



The Coming Test of U.S. Credibility

Amitai Etzioni

America's influence has dwindled everywhere with the financial crisis and the rise of emerging powers. But it seems to be withering faster in the Middle East than anywhere else.

—“Great sacrifices, small rewards,” *The Economist*, 1 January 2011.

THE RELATIVE POWER of the United States is declining—both because other nations are increasing their power and because the U. S. economic challenges and taxing overseas commitments are weakening it. In this context, the credibility of U.S. commitments and the perception that the United States will back up its threats and promises with appropriate action is growing in importance. In popular terms, high credibility allows a nation to get more mileage out of a relatively small amount of power, while low credibility leads to burning up much greater amounts of power.

The Theory of Credibility

One definition of power is the ability of *A* to make *B* follow a course of action that *A* prefers. The term “make” is highly relevant. When *A* convinces *B* of the merit of the course *A* prefers, and *B* voluntarily follows it, we can refer to this change of course as an application of “persuasive power” or “soft power.” However, most applications of power are based either on coercion (if you park in front of a fire hydrant, your car is towed) or economic incentives and disincentives (you are fined to the point where you would be disinclined to park there). In these applications of power, *B* maintains his original preferences but is either prevented from following them or is pained to a point where he will suspend resistance.

Every time *A* calls on *B* to change course, *A* is tested twice. First, if *B* does not follow *A*'s call, *A* will fail to achieve its goals (Nazi Germany annexes Austria, despite protests by the United Kingdom and France). Second, *A* loses some credibility, making *B* less likely to heed *A*'s future demands (Nazi Germany becomes more likely to invade Poland). On the other hand, if *B* heeds *A*'s demand, *A* wins twice: it achieves its goal (e.g., the United States dismantles the regime of Saddam Hussein and establishes that there are no WMDs in Iraq), and it increases the likelihood that future demands will be

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PHOTO: Anti-government protesters demonstrate in Tahrir Square in Cairo, 1 February 2011. (The Yomiuri Shimbun via AP Images)

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heeded without power actually being exercised (e.g. Libya voluntarily dismantles its WMD program following the invasion of Iraq). In short, the higher a nation's credibility, the more it will be able to achieve without actually employing its power or by employing less of it when it must exercise its power.

Political scientists have qualified this basic version of the power/credibility theory. In his detailed examination of three historical cases, Daryl G. Press shows that in each instance, the *Bs* made decisions based upon their perception of the current intentions and capabilities of *A*, rather than on the extent to which *A* followed up on previous threats. Thus, if *A* does not have the needed forces or if *A*'s interests in the issue at hand are marginal, its threats will not carry much weight no matter how "credible" *A* was in the past. For example, if the United States had announced that it would invade Burma unless it released opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest (she was eventually released in November 2010), such a threat would not have carried much weight—regardless of past U.S. actions—because the issue did not seem reason enough for the United States to invade Burma, and because the U.S. Army was largely committed elsewhere.

Another political scientist, Kathleen Cunningham, has shown that the credibility of promises—as opposed to the credibility of threats—is much more difficult to maintain because the implementation of promises is often stretched over long periods of time.¹ The bulk of this essay focuses on dealing with threats, rather than promises.

Declining U.S. Power and Credibility

Over the last few years, much attention has been paid to the relative decline of U.S. power, but much less has been said of changes in U.S. credibility.

While there has been some erosion in the relative power of the United States measured since 1945 or 1990), the swings in the level of its credibility have been much more pronounced. When the United States withdrew its forces from Vietnam in 1973, its credibility suffered so much that many observers doubted whether the United States would ever deploy its military overseas unless it faced a much greater and direct threat than it faced in Southeast Asia. Additional setbacks over the next decades followed, including the failed rescue of American hostages in Iran during the last year of the Carter administration and President Reagan's withdrawal of U.S. Marines from Lebanon after the October 1983 Hezbollah bombing of U.S. barracks in Beirut. The bombing killed 241 American servicemen, but it elicited no punitive response—the administration abandoned a plan to assault the training camp where Hezbollah had planned the attack.²

