60th Anniversary Edition

The Best of FPRI's Essays on

The Middle East

✦ 2005-2015 ✦

60TH ANNIVERSARY FPRI 1955-2015

Foreign Policy Research Institute

The Best of FPRI's Essays on the Middle East, 2005-2015

Program on the Middle East

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FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
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The Best of FPRI's Essays on the Middle East, 2005-2015, which has been compiled in honor of FPRI's 60th Anniversary, will be followed by volumes from each of FPRI's other programs throughout 2015.

FOREWORD

By Tally Helfont, Director of FPRI's Program on the Middle East

March 2015

The Middle East – a region as complex and fraught with challenges as ever – continues to hold U.S. policymakers in its thrall. Though they may want to pivot elsewhere, the Middle East keeps pulling them back because the consequences of disengaging are too dire. The days of state power being held interminably in a single hand are fading. Iran's nuclear ambitions remain unquenched. The rise of ISIS – one of the greatest terrorist threats this world has seen – threatens to collapse the old state order, while reviving the smoldering embers of sectarianism. Internal political chaos now consumes Middle Eastern capitals from Damascus to Sanaa and will likely be with us for some time. Safety, security, human rights, economic interests, progress, reform, and hope are but a few of the commodities that are in jeopardy.

But all is not dire. As certain alliances have crumbled away in the wake of all the tumult, so have others formed and repaired in order to confront it head on. The United States finds itself on common ground with the Saudis and the Emiratis, the Jordanians and the Israelis, the Moroccans and the Egyptians with regard to the need to undermine radical actors in the region bent on its undoing. Beyond simply restoring stability, these countries understand that extremist non-state actors such as ISIS and its regional affiliates must be confronted militarily, politically, and for those among the aforementioned aligned states who have the legitimacy to do so, theologically. As these events, and their corresponding international responses, continue to unfold, out-of-the-box creative thinking and scholarship is needed to offer critiques and recommendations, color and nuance, background and vision.

FPRI's scholarship on the Middle East, sampled in this volume, has steadfastly provided such insight. Based on a holistic view of American strategic interests in the region, our analysis has transcended headlines and catch phrases. Focusing on perennial themes such as authoritarianism and reform; the Arab uprisings and its aftermath; radicalism and regional threats; sectarian divisions; and the Arab-Israeli conflict and peace efforts, FPRI's Program on the Middle East has utilized its vital and time-tested geopolitical approach to inform policymakers, academics, journalists, educators, and others interested in the Middle East.

In honor of FPRI's 60th anniversary, this volume is meant to provide the reader with a taste of the quality analysis we produced from 2005-2015 on a diverse array of topics. If you enjoy what you find here, visit us on the web to read, see, and hear more – or even better, become a member, a member at a higher level, or a partner, and support the sustained production of quality scholarship and analysis on the Middle East.

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THE IMPACT OF ARAB SATELLITE TELEVISION ON THE PROSPECTS FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE ARAB WORLD

By S. Abdallah Schleifer

May 2005

***S. Abdallah Schleifer**, an Associate Scholar of FPRI, is director of the Adham Center (for training and research in broadcast journalism) at the American University in Cairo, and publisher of Transnational Broadcasting Studies, an E-journal that the Center publishes in partnership with the Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, Oxford. Schleifer is former NBC News bureau chief in Cairo and covered the Middle East for two decades for American and Arab media. This essay is based on a presentation at the FPRI Sponsor Forum, hosted by Pepper Hamilton LLP on April 19, 2005. The views expressed are those of the author alone.*

Has Arab satellite television had a positive impact on the prospects for democracy in the Arab world? Yes, and in more ways than one might imagine.

News in the Arab World before the Age of Satellite TV

Little more than a decade ago there was no such thing as television journalism in the Arab world. State-owned national television channels had news bulletins, but in the sense of news value—stories covered and transmitted because of some intangible but intrinsic news value about which professionals are almost always in a rough consensus— there was no such thing as "TV journalism."

