



The Seemingly Tripod of Strategic Stability of the Middle East: An Exploratory Political-Economic Review & Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The world's stabilization policy in the Middle East has consistently failed through the U.S.-Israeli biases, a growth of extremism in all fronts, including Israeli government, and unexceptionally supported by the U.S. government, some Palestinian leading segments, and other regional powers' intervention. Moreover, to a large extent, because of all that fiasco and imbalanced treatment of the more independent nations, Islamist terrorism has been growing and added to all already-existing turbulences and instabilities. It is proposed in this exploratory research that as long as the currently growing biases, motivated by the political interest and hegemony-seeking approaches, pushed by bullying aggressions and suppressions, are pursued there is no visibility of any reliable success. The real resolution would only be imaginable through some genuinely impartial, moral, and ethical incentives targeting at an enhancement of the regional sustainability, and human support. To make things even more blurry, the current U.S. government's general vision and strategic goals, both internally and externally, are clearly identified through a noticeable trajectory, as boding a clear and even bigger fiasco more than ever. The world, at its most desirable setting, would surely need a restructured substitute for the currently standing United Nations, through a progressive and fair organizational re-engineering, in which the American lobbyist approach to governance is entirely abandoned and an impartiality principle would replace the currently governing realities, which have been in place for ages. The United Nation's efficacy has been nothing but a dream for years, regardless of tens of resolutions passed against Israeli aggression and violations of the United Nations' rules and regulations. The main focus of this research is on Iran, one of the regional super powers that should have been brought into the proposed common forces of stability and regional growth, despite all the controversial issues and its strategic intentions, as envisioned through some western governments' eyes.

The author acknowledges the precious intellectual contributions of Dr. Murray Nabors, Dean of Liberal Arts & Sciences at Missouri Western State University (MWSU), during many challenging and inspiring exchanges of research-based ideas. His support for this research along with those provided by other academic units of MWSU are also greatly appreciated.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a continuous concern as well as great challenges about some sound foreign policy that would ultimately lead to some sustainable stability in many regions of the world, including the turbulent Middle East, consisting of the 18 countries of Israel, Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Lebanon, State of Palestine, Qatar, Yemen, Jordan, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, and Cyprus.

Many policy advisors, experts, and academicians have dedicated some noticeable amounts of their resources in exploration of some corresponding solutions to the ever-growing controversies and deeper socio-economic wounds. An example for the politicians and experts is Tony Blair of the UK (2017), serving as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom for the longest period (1997-2007) in the UK's modern time. He has been serving as the special envoy of the

Quartet, consisting of United Nations, European Union, the U.S., and Russia, in 2007-2015. He has traveled to Israel more than 178 times after his departure from his UK's PM position through 2017. He has been a strong advocate of state of Israel at all times. His continual efforts for promoting peace between Israel and the Palestinians are recorded. In summary, he has offered - what he calls - new ways and approaches in his recommendations. He has offered three basic principles: "The first is that the security of the state of Israel is not just an Israeli interest or, indeed, an American interest. It is a global interest for the security of all the nations of the world." (p. 1)

Blair's second principle then is narrowed down on a necessary and sustainable relationship between Israel and Arab nations, in which some collective strong commitment to a departure from both Shia extremism (led by a non-Arab country of Iran) and Sunni extremism, from the Muslim Brotherhood all the way through ISIS and other groups. On that Sunni segment of Islamic extremism, he failed to openly mention Saudi Arabia. That segment has been in fact led by Saudi Arabia and some had also dominated in Egypt and even in Turkey to some extent. He highlighted a need for subscription to mutual respect for religious tolerance, mutual security, and economic conditions. He proposes, perhaps as a third principle, that the Middle Eastern conflicts and instabilities would not come to a real end unless the problem of Palestinians is appropriately tackled and resolved. He proposes that the prerequisite for a sustainable stability and peace between Palestinians and Israel is a two-state solution and a real collective respect for religious tolerance. His distinct approach includes a set of appropriate conditions as a stable foundation for peace, as opposed to establishing peace as a prerequisite for better conditions.

Despite the seemingly decency of those efforts in bringing peace to the region, one may wonder why it has not succeeded after years of hard work. I am proposing that one can identify the strong biases towards the state of Israel by both U.S. and U.K., and then more loss of trust in Palestinian side, and generally, the Arab as well as Iranian sides of the equation, each in their own different ways. Iranian government (siding with Palestinians) cannot trust the already declared biases for - and unconditional commitment to - the state of Israel and pronouncing their biases against Palestinians, Iran, Egypt, and Turkey by those who would like to play the role of "peace making". Impartiality and not bullying attitudes of any mediators would be an absolute necessity for achieving any relative success.

Blair (2017) has consistently recommended that major world powers would do better in stabilizing the world and more specifically, the Middle East, by relying primarily on the active roles of the major countries of the region in taking charge. Obviously, that notion would not be purely implemented, given the political dimension and divisions of the world. The focus of this research is on the Middle East and then Iran. According to the late Chinese leader, Mao Zedong, if the third world war should ever be a reality, it would be mainly caused by the Middle Eastern tensions and the ongoing instability.

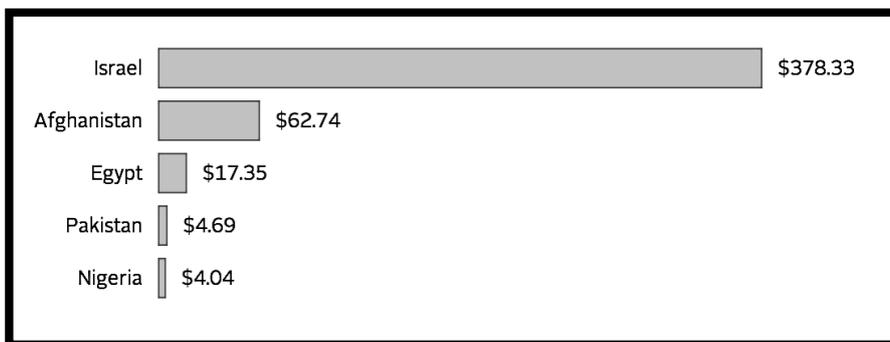


Figure 1. Fiscal Year 2015 - U.S. Foreign Aid per Capita

Table 1: The 2016 Estimated Most US Foreign Aid

1. Israel	\$3.10 billion
2. Afghanistan	\$1.51 billion
3. Egypt	\$1.46 billion
4. Jordan	\$1.00 billion
5. Pakistan	\$803.8 million
6. Kenya	\$630.3 million
7. Nigeria	\$607.5 million
8. Tanzania	\$590.6 million
9. Ukraine	\$513.5 million
10. Uganda	\$469.1 million

Source: ForeignAssistance.gov

Numbers were included in the President’s FY 2016

What is missed, partially if not entirely, by many policymakers and international organizations is a new fact about the rapidly growing Islamic ideology and the growing challenges that need to be encountered most delicately and in a sound strategic planning for a sustainable as well as balanced promotion of peace and stability. The divisions are already wide and most destructive, followed by violence, crime, and terrorism.

Table 2: Regional Distribution of Muslims (2017)

Latin America/ Caribbean: 840,000	North America: 3,480,000
Europe: 43,470,000	Sub-Saharan Africa: 248,420,000
Middle East/ North Africa: 370,070,000	Asia Pacific: 986,420,000

Table 3: Top 12 Countries with the Largest Muslim Populations (2017)

Pakistan 176.2 million	Indonesia: 209.1 million
Bangladesh 134.4 million	India: 167.4 million
Egypt: 77 million	Nigeria: 77.3 million
Turkey: 71.3 million	Iran: 73.6 million
Algeria 34.7 million	Sudan: 39 million
Iraq: 31.2 million	Morocco: 31.9 million

Source: 1. <https://www.thoughtco.com/worlds-muslim-population-2004480>

2. Nations of the World, Grey House Publishing, 2018

3. PEW Research Center

Are the world’s major powers getting smarter in dealing with the changing realities of the world? Is it still a winning strategy to continue to advocate the same failed foreign policy of the 19th and 20th centuries, in which the super powers’ legitimate or illegitimate interests were the prerequisite for any major policy adoption? Are we still assuming that violence and terrorism are just random events and not preventable? Unfortunately, the trajectory of what major

powers have been doing would bode some growing, not diminishing, terrifying turbulences, as inevitable consequences of short-sighted policies. Though, there are some individuals of major influences, such as Gates, Warren Buffets, etc., who have shifted their attentions to a global health and development. That movement needs to be supported and innovated by the major nations of the world for their sustainable stability, if nothing else, before it is too late. Western countries' faces are changing with no exception, and that is primarily due to the concentration of prosperity in those nations along with the varying birth rates in various countries. New long-term prosperity plans for empowering humanity are needed more than ever, without any regards and biases towards one or the other races, religious denominations, gender, national origins, etc. All one has to do is to just refer to the demographic research for a better understanding of the globalization's challenges. Extremism is most likely the byproduct of long-lasting wrong policies.

Referring to many sources in Global Research (2016), or the historian William Blum (*Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*, 2018), one would see how the U.S., as "the World's Only Superpower" has contributed to the historically growing turbulences around the world in protecting its own "self-interest". Ironically all that has been unexceptionally done under a declared defense of democracy and "human rights". William Blum (2018) summarizes his article and a book with a challenging thought-stimulating statement that:

It is a scandal in contemporary international law, don't forget, that while "wanton destruction of towns, cities and villages" is a war crime of long standing, the bombing of cities from airplanes goes not only unpunished but virtually unaccused. Air bombardment is state terrorism, the terrorism of the rich. It has burned up and blasted apart more innocents in the past six decades than have all the anti-state terrorists who ever lived. (p.1)

Also, "A terrorist is someone who has a bomb but doesn't have an air force." (p.1). He offers the following counts of the countries that U.S. has bombed more than once in several cases. He stresses that: "Moreover, Washington does not apply the term "weapons of mass destruction" to other weapons the US has regularly used, such as depleted uranium and cluster bombs, which can be, and often are, highly indiscriminate."

Table 4: The List of Countries that U.S. Has Bombed

1. Korea and China 1950-53 (Korean War)
2. Guatemala 1954
3. Indonesia 1958
4. Cuba 1959-1961
5. Guatemala 1960
6. Congo 1964
7. Laos 1964-73
8. Vietnam 1961-73
9. Cambodia 1969-70
10. Guatemala 1967-69
11. Grenada 1983
12. Lebanon 1983, 1984
13. (both Lebanese and Syrian targets)
14. Libya 1986
15. El Salvador 1980s
16. Nicaragua 1980s
17. Iran 1987
18. Panama 1989
19. Iraq 1991 (Persian Gulf War)
20. Kuwait 1991
21. Somalia 1993
22. Bosnia 1994, 1995
23. Sudan 1998
24. Afghanistan 1998
25. Yugoslavia 1999
26. Yemen 2002
27. Iraq 1991-2003 (US/UK on regular basis)
28. Iraq 2003-2015
29. Afghanistan 2001-2015
30. Pakistan 2007-2015
31. Somalia 2007-8, 2011
32. Yemen 2009, 2011
33. Libya 2011, 2015
34. Syria 2014-2015

<https://www.globalresearch.ca/united-states-bombings-of-other-countries-americas-bombing-list/5533371>

According to a 2017 study, by an investigative historian, Eric Zuesse, entitled: "August 09, 2017 Polls: U.S. Is 'The Greatest Threat to Peace in the World Today.'" That was based on the results of a PEW Research Center's polling of 30 countries that were first surveyed in 2013 and again in 2017. The main question of the survey was: "Do you think that the United States' power and influence are a major threat, a minor threat, or not a threat to (each of the 30 surveyed countries)?" and the same question was presented on China, and then on Russia. The results are summarized below in Table 5:

Table 5: Major Threat to the World's Peace

Country	Ranking: 2017
USA	35%
Russia	31%
China	31%

Main Source: Strategic Cultural Foundation, August 2017

I would propose that a country, with the aforementioned records of performance and strong biases towards Israel, can hardly serve as a unifying leader in a genuine effort to secure peace and stability in the Middle East, and probably most other places. There is a strong need for a new approach, sponsored by most other free nations, including the U.S., who are able to recognize the current loss of trust in the leadership of the governing institutions. This loss of trust is more reflected in the polling given to the public than foreign policy experts.