Operation Desert Storm drastically increased U.S. military credibility. The United States and the UN demanded that Saddam Hussein withdraw from Kuwait. When he refused, U.S. and Allied forces quickly overwhelmed his military with a low level of American casualties, contrary to expectations. Saddam's forces were defeated with less than 400 American casualties.³ The total cost of defeating Saddam was \$61 billion—almost 90 percent of which was borne by U.S. allies.⁴ When Serbia ignored the demands of the United States and other Western nations to withdraw its hostile forces and halt ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, NATO forces defeated the Serbs with little effort, losing only two troops in a helicopter training accident.⁵ U.S. credibility reached a high mark in 2003, when the United States, employing a much smaller force than in 1991, overthrew Saddam Hussein's regime swiftly and with a low level of American casualties, again despite expectations to the contrary. In the first phase of the war—up to 1 May 2003, when the Saddam regime was removed and no WMDs were found—there had been only 172 American casualties.⁶ Only \$56 billion had been appropriated for Iraq operations.⁷

Those who hold that credibility matters little should pay mind to the side effects of Operation Iraqi Freedom. After the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Libya did not merely stop developing WMDs or allow inspections, it allowed the United States to pack cargo

planes with several tons of nuclear equipment and airlift it from the country.⁸ The country surrendered centrifuges, mustard gas tanks, and SCUD missiles. It sent 13 kilograms of highly enriched uranium to Russia for blending down, destroyed chemical weapons, and has assisted the United States in cracking down on the global black market for nuclear arms technology.⁹ The reasons are complex, and experts point out that Muammar al-Gaddafi, the leader of Libya, was under considerable domestic pressure to ease his country's economic and political isolation.¹⁰ Gaddafi also believed he was next in line for a forced regime change. In a private conversation with Silvio Berlusconi, Italy's prime minister, in 2003, Gaddafi is reported to have said, "I will do whatever the Americans want, because I saw what happened in Iraq, and I was afraid."¹¹

Iran's best offer by far regarding its nuclear program occurred in 2003, at a time when U.S. credibility reached its apex. In a fax transmitted to the State Department through the Swiss ambassador, who confirmed that it had come from "key power centers" in Iran, Iran asked for "a broad dialogue with the United States." The fax "suggested everything was on the table—including full cooperation on nuclear programs, acceptance of Israel and the termination of Iranian support for Palestinian militant groups."¹² (The Bush administration, however, considered the Iranian regime to be on the verge of collapse at the time, and, according to reports, it "belittled the initiative.")¹³ Richard Haass, who at the time was serving as director of policy planning at the State Department, stated that the offer was spurned because "the bias [in the Bush administration] was toward a policy of regime change."¹⁴ Still, in 2004, Britain, France, and Germany secured a temporary suspension of uranium enrichment in Iran.¹⁵ It lasted until 2006, when American credibility began to decline.¹⁶ Also in 2004, Iran offered to make the "European Three" a guarantee that its nuclear program would be used "exclusively for peaceful purposes," as long as the West would provide "firm commitments on security issues."¹⁷

In 2005, as U.S. difficulties in Iraq and Afghanistan mounted and its level of casualties—as well as those of its allies and of the local populations—increased without a victory in sight, U.S. credibility was gradually undermined. Since 2005, more than 4,000 Americans and hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have



(AP Photo/Iraqi TV via AP/TN)

Saddam Hussein is seen in this image from video broadcast on Iraqi television, 2003.

died, and the direct cost of military operations in the country has exceeded \$650 billion.¹⁸ The same holds true in Afghanistan—only more strongly—already the longest war in which the United States has ever engaged, with rising casualties and costs.

Both credibility-undermining developments were the result of a great expansion of the goals of the mission. In Iraq, the mission was initially to overthrow the regime and ensure that it has no WMDs. In Afghanistan, the mission was initially to eradicate Al-Qaeda. But in both countries, the mission morphed into the costly task of nation building—although other terms were used, such as reconstruction and COIN (counterinsurgency)—which includes building an effective and legitimate government composed of the native population.

In popular terms, the United States won the wars but has been losing the peace. The distinction between the pure military phase (which was very successful in both countries) and the troubled nation-building phase that followed has eluded the Nation's adversaries, who have focused on the fact that the United States seems to have great difficulties in making progress toward its expanded goals. Thus, even if the United States achieves its extended goals

in these two nations, it will have done so only with great efforts and at high costs. And many observers are very doubtful that these nations will be turned into stable governments allied with the United States—let alone that they will be truly democratic. The fact that the United States is withdrawing from Iraq (and is on a timeline, however disputed, to begin withdrawal from Afghanistan)—regardless of whether its goals are fully accomplished—further feeds into the significant decline in its credibility. This stands out especially when compared to the credibility it enjoyed in 2003 and 2004.