News bulletins were dominated by footage covering ceremonial occasions of state, and this held true whether the country was a republic or a monarchy: the ruler receiving newly accredited diplomats; the ruler hosting another head of state and, more recently, with his guest addressing the press; the ruler received at the airport upon returning home; the ruler addressing parliament on a significant occasion; the ruler inaugurating a new dam or some other massive facility. But do not imagine that state television was devoted solely to recording ceremonial activities of the ruler; there was also the prime minister—the prime minister convening a meeting of the cabinet; the prime minister or other ministers opening factories.
In this sealed universe, there were no television reporters, just a cameraman who recorded the event, editing-in-camera so to speak, in order that his film or tape could be played directly that evening on the news, while a presenter read wire copy from the state or semi-official news agency that had covered the same event. Since the wire copy only approximated the footage

being shown—the same event but with nothing written to picture, nor any picture edited to fit the copy— there was always a desultory, oddly detached quality, aside from the basic banality of the events that were covered.

Unlike radio there was no comparison effect. Terrestrial television had a range of 50 miles. With boosters the signal could be relayed the length of a country but not beyond its borders. Unlike BBC Arabic Radio Service, which anyone could listen to in the Arab world, no one in the Arab world could see BBC television news, or any other broadcaster (be they American, French, or Italian) covering the news according to international standards.

Global television news agencies supplied videos of major international news, which at times included regional events like the civil war in Lebanon. But again, this was footage from the field, not a field report. The television news agencies provided pictures and a written description of the shots, the location, and names of personalities, but it did not include a script which could be translated and read. The national television channels would again take copy from their own state news agency, or even an international news agency—the copy carefully vetted so as not to contradict the official take on the event. But again, this wasn't a news report, and the copy the anchor read rarely amplified the significance of the picture shown. If it did, the result was purely accidental since the idea of writing to picture was part of the art of a television journalism that simply wasn't practiced.

Regional news—a coup, a civil war, a massacre—might never be broadcast if deemed embarrassing to a friendly fellow Arab state. Or perhaps a report would finally appear a few days late because the channel had waited for the political leadership to decide what its response to the event in a neighboring country might be. Of course this could be ludicrous since short-wave radio—BBC Arabic service, VOA and Monte Carlo Arabic radio—would already be reporting on these events. So at the very least, the "educated classes"—a linguistic flourish I've gotten used to, living as I do in the Arab world—were aware of the event. Most notoriously in that vein, was the failure of the Saudi official media to mention the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait for more than 48 hours after the event.

President Sadat and Me

I must confess that once one understood the system, it had its extra-journalistic uses. Let's say our bureau (at the time, the NBC News Bureau) was in desperate need of a difficult-to-secure international telephone line. There were very few available in Cairo in the mid-seventies. I knew President Sadat was to inaugurate a new cultural center, so that morning I would show up with my camera crew. Of course NBC News wouldn't have had the slightest interest in the event, and I had no intention of shipping the film we would shoot. Needless to say, my

competition, CBS and ABC, weren't covering; only an Egypt TV cameraman who would always accompany the President would be doing so, which was just fine. At the right moment I would approach the President and ask him for his reaction to any seemingly relevant question or two —a rumor from Washington, a report from Tel Aviv. Needless to say, my crew would film the stand-up interview. But more importantly, Egypt TV, not having its own correspondent, would film every second of the interview. Now in those days there was no television to watch outside Egypt TV, and that night 50 million Egyptians would watch the President and me chatting together about reports from Washington and Tel Aviv, just like old friends. The next morning I would rush over to the Ministry of Telecommunications where everybody would recognize me—it was the foreign correspondent friend of the President! I would be ushered into the office of the minister, and within minutes, the phone line was ours.

The CNN Effect

What changed all of this—and here is a pertinent lesson of how benign foreign intervention by force of example can be a motor for change in the Arab world—was CNN coverage of the build-up and the eventual combat between the American-led Alliance and Iraq in 1991. There were very few dishes in the Arab world at the time, but given the need to dispel outrageous Iraqi radio propaganda, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab countries in the American-led Alliance pulled down CNN 24/7 coverage of the build-up and then the war, subsequently re-transmitting them via terrestrial television. Suddenly, Arabs could see events in the Arab world significantly covered—CNN reporters out in the field coming back with finished reports. Since the reports were in English, English speakers were suddenly in great demand in millions of Arab households and coffee shops. In Egypt, a new pay TV company, CNE, continued to retransmit CNN terrestrially after the war had ended.

Saudi private interests with very close ties to the palace sensed the importance of satellite news and the potential for mischief if placed in the wrong hands. They quickly moved after the war ended to establish a satellite channel with morning and evening news bulletins transmitting real reports— footage from the field edited into meaningful news stories by Arab correspondents in the field with their cameramen. That channel, MBC, was logically based in London where there was already a cadre of expatriate Arab journalists trained to international standards, or trainable by executives brought in from the BBC and ITN. There the ambience in no way resembled that of state television channels, which were literally extensions of the ministries of information, invariably occupying the same building.

