Maariv* worries about an Iran "holding power" over the Arab world if it "becomes a threshold nuclear power," advising that "dealing with the Iranian threat is a significantly higher priority" than Mideast peace negotiations. Noting the GCC countries' welcome of the interim agreement at their just-concluded summit, Saudi Arabia's *Al-Watan* urges Iran to be "constructive and reach out for the handshake instead of continuing to encourage malice." The UAE's *National* challenges Tehran to prove to its neighbors that "recent peace gestures are real" by helping resolve the Syrian humanitarian crisis. Pan-Arab *Al-Hayat* is however doubtful about Iran's ability to reform depicting "a system put under strain when enemies turn into interlocutors," arguing that "internal rifts are set to deepen after Secretary Kerry stressed Iran must back words with action to reassure the world."

Message:

- ✓ ***"It is the President's centerpiece of his foreign policy: Iran will not acquire a nuclear weapon." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"This agreement halts the progress of Iran's nuclear program and rolls it back in certain places for the first time in nearly ten years." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"It provides unprecedented monitoring and inspections." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"While we negotiate to see if we can conclude a comprehensive agreement that addresses all of our concerns, there's an important fact: Iran's nuclear program will not move forward." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"This monitoring is going to increase our visibility into Iran's nuclear program as well as our ability to react should Iran renege on this agreement." (Secretary Kerry)***
- ✓ ***"This agreement does provide Iran with a very limited, temporary, and reversible sanctions relief. And it's reversible at any time in the process if there is noncompliance." (Secretary Kerry)***

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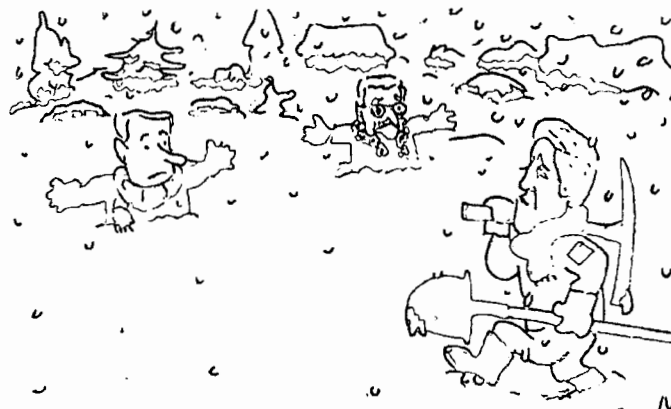
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HOT TOPICS
FRIDAY 12/13/2013

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'The Kerry Show': International observers hold little hope for Secretary Kerry's latest "frantic" attempts to engineer a framework agreement for Middle East peace, warning that the trip is a "wasted journey" to push a proposal that neither side is willing to accept. Israel's *Sof Hashavua* forecasts "at some point, the promises [Secretary Kerry] received from both sides will dissipate, the fog will disperse, and the smiles will disappear. Kerry will find out that both leaders have the same nil ability to carry out the compromises needed to reach an arrangement." Hong Kong's *Oriental Daily*



Source: *Haaretz*, Israel

News laments "regardless of how many times Kerry visits the Middle East, he can't bring about an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement." Israel's *Yisrael Hayom* scoffs: "Kerry behaves as if he does not hear the pessimistic voices and the mutual charges, but still claims the sides are closer to agreement than they have ever been." *The Jerusalem Post* calls on the Secretary to "remember that true peace can only come from a position of strength, one where the sides have common interests and are not being forced to make compromises regarding safety." Meanwhile, Palestinian *Al-Quds* reiterates its vehement opposition to "any transitional solutions" and "the presence of Israeli forces in the Jordan Valley, [which] contradicts a final and lasting solution to the Palestinian cause." For London-based *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, the proposals "smack of utter surrender to Netanyahu's demands...Kerry's plan is clearly an Israeli plan." Lebanon's *Daily Star* declares "now is the time for the US to stand up for Palestine and to show that it can break away from Israel." An analyst tells India's *Halaat-e-Hazra*, "Until and unless practical measures are taken against Israel to check its aggression on the Palestinians, the efforts to resolve the Middle East conflict won't succeed."

Message:

- ✓ **"President Obama is committed to this process because he understands that the possibilities of peace are dramatic and worth fighting for: a secure Jewish and democratic Israel living alongside a sovereign and independent Palestinian state; an Israel that enjoys peace and normalized relations with 22 Arab nations." (Secretary Kerry)**
- ✓ **"Imagine what peace would do for trade and tourism, what it would mean for developing technology and talent, for future generations of Israeli and Palestinian children." (Secretary Kerry)**

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- ✓ *"Leadership from our partnerships in the world is critical." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"We are working to bring the parties back to the negotiating table." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"We are going to continue this conversation on both sides, clear-eyed about the challenges." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"The status quo is unsustainable, and there is no realistic alternative but two states for two peoples." (Secretary Kerry)*

'The Kabul Test': International commentators attempt to understand the motivations behind President Karzai's "foot-dragging" on the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with Washington, with several speculating his current trip to India is part of a strategy to build regional support. According to Japan's *Mainichi*, Karzai has not yet signed the BSA because he "holds a grudge" against the US for interfering in domestic affairs and he is afraid "his people might call him a traitor." *The Indian Express* describes a "delicate moment" amid deepening mistrust between Karzai and the Obama Administration, with Karzai "angry at the American outreach to the Taliban." Afghanistan's *Khaama Press* suspects Karzai doesn't want to be remembered as a "foreign puppet." Meanwhile, pan-Arab *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* sees "confusion all along the line" as Karzai "courts the mullahs of Tehran" and "hedges his bets by saying nice things about the Taliban." Russia's *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* suspects "he is trying to reduce [his country's] dependence on the US by strengthening ties with neighboring countries." *China Daily* considers it "essential that countries in the region... better coordinate their stances and provide support in one way or another so [Afghanistan] can emerge from its long-standing unrest." For *The Indian Express*, "The answer for Delhi lies in extending strong military support for Kabul and complementing it with an expanded political engagement with Pakistan's civilian leaders." *DD News* hopes over time the India-Afghanistan partnership will "evolve in such a way that Afghanistan would receive the kind of military supplies that it requires." Afghanistan's *Khaama* urges the international community "not to leave Afghanistan in isolation and its people in the lurch."

