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Middle East at the beginning of September 2016: Key Dynamics

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As September 2016 dawns, there are a number of important developments in the Middle East that dominate the region's politics. These include: (1) The ongoing wars in Syria and Iraq; (2) Iranian politics and foreign policy in the year after the signing of the JCPOA nuclear agreement; (3) Continued stalemate in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; (4) Turkey's domestic politics and foreign policy after the abortive Coup D'état of 15 July 2016 and (5) Continued uncertainty about US policy in the Middle East before the November US elections.

1. Impact of the Ongoing Wars in Syria And Iraq

a. Syria, the Assad Regime and ISIS: Currently, two inter-related wars are underway in Syria. The first pits the US, the Assad Regime, Russia, the Kurds, Iran and Hezbollah against ISIS. The second pits the anti-Assad Syrian opposition, composed both of Islamist and non-Islamist forces, some of whom are backed by the United States as well as Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar, against the Assad regime which is backed by Russia, Iran, Hezbollah and other Shia Moslem forces in the Middle East recruited by Iran. Complicating the picture even more are clashes between the Kurds, who have been backed by the United because of their successes in fighting ISIS, and who have been endeavouring to create a contiguous area on the north-eastern border of Syria with Turkey; and the Turks, also backed by the United States, who are fighting to prevent just such a development.

While the war against the Assad regime is currently at its most intense around the northern Syrian city of Aleppo, Syrian government attacks against the Kurds indicate that the tacit

alliance between the Assad regime and the Kurds may have been broken. As far as the war against ISIS is concerned, the Sunni Moslem Jihadist group has been steadily losing ground and its capital in Raqqa may soon be in danger if the US can convince the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) composed of both Arabs and Kurds, but dominated by the Kurds, to move on Raqqa, rather than on the city of Afrin, a Kurdish enclave in north-central Syria, which, if captured, would unite the Kurdish sections of Syria. Turkish opposition to such a development led to a US-backed invasion of north-central Syria in late August by a combination of Turkish tanks and Turkish-supported Syrian rebels, after the Syrian Democratic Forces had captured the city of Manbij, in a move also backed by the United States. The Turkish move, supported by the United States, was bitterly opposed by the Kurds, who clashed with Turkish supported forces around the Syrian city of Jarablus, and who were also told by the US to pull their troops back across the Euphrates River. Whether the Kurds will now be willing to move on Raqqa is an open question.

Meanwhile Russia has exploited the Syrian situation to not only to support the Assad regime---thereby demonstrating the Russia stands by its allies---but also to acquire a major military position in the Middle East, with the Hmeimin air base in northeast Syria near Latakia and an expanded naval base at Tartus on the Syrian coast. Also, by closely coordinating its military activities with Iran---Russian bombers used an Iranian base to bombard forces of the Syrian opposition---Moscow is demonstrating that it is again a major power in the Middle East, much as it was in Soviet times [1]. This in turn helps Russian president Vladimir Putin's domestic political position, especially with Russian parliamentary elections on the horizon and a deteriorating Russian economy threatening Putin's popularity.

As the Russian position in both Syria and the greater Middle East strengthens, US policy in Syria appears as confused as ever. US President Barack Obama's unwillingness to get involved in Syria in a major way---although he has sent special operation forces and a limited amount of military equipment to help Syrian opposition forces such as the SDF---has created a vacuum which Russian forces have filled. President Obama's observation that Putin was getting Russia bogged down in a quagmire in Syria has not yet proven to be the case as a combination of Russian airpower and ground forces from the Assad regime, Iran, and Hezbollah have turned the tide in Syria, strengthening the Assad regime and enabling it to regain territory from both ISIS and non-ISIS rebels, although the war continues with no end currently in sight.

B. War in Iraq: The situation in Iraq is, if anything, more complicated than the situation in Syria. While, ostensibly, there is only one war in Iraq---the one pitting the Iraqi government of Heidar Abadi against ISIS which in 2014 had seized large swaths of Iraq, including the major city of Mosul---there are numerous divisions among the Iraqi forces fighting ISIS, and some of these forces are also divided among themselves, while the Abadi regime's supporters, primarily the United States and Iran, are also divided not only on strategy for capturing and securing Mosul, but also on the post-ISIS future of Iraq.

