

Jokes



A lawyer runs a stop sign and gets pulled over by a sheriff. He thinks he's smarter being a big shot lawyer from New York and has a better education than an sheriff from West Virginia. The sheriff asks for license and registration. The lawyer asks, "What for?" The sheriff responds, "You didn't come to a complete stop at the stop sign." The lawyer says, "I slowed down and no one was coming." "You still didn't come to a complete stop. License and registration please," say the sheriff impatiently. The lawyer says, "If you can show me the legal difference between slow down and stop, I'll give you my license and registration and you can give me the ticket. If not, you let me go and don't give me the ticket." The sheriff says, "That sounds fair, please exit your vehicle." The lawyer steps out and the sheriff takes out his nightstick and starts beating the lawyer with it. The sheriff says, "Do you want me to stop or just slow down?"

Two factory workers are talking. The woman says, "I can make the boss give me the day off." The man replies, "And how would you do that?" The woman says, "Just wait and see." She then hangs upside down from the ceiling. The boss comes in and says, "What are you doing?" The woman replies, "I'm a light bulb." The boss then says, "You've been working so much that you've gone crazy. I think you need to take the day off." The man starts to follow her and the boss says, "Where are you going?" The man says, "I'm going home, too. I can't work in the dark."

Three doctors are discussing which types of patients they prefer. Doctor Watson says, "I prefer librarians. All their organs are alphabetized." Doctor Fitzpatrick says, "I prefer mathematicians. All their organs are numbered." Doctor Ahn says, "I prefer lawyers. They're gutless, heartless, brainless, spineless, and their heads and rear-ends are interchangeable."

Two Irishmen friends are drinking together at one of their homes. One friend takes out a bottle of Irish whiskey and asks the other, "Will you pour this bottle out on my grave if I die first?" His friend replies, "Do you mind if I pass it through my kidneys first?"

A Brazilian, a Frenchman, and a Nigerian were in a plane. The pilot told them that they have to jump out of the plane when they find their country. The Brazilian jumped out when he saw the Christ the Redeemer statue. The Frenchman jumped out when he saw the Eiffel Tower. When it was the Nigerian's turn the pilot asked, "When will you jump?" The Nigerian put his hand outside the plane window. When he brought it back in, his watch was gone. He said, "Ah, we've reached my country."

An Indian cab driver picked up a Japanese man from a hotel. Along the way, they saw a Honda motorcycle overtake the taxicab and the Japanese guy said, "Motorcycle very fast, made in Japan." Then a Toyota car overtook the taxicab and the Japanese guy said, "Car very fast, made in Japan." When they reached the destination the fare was 1500 rupees. The Japanese man thought the ride would only cost 500 rupees. He asked the driver why the ride was so expensive. The driver said, "Meter very fast, made in India."

A manager at Walmart had the task of hiring someone to fill a job opening. After sorting through a stack of resumes, he found four people who were equally qualified. He decided to call the four in and ask them only one question. Their answer would determine which of them would get the job. The day came and as the four sat around the conference room table, the interviewer asked, "What is the fastest thing you know of?" The first man replied, "A thought. It just pops into your head. There's no warning." "That's very good!" replied the interviewer. "And, now you sir?" he asked the second man. "Hmm, let me see, a blink! It comes and goes and you don't know that it ever happened. A blink is the fastest thing I know of." "Excellent!" said the interviewer. "The blink of an eye, that's a very popular cliché for speed." He then turned to the third man, who was contemplating his reply. "Well, out at my dad's ranch, you step out of the house, and on the wall there's a light switch. When you flip that switch, way out across the pasture, the light on the barn comes on in less than an instant. Yep, turning on a light is the fastest thing I can think of." The interviewer was very impressed with the third answer and thought he had found his man. "It's hard to beat the speed of light," he said. Turning to Bubba, the fourth and final man, the interviewer posed the same question. Old Bubba replied, "After hearing the previous three answers, it's obvious to me that the fastest thing known is Diarrhea." "What!?" said the interviewer, stunned by the response. "Oh sure," said Bubba. "You see, the other day I wasn't feeling so good, and I ran for the bathroom, but before I could think, blink, or turn on the light, I had already sh*t my pants." Bubba is now the new greeter at a Walmart near you!