Message:

- ✓ *"There are a lot of very good reasons for the Afghan people, for us, and for our coalition partners, that the BSA needs to be signed as soon as possible." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"We need to do planning, and we've been very clear about this all along." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"We support the role India has played in Afghanistan." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"We think it's important for Afghanistan to have strong relationships in the region." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*

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HOT TOPICS
MONDAY 12/16/2013

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'The Syrian Black Hole': Global observers see the West's "ineffective" policies and weak responses exacerbating the conflict and the humanitarian crisis as some describe a "proxy war" for regional control. Saudi Arabia's *Al-Watan* reminds Western powers that it was the Syrians "who rose against the injustice and tyranny of the Asad regime" and their "will should not be ignored." Germany's *Norddeutscher Rundfunk* radio believes the "greatest crime would be to helplessly watch" as "regional powers fight for supremacy." The UK's *Guardian* argues "Syria is now mainly a battlefield where Saudi Arabia and Iran are waging a proxy war, with devastating sectarian repercussions. It is doubtful the peace talks can even be convened, let alone produce results." Meanwhile, Italy's *Corriere della Sera* is appalled by the "massacres perpetrated with impunity by a regime that today is seen as the lesser evil." Kuwait's *Al-Siyassa* depicts "a global mockery" as Asad stands "unpunished." For Spain's *El Pais*, "Syria becoming a jihadist haven... is the inevitable result of suicidal Western apathy." Turkey's *Zaman* derides the Obama Administration for pursuing a "realpolitik and interest-based foreign policy with isolationist tendencies." Israel's *Jerusalem Post* blames the President's "support of every single transition in the Middle East from secular Arab state to brutal Sharia thugocracy," for Syria becoming the "new rallying point for worldwide jihad." Lebanon's *Daily Star* portrays the US as "grasping at straws" with no "real policy." Pan-Arab *Al-Quds al-Arabi* stresses that the "weakness of the US response is a stark reminder to the Syrian people that they have no one to help them now but God."



Source: *Arab News*, Saudi Arabia

Message:

- ✓ "The moderate opposition has been united up until recently, and we believe they still can be united." (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ "We are aiming towards the Geneva II conference which will take place in the latter part of January." (Secretary Kerry)
- ✓ "We are committed to try to bring a strong representation of the opposition, together with the Asad regime representatives and with maybe 30 or so other countries and all try to work in the same direction, which is to get a political settlement out of Syria." (Secretary Kerry)

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'US Joins Ukraine Game': International media question the wisdom of the EU's suspension of trade negotiations with Ukraine, with some depicting US consideration of sanctions and visits by American politicians as heralding the official "entrance of the US" into the regional struggle. Italy's *Corriere della Sera* depicts the EU as "exasperated by Kiev's double cross," lamenting "the Brussels-Kiev Agreement is gone. The union is a king in check." Austria's *Salzburger Nachrichten* defends the suspension of negotiations as "appropriate and rather important," considering "nothing is likely to change because President Yanukovich isn't capable of running the country." In contrast, *Hong Kong Economic Journal* derides Brussels as lacking "the capability and experience to deal with the eastern issues." Poland's *Rzeczpospolita* praises US consideration of sanctions as stepping up the plate to "say what the EU does not want to say." Austria's *Wiener Zeitung* depicts Washington "hauling out the big guns." According to Lebanon's *Daily Star*, EU and US politicians' "most important task is to help keep the diverse country in one piece." China's *People's Daily* lashes out at Western powers' "strategy of forcing small and medium countries to choose sides." *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* accuses Senator McCain of purposefully attempting to "stir up trouble in Russia's backyard." Spain's *ABC* declares "the scent of the Cold War crystallized with the visit of Senator McCain."

Message:

- ✓ *"We continue to urge the Government of Ukraine to listen to the voices of the Ukrainian people, the majority of whom clearly want peace, justice, and a European future." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"This includes bringing to justice those responsible for the violence on November 30th." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"We are disappointed the discussions between the President and the opposition were apparently unproductive." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"We believe in a democratic country that aspires to a future, whether in Europe or anywhere else, where peaceful protests are allowed without interference." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"We believe President Yanukovich still has an opportunity to move forward on a path towards European integration, which is what the people out on the streets are demanding." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*

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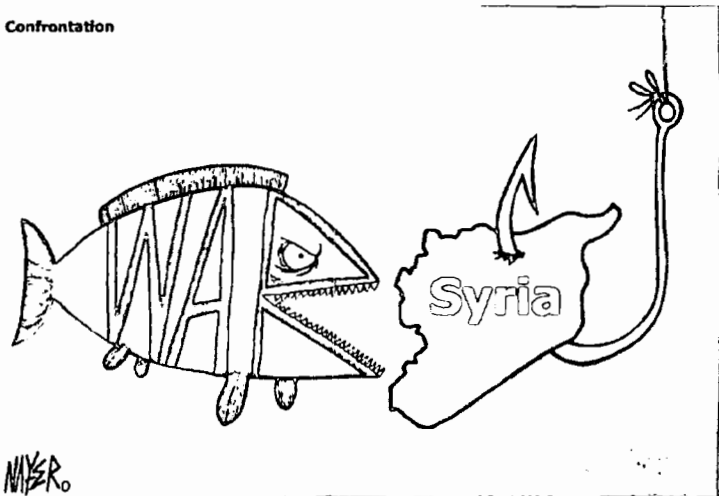
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HOT TOPICS
TUESDAY 12/17/2013