Again one must acknowledge outside influence, in this case at work as ambience (the ambience of London), where the coverage of political life could be simplified into a schematic which goes, "Here is a problem; here are the contending solutions to that problem." This contrasts

vividly with what had become, after the 1948 defeat in Palestine and the waves of coup d'etats and revolution that followed, the prevailing mode of thought and expression in Arab media. This mode was reflected above all in the commentaries of the state-owned or directed printed press, which were always long on commentaries and short on news. And that mode of thought and expression is that every problem has its roots in a conspiracy, and the contending issues were, or in some cases still are, between rival or shifting conspiracy theories—a political media environment that has been described so well by our colleague Saad ad-Din Ibrahim at a media conference last year in Cambridge. His paper, entitled "Thoughts in Arab Satellite Television, Pan Arabism, and Freedom of Expression" can be found in the Fall/Winter issue of Transnational Broadcasting Studies at www.tbsjournal.com

The Rise of Al Jazeera and Other Satellite Channels

In such an environment, real news reports from the field, narrated in Arabic and available on television, was a stunning experience. MBC quickly acquired a large audience particularly in the Gulf and eastern Saudi Arabia because the satellite signal was downloaded in Bahrain and retransmitted terrestrially. In those parts of Arabia and the Gulf, MBC took major audience share.

Other channels followed, and after an aborted attempt at 24/7 Arab language TV news coverage produced by BBC in the service of another Saudi group, the newly installed Emir of Qatar provided funds and facility to launch Al Jazeera in 1996, approximating the BBC model of public owned but not state controlled television. The core staff at Al Jazeera had all been trained, and served as broadcasters at BBC.

By now, dishes and a number of entertainment satellite channels were proliferating across most of the Arab world. That proliferation of dishes provided Al Jazeera with a rapidly growing mass audience, now estimated at more than 50 million viewers. Because Al Jazeera is a 24/7 news operation, it quickly seized the leadership position in Arab satellite broadcasting; a position that would not be significantly challenged until just before the invasion of Iraq, when the MBC group which had first launched TV news coverage in a limited news bulletin format back in 1992, now gathered together a group of Arab journalists, including the first news director at Al Jazeera and a number of Al Jazeera reporters, and launched Al Arabiya. The competition has had a positive effect. Arab satellite television journalists are less likely to indulge their personal ideological takes on the news when they know a more detached, and thus a more reliable version of the same event is available on the TV screen just one click away on everybody's remote control.

So here we have one of those amazing historic reverses: The most servile, the most state controlled, the least professional of all media in the Arab world, is suddenly refashioned in a satellite format, providing news reports more in accord with international professional standards than any other form of media in the region. And because those reports can be uplinked from Europe to a satellite which can download these reports to dishes anywhere in the Arab world, this becomes an uncensorable format due to the transmission technology and satellite links.

For many Arabs, however, the great joy in Al Jazeera was to watch the several "Cross-fire" types of political talk shows that would pit critics of Arab regimes against their defenders: Islamists against either liberal secularists or Arab nationalists. While debates that were unimaginable on the state national television channels flowed back and forth, the audience could join in by telephone, again expressing their own opinions, and doing so in a manner also unimaginable only a decade ago. But as Ibrahim Helal, former chief editor at Al Jazeera, acknowledged at that same Cambridge conference on Arab media last winter, all too often these talk shows degenerated into unproductive shouting matches in which abuse replaced dialogue and analysis. One senses that these talk shows are too often a vehicle for the collective venting of emotion rather than exercises in critical thinking.

I would argue that it is informed opinion that is of value—not opinion for its own sake. The Arab world has for too long suffered from the conspiracy mania and political hysteria fostered by uninformed opinion. Reporting from the field, and reporting the facts as they are in the field, informs opinion.

When Saad ad-Din Ibrahim was finally released from prison, during which time he had been vilified by nearly the entire Egyptian press, it was Al Jazeera that interviewed Saad ad- Din and allowed him to again raise the very issue—the possibility of hereditary succession to power in Egypt—which had resulted in his imprisonment in the first place. A critical issue for the democratic process had been put into play by a news report; by an interview. This novelty offered great improvement over the previously dominant confrontational talk shows, which at best function after the facts are established, but all too often are oblivious, if not indifferent to facts.