Among the Shia majority in Iraq (an estimated 60 percent of the Iraqi population) there are a series of splits. First, Abadi has been plagued by his predecessor, Nuri al-Maliki who had been ousted after ISIS captured Mosul and other Iraqi cities such as Ramadi in 2014. Maliki is now trying to mount a political comeback and has been holding meetings with some of the Kurdish groups in Iraq (Kurds are about 20 percent of the Iraqi population) to facilitate his comeback. Other opponents of Abadi within the Iraqi Shia community include militia leader Muqtada al-Sadr who has been attacking the Abadi regime for being “corrupt” and other Shia militias, many of which are organized into so-called “popular mobilization units” (PMU’s), some of which contain Sunni troops and others of which appear to be more loyal to Iran than to the Abadi regime. While an agreement was recently signed to integrate the PMU’s into the Iraqi state apparatus, the success of the integration remains to be seen [2].

Yet another challenge for the Abadi regime is the Kurds (an estimated 20 percent of the Iraqi population). Long a persecuted minority when the Sunni Arabs (20 percent of the population) were in control under Saddam Hussein---he used poison gas against them in 1988---the Kurds exploited the no-fly zone imposed by the United States after the First Gulf War in 1991 to create a quasi-independent entity in northern Iraq. Then, when the regime of Saddam Hussein was overthrown in 2003 by the United States, the Kurds strengthened their autonomous zone, now called the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). While a loose agreement was worked out between the KRG and the Iraqi Government, whereby the Kurds were allowed to keep 18 percent of the revenue of the oil exported from Kurdish areas in return for financial support from the Iraqi government, the agreement never really worked and collapsed in 2014.

This development reinforced calls for independence among the Kurds. Complicating matters further in Iraq are the divisions among the Kurds themselves. There are three major Kurdish groups: (1) The Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) under Massoud Barzani, which has been the strongest voice for Kurdish independence; (2) The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) led by Jalal Talabani, and (3) a reformist Kurdish Party called the Kurdish Movement for Change (Gorran), led by Nawshirwan Mustako. Gorran had broken away from the PUK in 2009, but on 17 May 2016 signed a detailed agreement with the PUK which both parties appear to believe will strengthen their political position within Kurdistan against the KDP and Massoud Barzani who remains the dominant Kurdish political figure, albeit an increasingly authoritarian one, and will pressure Barzani into a more equitable power-sharing arrangement within the KRG [3]. Meanwhile, the Kurdish militia, called the Peshmerga, has been the leading US-supported force fighting ISIS in Iraq, and is expected to play a major role, along with the Iraqi Army in liberating Mosul from ISIS.

However, a major question in Iraq is what happens after the liberation of Mosul. Given the fact that Mosul is a predominantly Sunni city, and Sunni Arabs have formed the core of ISIS supporters in Iraq, in large part because of their mistreatment by Maliki when he was in power; it

is imperative for the Abadi government whatever its weaknesses (the Iraqi Defence Minister was just ousted on corruption charges), to ensure that the Sunni population is not mistreated after Mosul is liberated from ISIS. Complicating matters further in Iraq are conflicting territorial claims between Kurds and Arabs in Northern Iraq in areas such as Kirkuk and Nineveh claims that could result in an Arab-Kurdish conflict once ISIS is driven from Mosul [4].

2. Iran after the JCPOA

While the US Obama Administration may have hoped that the July 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran [formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA] would lead to a moderation of Iranian foreign policy and a warming of US-Iranian relations, such has not been the case. Not only did Iranian demonstrators seize and burn the Saudi Embassy in Tehran after the Saudis had executed Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr, thus exacerbating the already highly strained relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran, the embassy attack also raised tensions in the Persian Gulf region and further inflamed relations between Sunni and Shia Arabs throughout the Middle East. Meanwhile, Iran continues to recruit Shia Moslems all over the Middle East to fight in Syria to support the Shia Assad regime, especially in Lebanon (Hezbollah), Iraq and Afghanistan (Hazaras) [5]. The Iranians also continued to support the Shia Houthis in Yemen, who were battling a Saudi-led coalition in that country, and also continued to call openly for the destruction of Israel, as did Iran's ally Hezbollah.