According to Bruce Stokes (April 13, 2018), given all the recent developments in the world, in a global attitude survey (Spring 2017) and another one run in 2018, there were more pessimism about democracy among the U.S. foreign policy experts than those in the European countries. American foreign policy experts have also demonstrated more pessimism than their European counterparts when it comes to trusting in their country's national government. About 42% of U.S. experts and 61% of European counterparts did indicate that they trust their government to do what is right for the country. The percentages of the public's adherence view in both groups on democracy were identical, just 46%. However, American Public were happier (51%) than the European public (46%) with the government's job in doing what is right for the country.

Table 6: A Survey of Perceived Democracy and Government Performances

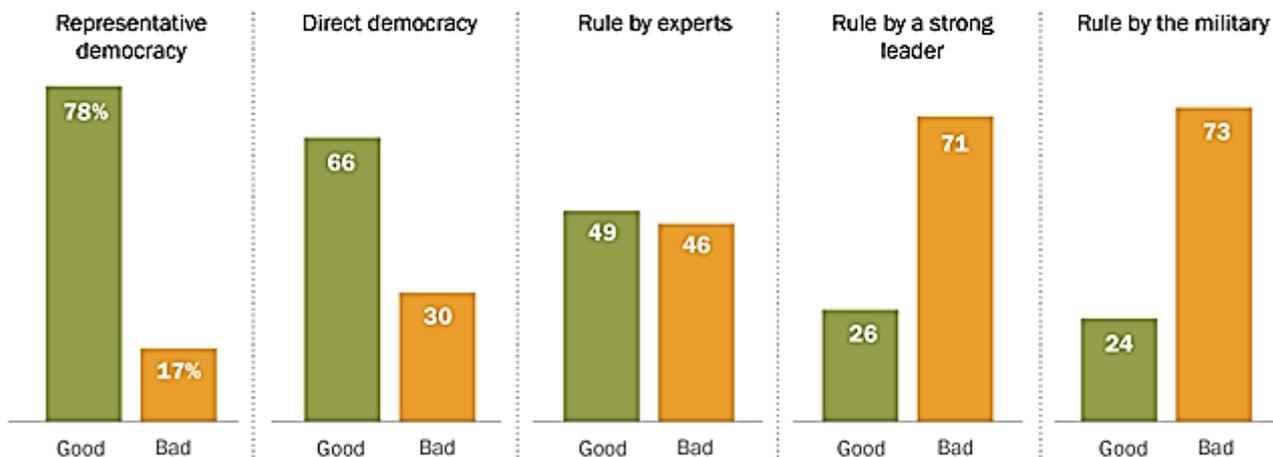
	Satisfied with democracy	Trust in government (a lot and/or somewhat) for doing right for the country
American Foreign Policy Experts	27%	42%
American Public	46%	51%
European Foreign Policy Expert	64%	61%
European Public	46%	46%

Source: PEW Research Center (Spring 2017): Respondents included 237 Europeans and 110 Americans.

Tabulated by Reza G. Hamzaee

In another world-wide survey, PEW Research Center reports a clear and distinct preference for representative and direct democracy than any other forms, as is demonstrated in the following Table. Ruling by a strong leader, or military turned out to be the two worst of all choices with a "Bad" ranking of 71% and 73%, accordingly.

WORLD-WIDE SUPPORT FOR REPRESENTATIVE AND DIRECT DEMOCRACY



Note: Percentages are global medians based on 38 countries. Full question wordings for political systems: Representative democracy, "A democratic system where representatives elected by citizens decide what becomes law"; Direct democracy, "A democratic system where citizens, not elected officials, vote directly on major national issues to decide what becomes law"; Rule by experts, "Experts, not elected officials, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country"; Rule by a strong leader, "A system in which a strong leader can make decisions without interference from parliament or the courts"; Rule by the military, "The military rules the country."

Source: Spring 2017 Global Attitudes Survey. Q29a-e.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 3. Surveyed World-Wide Support for Democracy
 Source: Fact Tank - Our Lives in Numbers. PEW Research Center
<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/>

In addition to all other socio-economic challenges encountered by many Western countries, the growth of Islam has strongly concerned the governments' policies. Another less than appropriate policy in treating the restructuring of many non-Muslim societies could lead to some run-away controversies with immeasurable consequences. As exhibited below, the growing number of Muslims, e.g., in the U.S. and Germany are well documented. According to The Wall Street Journal (May 17, 2018, p. A3), "Births per 1,000 women reached an all-time U.S. low in 2017" at 60.2, which is 6.02 percent, which is obviously not the same thing as the birth rate.

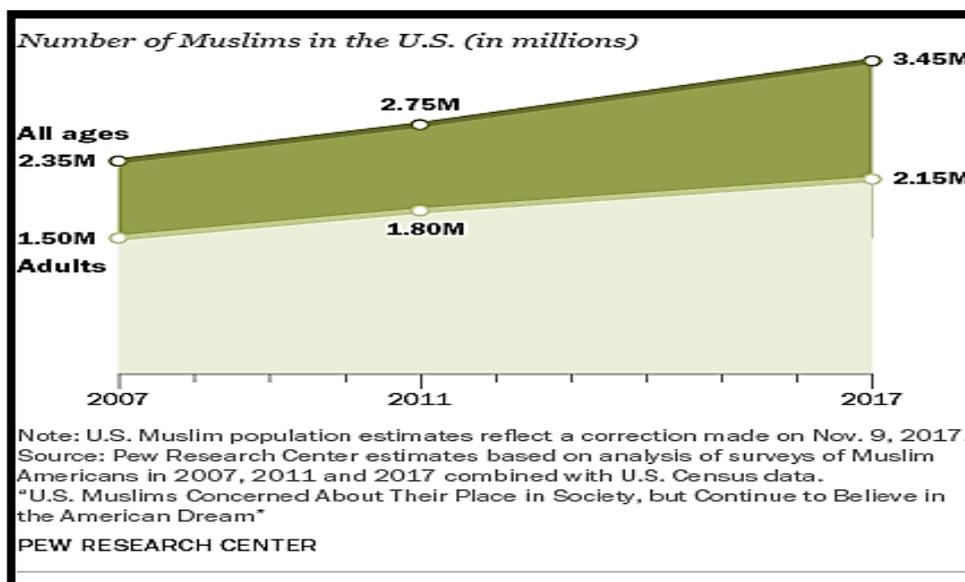
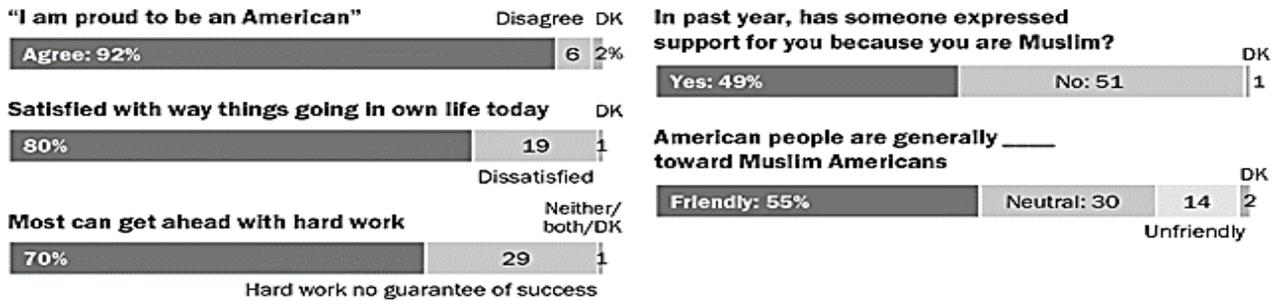


Figure 4. Continual Growth of Number of Muslims in the U.S.

Despite some tangible negative aura created against the U.S. Muslims, it was reported by a 2017 study conducted by PEW Research Institute, as is summarized in Figure 5, that nine-in-ten U.S. Muslims have expressed their sense of pride in being American.

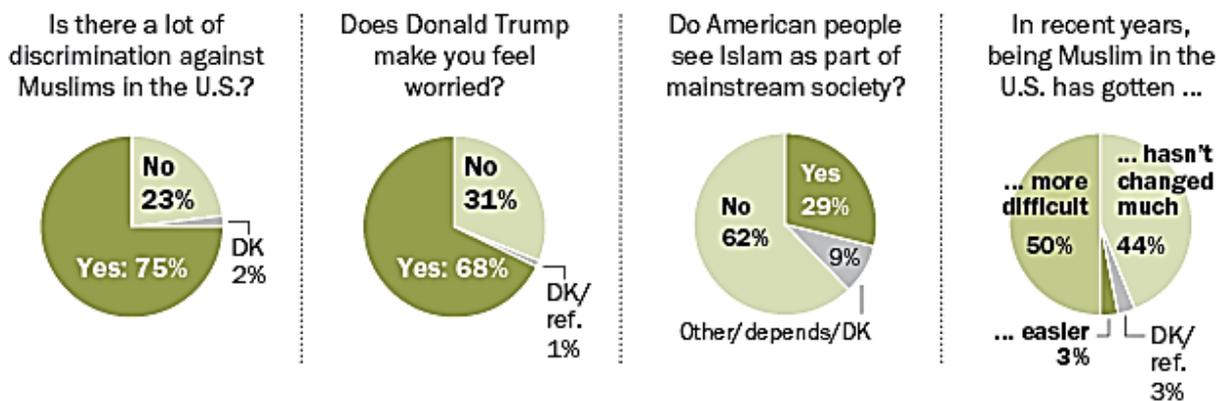
Nine-in-ten U.S. Muslims proud to be American



Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.
 Source: Survey conducted Jan. 23-May 2, 2017.
 "U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream"
 PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 5. Ninety Percent of US Muslims are Proud to Be American

Source: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/09/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/>



Source: Survey conducted Jan. 23-May 2, 2017.

Figure 6. US Muslims are Concerned about Their Place in Society

Source: PEW Research Center: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/09/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/>

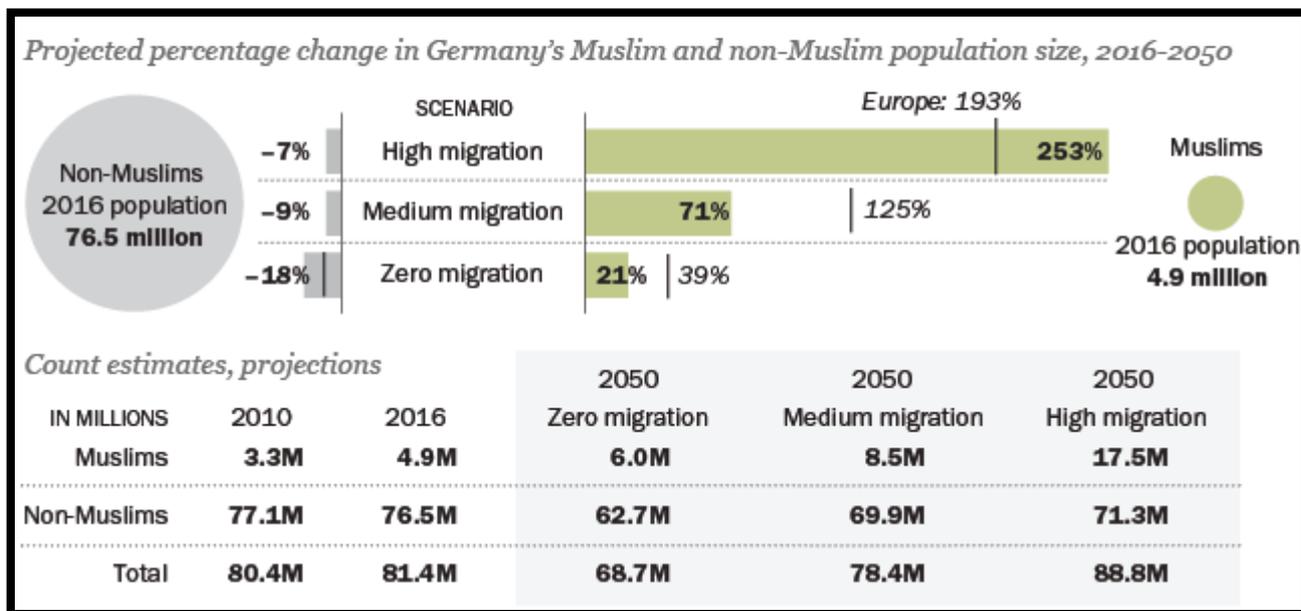


Figure 7. Germany's non-Muslim Population Decline and Muslim Population Growth

The support for democracy and religious freedom among Muslim nations, as summarized in the following table, has been growing.

Table 7: Widespread Support for Democracy and Religious Freedom

	Prefer democracy over a strong leader	Say religious freedom is a good thing**
Sub-Saharan Africa*	72	94
Southeast Asia	64	93
Southern-Eastern Europe	58	95
Middle East-North Africa	55	85
Central Asia	52	92
South Asia	45	97

*Data for all countries except Niger from "Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa."
 **Medians show Muslims who say non-Muslims in their country are very free to practice their religion and consider this a good thing.
 PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q10, Q11 and Q14.

Source: PEW Research Center, August 30, 2013

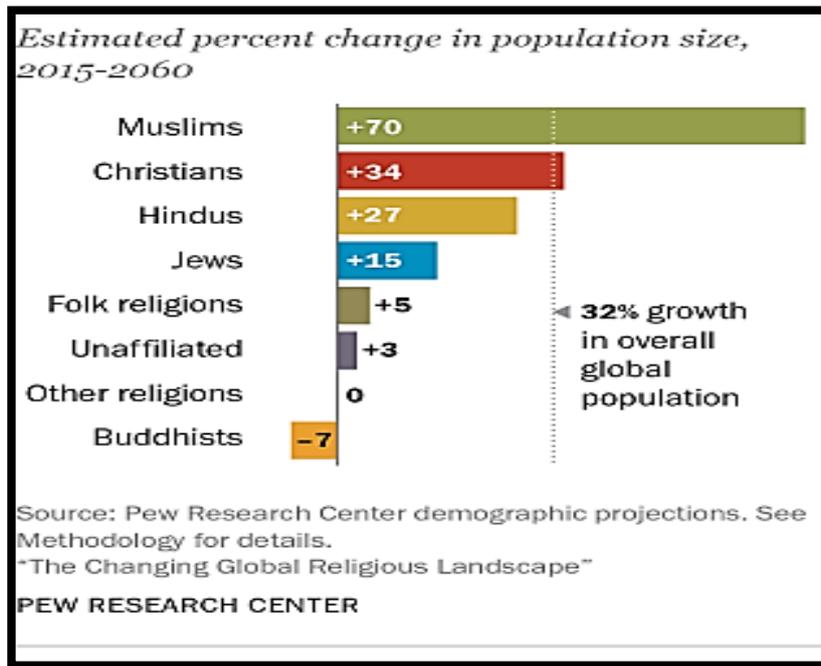


Figure 6. Fastest-Growing Major Religion
Source: Bill Chappell, April 2, 2015

According to Bill Chappell (April 2, 2015) "World's Muslim population will surpass Christians this century", Copyright 2015 NPR. <http://www.npr.org/>.

Table 8: Countries That Will No Longer Have a Christian Majority In 2050

	MAJORITY RELIGION 2010	% OF POPULATION 2010	MAJORITY/LARGEST RELIGION 2050	% OF POPULATION 2050
Australia	Christians	67.3%	Christians	47.0%
United Kingdom	Christians	64.3	Christians	45.4
Benin	Christians	53.0	Christians	48.5
France	Christians	63.0	Unaffiliated	44.1
Republic of Macedonia	Christians	59.3	Muslims	56.2
New Zealand	Christians	57.0	Unaffiliated	45.1
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Christians	52.3	Muslims	49.4
Netherlands	Christians	50.6	Unaffiliated	49.1

Source: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source: PEW Research Center, and Bill Chappell (April 2, 2015)
Also available at: <http://www.npr.org/>

Focusing on the destructive elements of major power's self-serving intervention, one could lose hope in achieving any real success for peace and stability in the region. Despite the expected destructive intervention by President Trump in the Western agreement with Iran, the global community, including many American people, has been supportive of Iranian

government's compliance with the nuclear agreement that has been carefully watched, inspected, and confirmed by the international community. Iran needs to stay within the limits that have been acceptable to the world and the majority of the American people as well as government, especially the Democrats, and push intelligently the Trump camp to a more isolation than they are already suffering from. Iran needs to keep earning the global support of its well calculated compliance with what the world is currently expecting. Obviously, there will be all the needed time in the future to plan strategically in bringing Iranians into a fair, respectful, and a comprehensive treatment similar to what other states in the region have been enjoying with respect to the sensitive nuclear energy and/or weapons. The responsibilities alongside a sense of security must be equally shouldered and enjoyed by all (or the main) regional states, not just one or two.

Moreover, despite the religious sensitivity of region, the U.S. policy on the Middle East has been more obscured than ever. Treatment of Turkey, Egypt, and Israel, altogether, has been conducive to no better, but much worse adverse conditions against a real coordination and sustainable coexistence among the nations of the region. I am strongly recommending that, if Tony Blair's doctrine has to gain any legitimacy, at a minimum, Turkey and Egypt must be also recognized and incorporated into the strategic architecture of the regional peace, stability foundation, and the mainstay of regional prosperity. This would bring more of the regional players into the equation and discount the conflicting roles of biased outsiders from the regional peace process.

Table 9: Demography of Islam

Country Name	Total Population	% of Muslims	Number of Muslims	Percentage of Shia to Muslims	Number of Shia
Afghanistan	22664136	100	22664136	15	3399620
Azerbaijan	7676953	93.4	7170274	80	5736219
Bahrain	590042	100	590042	65	383527
India	952107694	14	133295077	2-Oct	13329507
Iran	66094264	99	65433321	70	45803324
Iraq	21422292	97	20779623	65 - 30	13506755
Kuwait	1950047	89	1735542	30	520662
Lebanon	3776317	70	2643422	65	1718224
Oman	2186548	100	382000	2	7640
Pakistan	129275660	97	125397390	15 - 2	18809608
Qatar	547761	100	547761	15	82164
Saudi Arabia	19409058	100	19409058	5	970452
Syria	15608648	90	14047783	15 - 9	2107167
Turkey	62484478	99.8	62359509	6	3741570
United Arab Emirates	3057337	96	2935044	15	440256
Yemen	13483178	99	13348346	15	2002251

Source: PEW Research Center, various dates of census were reported

A Country of Focus, Iran, and Recommended Objectives:

Iranian government is at a very critical stage in planning for its economic viability and growth, while putting in balance both internal and external objectives. I propose the following urgent objectives:

1. Maximizing Iranian economic performance and serving the urgent needs of the economy for further sustainable growth, employment, and prosperity through effective economic policies conducive to low inflation, facilitating easier and smoother business operations.

The excessive youth unemployment rates close to 30% would bode turbulence in the Iranian socioeconomic environment. The youth and the elderly are both under excessive economic pressures. Officially, this would place them within the poverty lines. A great component of the citizens in other age groups are also adversely affected by the unpleasant economic conditions resulted from a non-homogeneous dissemination of the fruits of the recent improvement in economic growth, followed by some reductions and/or eliminations of some of the comprehensive sanctions against Iranian people.

2. Just like the rest of the world, Iranians need to focus on a long-term strategy for beyond the 4-year period, and more in coordination with the international community, including some equitable expectations of other nations with no loss of focus on what was agreed with Obama's government. Donald Trump's positions are politically immature and not either respected or supported by any domestic or international majorities of stakeholders. He is not even given any meaningful support by several Republicans in the US Congress on many other important issues. Iran needs to maintain its currently ongoing agreement with the U.S. and the rest of the major nations, and count on Europe's support most seriously. In that well-calculate approach, Trump's new bullish and excessively suppressive pressures would be an isolated and consequently, defeated act in its failure to attract any sustainable international unification for imposing inequitable sanctions against the hard-working Iranian people.
3. Iran needs to focus on a strategic goal of national strength through infrastructural investment, the most vital and lucrative component of which would be investment in the nation's rich human capital.
4. Iranian government must dedicate a great operational force to an urgently effective planning for saving the retirees from an undeserving poverty, in which retirees are currently trapped. Domestically, Iranian government is challenged by a devastating economic deterioration, encountered by many families, despite some economic growth and declining inflation rates. It is mind boggling that almost all retirees, who have spent their main sources of active lives, invested education, and dedicated labor force and ultimately their existence, are reportedly living below the poverty lines, as defined by governmental agencies. This is a brutal fact, signaling an ugly abandonment of the elderly by the government. Recent news from Iran have been encouraging, and hopefully a fundamental indexing budgetary policy will be adopted.
5. In the long run and after some relatively more stable circumstances are created, if ever, and the current storms of foreign affairs are tamed, it would be mandatory for any Iranian government to call for at least a regional re-assessment of the state of nuclear weaponry and demand for either creation of stability and balance among all regional states, including - but not limited to - Israel, Pakistan, and India or trying most effectively and objectively to gain an international respect and green lights for its legitimate and logically-based development of defensive nuclear power. Iran must not be trapped into a potentially indefensible nuclear position, while Israeli aggressions in the region are unexceptionally ignored and even supported by the U.S. government, as recorded at the United Nations' Security Council.

No country in the world has ever been comparable with Israel in being the target of as many condemning resolutions, issued by the United Nations. In his "Rogue State: Israeli Violations of U.N. Security Council Resolutions", published by Foreign Policy Journal, on January 27, 2010, Jeremy R. Hammond reported through a detailed list of 79 resolutions "directly critical of Israel for its violations of U.N. Security Council resolutions, the U.N. Charter, the Geneva Conventions, international terrorism, or other violations of international law." He started with Resolution 57

(Sep. 18, 1948) and ended his 79-item list with Resolution 1860 (Jan. 8, 2009). For the entire article, review: <https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2010/01/27/rogue-state-israeli-violations-of-u-n-security-council-resolutions/>.

As a secondary reference, according to Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_Nations_resolutions_concerning_Israel :

As of 2013, Israel had been condemned in 45 resolutions by United Nations Human Rights Council. Since its creation in 2006—the Council had resolved almost more resolutions condemning Israel than on the rest of the world combined. The 45 resolutions comprised almost half (45.9%) of all country-specific resolutions passed by the Council, not counting those under Agenda Item 10 (countries requiring technical assistance).

Also, in the same piece, you'll find:

The United Nations General Assembly has adopted a number of resolutions saying that the strategic relationship with the United States encourages Israel to pursue aggressive and expansionist policies and practices.

It is well known to all nations and those with a genuine concern and a clear conscience that such strongly biased support by the U.S. will never be effectively transformed into a real and sustainable stability in the Middle East. So, a responsible and logical question to be addressed to the global community, has been why so much of wastes of the US tax payers should be dedicated to a bullying state for “stabilizing” the Middle East? That question has begged a logical answer for decades.

Current Iranian Realities:

All other sensitive policy issues and challenges aside, the relatively popular moderate government has worked hard in the recent years to bring the country into an international community's more optimistic perspective, mainly in the context of keeping nuclear limitations in line with their communicated expectations. Donald Trump's tougher suppressive limitations have not been acceptable to the rest of the world, a great majority of the Americans within the political process and policy makers, and needless to say, to Iranians for the good reasons. What Trump is doing in his treatment of Iran, has been an extension to his other deteriorating policies with expected adverse effects even on the majority of Americans. Eventually, he would fail in both grounds, unless he begins soon to understand what a genuine and fair contribution would mean to the American nation as well as the rest of the world. His illegitimately boasting attitudes on his less than ethical real-estate bullying and suppressive approaches of the past are universally perceived to be detrimental to both domestic as well as international image of the U.S. The increasing U.S. credibility and prestige in the international community, gradually earned under Obama's leadership, could not be declined further in just one year and more to come, as demonstrated by any available & reliable indicators. Iranian government needs to stay on the same path that brought the economy to a much more sustainable growth and relative prosperity within a rather short period of time after some of the devastating economic sanctions were either eased up or removed totally.

Iranian government will strategically be more successful and hopefully popular through a genuinely reliable and sustainable planning for domestic democratic policies as well as some comprehensive compliance with the international community, without waiving any of its legitimate rights and leverage in the long run. Some tactical compromises are always fruitfully successful in order to eventually earn a long-term recognition and listening ears for its equitable and legitimate claims of better treatments, as compared to those enjoyed by other

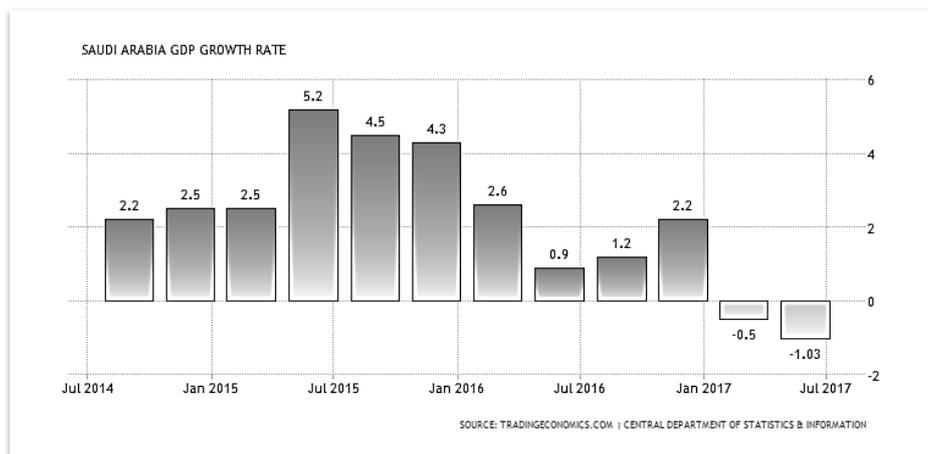
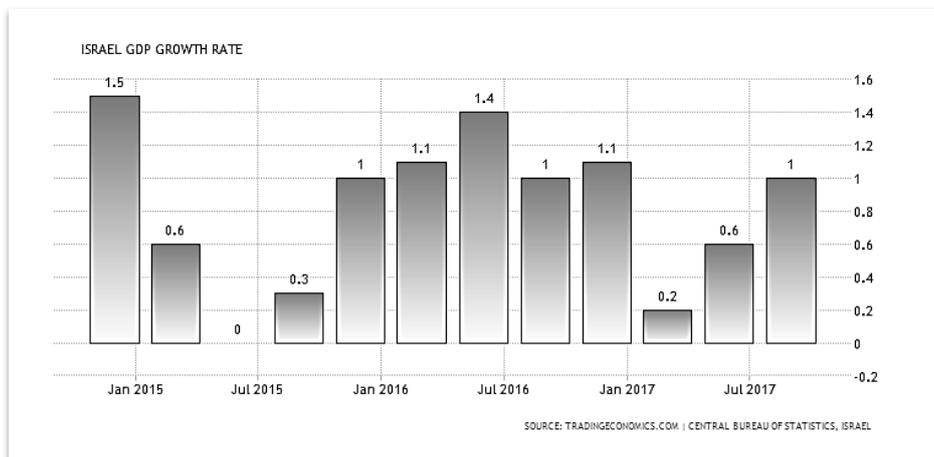
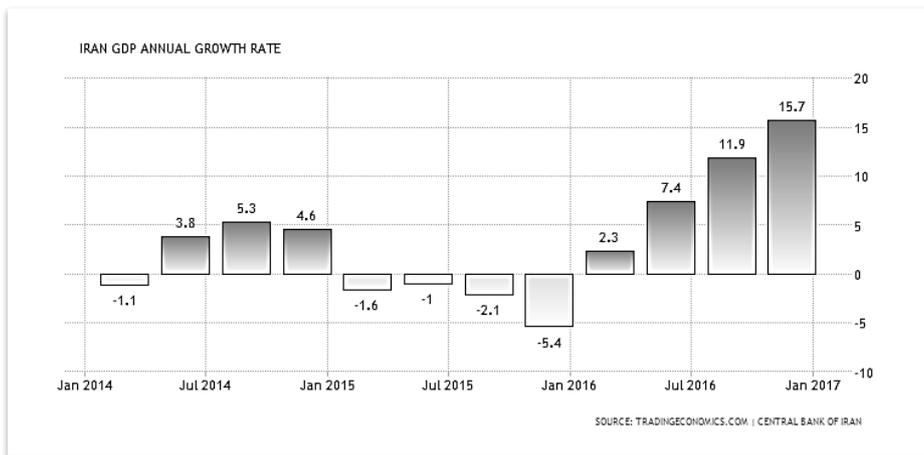
countries of the region, such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, etc.

Any real and durable regional stability is not just implemented by force and sanctions in the long run. Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, and other nations of the region would all win and succeed to live in much more collective prosperity and peace, should some equitable foundations for religious and political tolerance be established through a few cohesive well-calculated apolitical approaches. Power brokers, like U.S., would have no constructive role but just some heavily self-interested motives and political investment, which have consistently demolished any foundation for a real hope for a regional stability and peace. Alternatively, the author proposes that the United Nations through a general session must assign an international commission, cautiously established through selection or election of individual members, who are globally well known to be unbiased and apolitical in their assigned services. The committee needs to be meeting and working full time within some to be written by-laws. In its primary provisional phases, the commitments from the regional states and other big powers, such as the quartet nations, must be carefully discussed and earned.

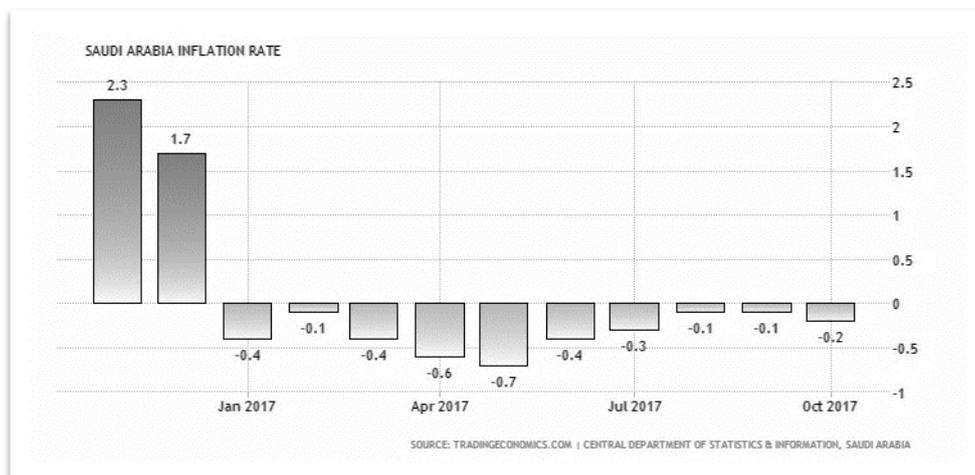
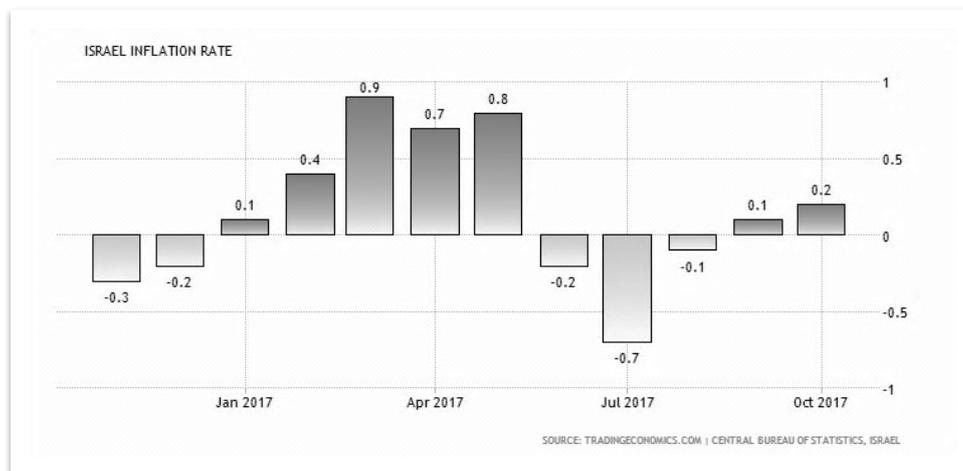
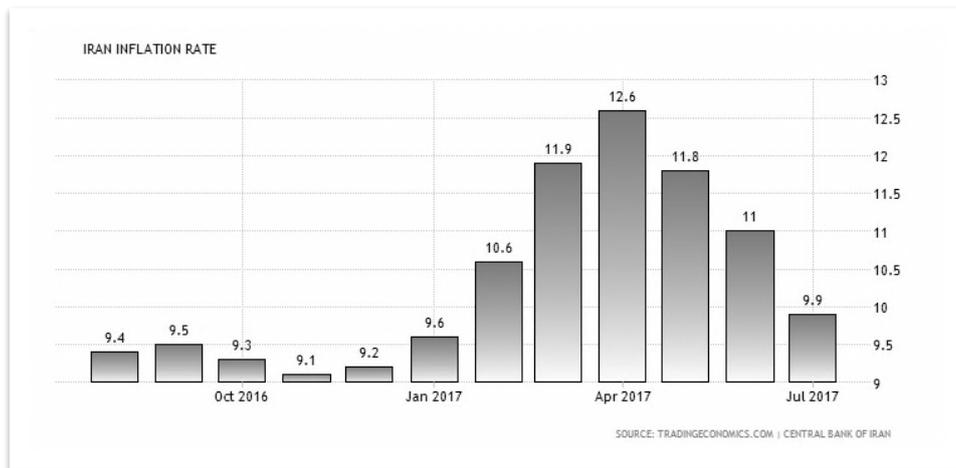
Current Iranian, Israeli, and Saudi Economic Perspectives

The annual economic growth of Iran was reported to be at 15.7%, as measured in the last quarter, December 2016, compared to the previous quarter, which was 11.9%. This growth was expected to be even higher all along 2017. The similar economic indicators for Israel and Saudi Arabia have been about 1% and 2.2%, respectively.

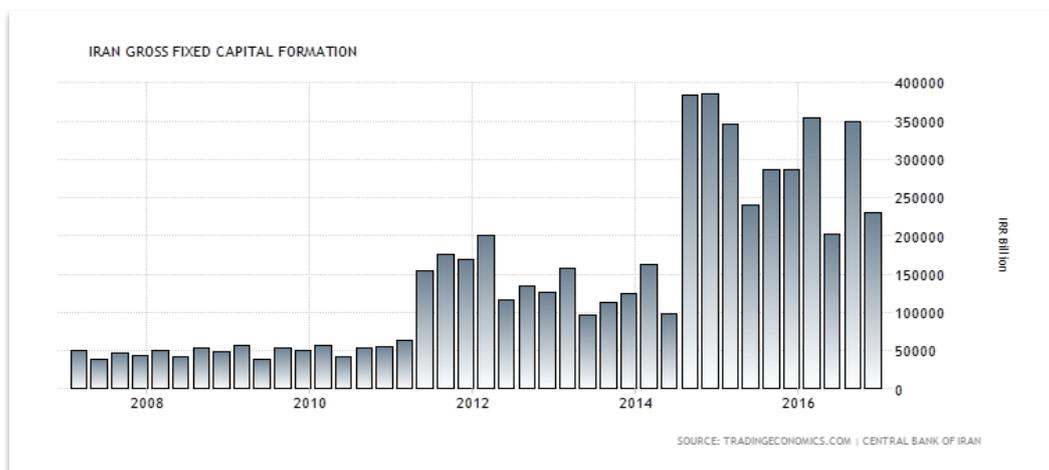
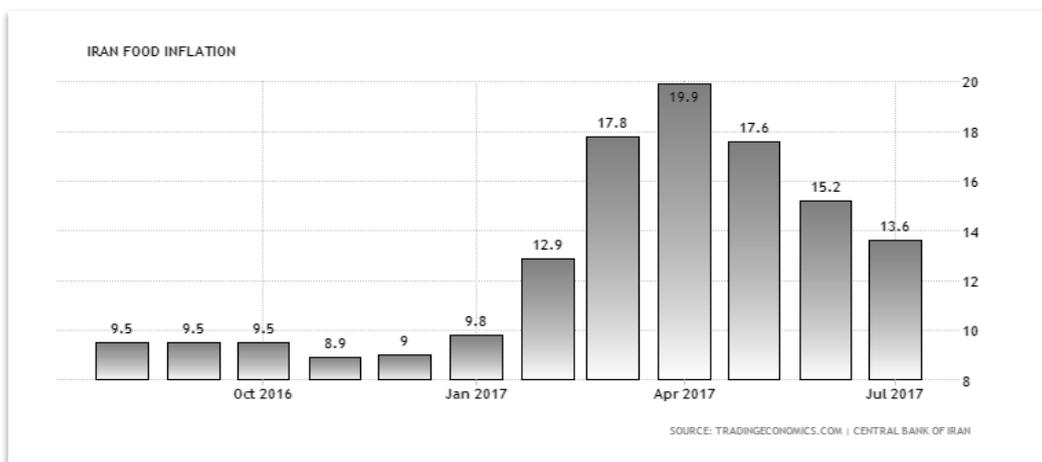
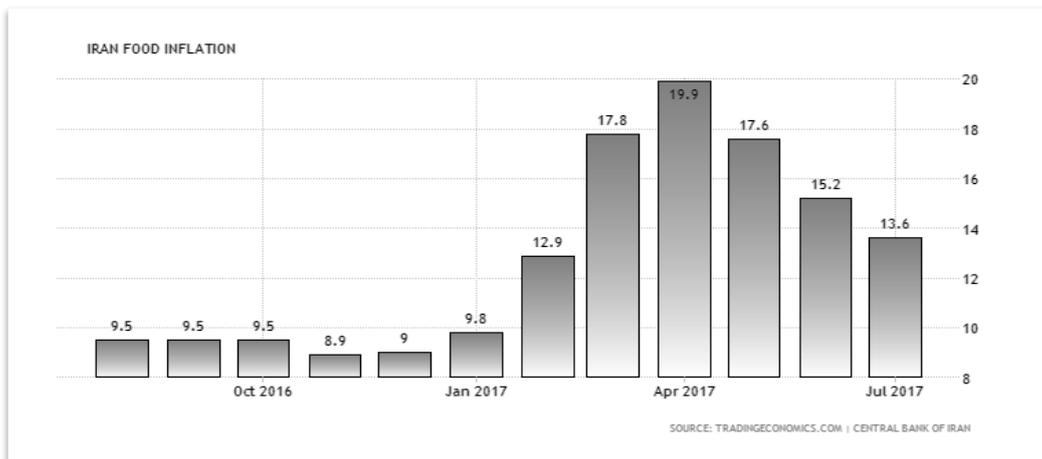
Although the recent inflation rates in Iran have been still too high at 9.9% (reported in July 2017), the monthly falling rate since April 2017 has been promising. Iranian capital formation and infrastructural investment must be even more than what it has recently been. The similar inflation measures for Israel and Saudi Arabia in the same month have been more of minor deflation of - 0.7% and - 0.3%. The Iranian high inflation rates have been recognized to be primarily due to a less growth of aggregate supply than aggregate demand, as caused by many months of economic and financial sanctions, imposed by the world against Iran. When food inflation is concerned, the figures were even worse.



Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/indicators>



Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/indicators>



Although in recent years, Iran has achieved a higher level of invested and capital formation, it needs to invest much more in its infrastructure and economic foundation than primarily in military development



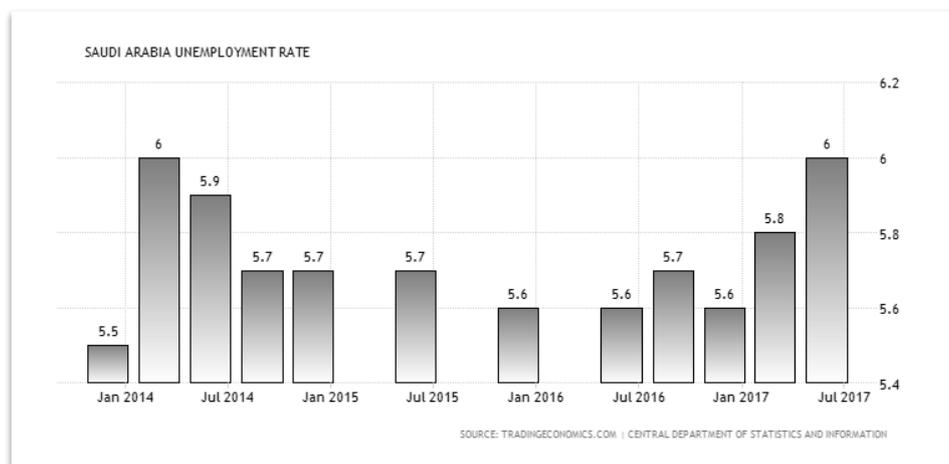
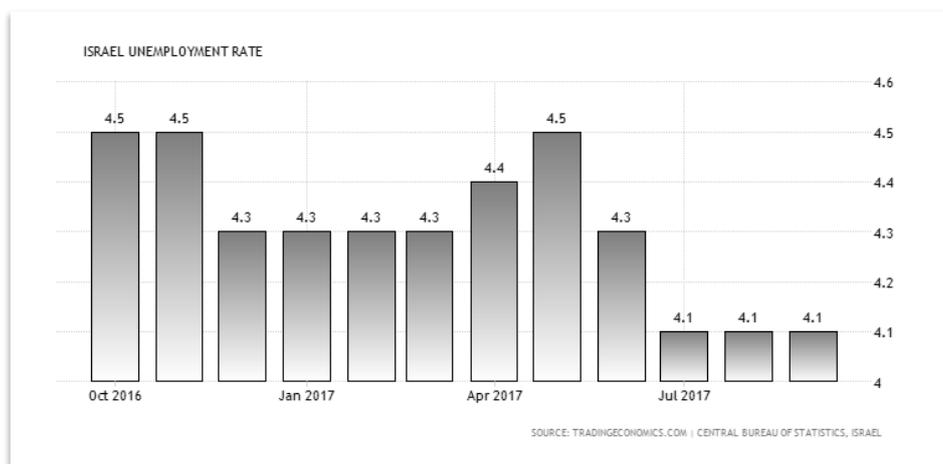
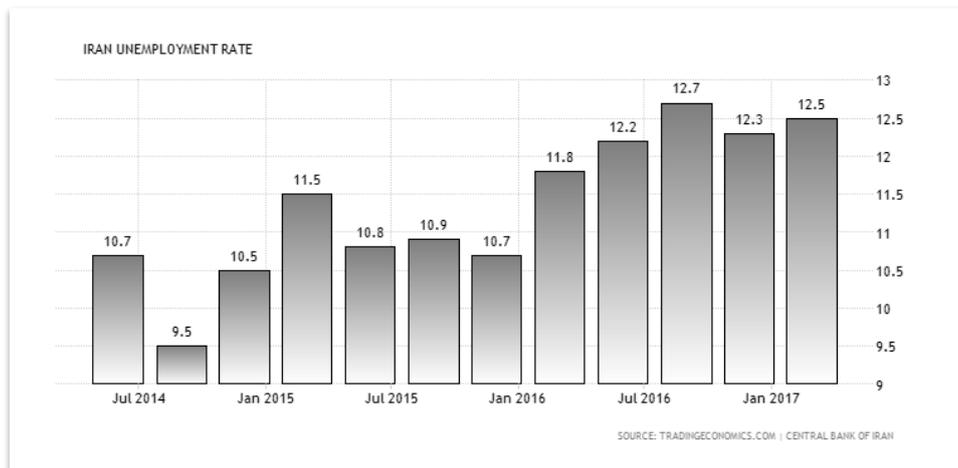
and foreign assistance, given its poor performance in meeting domestic needs, and improving the standard of living for millions of its citizens.



Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/indicators>

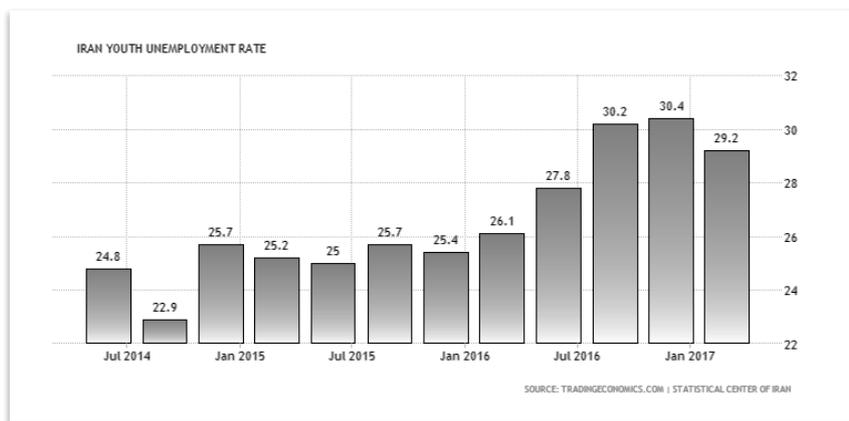


The best evidence of this fact is the high rates of unemployment, and even more so, when youth unemployment rates (30% or so) have been reported to be devastating. It is an emergent situation for the Iranian government to save its own people from the economic hardship that they have been experiencing for many years. Unemployment figures for Israel and Saudi Arabia were 4.3% and 5.6% to 5.7% in the same period, January 2017.

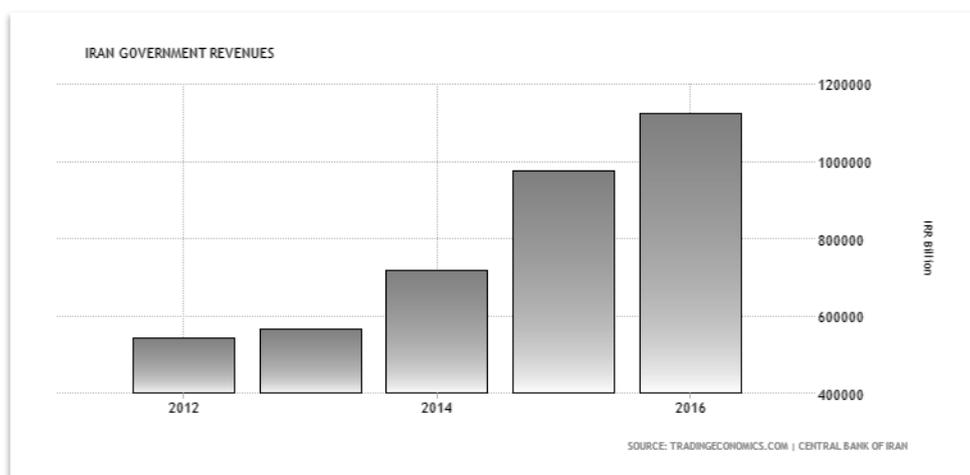
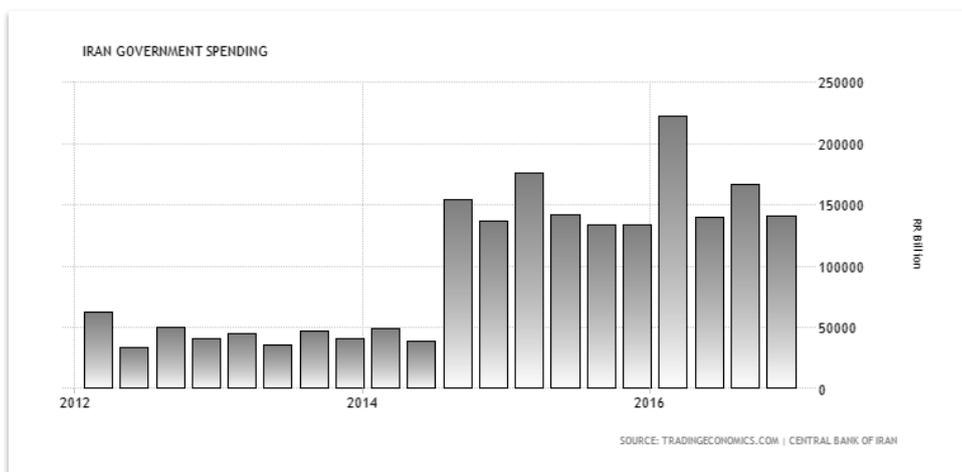


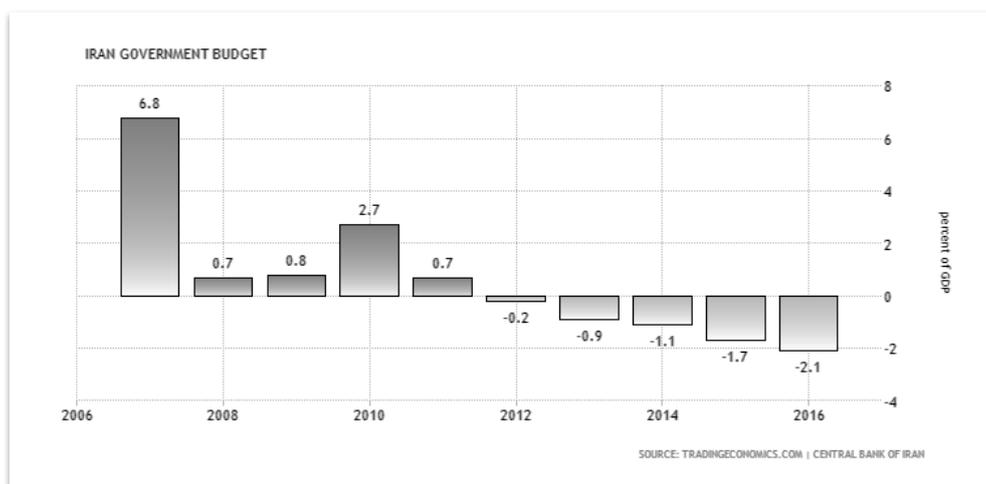
Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/indicators>

Again, younger generation is under brutal economic pressure. As is clear from the following figure, the average youth unemployment rates prevailing in 2016: 3rd, 4th quarters and 2017: 1st quarter, have been about 30%. Through tax rewarding policies granted to businesses which effectively create new jobs, government can gradually reverse that ominous picture. Empirical evidence has repeatedly proven the bitter fact that such poor job conditions in any country would result in more crime, violence, and even terrorism.



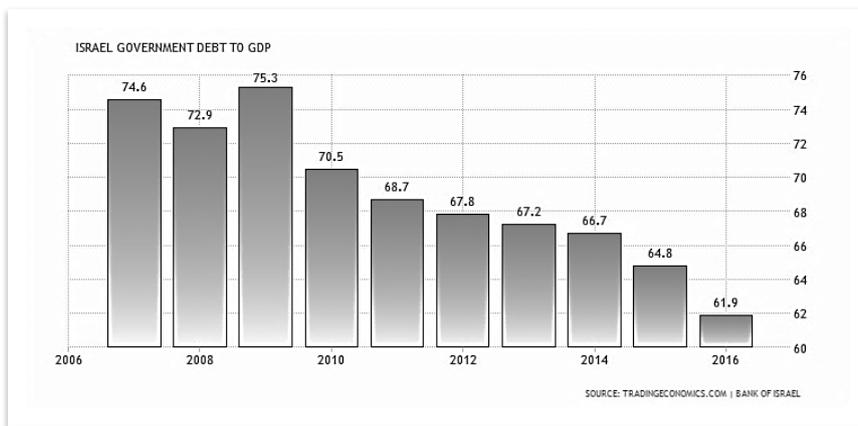
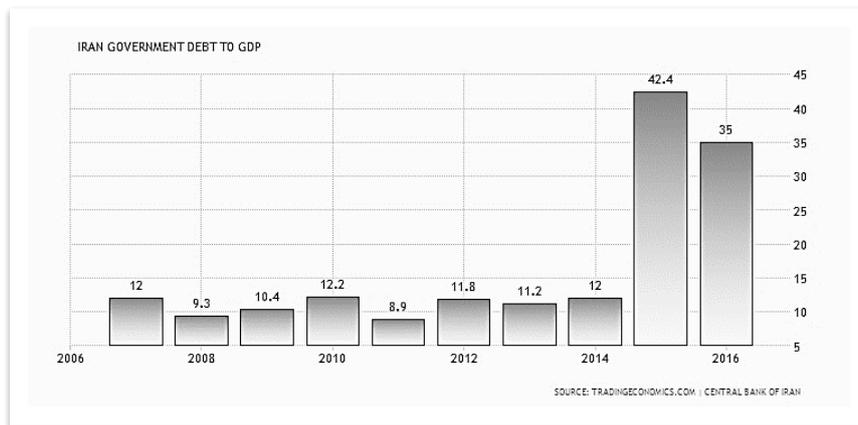
Another solution is a sustainable fiscal efficiency that has been absent in Iran for a long time. Government’s budget deficits and its Deficit spending are both necessary in expanding the economy, given that there are some organizations with some designated responsibilities that are only a tiny fraction of those of the government, but forcefully compete with the government in acquiring as much of the nation’s wealth and budget as they can. How else can a government commit itself to fiscal efficiency? Correcting the long-lasting tax loopholes in Iran and the flat (hence, more discriminatory) tax policies affecting the affluent more favorably, could bring about some considerable income sources for the government.





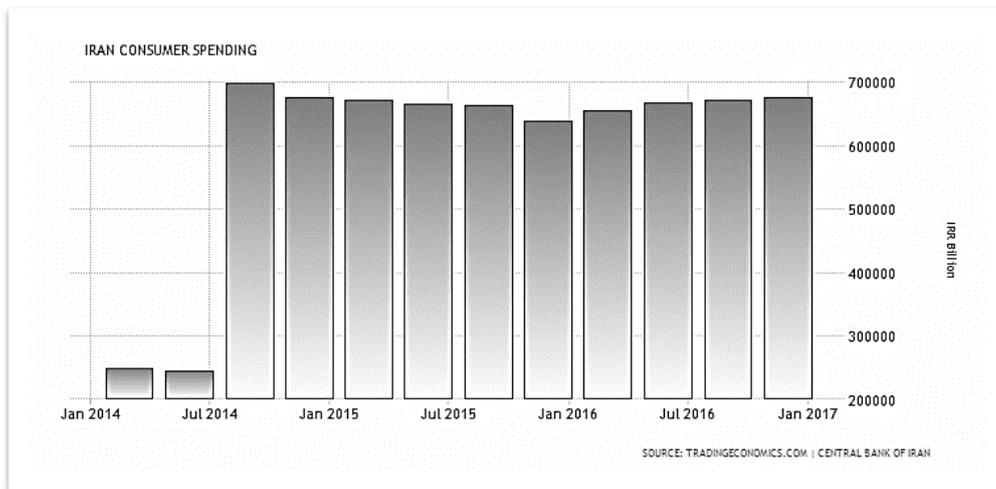
The continuous government budget deficits in years (see above figure) would surely cause a cumulative growth in government's debt, as is reported in the following figure. Government's debt has been 42.4% and 35% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the last two years. Meanwhile, one of the biggest rivaling organizations in Iran has continued to enjoy big budgets and earnings all along, while carrying no or minimal responsibility in promoting the national economy and the nation's prosperity. That has to be changed, if responsibilities and authorities should grow in a paralleled fashion.

The same government debt indicators for Israel and Saudis were 61.9% and 13.1%, respectively for the same year of 2016. In the case of Israel, though too high, the continuously declining trend from 75.3% in 2009 (the end of the Great Recession) to 61.9% has been impressive. However, the Saudis have gone through some familiar pattern of high military expenditures and growing foreign assistance (similar to Iranians) to other regional allies in, e.g., Yemen and other places.

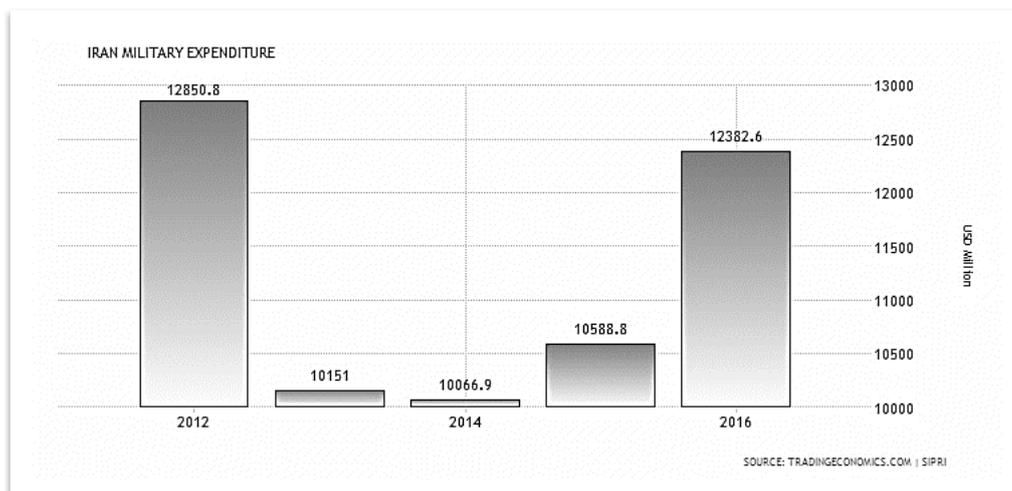


Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/saudi-arabia/indicators>

In the following figure, it is clear that Iranian Consumer spending has been quite stable for the 3-year period of 2014-2017.



As exhibited in the following two figures, Iran’s military expenses, as measured in the US dollars, have been recently very high and growing. It is unfortunate that the military’s budget has had to be in competition with the national welfare and sustainability.



SAUDI ARABIA SUNNIS SUPERPOWER

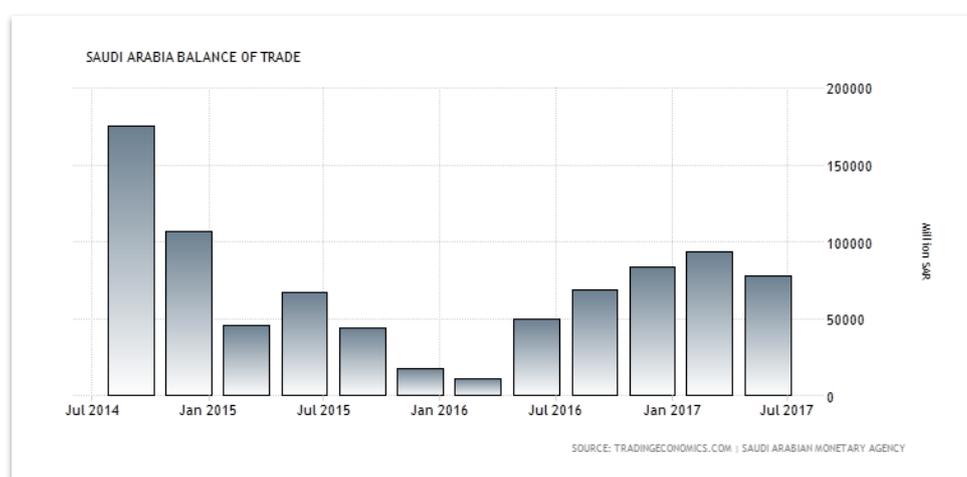
Saudi Arabia has been struggling hard to be recognized as the most powerful leader of the Sunni Muslims of the region and/or the world, and as such, there have been growing conflicts with Islamic Republic of Iran, which is more or less recognized as one of the superpowers in the Middle East, leading Shiite Muslims of the region and the world. Moreover, Egypt and Turkey, influenced by the world politics as well as those of their own domestic controversies, are not in any harmony with the Saudis. The current U.S. policy in providing mega lift to the Saudi-Israeli alliance would soon deepen not only the internal societal gap and divisions within the Saudi Arabian nation, but the deterioration of its relationship with other regional states.

Table 10: The Three-Month U.S. – Saudi Arabian Trade in Goods (2018)

Month	Exports	Imports	Balance
January 2018	802.4	1,485.6	-683.1
February 2018	1,011.2	1,290.8	-279.7
March 2018	1,541.7	1,593.1	-51.4
TOTAL 2018	3,355.3	4,369.5	-1,014.2

NOTE: All figures are in millions of U.S. dollars on a nominal basis, not seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified. Details may not equal totals due to rounding. Table reflects only those months for which there was trade.

Source: The United States Census Bureau: Foreign Trade. Also available at: <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c5081.html>



Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/saudi-arabia/indicators>

ISRAEL

Table 11: Israel's Economic Indicators

Overview	Last	Reference	Previous	Range	Frequency
GDP Growth Rate	1 %	Sep/17	0.6	-1.1 : 4.3	Quarterly
Unemployment Rate	4.1 %	Sep/17	4.1	4.1 : 11.4	Monthly
Inflation Rate	0.2 %	Oct/17	0.1	-2.74 : 486	Monthly
Interest Rate	0.1 %	Oct/17	0.1	0.1 : 17	Daily
Balance of Trade	-2297 USD Million	Oct/17	-1313	-2334 : 114	Monthly
Government Debt to GDP	61.9 %	Dec/16	64.8	61.9 : 96.7	Yearly

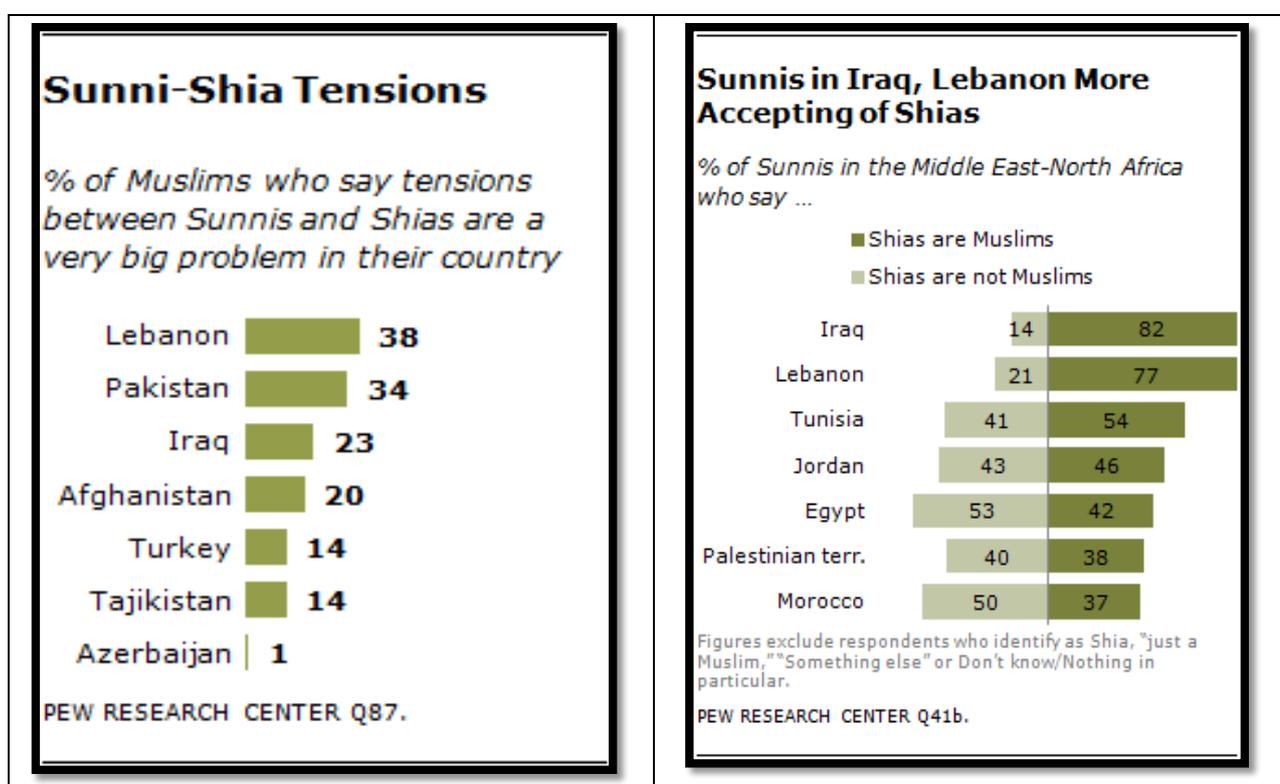
Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/israel/indicators>

Table 12: The Three-Month U.S. – Israeli Trade in Goods (2018)

Month	Exports	Imports	Balance
January 2018	1,021.9	1,788.4	-766.5
February 2018	1,275.8	1,504.4	-228.6
March 2018	1,223.0	2,045.4	-822.4
TOTAL 2018	3,520.7	5,338.2	-1,817.5

NOTE: All figures are in millions of U.S. dollars on a nominal basis, not seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified. Details may not equal totals due to rounding. Table reflects only those months for which there was trade.

Source: The United States Census Bureau: Foreign Trade. Also available at: <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c5081.html>



Source: PEW Research Center, 2012

Reference: <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/08/09/the-worlds-muslims-unity-and-diversity-executive-summary/>

Comparative Economic Perspectives: Five Focused Major Middle Eastern Countries

In an effort to provide a comparative perspective - as recent as accessible - the various economic indicators of five major Middle Eastern countries are tabulated and organized by the author into Tables 13-15.

Table 13: The Five Countries' Economic Data: levels and Ratios of 5-country Averages

Economic Indicators	Unemployment Rate	Inflation Rate	Interest Rate	Balance of Trade	Government Debt	Currency	GDP
Israel	4	0	0	-2069	62	4	319
Saudi Arabia	6	3	2	33749	13	4	646
Egypt	11	14	17	-3626	92	18	336
Turkey	10	10	8	-5761	28	4	858
Iran	12	9	18	10726	35	37819	393
5-Country Average	9	7	9	6604	46	7570	510
Iran/5CA	1.37731	1.26582	1.99557	1.6242	0.75889	4.99617	0.76998
Israel/5CA	0.43981	0.02693	0.01109	-0.3133	1.34215	0.00047	0.625
SA/5CA	0.6713	0.39052	0.24945	5.11054	0.28404	0.0005	1.26567
Turkey/5CA	1.2037	1.37759	0.88692	-0.87237	0.61362	0.00054	1.68103
Egypt/5CA	1.30787	1.93913	1.85698	-0.54907	2.0013	0.00233	0.65831

Table 14: The Five Countries' Economic Data: levels and Ratios of 5-country Averages

Economic Indicators	GDP per capita	GDP per capita PPP	Employed Persons	Population
Israel	33783	32613	3847000	9
Saudi Arabia	21395	50458	11641000	33
Egypt	2724	10319	25963000	93
Turkey	14071	23679	28288000	81
Iran	5758	18498	23331168	81
5-Country Average	15546	27113	18614034	59
Iran/5CA	0.37038	0.68225	1.25342	1.36688
Israel/5CA	2.17307	1.20284	0.20667	0.14885
SA/5CA	1.37622	1.861	0.62539	0.55097
Turkey/5CA	0.90511	0.87333	1.51971	1.36536
Egypt/5CA	0.17522	0.38059	1.39481	1.56794

Economic Indicators	Food Inflation	Interest Rate	Balance of Trade	Exports	Imports
Israel	-1	0	-2069	4756	6825
Saudi Arabia	7	2	33749	63134	29384
Egypt	13	17	-3626	2146	5773
Turkey	10	8	-5761	13176	18936
Iran	12	18	10726	44278	33552
5-Country Average	8	9	6604	25498	18894
Iran/5CA	1.418	1.99557	1.6242	1.73653	1.7758
Israel/5CA	-0.1233	0.01109	-0.3133	0.18653	0.36122
SA/5CA	0.80148	0.24945	5.11054	2.47603	1.55521
Turkey/5CA	1.27867	0.88692	-0.87237	0.51675	1.00222
Egypt/5CA	1.62515	1.85698	-0.54907	0.08416	0.30555

Ease of Doing Business	Steel Production	Sales Tax Rate	Economic Indicators
54	300	17	Israel
92	385	5	Saudi Arabia
128	583	14	Egypt
60	2998	18	Turkey
124	2120	9	Iran
92	1277	13	5-Country Average
1.35371	1.65988	0.71429	Iran/5CA
0.58952	0.23489	1.34921	Israel/5CA
1.00437	0.30144	0.39683	SA/5CA
0.65502	2.34732	1.42857	Turkey/5CA
1.39738	0.45647	1.11111	Egypt/5CA

Iran, after Saudi Arabia, offers the lowest sales-tax environment, and after Turkey, has the highest ranking in steel production. In terms of ease of doing business, as well as food inflation rates, Iran is the second worst after Egypt. Once inflation rates are relatively higher in Iran, it won't be ironic to see the worst record within the five countries for nominal interest rates.

When it comes to international trade, Iran is much bigger than the other countries. Iran's imports are of the highest ranking. Its exports are second largest, after Saudis. The fact that Saudis have not been economically sanctioned and have historically been the OPEC biggest oil sellers, it won't be a surprise nor in any contradiction with the Western elaborate policy in empowering the latter against the former by all means. Given the well-established biases of Trump's policies, as an extension to its unconditional alliance with Israel, Iran would find soon an optimal strategic policy movement towards more friendly and less biased tendencies of Europe, China, Japan, South Korea and other regional nations for its trade and economic cooperation. Iranian government has never trusted the U.S. sincerity in promoting peace and regional stability, and Donald Trump has championed himself in ruination of any leftover sluggishly growing optimism that Barak Obama was successfully planting in Iranian-American political and economic relationship.

Observing Trump's immature commitment to reversing whatever Obama had done, with no regards to conventional wisdom and the strategic extent of losses both inside the U.S. and externally, almost anywhere in the world, any leader of average intelligence would set aside the U.S., as an accountable partner, entirely and focus on development of more sustainable relationship with leaders of higher political and intellectual maturity, who do not run the world like a real estate business, in which no ethical principles would matter. Obviously, inside the U.S. Democratic Party, there are some who would understand the strategic significance of the Iranian role in sustainability of the turbulent Middle East. That would be a better time for Iran only temporarily to cultivate more sustainable relationship with the U.S before another bullying government would take over.

Another strategic move for any country like Iran, facing the well-united alliance of Israel-U.S.-Saudis, is to restructure its foreign currency reserves to a minimum dollar and maximum euro reserve basis. This would help the improvement of trade conditions with the European countries even more than otherwise. Meanwhile, applying the real estate marketing strategies, would make it more urgent to minimize the upcoming potential losses for the U.S. that would be soon a big gain for other more sophisticated and wiser countries. None of that would ever be reliable if Iranian government could not stand up to its people's normal expectations. Law and order, real not superficial justice, more infrastructural investment, higher economic growth, more jobs, more investment in R&D and higher education, and less suppression of civil rights are the main fabric to be tightly and strongly woven to stand against any foreign aggression, including what Israeli government has been imposing on Iran and other Middle Eastern nations. Genuine respects for international law as well as a firm commitment to Iranian people's welfare, as a preliminary condition for anything else, including any (hopefully, secondary) commitment to other foreign countries, would bring Iran into the front row for economic cooperation and development.

The current Iranian government has demonstrated some real desire and intension in promoting integrity and accountability, as most critically observed by many nations and experts. However, the power structure within the government is the main impediment for its efficacy and success. As discussed in previous pages, the main beneficiaries of Iran's temporary economic growth after a relief from the devastating sanctions were clearly the military and the

military-related factions and industries. It is yet clear from Table 15 that Iran relative to the five major countries had the second lowest military expenditures after Egypt.

Table 15: The Five Countries' Competitiveness, Corruption Ranks: levels and Ratios of 5-country Averages

Competitiveness Index	Competitiveness Rank	Corruption Index	Corruption Rank	Economic Indicators		
5	16	62	32	Israel		
5	30	49	57	Saudi Arabia		
4	100	32	117	Egypt		
4	53	40	81	Turkey		
4	69	30	130	Iran		
5	54	43	83	5-Country Average		
0.93929	1.28731	0.70423	1.55875	Iran/5CA		
1.16806	0.29851	1.4554	0.38369	Israel/5CA		
1.06247	0.5597	1.15023	0.68345	SA/5CA		
0.97228	0.98881	0.93897	0.97122	Turkey/5CA		
0.8579	1.86567	0.75117	1.40288	Egypt/5CA		
Government Debt to GDP	Government Budget	Credit Rating	Military Expenditure	Industrial Production	Car Production	Economic Indicators
62	-2	76	17800	6	0	Israel
13	-9	86	61358	1	0	Saudi Arabia
92	-10	28	5357	11	0	Egypt
28	-1	44	14974	12	141372	Turkey
35	-2	15	12383	5	958335	Iran
46	-5	50	22374	7	219941	5-Country Average
0.75889	0.43659	0.30133	0.55345	0.7604	4.35723	Iran/5CA
1.34215	0.44699	1.52049	0.79555	0.81779	0	Israel/5CA
0.28404	1.85031	1.73262	2.74233	0.1076	0	SA/5CA
0.61362	0.22869	0.89313	0.66925	1.72166	0.64277	Turkey/5CA
2.0013	2.03742	0.55243	0.23943	1.59254	0	Egypt/5CA
Current Account	Currt Acct to GDP	Crude Oil Production	FDI	Terrorism Index	Economic Indicators	
2635	4	0	25050	5	Israel	
7834	-4	9935	264	6	Saudi Arabia	
-1785	-6	588	2950	7	Egypt	
-7096	-4	50	12300	8	Turkey	
7441	6	3810	877	4	Iran	
1806	-1	2877	8288	6	5-Country Average	
4.12061	-9.84375	1.32449	0.10581	0.63375	Iran/5CA	
1.45919	-6.40625	0.00014	3.02237	0.86437	Israel/5CA	
4.33824	6.09375	3.45376	0.03185	0.99248	SA/5CA	
-3.92956	5.9375	0.01721	1.48404	1.28459	Turkey/5CA	
-0.98848	9.21875	0.20441	0.35593	1.2248	Egypt/5CA	

Saudis and Israelis spent most in their military. That's why some have justified Iran's recent heavy military expenditures. Also, as revealed in Table 15, the relative stance of Iran in combating corruption, as compared to the five focused countries, is the weakest and worst. Iran's world-wide ranking is 130, which is extremely discouraging to know that this nation of almost 2,600 years of civilization, has been ranked worse than 129 other sovereign nations. On the same issue, several research works, such as Hamzaee (2008) found that "the law and order" variable has been one of the major influential factors in explaining nations' economic prosperity.

CONCLUSION: A PROPOSED SET OF GLOBAL POLICY

Given the historical failure of world organizations, such as the United Nations, in securing peace and stability in the real sense, the global community is at an urgent juncture. There is a need for better management and control of the currently explosive forces of violence, dissatisfaction, and devastating frustration of citizens with organized violations of nations' peace and prosperity either by their own local states or bullying foreign powers.

There is a need for most dynamic and sustainable efforts even through try and error, where human intelligence can be refocused on righteous directions against power hunger and for conscientious movement in creating peace and societal health in most advanced as well as least advanced nations of the world. The effort in this piece of work is just a meager share for this author to join many in offering some thoughts and resolutions through brain storming, communicating on common concerns in exploring better ways than what power brokers have trapped us for ages, and come up with more globally united grass-root movements that would bring about more harmony and resolutions in confronting the growing challenges with the growing populations.

The ethical crises in American politics and many other "free" societies would magnify the depth of what cannot be expected of those at the top of leadership of this world. United Nations, funded mainly by the richest nations, has no genuine power in serving its own purpose, though most noble. Funds for results are released, when the decency of the results are also controlled and redefined by the political interests of the main fund donors.

I am inviting other researchers, academicians, human rights activists, and decent politicians of the world to join this ongoing movement in exploring a real freedom, in which humanity is the strategic target of protection and promotion. I am not assuming any authority, whatsoever in pushing a good agenda. I am just frustrated and threatened enough by the trajectory of the historical performance records of the conventional leadership of the world. Hence, in my own meager share, I would like to start a communication, and the following propositions.

What Could Be Done?

1. Establishment of a new world-wide peace-keeping institution, similar to - but essentially more effective than - the United Nations. Just as an example, it would be The Global Harmony Foundation (GHF), or anything else to that extent. This would serve as a harmony, peace, and prosperity insurance foundation, with the following tentative provisions:
 - New bylaws are mandatory to be diligently worked on and no specific country's lobbyist approach would be acceptable that would result in their unilateral control of the world's policies.
 - Free elected individuals from various nations would be representatives of their nations. No government would influence the elections, except for their protection of the election process, and individual rights of electing and being appropriately considered for election.
 - Countries' domestic tax systems would create some appropriate individual and business tax credits in favor of a new substituting tax liabilities for funding the GHF. Each country needs to provide an annual membership premium that would amount to the same fraction of their national government tax revenues.
 - All members would sign to sponsor the rules, laws, and directions of the GHF, exactly as their national systems of law and order would govern internally.

- A GHF International Court, overseeing and ruling the international performances and interactions of the nations of the world.
2. A world-wide provisional task force to study and propose specific steps towards establishment of a world-wide nuclear regulation agency overseeing, ruling and regulating nuclear – related activities of all the nations of the world. No nations should be treated differently than the others. Let's not forget that the biggest nuclear warfare in the world belongs to the U.S., and even worse, the only state, which has ever used nuclear bomb against another nation in the most devastating way is the U.S.
 3. The Middle Eastern perilous conflicts and long-lasting turbulences must not be resolved by any but the regional states through an independent and impartial organization, such as my proposed CHF, only as an example.
 4. Each major region of the world, such as the Middle East, should establish a local chapter of the world-wide organization, CHF to bring the region's nations into a unity, coordination, and coordination for enhancement of their potential economic infrastructures, societal, legal, and environmental advances.
 5. Each country must allocate a certain percentage of its GDP to the CHF membership dues. It can be, e.g., 1% of their GDP equally across the board. No country would have any heavier influence, rights, or privileges more than the others.
 6. More R&D budgets and research and diligence would be applied towards establishment of bylaws, regulations, military power, elections, etc., of the proposed CHF.
 7. I also propose that this list must be extended to more specific items to be proposed by other researchers, policymakers, experts of currently standing United Nations, humanitarians, and peace-promoting groups and organizations.

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