RELEASED IN FULL

'Crocodile Tears' for Syria: As international commentators bemoan the continuing humanitarian crisis in Syria, many blame the West for "abandoning its allies" and call for "unified efforts" to defeat President Asad and the Islamist rebels. In response to the regime's recent air attack on Aleppo, *France 2* television fears "the Syrian army seems to have abandoned chemical weapons only to better use conventional weapons." Italy's *La Repubblica* points out UN concerns that "it is difficult to deliver humanitarian assistance to millions of civilians stuck in combat zones." Spain's *El Mundo*

Confrontation



Source: *The Saudi Gazette*, Saudi Arabia

highlights the UN's "historic SOS for Syria" in its biggest-ever aid appeal. The UK's *Daily Telegraph* laments the growing refugee population, which itself is a "catastrophe of biblical proportions." For pan-Arab *Al-Hayat*, Russia and the US are "equally responsible for the continuing Syrian tragedy," given Washington's "many mistakes" such as halting aid to the Free Syrian Army. Lebanon's *Daily Star* accuses the US of "abandoning its allies" in Syria and condemns Western powers for focusing on "keeping the jihadists out rather than deposing Asad." Iran's *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* criticizes "the Americans who adopted a harsh stance against the Syrian government" but now "gradually distance themselves from such policies." Pan-Arab *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* depicts Syrians "caught between two fires: the extremist Asad regime and extremist jihadists... Unified efforts are required to get rid of them both." Qatar's *Peninsula* advises, "Now is the time when the United Nations should whip up a frenzy of support for addressing the humanitarian crisis in Syria. This might help shore up support for rebels fighting Asad and bring his egregiousness into focus."

Message:

- ✓ "Our humanitarian assistance is distributed through international and non-governmental organizations including the UN and is not affected by the suspension, nor is our broader commitment to providing non-lethal assistance to the Syrian people, as well as assistance to the opposition." (White House Spokesman Carney)
- ✓ "We are the leader in the provision of assistance and we'll continue to do that." (White House Spokesman Carney)

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- ✓ *"What is unquestionably the case is that there is no resolution to the conflict in Syria without a negotiated political solution." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"That is why it's important to move forward to Geneva, and why it's important to engage in a political process that can produce a resolution so that the bloodshed can end and the Syrian people can begin to rebuild their country and enjoy the better future that they deserve." (White House Spokesman Carney)*

'Clap Hard or Face a Firing Squad': Global observers express shock at the "swift execution" of Jang Song-thaek, the North Korean leader's uncle and mentor, and worry over circumstances that bode ill for regional stability. South Korea's *JoongAng Ilbo* stresses that Pyongyang "stunned the world with a cruel and tyrannical symbol of its dictatorship." *The Korea Times* depicts purging in "the most brutal way imaginable." Singapore's *Straits Times* opines Kim showed himself to "be impulsive and reckless," and sees "Asia bracing itself for more bouts of instability. It could be a nuclear test or missile launch, staged provocations against South Korea, or baiting of the US." The UAE's *Khaleej Times* is "frightened" because "eliminations behind the iron curtain are likely to spill over into the region," saying that Secretary Kerry has "rightly termed the move as 'erratic' and intended to eliminate any potential adversary." Japan's *Yomiuri* wonders if the "increasingly unstable" Pyongyang will now "conduct its fourth nuclear test or launch another missile under the guise of a satellite launch in order to demonstrate its nuclear deterrent capability." *The Australian* laments that Kim "has shown a malevolence that has dashed hopes he would bring change to North Korea. Even China appears increasingly unable to rein in his excesses." The UAE's *Gulf News* sees a "sign of troubling change," as Pyongyang needs China as its "political ally and Jang was the regime's closest link to Beijing." Meanwhile, Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post* posits that China is "monitoring the implications of Jang Song-thaek's execution but does not expect it to trigger major shifts in North Korea's policies."

Message:

- ✓ *"[The reported execution] underscores the importance for all of us of finding a way forward with North Korea in order to denuclearize the peninsula." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"It's an ominous sign of the instability and danger that exists." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"We need to factor that into the urgency of getting China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, and all of us to stay on the same page and to put as much effort into the denuclearization as possible." (Secretary Kerry)*
- ✓ *"To have a nuclear weapon potentially in the hands of somebody like Kim Jong-un just becomes even more unacceptable." (Secretary Kerry)*