But perhaps the most important development---or lack thereof---was the continuing freeze in US-Iranian relations, more than a year after the signing of the JCPOA. There were several reasons for this. First, conservative forces in Iran, led by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard (IRG), supported by Iran's supreme religious leader, the Ayatollah Khamenei appeared concerned that an improvement of relations with the United States, which they continued to call "The Great Satan" could jeopardize the purity of Iran's Islamic Revolution as well as threaten their own power, including the economic power of the IRG who control large sectors of the Iranian economy. Consequently, the Iranian hard-liners sought to sabotage any possibility of a US-Iranian rapprochement by continuing to make bellicose statements about the United States, by harassing US ships in the Persian Gulf and by arresting dual nationals who could have been expected to facilitate trade between Iran and the West [6]. Other irritants in US-Iranian relations included Iran's continued development of missiles that not only had the capability of hitting Israel with nuclear warheads, but with further development also had the potential to strike the United States. This was a violation of the spirit, if not the text, of the JCPOA agreement which stated "Iran is called upon not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons"[7]. These negative Iranian actions have not given the lame-duck Obama Administration, let alone the strongly anti-Iranian Republican-dominated US Congress, much incentive to suspend the sanctions that remain in place after the JCPOA, because of Iran's support for international terrorism (Only the nuclear-related sanctions were lifted once Iran was deemed in compliance with the JCPOA). All these developments have weakened the position of the relatively moderate Iranian President, Hassan Rouhani, who faces re-election in 2017.

Rouhani had hoped and perhaps oversold to the Iranian public that Iran's economy would sharply improve after the signing of the JCPOA, something that has yet to happen because foreign firms remain concerned about violating the continued US sanctions regime. While there has been some foreign direct investment, and with sanctions on the sale of Iran's oil having been lifted, Iran's oil production is almost back to pre-sanction levels (although it appears to have plateaued in July 2016) [8], the economic benefits of the JCPOA have yet to flow down to the Iranian public and this may diminish Rouhani's re-election prospects in 2017.

3. Stalemate in the Israel-Palestinian Peace Process

With wars raging in Iraq and Syria, as well as in Yemen and Libya, and with ISIS, although now on the territorial defensive, still threatening Arab countries like Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia, attention has shifted away from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which was once the centrepiece of Middle Eastern politics. Indeed, the Iranian-Saudi conflict has even led to a tacit alignment between Israel and Saudi Arabia as both fear an expansionist Iran and worry about the withdrawal of US power from interest in the Middle East. The multiple conflicts in the region have, in turn, along with a hard-line stance by Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and by Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas (he is afraid of being undercut by the rival Hamas movement) as well as by continuing Palestinian incitement against Israel, has limited the US effort to reach a Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement. This is a welcome development for the right-wing Israeli government coalition led by Binyamin Netanyahu. However, both Netanyahu's coalition government and the rival wings of the Palestinian movement [Hamas which controls Gaza and the Palestinian Authority under Mahmoud Abbas which controls the West Bank] are driven by many divisions. In the case of Netanyahu's Likud Party-led coalition, there is pressure from the Religious Zionist Jewish Home Party of Naftali Bennett, which is pressing Netanyahu to authorize more housing for Jews in the Israeli-occupied West Bank as well as in East Jerusalem. Such housing construction alienates the United States and the European Union who strongly oppose it, let alone the Palestinians who see such construction, along with the road and other infrastructure construction which is part of settlement expansion, as diminishing the territory available to them for a future Palestinian state.

Netanyahu has sought to counter such pressure by sending out political signals that he would be willing to enlarge the coalition by bringing in the more dovish Zionist Union Party, although many in Israel suspect that this is just a political ploy by Netanyahu. In addition, the Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) parties in Netanyahu's coalition adamantly oppose any religious concessions to Israel's Reform and Conservative movements, something that is alienating the politically influential Reform and Conservative Jews in the United States. Other problems in the US-Israeli relationship include continued personal animosity between Obama and Netanyahu (although this has not yet affected security cooperation between the United States and Israel, who are currently negotiating the renewal of a ten year US military aid agreement), and the erosion of bipartisan

support in the United States for Israel. While the US Republican Party remains staunchly pro-Israel, many Democrats, especially the younger members of the party, are wavering in their support [9], and the anti-Israeli BDS movement (Boycott, Divest, Sanction) which aims to delegitimize Israel as a Jewish State, has gained some traction on college campuses in the US, although it has run into trouble in State legislatures, a number of which have declared such boycotts illegal.