News and the Cultivation of a Democratic Consciousness

Both Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya responded to widespread concern and anger in the Arab world with America's deepening involvement in the region—in particular the invasion and occupation of Iraq and what has appeared as continued U.S. support for the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories— by increasing coverage of American political life. This involved

providing intensive coverage of the 2004 U.S. presidential election campaign. Even if the interest in the campaign was stimulated in part by the fact that several of the contenders for the Democratic Party nomination challenged the wisdom and conduct of the invasion of Iraq, the result was nonetheless extraordinary coverage of the democratic process starting from the time of the primaries.

Indeed, Hugh Miles, the author of a recent book about Al Jazeera, observed at a recent media workshop in Doha that Al Jazeera has done more to educate Arabs about democracy than any other broadcaster. He was alluding to Al Jazeera's regular weekly program, "From Washington," with guests from both the administration and the opposition, as well as the special weekly show, "US Presidential Race," which started in January 2004. The latter program took great pains to educate Arab viewers on the American political and electoral process, how delegates to the conventions are chosen, how the modern primary system evolved, and how the Electoral College functions. This show was supplemented by special reports, documentaries, and live coverage of many of the highlights in the primary campaigns, the conventions (with four reporters covering both conventions) and then the election campaign itself.

In contrast to the usual confrontational talk shows, Al Jazeera's programs, "From Washington" and "the American Presidential Face," produced by the Washington bureau and hosted by Al Jazeera's veteran correspondent, Hafez Al Mirazi, had a distinctly informative style. These shows, and in particular the latter one, were obviously designed to help viewers newly interested in American politics to easily understand what was happening during the campaign, and to grasp the basic workings of the American democratic system. The coverage deepened the Arab world's factual, rather than imaginatively preconceived, understanding of America. As an additional side effect, it provided a familiarization course in the operations of a functioning democracy. A similar effect has been underway in the intense reporting on political life in England by the Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya bureaus in London. Again, the stimulus may be issues of particular interest to an Arab audience, such as the debates in parliament related to the Iraqi invasion, but the side-effect has been a protracted education in the democratic process.

The importance of this development cannot be exaggerated. Until a few years ago, there was not a single Center for American studies at any Arab university. Now there are two: one is at Cairo university, and the other has just started at the American University in Cairo, funded interestingly enough by the Saudi Prince and global investor, Alwalid bin Talal (who is deeply involved in Arab satellite television). Additionally, the RAND Corporation has launched a regional research center in Qatar, the host country for Al Jazeera.

Two other elections have had a profound effect on stimulating the democratic process in the Arab world. I am referring to the Palestinian election for President (which was a contested election), and also the local elections in which Hamas entered the political process and did quite well, suggesting to Fatah's leadership that there is a price to be paid for the sort of casual corruption that characterized Palestinian Authority's rule in the territories since Oslo.

But the election with the greatest impact of all was the one in Iraq, in which millions of Arabs watched millions of Iraqis braving terrorist threats to vote in a highly competitive election. And the great question those elections pose in the consciousness of every Arab, in every Arab country, is: If free, competitive elections can be held in Iraq, despite a violent insurgency and a foreign occupation, then why not here?

THE DARFUR CRISIS

by Harvey Glickman

July 2006

Harvey Glickman *is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Haverford College and an FPRI associate scholar. His current interests cover the politics of genocide and American foreign policy. His books include* Ethnic Conflict and Democratization in Africa *(African Studies Association, 1995).* *He thanks Peter Ajak and Emma Rodman for their comments on early drafts of this article.*

What do George Clooney, Manute Bol, Elie Wiesel, and Olympic speed skater Joey Cheek have in common? They have all publicly called for the UN Genocide Convention of 1948 to be applied to Darfur and for greater intervention to halt genocide there.

Over the past few years, the U.S. government has agreed, at least in rhetoric. On July 23, 2004, the U.S. Congress passed a unanimous joint resolution declaring a genocide event in Darfur, as defined by the Convention, Article II of which defines genocide as:

> any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:
> (a) Killing members of the group;
> (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
> (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
> (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
> (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Signers of the Convention, which include the U.S., are supposed to act to bring such events to an end. In September 2004, then-Secretary of State Colin Powell testified to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "Genocide has been committed in Darfur, and the government of Sudan and the Janjawid [militia] bear responsibility."