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HOT TOPICS

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WEDNESDAY 12/18/2013

'Humiliation of a Diplomat': Indian commentators condemn the "barbaric" arrest of Deputy Consul General Devyani Khobragade for visa fraud, accusing the US of diplomatic double standards and supporting India's "reciprocal" measures against US diplomats, though some warn against jeopardizing strategic bilateral ties. *Inquilab* finds Khobragade's arrest "highly reprehensible and condemnable." *The Pioneer* is upset that "basic diplomatic courtesies were not extended to her." *Dainik Hindustan* thinks "such treatment of a diplomat of a friendly country shows US arrogance and insensitivity." *The Telegraph*, comparing Khobragade's case to that of the recent arrest of 11 Russian diplomats, depicts a "clear double standard" due to the fact that "the Americans fear Russia" whereas "the White House knows it can offer the Indian Prime Minister another state dinner and all will be forgiven." *Maharashtra Times* wonders: "How would America react if one of its diplomats were to be arrested for staying here illegally?" *The Pioneer* praises New Delhi for "sending the message, loud and clear, that India will not tolerate its diplomats being treated shabbily." *The New Indian Express* calls for "reviewing the immunity and benefits enjoyed by US diplomats in India." *Daily News and Analysis*, meanwhile, acknowledges that the Indian reaction "has conveniently overlooked the facts in their entirety and devolved into jingoistic balderdash." *The Times of India* advises New Delhi to pursue a "calibrated and proportionate response, designed to convey its outrage and extract an apology from the US," without "going overboard." *The Economic Times* urges Washington and New Delhi to "ensure that this row does not affect the strategic relationship that the two countries hope to build."

Message:

- ✓ *"The US and India enjoy a broad and deep friendship, and this isolated episode is not in any way indicative of the close and respectful ties that we share and will continue to share." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"We have conveyed at high levels to the Government of India our expectations that India will continue to fulfill all of its obligations under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, and on Consular Relations." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"The safety and security of our diplomats and consular officers in the field is a top priority." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"We'll continue to work with India to ensure that all of our diplomats and consular officers are being afforded full rights and protections." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"Safety and security of our facilities is something we also take very seriously, and we'll keep working with the Indians on that." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Robert Strand, Senior Reviewer

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'Kim-dom of Chaos': While international observers suggest a number of possible economic and political causes for North Korean official Jang Song-thaek's fall from grace and execution, observers widely agree that the purge is a concerning indication of instability in the Kim regime. Malaysia's *Sin Chew Daily* wonders if "North Korea is trying to separate itself from the Chinese-style economic reform" advocated by Jang Song-thaek, which could mean continued economic stagnation since "no one will take the risk of losing one's life to persuade Kim Jong-un." South Korea's *Dong-a Ilbo* in turn forecasts "if North Korea lets down people's last hope for its reform after the purge, Beijing will have to reconsider its North Korea policy." For *JoongAng Ilbo*, Jang's execution provides insight into Kim Jong-un's unstable, swinging-door inner circle and "could become a significant turning point in the entire 68-year history of North Korea." Hong Kong's *Oriental Daily News* entertains rumors that Kim Jong-il may have "left teachings" for his son to beware of Jang, a theory which indicates the "situation is even more turbulent" than previously expected. South Korea's *Chosun Ilbo* warns that regardless of the cause, "Kim Jong-un's erratic behavior threatens us all." Pakistan's *Dawn* acknowledges that North Korea's "opacity and proclivity toward bizarre pronouncements make it easier to mock than to analyze," but asserts "in its present state, North Korea cannot endure indefinitely, although predictions of its demise have proved premature in the past. How soon the House of Kim might crumble remains an open question."

Message:

- ✓ *"North Korea's failure to take steps that would allow them to rejoin the community of nations and to end the intense isolation that they are experiencing in the world has resulted in the impoverishment of the North Korean people." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"This isolation is combined with the regime's decision to spend the resources it has on military procurement rather than feeding its own people." (White House Spokesman Carney)*
- ✓ *"We're focused on working with our partners in the region to help get North Korea to a place where it will fulfil its commitments to denuclearize." (State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"We need to focus on what's really important here when it comes to North Korea – the horrible economic situation it has put its people under." (State Department Spokesperson Harf)*

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HOT TOPICS
THURSDAY 12/19/2013

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'India Takes on Uncle Sam': While some international observers find fault with both the US and India in the diplomatic dispute over the arrest of Indian diplomat Devyani Khobragade, others champion Indian outrage and rail against US "exceptionalism" in the application of legal standards and diplomatic privileges. *Hong Kong Economic Journal* thinks the US and India "are both hypocritical," while Saudi Arabia's *Arab News* sighs, "Bad show all round." For India's *Hindustan Times*, the Khobragade case should have been considered a "small irritant," and the ensuing high-profile dispute is proof of the "downward spiral" of US-India ties. *The Hindu*, however, thinks the spat "smells of politics" ahead of Indian elections, warning that "while some of this outrage is justified...in the current atmosphere of nationalist fury, it is all too easy to take it too far." Hong Kong's *Ming Pao Daily* acknowledges that the US "took the most embarrassing way possible to arrest Khobragade," but criticizes India for allowing its "victim complex" to dictate its actions. Meanwhile, India's *Business Standard* is shocked by the "casual barbarism" of the US justice system, in which diplomats and citizens are treated "with equal disrespect." An astonished *Standard* in Hong Kong exclaims, "Doesn't the US proclaim itself to be a civilized country?" Even *The Pakistan Observer* is dumbfounded that "the US squeezes and expects all sorts of due and undue privileges and courtesies, and yet it is not willing to extend the same benefit to diplomats of other countries. India rightly snubbed the US." Australia's *Canberra Times* takes the case as proof of "the persisting US belief in being uniquely virtuous and therefore exceptional, which means that laws, rules and norms apply to and can be enforced on everyone else, but not themselves." *Times of India* snarkily points out that the US "was not dealing with a North Korea or the Axis of Evil."