The fact that the United States has, on several occasions, made specific and very public demands of various countries, only to have these demands roundly ignored—without any consequences—has not added to its credibility. On several occasions, the United States demanded Israel extend the freeze on settlement construction in the West Bank and cease building in East Jerusalem. While one can question whether such a call for a total freeze was justified, especially as no concessions were demanded from the Palestinians, one cannot deny that, as Israel ignored these demands and faced no consequences, U.S. credibility was diminished.

The same has occurred in Afghanistan. The United States voiced strong demands, only to be rebuffed very publicly by a government that would collapse were it not for American support. Moreover, the United States was forced to court President Hamid Karzai when he threatened to make peace on his own with the Taliban and was courted by Iran. A particularly telling example took place on 28 March 2010, when President Obama flew to Kabul and “delivered pointed criticism to Hamid Karzai” over pervasive corruption in the Afghan government.¹⁹ Then-National Security Advisor James Jones voiced the president’s concerns, stating that Karzai “needs to be seized with how important” the issue of corruption is for American efforts in the country.²⁰ But Karzai was “angered and offended” by the visit.²¹ Only days later, he made a series of inflammatory remarks about Western interference in his country, accused foreigners of a “vast fraud” in the Afghan presidential election, and threatened to ally himself with the Taliban.²² A few weeks after these statements, Karzai was in Washington as a guest of the White House, where he was well-received, and all seemed forgiven.

The Next Test

As I will show shortly, in recent years a large and growing number of U.S. allies and adversaries—especially in the Middle East—have questioned American commitment to back up its declared goals—that is, they question the Nation’s credibility. Hence, the way the United States conducts itself in the next test of its resolve will be unusually consequential for its position as a global power. I cannot emphasize enough that I am not arguing that the United States should seek a confrontation, let alone engage in a war, to show that it still has the capacity to back up its threats and promises by using conventional forces. (Few doubt U.S. power and ability to act as a nuclear power, but they also realize that nuclear power is ill-suited for many foreign policy goals.) However, I am suggesting that the ways in which the U.S. will respond to the next challenge to its power will have strong implications for its credibility—and for its need to employ power. One’s mind turns to two hot spots: North Korea and Iran.

North Korea is an obvious testing ground for American resolve. While Iran is denying that it is developing a military nuclear program, North Korea flaunts its program. While Iran is using its proxies, Hezbollah and Hamas, to trouble U.S. allies in the Middle East, North Korea has openly attacked the U.S. ally South Korea, both by reportedly torpedoing a South Korean ship in March 2010, killing 46 sailors, and by shelling a South Korean island in November, killing two South Korean soldiers. While Iran is spewing over-the-top accusations against the West, its rhetoric is no match for North Korea’s bellicose statements and actions. In short, North Korea would seem to be the place where U.S. credibility is most being tested and will continue to be in the near future.

At the same time, many military experts agree that on the Korean peninsula, the United States will be deterred from responding effectively to North Korean provocations and assaults. North Korea already has nuclear arms, roughly 1,000 missiles, many of which could devastate Seoul and other South Korean targets.²³ It has between 2,500 and 5,000 tons of chemical weapons (including sarin and mustard gas) that could be mounted on missiles, a sizeable conventional army, and leaders who are difficult to deter because they are considered irrational.²⁴

Hence, after the 2010 hostile acts by North Korea against a key U.S. ally, both Secretary of State



(Photo by Kim Min-Hee/Pool/Getty Images)

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaks beside South Korean Foreign Minister Yu Myung-Hwan during a press conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Seoul, South Korea, 28 May 2010.

Clinton and President Obama called on China for help. That is, the United States—unable to act—was publicly beseeching another power to come to the rescue. At the same time, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen, made a hasty trip to the region to discourage unilateral South Korean action.²⁵ All of these statements seem very prudent, even unavoidable. In fairness, I do not discern another course the United States could have followed. However, it does not build credibility or trust among allies. In short, unless the North Korean challenge grows much more severe, and arguably, even if it does, the United States is unlikely to enhance its credibility by the ways it responds to the challenges it currently faces there.