Two men from Dublin are walking to the annual Dublin Fair, when it starts to rain. "Patrick, put your umbrella up, it's raining." "I can't, Mick, it's got holes in it." "Holes in it? Then why did you bring it with you?" "I didn't think it would rain."

Q: Why were the Indians here first?
A: They had reservations.

Reaching the end of a job interview, the Human Resources Officer asks a young engineer fresh out of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "And what starting salary are you looking for?" The engineer replies, "In the region of \$125,000 a year, depending on the benefits package." The interviewer inquires, "Well, what would you say to a package of five weeks vacation, 14 paid holidays, full medical and dental, company matching retirement fund to 50% of salary, and a company car leased every two years, say, a red Corvette?" The engineer sits up straight and says, "Wow! Are you kidding?" The interviewer replies, "Yeah, but you started it."

Paddy Englishman, Paddy Scotchman and Paddy Irishman come across a magic slide. The slide operator tells them when they slide down, whatever they shout out for is what they will land in at the bottom. Paddy Englishman goes first and yells "Gold!" and lands in gold. Paddy Scotsman goes next and screams "Silver!" so he lands in silver. Paddy Irishman looks down the slide and, being afraid of heights, closes his eyes and jumps, crying out "OH SH*T!"

Continued from page 1

Keeping Out of Syria

urbs of Damascus and towns north of Homs. This strategy of obeying some of the cease-fires and ignoring others has allowed the government to achieve military victories it otherwise would not have.

Of course, Damascus will not respect the remaining cease-fires forever. In southern Syria, civilians are establishing local governments to provide services and promote economic revival. And in several towns in Idlib Province, residents have organized elections for town managers. Because the Syrian government has consistently rejected all other political entities within Syria as illegitimate, it will make great efforts to quash these organizations. In Damascus in 2015 and 2016, for instance, it shut down independent administrations in neighborhoods that had made peace with the government.

The Syrian government's refusal to accept the legitimacy of other political groups within Syria has stalled progress at the UN peace talks in Geneva. Assad's envoys refuse to discuss any political reforms, much less a transition away from Assad himself. Meanwhile, the opposition's delegation, backed by Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the West, has insisted that Assad must give up power as part of any deal. This deadlock shows no signs of breaking before the next round of talks, scheduled for November.

soldiers and a handful of American civilians are currently deployed in the country. The U.S. mission inside Syria started as military support for the Kurdish forces fighting ISIS but has grown to include keeping the peace between government forces, Arab rebels, and even Turkish soldiers in the northern Syrian city of Manbij and helping carry out initial reconstruction work. The United States' first priority should be avoiding further mission creep and, above all, taking care not to get ensnared in any costly new military campaigns.

Policy makers in Washington and Jerusalem are also anxious about Iran's military position in Syria near the Golan Heights, from which it could threaten Israel. This is a legitimate concern: Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, one of the largest Iranian-mobilized Iraqi fighter groups in Syria, has already vowed that its next fight will be to liberate the Golan Heights. Syria is not the place to resist Iranian expansionism, however. Air strikes won't compel Iranian forces to quit Syria, and ground incursions would simply force the United States to defend territories against sustained Iranian and Syrian unconventional warfare tactics. History indicates that the Iranian and Syrian



Russian helicopter flies near Shayrat air base in Syria, September 2017.

ISIS' FALL

In the summer of 2017, for the first time in the Syrian civil war, ISIS began confronting sustained attacks from both U.S.-backed and Iranian- and Russian-backed armies. As of this writing, the SDF, with U.S. air support, has nearly retaken ISIS' capital, Raqqa, and has moved into the group's last bastion, the southeastern province of Deir ez-Zor, whose oil fields have supplied ISIS with funds. Meanwhile, in early September, Syrian government forces charged into the province's capital, also called Deir ez-Zor, which lies on the banks of the Euphrates River. Russia and the United States have agreed that the river should separate the two forces, with Syrian government troops remaining on the west bank and the SDF staying on the east. At the same time as government forces are advancing on the city, they are in the process of recapturing the rest of the province of Deir ez-Zor west of the Euphrates, while the SDF takes the portion of the province east of the river.