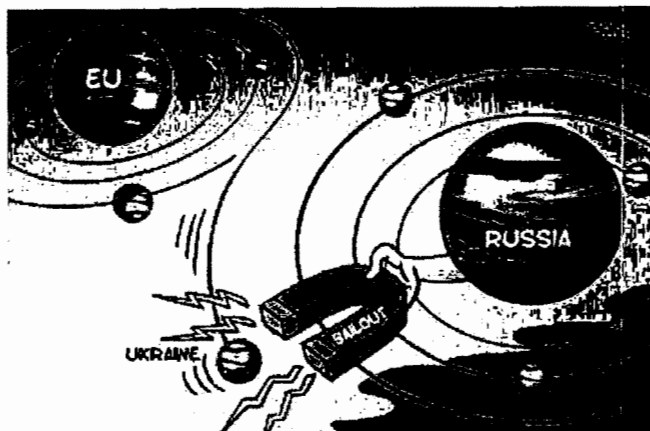
Message:

- ✓ *The Secretary empathizes with the sensitivities we are hearing from India about the events that unfolded after Ms. Khobragade's arrest. (State Department Statement)*
- ✓ *In his conversation with National Security Advisor Menon he expressed his regret, as well as his concern that we not allow this unfortunate public issue to hurt our close and vital relationship with India. (State Department Statement)*
- ✓ *The Secretary understands very deeply the importance of enforcing our laws and protecting victims, and, like all officials in positions of responsibility inside the US Government, expects that laws will be followed by everyone here in our country. (State Department Statement)*
- ✓ *It is also particularly important to Secretary Kerry that foreign diplomats serving in the United States are accorded respect and dignity just as we expect our own diplomats should receive overseas. (State Department Statement)*
- ✓ *Secretary Kerry Call to Indian National Security Advisor Menon*

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World Cartoon: Ukraine



Source: *The National*, UAE

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HOT TOPICS
FRIDAY 12/20/2013

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'Ripples From the US' QE Exit': Though some international commentators interpret the Federal Reserve decision to begin tapering its quantitative easing policy as a vote of confidence in the US economy, several are concerned that the move could trigger global market "uncertainties" and harm developing economies. Australia's *Sydney Morning Herald* observes "the pull-back in monthly bond buying was welcomed by business and policy leaders, who said it was a sign of a strengthening US economy." *The Telegraph* thinks the move demonstrates that Fed chairman Ben Bernanke "believes the world's largest and most influential economy is finally back on a sustainable growth path and can be gradually weaned off its diet of freshly-minted money." For India's *Economic Times*, "Tapering had to happen and this is probably the best course of action as far as tapering is concerned." But Singapore's *Business Times* muses "it's equally likely that \$10 billion out of \$85 billion is small enough not to make an appreciable difference." *The Australian* welcomes the tapering decision but cautions that "the economic 'recovery' remains among the most anemic in US history." The UK's *Independent* asserts "this was policy tightening in only the most nuanced sense...As the gyrations earlier in the year made painfully evident: the slower, and gentler, the better." *China Daily* worries the tapering of quantitative easing "could still spell more trouble for the fragile global recovery than the euphoric initial response might suggest." Thailand's *The Nation* predicts that "emerging market countries with huge debt loads and current account deficits will certainly see a hammering of their currencies."

Message:

- ✓ *The Committee expects that, with appropriate policy accommodation, economic growth will pick up from its recent pace and the unemployment rate will gradually decline toward levels the Committee judges consistent with its dual mandate. (Federal Reserve Statement)*
- ✓ *The Committee recognizes that inflation persistently below its 2 percent objective could pose risks to economic performance, and it is monitoring inflation developments carefully for evidence that inflation will move back toward its objective over the medium term. (Federal Reserve Statement)*
- ✓ *Taking into account the extent of federal fiscal retrenchment since the inception of its current asset purchase program, the Committee sees the improvement in economic activity and labor market conditions over that period as consistent with growing underlying strength in the broader economy. (Federal Reserve Statement)*
- ✓ *In light of the cumulative progress toward maximum employment and the improvement in the outlook for labor market conditions, the Committee decided to modestly reduce the pace of its asset purchases. (Federal Reserve Statement)*
- ✓ **Federal Reserve Statement**

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How They're Playing—'Kremlin Operation Seduction': European observers see Russian President Putin appeasing the West ahead of the Sochi Winter Olympics by announcing his intent to free jailed oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Greenpeace activists, and rock band members. France's *Le Figaro* notes that "The surprise announcement came on the eve of the Sochi games, which threaten to end up as a Western political platform critical of Putin's regime." Germany's *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* agrees "the reason for his pre-Christmas theater of pardoning can be found at the base of the Caucasus mountains, namely Sochi." Italy's *Corriere della Sera* describes "a particularly clement Putin who would like everyone to forget Russia's failed respect of human rights." Russia's *Vedomosti* laments that "setting Khodorkovsky free won't undo everything done by his arrest. In fact, letting him out of prison, as suggested by Putin, strengthens the president's hand," and stresses "it will take a lot of work to convince people that the hunting season is over." The Czech Republic's *Lidove Noviny* mocks the Russian President: "No one asks why these people were sent to prison in the first place, everyone hails the monarch for his generosity!" The UK's *Guardian* reminds that it "was not humane to put Khodorkovsky in jail in the first place," and hopes for a time when Putin "stops speaking with a forked tongue." Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* regrets that the "rule of law is not part of Putin and his men's vocabulary." Russia's *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* concludes, however, that "the West will be forced to welcome this step taken by Putin - even if it's welcomed through gritted teeth."