Next Test: The Middle East

This brings us to Iran. The president has consistently stated—both as a candidate and since taking office—that an Iran with nuclear arms is “unacceptable.”²⁶ Shortly after his election in November 2008, Obama declared that “Iran’s development of a nuclear weapon” is “unacceptable.”²⁷ In February 2009, he repeated that statement, saying Iran “continue[s]

to pursue a course that would lead to [nuclear] weaponization and that is not acceptable.”²⁸ In March 2010, after a meeting with European leaders, Obama stated, “The long-term consequences of a nuclear-armed Iran are unacceptable.”²⁹ When signing into law a new round of sanctions against Iran in July 2010, Obama repeated, “There should be no doubt—the United States and the international community are determined to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.”³⁰ Indeed, this has been a consistent stance throughout different U.S. administrations. In 2007, then-Vice President Cheney said, “We will not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon.”³¹ In 2009, Secretary of State Clinton declared, “We are going to do everything we can to prevent you [Iran] from getting a nuclear weapon. Your pursuit is futile.”³² Moreover, many see the acquisition of nuclear arms by Iran as a “game changer” because it would embolden Iran to become a regional hegemon. And yet many in the Middle East doubt that the United States will use its military force to stop Iran from gaining nuclear arms if sanctions fail.

All the nations in the Middle East, including the United States’ closest and strongest allies, are

already indicating that they have serious doubts about the U.S. commitment to the region, although the steps they have taken so far in response vary a great deal. The nuclear issue is the last cause for these concerns, which stem from many sources. They are due, in part, to the perception that the United States is overextended. Its military is held to exhaustion and mired in Afghanistan. It still seeks to play a role in practically all international and even domestic conflicts—from Colombia to Burma and from Sudan to Kosovo. It extends some form of aid to over 150 nations, including countries of rather limited global significance or relation to U.S. interests—East Timor, for instance.³³ The United States own economy is viewed as challenged, and its polity is often gridlocked. The notion of a “post-America” period of international relations is gaining currency.³⁴

Leaders overseas also note that influential American public intellectuals are calling on the United States to scale back its global activities. Michael Mandelbaum, Peter Beinart, and others argue that the next era of American foreign policy will be characterized by a much more constrained approach to the world. Others predict, or at least fear, that America is not merely scaling back, but will initiate a new isolationism leading it to abandon its allies and retreat to fortress America,” an inward-looking America unconcerned with global affairs.³⁵

A brief cook’s tour of the countries in the Middle East reveals that they are aware of and concerned about U.S. disengagement and declining power, and they are unable to determine how far America will draw down and which obligations it will continue to honor. That is, they question U.S. credibility.

The scaling back is most obvious in Iraq, where U.S. troops are rapidly leaving and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki recently stated that no American soldiers would remain in Iraq after the end of 2011. This posture puts the United States in the awkward position of trying to convince Iraq to allow some of its forces to remain or to attach them to its embassy. Maliki declared that Iraq would not

fall into Iran’s orbit.³⁶ However, the influence of Iran over Iraq’s Shi’ite-majority government is significant and growing. Iran has provided funding, training, and sanctuary to Shi’ite militias.³⁷ It also has become Iraq’s main trading partner.³⁸ Particularly revealing is the return of radical Shi’ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr to Iraq from Iran in early 2011. The eight months of deadlock following Iraq’s 2010 parliamentary elections had ended only after Sadr threw his political faction’s support behind the unity government of Prime Minister Maliki. Iran, where Sadr had been living for almost four years in self-imposed exile, brokered the deal.³⁹ Kenneth Pollack of the Brookings Institution stated that this development has the White House “very, very worried,” and added, “This is something Iran has been trying to do for months. Clearly this is a big win for them and really bad for the United States.”⁴⁰ Although Iran’s growing influence is not without ambiguities and difficulties, the fact remains that however one scores it, Iraq is a place where American influence is sinking, and Iranian influence is slowly rising.

Syria was a nation the United States hoped to disengage from Iran and bring into the Western fold. First, the Bush Administration, and then—to a much greater extent—the Obama administration courted Syria. Thus, in February 2010, Obama sent Under Secretary of State William Burns to meet Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and announce the nomination of a new ambassador to Syria, the first since 2005. The United States was willing to discuss lifting sanctions against Syria and pressuring Israel to give up the Golan Heights.⁴¹ Syria’s apparent response to the U.S. move was to host Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in order to underscore the strength of the Iranian-Syrian alliance.⁴² Syria not only rebuffed the U.S. overture, as it did previous ones, but moved in the opposite direction: closer to Iran. Iran has transferred advanced radar to Syria as a means of deterring Israeli military action,⁴³ and Syria serves as a main pipeline through which Iran ships missiles and

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other arms to Hezbollah in Lebanon, despite UN and other demands to desist. After the United States announced it would nominate a new ambassador, a gesture of engagement, the presidents of Syria and Iran jointly and publicly mocked U.S. policy, and Syria's president Bashar al-Assad criticized what he called America's "new situation of colonialism" in the region.⁴⁴

Lebanon is often considered one of the most democratic and pro-Western nations in the region. At the same time, Iran's role in Lebanon is greater than in any other nation in the region. This is due in part to the fact that Iran paid for a significant portion of the reconstruction of south Lebanon after the Israeli incursion, and because Hezbollah joined the government as a powerful coalition partner in 2009, while previously it was in the opposition. Even more important, Iran has placed in the hands of Hezbollah numerous advanced missiles and other military equipment,⁴⁵ and Hezbollah often follows instructions from Iran about when to employ its arms against Israeli,⁴⁶ American,⁴⁷ and other targets.⁴⁸

Turkey was once solidly in the Western camp. A secularized nation, a staunch member of NATO, a nation keen to join the European Union, and with

considerable commercial and even military ties to Israel, Turkey has become more Islamist, moved away from the West, and closer to Iran, since the 2002 election of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) to serve as prime minister. In the first five years of AKP rule in Turkey, trade with Iran multiplied six-fold.⁴⁹ This increased economic cooperation has translated into better political ties. In June 2010, when the United States finally succeeded in convincing Russia and even China to support additional sanctions against Iran, Turkey (working with Brazil), came up with a deal it negotiated with Iran regarding the treatment of uranium. Many observers viewed this deal as merely a stalling tactic to try to head off the sanction vote—that is, Turkey acted on Iran's behalf to undermine a major U.S. drive against Iran. When the vote did finally take place, Turkey voted against the sanctions.

Afghanistan's place on this axis is much less clear. The United States has announced that, as of July 2011, it will start scaling down its forces and will withdraw by 2014, although this deadline is said to depend on conditions on the ground. Switzerland has already removed its troops while the Dutch and Canadians will be gone by the end of 2011.



(AP Photo/Bassem/Tellawi)

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Syrian President Bashar Assad review the honor guard at al-Shaab presidential palace in Damascus, Syria, 25 February 2010.

The United Kingdom has announced it will have all its troops out in 2011. There is a strong sense among the Afghan elites that the United States has already abandoned them once (after they drove out the Soviet Union) and may well do so again.⁵⁰ They are mindful of the growing opposition to the war in the United States and its budgetary difficulties. The United States has already appropriated \$300 billion for Afghanistan.⁵¹ It plans to spend at least \$400 billion more over the next decade.⁵²

Pakistani elites have a similar fear of being abandoned by the United States: they worry that the United States is tilting toward India, which it views as a rising regional power that could “balance” China, and they are concerned the United States will distance itself from Pakistan once the Taliban is defeated. Pakistani media charge that the United States views their country as “The Disposable Ally.”⁵³

Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt are considered “Sunni nations” and the Arab nations closest to the United States. All these nations have expressed concerns about U.S. staying power.⁵⁴ In the absence of a strong American presence in the region, Saudi Arabia and Jordan are likely to follow their inclination to accommodate and compromise with the powers that be, rather than push back. For example, when Saddam was riding high and mighty, Jordan refrained from condemning Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990.



(AP Photo/Salih Zeki Fazloglu, Anatolia, Pool)

Iranian negotiators arrive for talks between Iran and world powers on Iran’s nuclear program, Ciragan Palace in Istanbul, Turkey, 21 January 2011.

It briefly joined Egypt and Syria in attacking Israel in 1967, but when Israel gained the upper hand, Jordan was quick to cut back its involvement, and in effect moved closer to Israel.⁵⁵ They are weathervane states, and the wind is blowing east.

Egypt, the most distant nation of the three from Iran, may be the only one with staying power. It does not maintain an embassy in Tehran and does little trade with Iran, and has shown that it can follow its own lights, both in dealing with Hamas and with Israel. The recent revolution—removing Hosni Mubrak from his 30-year reign—brings a whole new set of possibilities for Egypt.

As of the beginning of 2011, these Sunni nations, and most others in the Middle East, experienced regime-challenging convulsions, starting with the ousting of the president of Tunisia. It will take years to find out whether these convulsions will lead to truly democratic regimes, continued upheaval, Islamic fundamentalism, or to some other outcome. However, two developments are already quite clear and both deeply affect the issue at hand. First, the new regimes are very likely to be less committed to the United States than the old outgoing autocrats. And second, the new regimes will be more subject to meddling by Iran. This meddling may take only the form of fervent religious appeals and funding, but if the opportunity arises, also the provision of arms. To put it differently, if Iran’s hegemonic and militaristic ambitions can be dwarfed one way or another, the regime changes in the Middle East will be much less potentially damaging to the United States than if Iran is allowed to continue to follow its current course.

All three countries face transitions that could make them more vulnerable to Iranian influence—for instance, if the Palestinian majority plays more of a role in the government of Jordan or the Muslim Brotherhood in that of Egypt. However, these developments are particularly difficult to foretell. What is much clearer is that these nations are unlikely to serve as bulwarks against emerging Iranian hegemony in the region.

In addition, since 2008, both the Israeli government and the majority of Israeli voters have grown suspicious of U.S. support, in response to various reports about President Obama’s viewpoints and acts.

American allies in other regions are also consumed by doubts. South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan have

been enhancing bilateral military cooperation with the United States to make it more likely that America will honor its commitments to their security.⁵⁶ These countries will naturally also look to the way the United States responds to the Iranian challenge in the Middle East in order to judge to what extent they can rely on the support of an America that is scaling back its international role.

These countries are already consumed by doubts. Thus, a senior Japanese official briefed a group of Washington policymakers and analysts in January 2011, about what he called Japan's "credibility gap" with the United States. He reported that Japan was unsure that the U.S. nuclear umbrella indeed covered it, and that he believed that the U.S. would act against North Korea only if it sent its nuclear arms to other nations—not if it added to its nuclear arsenal and threatened its neighbors. (The official was talking under Chatham House rules, which allow one to use the information provided, but not to cite the source or venue.)

The fact that the United States is drawing back in the Middle East cannot be contested, given the drawdown in Iraq and expected drawdown in Afghanistan. Moreover, the fragile condition of these states after U.S. withdrawal is unlikely to enhance its credibility, especially given the high level of sacrifice involved in order to achieve whatever was achieved. Iranian influence is already growing in Turkey, Syria, and Lebanon and is

increasingly feared elsewhere, especially after the 2011 uprisings against aging Arab heads of state in Tunisia and Egypt. The question is whether the United States will be able to maintain its power and enhance its credibility in the region in ways other than those it used in the past; that is, without relying on large-scale military interventions, ground forces, and major commitments of economic aid. The American people are not likely to favor such costly commitments under current economic conditions at home. The strategy based on dealing with the nations on Iran's periphery—courting Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey to "peel" them away from Iran, to isolate Iran, and to induce it to change course—seems to be failing. The main alternative to working on Iran's periphery in order to affect Iran at the core is to deal directly with Iran itself in one way or another.

Best, and least likely, is for continued negotiations and engagement to work. Sanctions may lead to the same results, although their work is, at best, slow, and the day Iran tests its first nuclear weapons may well be closer at hand. We might want to consider military options as well. Whatever course we follow, success or failure here will determine U.S. credibility in the near future to a very large extent, and this in turn will significantly affect the ability of the United States to discharge what it sees as its global responsibilities and live up to its commitments overseas. **MR**

For more discussion, please visit Amitai Etzioni at <http://blog.amitaietzioni.org/> and <http://icps.gwu.edu/>.

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FM 7-0 Training Units and Developing Leaders for Full Spectrum Operations

U.S. Army Combined Arms Center
Intellectual Center of the Army

ATN
Army Training Network

The new FM 7-0, Training Units and Developing Leaders for Full Spectrum Operations, is the Army's keystone doctrine for training units and developing leaders for full spectrum operations on a rotational cycle using the ARFORGEN process. It supports the concepts in FM 3-0, Operations.

The 2011 FM 7-0 is less than a third as long as the 2008 version and is best viewed on the Army Training Network (<https://atn.army.mil>). The online FM 7-0 links to videos, documents, best practices, examples and other resources.

Other significant changes: FM 7-0 for the first time incorporates leader development as part of unit training; replaces Core METL and Directed METL with FSO METL; focuses on a modular, brigade-centric force in the ARFORGEN process; introduces the importance of FSO training against complex hybrid threats; and makes training management an intellectual process rather than lock-step.

The proponent for FM 7-0 is the Combined Arms Center. View FM 7-0 at <https://atn.army.mil>

FM 7-0
Training Units and Developing Leaders for Full Spectrum Operations