In the case of the Palestinians, the Hamas movement in Gaza, which remains dedicated to Israel's destruction, faces internal conflict between its political and military wings and also over the choice of its primary outside supporters, either Iran or the Sunni states led by Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar. In the Gaza Strip itself, Hamas faces challenges by the Iranian-supported Palestinian Islamic Jihad as well as an emerging ISIS presence. Meanwhile, the fact that Hamas has sided with an ISIS-affiliated group in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula has angered the Egyptian Government led by general al-Sisi, while the recent abortive coup in Turkey may have weakened Turkey's support for Hamas. Even before the coup, the fact that Turkey was re-establishing full diplomatic relations with Israel had angered Hamas because Turkish President Recep Erdogan had previously demanded the complete lifting of Israel's embargo on Gaza as the price for the resumption of full relations, but the actual reconciliation agreement fell far short of that. In the case of the Palestinian Authority, PA leader Mahmoud Abbas is aging and there are splits with Fatah, his political party, over who will succeed him, with contenders such as Mohamed Dahlan and Jibril Rajoub. Meanwhile, the most popular Palestinian leader, Marwan Barghouti, remains in an Israeli jail after having been convicted of murdering Israelis during the Al-Aksa Intifada (2000-2004), and there is no indication when he will be released.

Given the splits both within Israel and among the Palestinians, and in light of the conflicts raging elsewhere in the Middle East, the Obama Administration, after a failed nine-month peace effort led by Secretary of State John Kerry (2013-2014) seems to have concluded that the time is not ripe for an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement, although France continues to push for an international conference that would lay out the parameters for an Israeli-Palestinian settlement. Perhaps the only sign of movement in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process are the scheduled Palestinian municipal elections in both Gaza and the West Bank in early October. Assuming they are held—still a very big if—they may produce the beginnings of a more unified Palestinian leadership capable of negotiating with Israel [10].

4. Turkey after the Coup

One of the most important developments in Middle East politics over the last few months was the abortive coup d'état in Turkey in mid-July. Even before the abortive coup there had been signs that Turkey was changing its foreign policy direction, and after the coup the changes accelerated, particularly in regard to Turkish policy toward Syria. Prior to May 2016 when he was ousted as Prime Minister and replaced by Binali Yildirim, Ahmet Davotoglu, who earlier had been Turkey's foreign minister, had adopted policies of Neo-Ottomanism and "no enemies"

for Turkey. The latter policy had proven to be highly unsuccessful, and before he was ousted in May, Davotoglu's (and President Recep Erdogan's) policies had succeeded in alienating most of Turkey's neighbours, including Egypt (following the 2013 coup that ousted Erdogan's friend, Mohamed Morsi, Erdogan severely criticized Egypt's new leader General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi), Israel [because Turkey had tried to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza by sending a flotilla of ships including the Mavi Marmara, that led to an Israeli attack that killed eight Turks and a Turkish American), Russia [because Turkey had shot down a Russian fighter-jet flying over Turkish territory], and above all Syria, as Turkey backed Islamist forces such as Jabat al-Nusra (linked to Al-Qaeda) and ISIS in their efforts to overthrow Assad. Turkey's policy in Syria had also alienated Iran, an ally of Assad and an enemy of Sunni Jihadist forces such as Jabat al-Nusra and ISIS. Turkey's relations with the United States had also deteriorated as Erdogan's regime, which Obama had once praised as an "excellent example of a Moslem Democracy", degenerated into Islamic authoritarianism, as Erdogan jailed a number of his political opponents, cracked down on journalists who criticized him [they were jailed as "terrorists"], and sought to transform Turkey from a parliamentary to a presidential system which would further enhance his power.