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HOT TOPICS
MONDAY 12/23/2013

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'Putin's Political Nativity Play': While many Russian observers debate pardoned businessman Mikhail Khodorkovsky's possible future political role, other international commentators question whether Russian President Putin's amnesties for high-profile activists are an indication of real reform for the country's human rights environment and its international role. Russia's *Kommersant* forecasts Khodorkovsky "will turn into a leader of public opinion." For Germany's *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* however, "Khodorkovsky's relinquishment of politics and his company Yukos shows that he knows he cannot win a direct confrontation with Putin." Russia's *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* boasts that regardless of what the released businessman decides to do with his new-found freedom, "the Kremlin does not fear him." The UK's *Times* hails the amnesties as "a landmark in Russia's long crawl from totalitarianism back to the community of civilized nations." The UAE's *Khaleej Times* wonders if this is the beginning of "another Glasnost in Russia." Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, however, scoffs, "whether an act of clemency is really a good foundation for a dialogue about the rule of law is questionable." For New Zealand's *The Dominion Post*, the amnesties "underline that justice in Russia is determined by the whim of Vladimir Putin." Germany's *ARD-TV* depicts the general amnesty as "a shining example of Putin's self-presentation to the world," fuelled by "the rush of success" the Russian leader felt after "successfully confronting the West in 2013, particularly in the cases of Syria and Ukraine." *Welt am Sonntag* agrees, urging that despite the amnesties, "the West should be clear about the fact that these are not the policies of a strategic partner but of a hostile antidemocratic power."

Message:

- ✓ *The United States strongly encourages Russia to pursue reforms that establish a transparent, independent, and reliable judicial system that upholds its commitments to human rights, the rule of law, and non-discrimination. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)*
- ✓ *We welcome the amnesty approved on the 20th anniversary of Russia's constitution. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)*
- ✓ *The United States supports the rights of all Russians to exercise their freedoms of expression, association, assembly, and belief, regardless of their political views. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)*
- ✓ *These rights are enshrined in the Russian Constitution as well as in international agreements to which Russia has committed itself. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)*
- ✓ *They are universal values, and their protection is a fundamental responsibility of all governments. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)*

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'Youngest Nation, Oldest Animosities': Global observers depict the specter of civil war "hovering over South Sudan" as rebel forces seize key oil territory, and call for a swift political resolution. The UK's *Guardian* stresses that South Sudan is "not yet a state" but a "disparate collection of tribes" with the "control of the bureaucracy and armed forces a matter of constant contention." *The Saudi Gazette* opines that the conflict has its origin in one of the continent's oldest feuds, "revolving around tribal loyalties and pride," and calls on "South Sudan's friends and neighbors to arrange for an immediate ceasefire followed by rival groups' negotiations." The UAE's *Gulf News* portrays the "fledgling country as a powder keg with a short fuse that has been lit," contending "the stakes are too high with regional implications" and urging the "international community to stage a rapid response to prevent loss of life and ethnic strife." Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* laments the country is "stumbling from one civil war to another." Meanwhile, *The Namibian Sun* regrets "the AU's sluggish approach to the fast degenerating" situation while commending the "proactive roles" being played by the US and Nigeria. The DRC's *Le Potentiel* sees President Obama's "immediate and unequivocal reaction" as proof Washington is "tired of acting as a firefighter" in the continent and is now "focused on doing business with African nations." Hong Kong's *Ming Pao Daily*, however, accuses the US of rushing South Sudan to independence for "geopolitical reasons" but "not giving its best efforts to help the country get a firm foothold."

Message:

- ✓ *Secretary Kerry called South Sudanese President Salva Kiir to discuss ways to stop the violence in South Sudan. (Readout of Secretary's Call)*
- ✓ *President Kiir said he had productive discussions with the visiting Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) ministerial delegation, to whom he had expressed his willingness to engage in peaceful dialogue and said he was open to negotiations without preconditions. (Readout of Secretary's Call)*
- ✓ *Secretary Kerry emphasized that only through leadership and political dialogue will the challenges facing South Sudan be resolved. (Readout of Secretary's Call)*
- ✓ *Secretary Kerry made clear that continued violence endangers the vision set forth at the time of South Sudan's independence. (Readout of Secretary's Call)*
- ✓ *The Secretary said he was sending US Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Ambassador Donald Booth, to the region to support regional diplomatic efforts to advance a solution. (Readout of Secretary's Call)*
- ✓ *Secretary Kerry and President Kiir discussed the need to prevent ethnic violence, their concern for the welfare of thousands of internally displaced persons fleeing the conflict, as well as for the safety of US citizens in South Sudan, and they agreed to speak again soon. (Readout of Secretary's Call)*

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HOT TOPICS
TUESDAY 12/24/2013

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'Russia Plays the Pardon Game':

International commentators dismiss the pardoning of oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky and two Pussy Riot members as a "PR stunt" ahead of the Sochi Olympics and lament President Putin's "clear demonstration of power," as several debate whether the decision heralds deeper human rights reform in Russia. For Poland's *Gazeta Wyborcza*, "It is clear that Putin releases political prisoners not out of the goodness of his heart but because he wants to show the world a Russia with a human face before the Olympics in Sochi." Germany's *Westdeutscher Rundfunk* radio agrees "the amnesty is a PR stunt to assuage Putin's critics before the Winter Games." Russia's *Ivestiya* thinks Putin has "won a victory first by putting [Khodorkovsky] behind bars and then by setting him free." Germany's *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* laments that "because this decision is so unpredictable and arbitrary, it is not an expression of political moderation but exactly the opposite." France's *Le Monde* asserts "the Tsar gives, the Tsar takes away...Ironically, the liberation of Khodorkovsky signifies Putin's victory and Russia's tragedy." Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post*, meanwhile, warns the amnesties "will not be any more than a temporary concession to world opinion unless they are part of a wider program of embracing political and social freedoms." Austria's *Der Standard* urges the international community "not to lose sight of the thousands of political prisoners" who remain in Russian jails. Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* welcomes the pardons, but would be more impressed by "judicial reform that makes sure fewer people are rid of their freedom." *The Pakistan Observer*, however, sees "no sign of an impending improvement in the country's poor human rights record." Nigeria's *Business Day* cautions that Moscow's "increasing tendency to exempt itself from the international rule of law is dangerous for the world, but it is likely to prove more dangerous for Russia."



Source: Tom Janssen, The Netherlands

Message:

- ✓ ***The United States strongly encourages Russia to pursue reforms that establish a transparent, independent, and reliable judicial system that upholds its commitments to human rights, the rule of law, and non-discrimination. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)***

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- ✓ *We welcome the amnesty approved on the 20th anniversary of Russia's constitution. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)*
- ✓ *The United States supports the rights of all Russians to exercise their freedoms of expression, association, assembly, and belief, regardless of their political views. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)*
- ✓ *These rights are enshrined in the Russian Constitution as well as in international agreements to which Russia has committed itself. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)*
- ✓ *They are universal values, and their protection is a fundamental responsibility of all governments. (Secretary Kerry's Statement)*

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THURSDAY 12/26/2013

Muslim Brotherhood Designated a 'Terrorist Organization': While many Egyptian outlets blame the Muslim Brotherhood for the recent Mansoura bombing which claimed at least 15 lives and welcome the Egyptian interim government's designation of the group as a terrorist organization, other international observers regret the missed opportunity for a democratic resolution and forecast that the move could lead to further violence. Egypt's *Al-Youm* 7 mourns the casualties of the bombing, proclaiming that "the people demand the execution of the Brotherhood." *Al-Ahram* lauds the interim government for "at last responding to popular pressure" and classifying the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization, which shows "the state is strong and capable of protecting its country from danger." But the Muslim Brotherhood's *Freedom and Justice* denies responsibility for the bombing and warns the interim government that if "it loses its mind and continues to strike and terrorize [the people], this will only lead to more violence." Russia's *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, however, worries the announcement and subsequent arrest of former Prime Minister Hisham Qandil, will only "drive the group underground, as it has before." Qatar's *Peninsula* views the announcement as a "hasty decision, which shows the government's fear and paranoia" and which will "only lead to relentless violence. The military-backed government should have chosen the democratic path to defeat the Brotherhood." An analyst complains to India's *Aalami Samay* television that "the military rulers of Egypt are making continuous efforts to kill democracy while the United Nations, the US and Europe are mute spectators." A commentator in Egypt's *Al-Shuruq al-Jadid* fears that ultimately, "Egypt will be transformed into another Iraq" as "terrorism becomes a banner under which thousands are arrested and the economy is paralyzed, while the real terrorists are free to carry on."

Message:

- ✓ *The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attack on the Dakaliya security directorate in Mansoura. (State Department Statement)*
- ✓ *We extend our deepest condolences to the families of the victims, and we hope for the quick recovery of the injured. (State Department Statement)*
- ✓ *The United States stands firmly with the Egyptian people as they work to put their country on the path towards democracy, stability, and economic prosperity, in an atmosphere free from violence. (State Department Statement)*

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HOT TOPICS
FRIDAY 12/27/2013

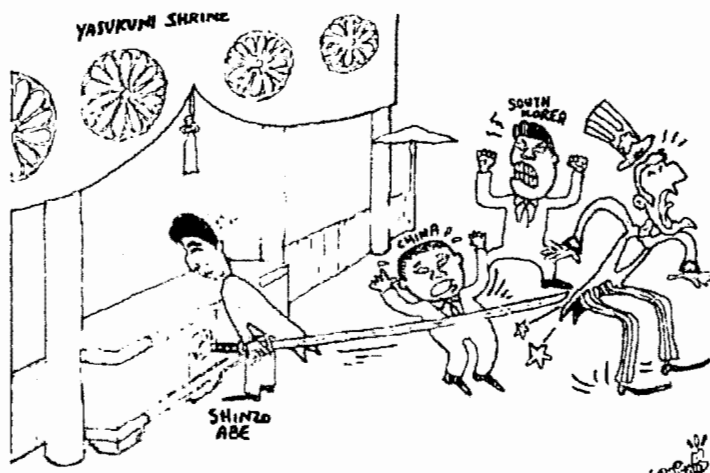
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How They're Playing - 'Abe Plays With Fire':

While Japanese commentators are concerned that PM Abe's Yasukuni Shrine visit will harm "national interests" and Tokyo's US alliance, observers in the rest of the world condemn the "calculated provocation" and warn of grave consequences. Japan's *Mainichi* urges Abe to "think about the national interests that have been damaged" as a result of the trip, pointing to the "unusual and extremely serious" US Embassy Tokyo statement.

Nikkei is unnerved by the statement, unable to recall "even a single episode in which America openly criticized a Japanese Prime Minister over his behavior."

Yomiuri worries Abe "may have miscalculated Washington's reaction." Meanwhile, France's *Le Figaro* observes "the glacial diplomatic atmosphere between Tokyo, Seoul and Beijing just got colder." China's *Liberation Army Daily* finds Abe's "ghost worship outrageous." *China Daily* denounces the "intolerable insult to the feelings of Chinese and Korean peoples [and the] blatant attack on human decency." South Korea's *Hankyoreh Shinmun* quips "Abe's so-called 'proactive pacifism' has turned out to be 'proactive troublemaking'." *JoongAng Ilbo* expects the visit will "exacerbate disputes over territorial and historical issues" and reduce ROK-China-Japan cooperation to a "pipe dream." China's *People's Daily* cautions Abe "is bound to pay a price for this behavior." South Korea's *Chosun Ilbo* believes "it is high time for Seoul to consider ways to deal with Japan from a totally different perspective" amid the threat of a "new Japan rearing its head." China's *Global Times* recommends declaring Abe and other high-level Japanese officials "persona non grata." The *Hong Kong Economic Times* calls for "tough and soft measures" to force the US to "rein in its pawn," including a "tough response to Japan's control of the Diaoyu Islands." The UK's *Daily Telegraph* frets, "Unless all parties remember that they have more to gain from cooperation than competition, the region could be set for a very unhappy new year."