In March 2006, President Bush declared, "This is a serious business. This is not playing a diplomatic holding game. . . . When we say genocide, that means genocide has to be stopped." In June 2006, taking a somewhat different tack by acting to intervene in a humanitarian crisis, the U.S. House of Representatives approved $450 million for assistance to Sudan, including $138 million for the Darfur region. Commentators such as former diplomat Timothy Carney

take another approach, seeing Khartoum as "the key to terrorism"--i.e., an ally in the war against violent jihadists. They are therefore are hesitant to act in Sudan's internal affairs without the cooperation of the present government, led by President Omar Bashir. (On April 29, 2005, the Los Angeles Times reported that Salah Abdallah Ghosh, the head of the Sudan security service, was flown to Washington in a CIA jet to review terrorism information gathered by the service.)

U.S. action on Darfur has largely been hortatory. Despite the anti-genocide rhetoric, the U.S. has acted largely as a cheerleader for the African Union (AU) or the UN to provide the boots on the ground in any peace-enforcement operation. Numerous calls around the world from media observers and human rights organizations for U.S., NATO, UN or AU intervention to halt genocide have succeeded only sporadically in shining a spotlight on the atrocities committed in Darfur, with the main achievement the May 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) brokered by the AU at a conference in Abuja, Nigeria, between the Sudanese government and only one of the three rebel factions.

Such an agreement reflects what appears to be a tacit aim of U.S. efforts, namely, not to alienate the government of Sudan, which provides assets to the U.S. effort in the war on terrorism; to track militants with murderous intent, to provide intelligence on the movements of suspected terrorists, and to keep the spigot open on oil in an extremely tight world petroleum market. Similar to our unacknowledged position on Pakistan, we need some "friendly (semi-) tyrants."

The DPA also, however, tacitly ratifies the Sudanese government's interpretation of the struggle as a civil war, rather than the state-sponsored ethnic cleansing it actually is (the government arms and equips the notorious janjaweed militia). What burst onto the world scene in 2003 as a thinly-disguised government effort to depopulate an area as large as France has proceeded long enough to now disintegrate into militia clashes, rebel factional disputes, banditry, and reciprocal cross-border raids between Chadian irregulars harassing the Sudan government forces and Sudanese irregulars helping Chadian rebels. So what started as an effort to extend the control of the central government elites over an unruly countryside has--sadly, like many African conflicts--degenerated into internal factional clashes and international skirmishes. This complicates the urge to thrust cleanly and forcibly into mass injustices in order to put things right.

Although Kofi Annan and other UN officials have denounced the janjaweed raids, the rapes, the pillaging, and the displacement of thousands upon thousands of villagers, and the UN has helped set up and administer refugee camps on the fringes of Darfur and over the border in Chad, the DPA does not bring in a UN force to replace or shore up the ineffective AU

contingent of 7,000 monitors. Four days after the DPA was signed, villagers in the Kalma refugee camp looted an AU police post and killed a Sudanese translator. Indeed, now there are reports of rebel factions imitating janjaweed tactics in their escalating internal struggle.

The DPA estimated that 200,000 are dead and 2 million displaced into camps in Darfur and in Chad. President Bashir's government agreed to assume certain responsibilities and looks toward the possibility of UN forces' supplementing the undermanned troops of the AU, who have been observing and supposedly enforcing a cease-fire in Darfur. That cease-fire, of May 12, 2006, provided for 5,000 rebels troops to be incorporated into the Sudanese army. The DPA also allows for wealth and power sharing as part of a new political architecture in relations between the central government and Darfurians. Khartoum is supposed to disarm the janjaweed and commits to contributing $30 million to a compensation commission, a sum many regard as inadequate. Most close observers do not expect the cease-fire to end the fighting. The abovementioned General Gosh, on the 2006 anniversary of the coup of June 29, 1989 that brought General Bashir to power, asserted that Sudan's leadership prefers death and martyrdom over living in a country whose sovereignty is not respected. In his own address Bashir stated flatly, "We will not allow international troops under the UN to deploy in Darfur."[1]

At present the Sudan government continues to agree to its commitments but appears unwilling to implement them; it has broken its promises five times already. With no provision in the DPA for the UN to take over peacekeeping from the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS), Khartoum has merely agreed to allow a UN planning mission to visit the area. Yet most international observers and commentators believe that only a muscular international intervention can end the violence and provide human security. