

Presentation/Discussion Questions

Middle East Politics, Fall 2009

Each of the presentations below should be at least ten and no more than 15 minutes. Part of the purpose of this assignment is for you to develop your skills as an oral presenter. Think back to a class you have had (of course not at Holy Cross!) where a teacher simply read aloud from his or her notes, and how boring that was for you as a listener. Thus you too should not read from notes – you can certainly consult notes or an outline as you speak, but you should not simply read; you should mostly be talking to the class and making eye contact with them. You can bring visual aids if you wish, such as maps. You can distribute handouts or use Powerpoint, but this should not be used to provide a written summary of everything you are going to say – a handout should not be more than one side of a single page.

You are not expected to do any extra research for your topic; if you wish to, you can, but you should still spend about 90% of your class presentation time dealing with the assigned readings. The answers to your questions will be found in the assigned syllabus readings, and in some cases below, brief extra readings. When you are presenting material from readings which are not on the syllabus, make sure to explain in your presentation who the authors are, what their background is (if you know this and if it is relevant to assessing their arguments or information), and what information they are providing.

After you cover all of the information required for your questions, feel free to add observations of your own about the material (within the 15 minute time limit). For example: did the reading(s) strike you as convincing – why or why not? Is there important information that an author failed to take into consideration?

If you miss the day of your presentation without a dean's note attesting to the fact that an unavoidable circumstance (illness, etc.) prevented you from attending that day, you will get a "0" for your presentation.

Discussion One: Condoleezza Rice and Barack Obama Cairo speeches

Although both of these speeches were delivered in Cairo, they were intended for somewhat different audiences. Rice's speech, occurring in the middle of a growing pro-democracy movement in an election year in Egypt, and months after Iraq's first post-war elections, was explicitly meant to support President Bush's strategy of democracy promotion in the Arab world. Obama's speech was framed as a message to the entire Muslim world (including the majority of Muslims who live outside the Middle East) and strove to improve U.S. – Muslim world relations, which were presumed to have been strained by recent U.S. foreign policy, particularly the invasion of Iraq. Nonetheless, there are important commonalities between the speeches, particularly in that both address U.S. commitment to democracy in the Arab and Muslim worlds.

Discussant 1:

- “Welcome, Mr. President,” Sheikh Ali Gomaa, *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 4-11 June 2009 (ER)
<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2009/950/sc3.htm>
- a) How specifically does each speaker seem to define the key components of democracy? (In other words, what specific aspects of democracy does each mention as essential, use as examples of what the U.S. expects, or criticize countries for having violated)? Are there key groups of political or civil rights on the Freedom House list that are not reflected in the speakers’ definitions? Does either speaker seem to focus more heavily on political rights or on civil liberties?
 - b) People worldwide praised the U.S. for its election of an African-American, whose father was a Muslim and who spent much of his childhood living in the Muslim world, as president, seeing in this election a level of acceptance of cultural and racial diversity that is not found in many democracies. As the first African-American secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice also represented a historic “first.” Does either speaker use her own experience, or that of the ethnic/religious group to which she has links, to make her points more persuasive? If so, do you think this use is effective?
 - c) In her discussion of what she sees as recent democratic developments in the Arab world, does Rice seem to suggest, to her Egyptian audience in particular, that the coming of democracy is inevitable? How does she try to appeal to Egyptian pride to encourage Egypt to democratize?
 - d) In an English-language editorial by the Egyptian official at the top of the formal Islamic hierarchy in Egypt, Sheikh Ali Gomaa, published a week before Obama’s arrival, Gomaa says that one of the changes that needs to be made to improve U.S. – Muslim world relations is “an end to the campaigns of defamation against Islam and the Muslim people, the aim of which was to fabricate and disseminate a false image of Islam and Muslims as the enemies of Western civilization.” How specifically does Obama try to do this in the speech?

Discussant 2:

- “Waiting for Action,” Gamal Essam el Din, *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 11-17 June 2009 (ER)
<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2009/951/eg4.htm>
- a) How specifically does each speaker seem to define the key components of democracy? (In other words, what specific aspects of democracy do they mention as essential, use as examples of what the U.S. expects, or criticize countries for having violated)? Are there key groups of political or civil rights on the Freedom House list that are not reflected in the speakers’ definitions? Does either speaker seem to focus more heavily on political rights or on civil liberties?
 - b) How does each speaker characterize the U.S. history of democracy? While using the U.S. as a model of democracy, does either address any shortcomings in U.S. democracy, historically or at present?

c) Is the tone of the speeches different? Does one come across as more of a “lecture,” or as more assertive than the other? How is democracy promotion in particular characterized (for example, is it something optional?) What will the U.S. role be in making it happen? If you were an everyday citizen in an Arab (Rice) or Muslim (Obama) country, would you find one speech more appealing/persuasive than the other?

d) According to the *al-Ahram Weekly* article above, how did leaders of Egyptian parties respond to Obama’s speech, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood?

Discussion 2: Iraq As A Rational, Deterrable Actor, 1990-2003?

- “Backfire: U.S. Policy Toward Iraq, 1988-2 August 1990,” Zachary Karabell, *Middle East Journal*, Winter 1995 (excerpts) (ER)

a) In the section of his article that you are reading, Gregory Gause argues that Saddam Hussein’s decision to invade Kuwait in 1990 resulted not from an opportunistic desire to take over a rich, militarily weaker neighbor, but because of Hussein’s belief that his regime was severely threatened by external pressures which could only be limited by invading Kuwait. Gause supports his case with careful attention to the timing of key events leading up to the war. What key events, in what order, happened in Gause’s recounting *to support his hypothesis that the Kuwait invasion was motivated by fear of external threats to Hussein’s regime*. According to Gause, if the alternative hypotheses which he suggests (offensive realism and predilection to violence) were the main causes of the invasion, how would its timing have been different?

b) Although Kuwaiti actions like the decision to produce more oil than the OPEC quota allowed, and the Kuwaiti refusal to forgive 1980s war debts, clearly played a role in prompting the invasion, Gause makes clear that Hussein was convinced that the U.S. was seeking to overthrow him whether he invaded or withdrew from Kuwait or did not. What examples of U.S. actions does Gause cite as having been seen by Hussein as evidence of U.S. intent to overthrow him? In light of U.S. actions as described in the Karabell piece in this same period, does Hussein’s belief seem rational? Why or why not – be specific.

c) Why do Mearsheimer and Walt believe that Saddam Hussein would not (or could be induced not to) use chemical or nuclear weapons against the U.S. or its allies, or transfer nuclear technology to other U.S. enemies? Do you find this argument plausible?

Discussion 3: Sectarianism in Iraq, 2003-9

Discussant 1:

- *Night Draws Near: Iraq’s People in the Shadow of America’s War*, Anthony Shadid, (Picador, 2005), 261-285 (ER)

Take the role of a Sunni Arab Iraqi who is angry with the position of Sunni Arabs since 2003, but who has not joined the insurgency (although you may be sympathetic to it). You can choose to be a man or a woman; if you choose to be a woman, in addition to including the issues discussed here, make some references to how your situation as a woman has changed since 2003 (particularly using Riverbend's experiences). **Speaking in the first person**, explain how you feel Sunni Arabs have been specifically disadvantaged from the time of the invasion through 2009. Make sure to include your concerns about the 2005 elections; you can also refer to the experiences addressed in *My Country, My Country* if you wish.

Discussant 2:

- Sami Zubaida, "The Fragments Imagine the Nation: The Case of Iraq," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 2002, pp. 211-214 (ER)
 - Eric Davis, "The Uses of Historical Memory," *Journal of Democracy*, July 2005 (ER)
- a) Does Riverbend think that sectarian differences between Arab Sunnis and Shi'a have always existed in Iraq, or that they developed for the first time, or changed significantly, since 2003? If she thinks they have significantly changed post-2003, to what does she attribute these changes? Be specific.
- b) Do the Zubaida and Davis readings, which discuss relations between different religious and ethnic groups in Iraq between 1920 and 1950, seem to suggest that in the pre-Saddam Hussein period there was much sectarian tension among these groups? Did Sunni and Shi'a Arabs and Kurds join together around common goals? Were there recurring sources of disagreement or tension among them?

Davis: From efforts by Sunni and Shi'ite Arab notables to found a national educational system before the First World War to intercommunal opposition to the postwar British project of imposing a monarchy and constitution on Iraq, the 1920 Revolution, the 1931 general strike, the 1948 protests against the Anglo-Iraqi Portsmouth Treaty, and the 1954 elections (which saw a coalition of ideologically diverse, democratic parties win significant parliamentary representation), interethnic cooperation was the norm rather than the exception in Iraqi politics.

Discussion 4: Kurdish Power and Desires Post-2003

- *Squandered Victory: The American Occupation and the Bungled Effort to Bring Democracy to Iraq*, Larry Diamond, (Owl Books, 2005), 161-178 (ER)
- a) Because they were well-organized (including having their own *peshmerga* militias), had U.S. sympathy because of their mistreatment by successive Iraqi regimes, and already had a strong power base because they had had their own region since 1991, the Kurds entered into the negotiations for the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) and the Iraqi constitution with much

more power than their 20% of the population would suggest. What specific provisions in the TAL does Diamond say were devised by the Kurds or specifically protected their interests?

- c) How does the International Crisis Group suggest that the dispute over Kirkuk be handled? Given what you have read in the class readings, including the Packer piece on Kirkuk, do you think the Kurds would be likely to accept this outcome? Why or why not?

Discussion 5: Is Iran post-1979 more democratic than it was under the Shah? Is it more democratic than authoritarian Arab countries?

Discussant 1:

- International Religious Freedom Report, 2007, State Department
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90210.htm>
 - Freedom House subcategory scores of Iran and Egypt in 2009 at
<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=483>
 - 2009 *Freedom in the World* country reports on each country, sections titled “Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2009&country=7601>
<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=363&year=2009&country=7627>
- a) Mohsen Milani argues that “a higher percentage of the population has been politically active in Islamic Iran (Langohr: post-1979) than under the rule of ...the Shah (78).” What does he mean by “politically active?” What evidence does he use to support his argument? Do you find the “higher percentage” argument persuasive?
- b) According to Mahdavi and the Freedom House 2009 report on Iran, and what categories on the civil liberties side of the Freedom House definition of democracy does Iran violate? (You don’t have enough information to answer each question on the civil liberties side; just connect the Mahdavi and FH 2009 information to the relevant FH civil liberties questions.)
- c) According to the *International Religious Freedom Report 2007*, to what extent do religious minorities in Iran have the freedom to practice their faith?

Discussant 2:

- “Fatemeh Haqiqatjoo and the Sixth Majles,” Ziba Mir-Hosseini, *Middle East Report*
<http://www.merip.org/mer/mer233/mir-hosseini.html>
(stop at “I Can No Longer Keep My Oath”) (Discussant 2)

- Freedom House subcategory scores of Iran and Egypt in 2009 and *Freedom in the World* country reports at the web addresses above

Iran's political system combines an unelected Supreme Leader and an elected president and parliament. Large numbers of people who would like to run for the offices of president and parliament are disqualified by the unelected Guardian Council, but before the June 2009 presidential election, the conduct of most elections was generally deemed free and fair.

Consider the 2005 presidential election in which Mubarak was re-elected president and the way the current parliament were chosen. Also consider the 2006 amendments to the Egyptian constitution.

Prior to the June 2009 presidential elections in Iran, how would you compare the Egyptian and Iranian political systems on the following two grounds:

- How much freedom do Egyptians and Iranians have to choose the two most powerful people in their political systems: the Supreme Leader (Iran) and the President (Egypt)? Consider in the case of Egypt the 2005 elections, the constitutional amendments, and Weaver's argument about how the succession to Mubarak is likely to be handled.
- In terms of disqualifying candidates who want to run for president or parliament, or severely obstructing opposition candidates who want to run from winning, how would you compare the Egyptian and Iranian regimes? Make sure to consider here the Muslim Brotherhood's experience in elections in Egypt.

Discussion 6: Changes in Women's Status Over Time in Iran

Discussant 1:

- a) How did the revolution change family relations and women's role in the family?
- d) Have women been successful in pushing back against/changing situations designed to discriminate against them, either on the individual level in their families or workplaces or in terms of laws and how strictly they are enforced? Give specific examples.
- e) In her discussions of young Iranian women's sexual and public behavior, Mahdavi notes that "these women explained to me that what I was witnessing was a sexual and social revolution, intended to have political reverberations. What seemed to other people to be fashion choices or response to peer pressure actually" was (at least in part) intended as opposition to the government and an attempt to get the government to change laws restricting youth behavior. Do you find the argument that the behavior Mahdavi describes (like going to parties, engaging in premarital sex, wearing tighter clothes and more makeup) can be a form of political opposition against a dictatorship persuasive? Can the limitation of these rights by the government be connected to specific rights on the Freedom

House civil rights list? If so, which ones? Does it seem like the youth Mahdavi interviews are actually motivated by a desire to oppose the government, or is this just a justification to make their behavior seem more socially valuable?

Discussant 2:

- “Out of the Frying Pan, Into the Fire: Young Iranian Women Today,” Norma Claire Moruzzi and Fatemeh Sadeghi, *Middle East Report*, Winter 2006 (ER)
 - a) Moruzzi argues that “in evaluating women’s position in...(Iran), it is important to look at the social, as opposed to the legal, aspects of citizenship” (22). Have social changes in the fields of education, access to birth control, and marriage since the revolution increased women’s rights?
 - b) Provide a brief analysis of the ways in which women’s rights have decreased and, if you think there are any, increased after 1979 when compared with the Shah’s regime. (In other words, what rights did women have and not have pre-1979; compared with this, what rights have they lost and gained post-1979)? Remember to include not just formal, legal rights, such as the Family Protection Law or laws about clothing, but also social changes in fields such as education and birth control access.
 - c) Answer the Mahdavi question above.

Discussion 7: The Goals of the Iranian Regime

Assume the role of an official representative of the Iranian equivalent of the State Department doing a training session for new hires to bring them up to speed on the major goals that the Iranian regime would like to achieve. SPEAKING IN THE FIRST PERSON, explain to these new employees the goals of Iran’s leadership, making sure to include oil, alliances with foreign countries, increasing economic resources available to the country, and the kind of role in the region and the world that Iran would like to have. (REMINDER: THIS SHOULD BE BASED ON THE IN-CLASS READINGS, particularly, but not necessarily exclusively, Katzman, Milani, and Makovsky/Ross and Tirman, insofar as the latter two sets of authors are suggesting what kinds of things Iran would like to achieve).

Discussion 8: What Are the Sanctions on Iran?

- “Sanctions Against Iran: A Promising Struggle,” Michael Jacobson, *The Washington Quarterly*, 2008, pp. 75-76 http://www.twq.com/08summer/docs/08summer_jacobson.pdf

Sanctions on Iran have been the major tool which the international community to date has tried to induce Iran to stop developing its nuclear capacity. Assume the role of a sanctions expert

at the U.S. State Department, tasked with familiarizing new State Department employees with the current sanctions in place on Iran. Describe what they are. (Don't just give the list and chronology of sanctions straight from Katzman, but explain what particular resources are denied to Iran by what sanctions.) Make sure to differentiate between U.S. unilateral sanctions and U.N. sanctions.

Discussion 9: Have Sanctions Actually Hurt Iran, or the Iranian Regime? Would Different Kinds of Sanctions Be Better?

- “‘Crippling’ Sanctions Will Still Be Ineffective,” Jamsheed Choksy, *Foreign Policy*, August 4, 2009
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/08/04/crippling_iran_sanctions_will_still_be_ineffective
- “Cato: America’s Policy Options on Iran,” Ted Galen Carpenter, September 20, 2006, pp. 4-5
<http://www.cfr.org/publication/11682/cato.html>
- “Sanctions Against Iran: A Promising Struggle,” 76-78
http://www.twq.com/08summer/docs/08summer_jacobson.pdf

As we touched on briefly in the case of international sanctions on Iraq in the 1990s, it is often very difficult for policymakers to craft sanctions which (even if they don't change the targeted regime's behavior) a) cause significant pain to the regime, while b) not primarily or exclusively causing pain to ordinary citizens who may have little leverage over what the regime does.

a) How specifically do Makovsky and Ross and other authors suggest that U.S. sanctions have hurt Iraq?

b) Why do Tirman and Carpenter say that sanctions have not been useful (make sure to include Carpenter's comparative analysis of use of sanctions outside of Iran). Which argument (sanctions have hurt the regime/have not) do you find more persuasive, and why?

c) What does Choksy say that more effective sanctions than those currently in place would look like?

Discussion 10: Can More Economic Pressure Be Brought to Bear on Iran?

- “Stuart Levey’s War,” Robin Wright, *New York Times Magazine*, October 31, 2008
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/02/magazine/02IRAN-t.html?_r=1&pagewanted=2

a) Makovsky/Ross argue that the U.S. could significantly increase financial pressure

on Iran by inducing several other countries to modify their economic policies. What specific policies, of which countries, would they like to see changed, and why do they think it is realistic to expect that these countries would find it in their interest to do this?

b) As described in the Wright article, the U.S. Treasury Department has already developed and implemented mechanisms other than sanctions to decrease trade with and investment in Iran. What are they, and have they hurt the Iranian economy? Give specifics.

Discussion 11: Podhoretz's Argument in Favor of A U.S. Attack on Iran

- a) Briefly – in 1-2 minutes - summarize the key reasons why Podhoretz thinks the U.S. should attack Iran.
- b) Many of the authors that we will read, both those who advocate an attack and those who do not, base their arguments in part on analogies in which they compare Iran to other countries over the last century and draw conclusions from these comparisons about how the U.S. should proceed. Podhoretz believes that Iran, especially under Ahmedinijad, is most similar to World War II Germany, arguing that Ahmedinijad “like Hitler..(is) a revolutionary whose objective is to overturn the going international system and replace it in the fullness of time with a new order dominated by Iran and and ruled by the religiopolitical culture of Islamofascism. Like Hitler, too, he is entirely open about his intentions, although - again like Hitler - he sometimes pretends that he wants nothing more than his country's just due.”

What does Podhoretz mean when he says that Ahmedinijad wants to create a new international system dominated by Iran and Islamofascist culture? What evidence does he provide for this? How does he see this as similar to what he describes as Hitler's attempt to spread fascism throughout Europe?

c) Are there similarities between what Bacevich refers to as the first or second generations of neoconservative foreign policy thinking (particularly as applied to Iraq) and Podhoretz's arguments, particularly but not exclusively the role that the Holocaust played in shaping neoconservative thinking and the role it plays in Podhoretz's Iran argument?

Discussion 12: Is Iran A Rational Foreign Policy Actor? Part I

- “The Myth of The Mad Mullahs,” David Ignatius, *Washington Post*, December 5, 2007
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/04/AR2007120401669.html>

a) Those who argue that a nuclear-armed Iran could not be dissuaded from using nuclear weapons by conventional deterrence often argue that unlike other cases in which deterrence worked, Iran's leaders are religious fanatics who do not make rational decisions. What specific

proof do various authors give for this, particularly of Iranian actions that demonstrate irrationality?

b) In the arguments we have read in this section, opponents of the thesis that Iran cannot be deterred because it is irrational offer two different but related arguments: 1) Iranian foreign policy actors are not acting irrationally, and 2) other nuclear-armed enemies of the U.S. in the past were said at the time to be irrational, but in fact they were successfully deterred through conventional deterrence. Explain these arguments as they appear in the Desch, Zakaria, and Ignatius readings and back them up with specific evidence from these authors. What sections of the 2007 NIE that Ignatius refers to suggest rational behavior by Iranian foreign policy elites?

Discussion 13: Is A U.S. or Israeli Attack on Iran Practical? What Can Iran Do To Retaliate?

- http://www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/World_Oil_Transit_Chokepoints/Hormuz.html
<http://hormuz.robertstrausscenter.org/disruption>
http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/070326_iranoil_hormuz.pdf
http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=email_en&sid=a_Aw9B.MGCuY

a) What specific obstacles to a U.S., and to an Israeli, attack do the Fallows and the Cordesman/Toukan reading raise? Do these obstacles seem surmountable – why or why not?

b) If the U.S. or Israel attacked Iran or seemed on the verge of doing so, how could Iran retaliate to make life more difficult for either country or the West in general?

Discussion 14: Iran's View of the U.S.-Iran Relationship

- Bush 2002 State of the Union address, until “I am a proud member of my party”
<http://archives.cnn.com/2002/ALLPOLITICS/01/29/bush.speech.txt/>

Much of the Tirman argument assumes that Iran a) believes that it has been on the receiving end of negative and largely unfair treatment from the U.S. for several decades and b) that much of that belief is rational and justified. Assume the role of an Iranian foreign policy spokesman, and, SPEAKING IN THE FIRST PERSON, do a chronological presentation laying out what you see as repeated attacks on Iran over the years by the U.S. (beginning with Mossadegh and including the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, and going until the present day. Include a list of the ways in which Iran has tried to cooperate with or assist the U.S., only to find its efforts unrequited or ignored (particularly in Afghanistan in 2001-2). (Make sure to include the 2003 initiative).

Discussion 15: Is Iran A Rational Foreign Policy Actor? Part II

If we assume that leaders of a “rational” state would do the following: try their best to remain in power, use all prudent means to increase the regional/international power of their

country, attempt to gain allies, and try increase the number of economic resources available to the country, do the readings of the last three days give any evidence of Iran behaving in a rational way in international politics since the 1979 revolution? (Don't just list its goals, but describe actions that suggest it behaved rationally). Any source in the Iran nuclear section of our syllabus can be used here, but particularly Milani's "Tehran's Take," the ICG piece, and Tirman will be useful.

Discussion 16: No Carrots, No Sticks, No Preconditions: Tirman's Argument

- Text of President Obama's Message to Iran, 20 March 2009

<http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2009-03/2009-03-20-voa7.cfm?CFID=278922501&CFTOKEN=41536103&jsessionid=8430615d3222ac42fff8366e62266165c217>

- a) What specific steps would Tirman say the U.S. should take toward Iran?
- b) Tirman says that the U.S. should significantly change the kind of language it uses in addressing Iran. What kind of language does he say that the U.S. has used and should be avoided? Does Obama's speech to the Iranians on the occasion of Nawruz seem to be the kind of change Tirman has been addressing?

"carrots and sticks" should not be used, as Iranians say they are not donkeys and cannot be bought off or beaten into submission. Stop talking about Iran as a rogue state, abusive to its own citizens, anti-Semitic, the main cause of violence in Iraq – we have to recognize in public discourse the fact of the IRI, that most Iranians and others in the region consider it legitimate. The all options on the table argument (about violence) is nonsense and needs to be discarded.

Obama: Nowruz is just one part of your great and celebrated culture. Over many centuries, your art, music, literature and innovation have made the world a better and more beautiful place. Here in the United States, our own communities have been enhanced by the contributions of Iranian-Americans. We know that you are a great civilization, and your accomplishments have earned the respect of the United States and the world...My Administration is now committed to diplomacy that addresses the full range of issues before us, and to pursuing constructive ties among the United States, Iran, and the international community. This process will not be advanced by threats. We seek, instead, engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual respect.

You, too, have a choice. The United States wants the Islamic Republic of Iran to take its rightful place in the community of nations. You have that right – but it comes with real responsibilities

- c) Does Tirman's account of conditions which made the Gorbachev-Reagan détente possible suggest that having regular contacts between enemy countries – rather than a policy of no

contact, no embassies in each other's countries, etc – significantly helps to lead to peaceful breakthroughs?

Never were U.S.-USSR ties severed; even in the middle of serious confrontations like Cuba were they broken. By the time Reagan was president several arms treaties had been signed. Mil-to-mil contacts institutionalized, so “even when relations were soured by events, the process lived on.” Things really developed after R and G met in a summit, and R and G’s personal relationship was key to success – five summits and close coop between Sec of State Shultz and FM Shevardnadze. Sizable commitment to understanding each other over many years, with extensive contact through scientific, educational, and cultural exchanges.

d) Do you find the Tirman argument compelling? Why or why not? Be specific.

Discussion 17: Tirman vs. Makovsky/Ross

- “Open Letter from Akbar Ganji,” Boston Review
<http://bostonreview.net/BR32.5/ganji.php>
- a) Although Tirman and Makovsky/Ross are making significantly different arguments, are there any places in which they would agree? Do they share any of the same presumptions about how relations with Iran should be conducted? Most importantly, would Makovsky/Ross disagree with any of the specific policies which Tirman advocates – if so, which ones, and specifically why?
- b) One of Tirman’s main arguments is that coercion has not and will not work to get Iran to change its foreign policy in a way that the U.S. would like. What proof does he provide for this contention?
- c) Does the 2003 offer from Iran to the U.S. described in the Parsi book, particularly its timing, support, undermine, or have nothing to do with Tirman’s argument that coercion (or fear of future coercive measures) has been and will be unsuccessful in pressing Iran to change its policies?
- d) Akbar Ganji, one of Iran’s leading human rights advocates and political dissidents, argues in his open letter both for strong international support for increased political and civil rights in Iran, and against any military attack on the country. What are his arguments in favor of this, and what specific kind of support does he want the international community to provide? Why does he see the U.S. as an inappropriate actor to directly sponsor democratization activities in Iran?

Discussion 18: Herzl and Jabotinsky’s Arguments for Zionism

- a) Theodor Herzl is known as one of the founding fathers of Zionism, the belief that Jews deserve and should create a homeland in what is now the state of Israel. Many authors consider Zionism a form of nationalism, insofar as all nationalists (before their countries

are founded), make the argument that a particular group of people (the French, the Italians, etc.) are indeed one people who share common characteristics which distinguish them from any other people, and that, as a unique people, they deserve to have control of a country in which they constitute the majority. Herzl is making the argument that a particular religious affiliation – being Jewish – makes Jews, wherever they live in the world, a single people. So what role does religion and Judaism play in his arguments for the right of the Jews to a homeland in Israel? Does he argue that God has given Jews the right to this land? What role does the historical fact that, prior to the Jewish exodus in 70 A.D., Jews were the majority in the Biblical land of Israel, and had a kingdom there, play in his argument?

- b) What does Herzl think is the cause of anti-Semitism, and how does he believe that the creation of a state of Israel will ameliorate this problem?
- c) What is Jabotinsky arguing justifies the creation of the state of Israel? If you were a Palestinian living in that land at the time of Jabotinsky's speech, how persuasive would you find his argument that "when the Arab claim (for the right of Palestinians to a Palestinian state) is confronted with our Jewish demand to be saved, it is like the claims of appetite vs. the claims of starvation"? Would you find Jabotinsky's overall argument that Jews have more of a right to this land than Palestinians convincing – why or why not?

Discussion 19: Marketing the Settlements in the U.S.

- <http://www.amana.co.il/Index.asp?CategoryID=102&ArticleID=191>
 - <http://www.amana.co.il/Index.asp?CategoryID=100>
 - "U.S. Synagogue Holds Event Promoting Sale of West Bank Homes," *Ha'aretz*, February 26, 2007 <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/830508.htm>
 - "Settlers Launch First Drive in U.S. to Sell Homes," Daphna Berman, *Ha'aretz*, June 3, 2007 <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/832405.html>
- a) The Amana Settlement movement is a group, and a company, which builds settlements in the West Bank (the first link above is their English-language homepage). As the *Ha'aretz* articles here discuss, a part of Amana's goal is to find U.S. buyers for settlement homes. Pick approximately ten individual settlements (link #2 is a list of all the settlements by name; click on a name to find information about that settlement). Include among your ten the following settlements: Ofra, Tel Menashe, Rehelim, and Itamar. What kind of picture emerges about the various settlements from their descriptions on this website? In what ways do the authors of the website try to make these particular settlements appealing to potential residents – and from the descriptions, what kinds of people do you think the authors believe are most likely to be attracted to the settlements?

- b) Print out a map of Israel and the West Bank (if you cannot find one, ask the professor), and plot the locations of your ten settlements on it. You can do this either in a Powerpoint slide which you show to the class or in a handout distributed to the class.
- c) According to the *Ha'aretz* articles, who is Amana targeting in the U.S. settlement fair, and what is it trying to do, both rhetorically and financially, to make buying these settlement homes attractive to U.S. buyers?

Discussion 20: Christian Zionist Support for West Bank Settlements

- “Israel’s Unlikely Ally: American Evangelicals,” Ilene Prusher, *Christian Science Monitor*, April 24, 1998
<http://www.csmonitor.com/1998/0424/042498.intl.intl.2.html>
- Christian Friends of Israeli Communities, www.cfoic.com
- “U.S. Tax Breaks Help Jewish Settlers in the West Bank,” Adam Entous, Reuters, August 25, 2008 <http://www.reuters.com/article/newsOne/idUSLK27562120080825>
- Also read ahead the article “Playing the Jesus Card” from the last day of the syllabus.

a) Describe briefly (5-7 minutes) how some groups of U.S. Christians have, concretely and specifically, helped Israeli settlements to grow. How does Entous argue that U.S. tax law facilitates such assistance?

b) Who are Christian Friends of Israeli Communities? Why do they oppose Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, and a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? How, throughout their website, do they try to make the cause of strengthening the settlements attractive to readers?

c) Why do CFOIC and other U.S. Christians described in these readings believe that Christians in particular are required to support a strong Israel and settlements?

Discussion 21: The Outpost Settlements and Their Resistance to Israeli Withdrawal

- “Israeli Report Condemns Support for Settler Outposts,” Steven Erlanger, March 8, 2005, *New York Times*, March 9, 2005
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=990DE2DF163CF93AA35750C0A9639C8B63&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all>
- “Israeli Settler Youth on the Rampage in Hebron,” Tony Karon and Aaron Klein, *Time Magazine*, December 5, 2008
<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1864616,00.html>

- “West Bank Settlers Send Obama A Defiant Message,” Ethan Bronner, *New York Times*, July 29, 2009
http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/30/world/middleeast/30settlers.html?_r=1&scp=2&sq=Nahliel&st=cse
- Jewish Settlements Threaten Viability of Palestinian State, *Der Spiegel*, Juliane von Mittelstaedt, August 17, 2009
<http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,643253,00.html>
- Also review the “Unsettlers” article from earlier in the syllabus
 - c) Who are the “Hilltop Youth,” and what are they trying to achieve? More specifically, what is the demographic profile of outpost settlers (young, old, religious, etc.) and why do they believe that what they are doing is necessary and right?
 - d) According to Israeli law, these settlements are illegal, but many Israelis and others say that the Israeli government is not serious about permanently uprooting these settlements. Is there any specific support for this contention in the readings?
 - e) If a peace settlement stipulated permanent Israeli withdrawal from West Bank settlements, including the outposts about which you have read, do you think these outpost settlers would agree to be evacuated peacefully? If not, why not, and what might they do instead?