Once the SDF captures Raqqa and Syrian government troops reach Abu Kamal, the last Syrian city west of the Euphrates before one reaches the Iraqi border, there will be no ISIS bastions left to retake. Then, Damascus will look for a way to seize Deir ez-Zor's oil fields, which will be vital for financing reconstruction, but which lie well east of the river. The Syrian government will also take an extremely dim view of the provisional civic council that the SDF is setting up to govern the portions of the province it controls. The internal tribal feuds that will likely split the SDF in the wake of ISIS' collapse will give the Syrian government a chance to move its forces east of the Euphrates, as well as providing Sunni militants with recruitment opportunities.

The Syrian government has already rejected the legitimacy of the Syrian Kurdish autonomous region, known as Rojava, being established in northeastern Syria. In August, Faisal Mekdad, Syria's deputy foreign minister, stated that the government would not allow any region to threaten "national unity" and called the local elections that the Kurds are organizing in Rojava "a joke." For his part, Assad has repeatedly stressed that his government will defeat "separatists." Nor does Iran, which is confronting restiveness among its own Kurdish population, harbor any affection for an autonomous Syrian Kurdish zone. Assad and the Iranians will be patient, however. Their forces may delay before moving against the SDF in Deir ez-Zor or the Kurds in northeastern Syria, but they won't accept local governments that can ignore and insult Damascus. After all, the civil war began back in 2011 over Assad's refusal to reform his autocratic government.

WASHINGTON'S BAD OPTIONS

Now that the end of the campaign against ISIS is in sight, the Trump administration will have to decide how long to keep a U.S. military presence in eastern Syria. Between 1,000 and 2,000 U.S.

governments might even recruit jihadists to fight U.S. forces. And the United States could expect little help from Turkey in any conflict with Iran. U.S. aid to Kurdish groups in Syria has created the potential for cooperation between Ankara and Tehran; in August, the chief of staff of the Iranian army visited Ankara for the first time since 1979. No one can know how long a war to limit Iranian influence in Syria would take or what achievable victory would look like. As a result, many policymakers in Washington and Jerusalem hope that Russia will limit Iran's influence, forestalling the need for a direct military confrontation.

Fortunately, the United States can live with greater Iranian influence in Syria. Iran's presence will complicate Israeli security but will not threaten the country's existence. Worse would be jihadists regaining Syrian territory and using it as a base to export terrorism. This is a real danger, as new jihadist groups have repeatedly appeared from the remnants of old ones. In 2011, for example, al-Nusra Front emerged from al Qaeda in Iraq. Al-Nusra learned from its predecessor: it was less brutal and concluded many alliances with non-jihadist groups until it could turn the tables on its erstwhile allies and destroy them one by one. If a new version of al Qaeda emerges in Syria, it will have learned from al-Nusra Front and ISIS and will likely be far harder to identify and contain than its forerunners.

There is one area where U.S. aid could do good: helping Syrian refugees in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. The governments of those countries, already overstretched, would likely allow the U.S. government and partner organizations to operate with greater autonomy than they could in Syrian-government-controlled areas. A renewed U.S. drive to raise funds would be extremely useful at a time of growing donor fatigue and dwindling UN resources, which have led to cuts in food rations in some refugee camps. Given the economic hardships in Syria and the government's ethnic-cleansing program—the regime has seized whole neighborhoods in cities such as Damascus and Homs from restive communities in which the opposition found roots—many refugees are unlikely to return home in the near future. Helping those refugees maintain a semblance of dignity would diminish the appeal of extremists and partially relieve a vast humanitarian crisis. Such a meager policy would represent a sad response to an uprising that demanded at its start only basic accountability from the government and a recognition of Syrians' dignity as human beings. But for the time being, it is the best the United States can do.