The 15 July abortive coup which Erdogan blamed on his Islamist rival, Fettulah Gulen, who was living in the United States, accelerated the foreign policy changes already underway before the abortive coup. Soon after taking office, Turkey's new Prime Minister Binali Yildirim, declared that his priority would be "increasing the number of Turkey's friends while reducing the number of its enemies" [11]. Turkey's actions soon followed Yildirim's words. Thus there was reconciliation between Turkey and Israel, as Israel promised to pay a limited compensation for those killed in the Mavi Marmara incident and allow Turkey a role—albeit a limited one—in the rebuilding of Gaza, although Israel refused to dissolve the blockade on Gaza as Erdogan had previously demanded. In the case of Russia, relations were restored when Erdogan apologized for shooting down the Russian plane (he later blamed the incident on Gulen). Relations between Turkey and Iran improved as well, and Turkey moved closer to the Russian-Iranian position on Syria by reversing the earlier Turkish demand that Assad had to leave office before a peace agreement could be signed. Now, said Turkey, Assad could play a role during the planned Syrian transitional process. Turkey later exploited the improvement of relations with Russia and Syria to send tanks and its special forces troops, along with Turkish-supported Syrian opposition forces (all of whom were backed by US airpower) to capture the Syrian city of Jarablus that lay just south of the Turkish-Syrian border [12]. It had been used as an ISIS base for attacking Turkey and as a conduit for volunteers and equipment going to the ISIS capital of Raqqa. There would appear to have been four goals in the Turkish action. First, to strike a blow at ISIS which had launched a number of terrorist attacks against Turkey after Erdogan had given the US the use of Turkey's airbase at Incirlik to attack ISIS in 2015. Second, to demonstrate that despite the purge of the Turkish army following the abortive coup, Turkey still had military capability. Third, to pre-empt a possible move by Syrian Kurds to capture the town of Jarablus, which would have extended Kurdish control over a wide swath of Syria south of the Turkish border,

and also to drive a wedge between the United States and the Kurds who had been the main Syrian ally of the US fighting ISIS. Erdogan's final goal was to demonstrate that despite their differences over Turkey's demand that Gulen be immediately extradited from the United States to Turkey, Turkey and the US could still cooperate. Indeed, the Turkish military action took place as US Vice-President Joseph Biden was in Turkey and Erdogan must have very much appreciated Biden's call for Kurdish forces to withdraw from the recently captured town of Manjib to the eastern side of the Euphrates River thus preventing any possibility of the Kurds uniting all the Kurdish enclaves in Syria. The question now is whether with the Kurds apparently out of the picture, will Turkish forces, with the blessing of the United States, move on to capture Raqqa.

Meanwhile, on the domestic front, Erdogan continued to crack down. Despite a façade of unity with two of the three opposition parties (the Republican Peoples Party (CHP) and the nationalist MHP)—the Kurdish HDP party was conspicuously left out of the reconciliation process despite its denunciation of the abortive coup; Erdogan undertook a massive purge of the Turkish state apparatus reminiscent of Stalin's purges in the Soviet Union in the 1930's, albeit, at least so far, without the executions that characterized the Stalinist purges. Erdogan's stated aim was to cleanse the bureaucracy of the Gulenist cadres which had infiltrated it—with Erdogan's blessing following Erdogan's AKP party coming to power in 2002, until Erdogan and Gulen fell out several years ago. Erdogan's critics, however see the purges as aimed at anyone—Gulenist or not—who was critical of Erdogan or was seen as a potential threat to the Turkish leader. On 10 August, the Turkish interior minister Efkan Ala stated that 76,000 civil servants had been suspended and 16,899 arrested. Of these 3,083 were police officers, 7,248 were soldiers, 2,288 were judges and prosecutors, and 199 were municipal officials [13]. In addition 21,000 private schoolteachers were suspended, 21,700 Ministry of Education officials were fired, 1,500 university deans were forced to resign and nearly half of Turkey's top generals and admirals were jailed or dismissed [14]. Indeed, so many of Erdogan's opponents have been jailed that no fewer than 38,300 inmates from Turkish jails were scheduled to be released to make room for them [15].

It appears clear that Erdogan wants to reshape the Turkish bureaucracy in his own image. However, it is an open question as to how well he will be able to run Turkey without the Gulenists, his erstwhile allies, and what the future of what is left of Turkey's democracy will be, given the extent of Erdogan's purges.

5. Future of the US Policy: A Major Question mark

It is rare in a US election campaign since World War II, for the candidates of the major parties to be so divided on foreign policy issues and on the role of the United States in the world. These differences will have major implications for US policy in the Middle East. The more traditional candidate is Democrat Hilary Clinton, and on the basis of her writings, speeches and activities as

Secretary of State (2009-2013), it is easier to foresee what her Middle East policy might be. Clinton is likely to pursue a more activist policy in Syria than the current US President, Barack Obama, as reflected in her policy suggestion—rejected by Obama--- to actively aid the Syrian opposition in 2012. In addition, she is more likely to promote an activist policy blocking further Russian inroads into the Middle East, and, while supportive of the JCPOA is more likely than Obama to take a tougher line on Iranian activities in the Middle East, a policy that would reassure US allies in the Persian Gulf such as Saudi Arabia, as well as Israel. Finally, while being supportive of Israel (albeit not of Netanyahu’s settlement policy in the West Bank), it is not at all clear that she will actively push for an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement immediately upon taking office as Obama did. This is the case not only because of the limited prospects for such a settlement at the current time, but also because she is likely to take office with limited political capital even if she defeats Donald trump by a large margin, because of the ugliness of the political campaign and questions about her personal integrity.

Republican candidate Donald trump, unlike Clinton, is very inexperienced in foreign affairs. Should he win the election, there is likely to be a retrenchment of US force deployments all over the world, including in the Middle East as he pursues his “America First” (or Fortress America) policy which limits or even eliminates the forward deployment of US troops. In Syria, Trump has said he would cooperate with Russia to fight ISIS, although he has not given any specifics as to how he would do this (or, as of this writing, on any other foreign policy issue), and it appears that he would be willing to cede influence to Russia in the Middle East as he seeks to create his own “reset” of Russian-American relations. On Israel, Trump has been supportive of the Jewish State, even going so far as to urge the moving of the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem [Clinton is unwilling to do this until a Palestinian-Israel agreement is signed]; nonetheless, the retrenchment of US from the Middle East would neither be in Israel’s interest nor in the interest of the Palestinians.

In sum, much of the future of US policy will depend on which candidate gets elected in November and one can only speculate on the future of US policy in the Middle East before then.

END NOTES

1. However, granting Russia the right to use an Iranian airbase was not popular in Iran, which takes pride in its independence from outside powers, and permission for Russia to use Iranian airbases was, at least temporarily, suspended after the use of the base was revealed in the Russian media. Iran’s Defence Minister blamed Moscow for “showing off” by revealing that Russian planes had used the Iranian base. See Monwar Khalaj, “Tehran Halts Russian Raids on Syria from Iran”, *Financial Times*, 23 August 2016
2. Jean Aziz, “What are Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units Doing in Beirut?”, *Al-Monitor*, 18 August 2016

3. Cited in Mohamed Salih, “The New Politics of Iraqi Kurdistan”, Fikra Forum (Washington Institute for Near East Policy), 16 August 2016
4. See Mohamed Salih, “Kurds Concerned About Baghdad’s Increasing Military Power”, *Al-Monitor*, 18 August 2016
5. Ramin Mostaghim, “Iran Drafts Hazaras in Syria Fight”, *Los Angeles Times*, 22 August 2016
6. See Najmeh Bozorgmehr, “Dual Nationals Caught in Iran Power Struggle”, *Financial Times*, 17 August 2016
7. Cited in “The Case for Revisiting the Iran Nuclear Deal”, *Middle East Briefing*, Volume 111, Issue 137, 4 August 2016
8. Cited in Benoit Faucon, “Iran’s Crude Oil Output Flattens”, *Wall Street Journal*, 26 August 2016
9. See Amnon Cavari, “Six Decades of Public Affection: Trends in American Public Attitudes Toward Israel”, in Robert O. Freedman (ed.), *Israel And The United States: Six Decades Of US-Israeli Relations* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2012), pp.18-119
10. See “Fatah Said to Beg Abbas: Cancel Local Elections, Hamas Will Win West Bank”, *The Times of Israel*, 26 August 2016
11. Cited in Semih Idiz, “Turkey, Iran Rekindle Relationship, but Take Things Slow”, *Al-Monitor*, 16 August 2016
12. See Dion Nissenbaum, “Turkey, US Join Rebel Assault on Syria”, *Wall Street Journal*, 25 August 2016
13. Cited in “Nearly 76,000 Civil Servants Suspended over Failed Coup Attempt”, *Hurriyet Turkish Daily News* (Online), 11 August 2016. For a solid study of the abortive coup and its aftermath, see GonolTol et al, “Unlocking Turkey’s Failed Coup: Causes and Consequences”, Middle East Institute (Washington DC) 17 August 2016
14. Cited in Josh Keller, “The Scale of Turkey’s Purge is Nearly Unprecedented”, *The New York Times*, 4 August 2016
15. Cited in Erin Cunningham, “Turkey Plans to Free 38,000 Inmates”, *The Washington Post*, 18 August 2016

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