Source: *Gulf News*, UAE

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HOT TOPICS
MONDAY 12/30/2013

RELEASED IN FULL

'Holy War against the Games': While international observers fear the Volgograd suicide attack presages the reemergence of an intensive terrorism campaign in Russia, European commentators are concerned by calls from Russian media for the Putin Administration to adopt hardline policies in crushing separatists. Italy's *Corriere della Sera* warns "it is very likely that the massacre in Volgograd is just the beginning of the terror campaign." The UK's *Guardian* agrees, pointing to the October bus bombing in Volgograd as proof of a "concerted campaign of violence" from insurgents "who want to carve an Islamic state out of the North Caucasus." *The Times* laments that "Putin's Sochi gamble opened the door to revenge killings by militants," as "despite the façade that Russia is a happy federation, the war [in the North Caucasus region] and the cruelty have not gone away." Russia's *Izvestiya* urges Moscow to "learn to be tough" and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* thinks the nation has been "left with no choice apart from declaring zero tolerance regarding terrorists and their family members... no suspended sentences, no alleviating circumstances" for perpetrators. *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* sneers that the people of Volgograd "are not aware of the huge danger yet... They are still playing human rights defense games." The UK's *Independent* worries that while "the Islamist threat to the Winter Games in Sochi is real," it will lead to the "tightening of a formidable range of security measures already in place." Germany's *Berliner Zeitung* cautions the bombing "plays right into Putin's hands. He can now expand precautionary measures in Sochi by referring to the terror danger and Western governments will hardly be able to accuse him of any abuse."

Message:

- ✓ *The United States condemns in the strongest terms the terrorist attack in Volgograd. (State Department Statement)*
- ✓ *We send our sincere condolences to the families of the victims and stand in solidarity with the Russian people against terrorism of any kind. (State Department Statement)*
- ✓ *State Department Statement*

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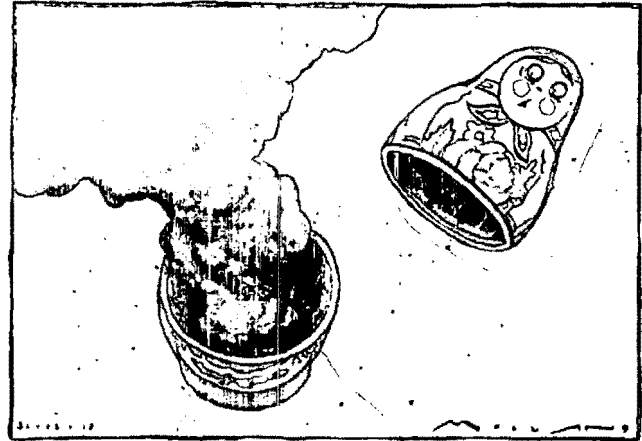
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HOT TOPICS
TUESDAY 12/31/2013

RELEASED IN FULL

'Russia in the Shadow of Terror': While international commentators are certain the double Volgograd bombings are related to the upcoming Sochi Olympics, many observers criticize the "security failure," though several warn that a Putin-style crackdown will hardly resolve Russia's problems. Spain's *El Pais* depicts a "terrorist wave in Russia with an Olympic target." Russia's *Izvestiya* suspects "the idea is to try to harm, if not to thwart, the Sochi Games." France's *Le Figaro* muses: "Not letting oneself be intimidated by terrorists is one thing, sending our athletes into a powder keg is another." Japan's *Sankei* warns



Source: *The Times*, UK

"President Putin's credibility will be damaged if the administration fails to preempt additional attacks." But France's *La Croix* contends that the attacks have already "sowed doubts in the mind of Russians regarding the Kremlin's assurance of law and order." Russia's *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* condemns the "major failure of the Russian special services." The UK's *Guardian* believes the twin attacks are a sign that Moscow's "decade-long strategy for pacifying the North Caucasus has failed." Portugal's *Diario de Noticias* depicts a "slap in the face" to Putin. The UK's *Independent*, meanwhile, laments "the security fallout from the atrocities won't be pretty." *The Daily Telegraph* speculates Putin "knows only one approach, and that is to get tough," but "getting tough has not worked before and there is no reason to suppose it will now." Austria's *Kurier* laments "the war may be over but the region has not been pacified... This cannot be concealed by verbosity and visions, nor can Olympic Games in a Potemkin village divert attention from Russia's serious problems." The UAE's *Khaleej Times* recommends that Moscow "beef up vigilance and make the sporting event a success," while "avoiding any witch-hunt which would inevitably lead to further polarization in the already divided Russian society."

Message:

- ✓ **"We condemn in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks in Volgograd." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)**
- ✓ **"We send our sincere condolences to the families of the victims and stand in solidarity with the Russian people against terrorism of any kind." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)**

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Robert Strand, Senior Reviewer

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- ✓ *"In terms of security for Sochi, anyone planning to attend should remain alert regarding their personal security at all times." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"Major events such as the Olympic Games are an opportunity for thieves or other folks who want to cause mischief." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"People should also be reminded that threats have been made against the Olympic Games and acts of terrorism, including bombings, continue to occur in Russia." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*
- ✓ *"Our diplomatic security personnel have been working with the Russians for many months on security." (Deputy State Department Spokesperson Harf)*

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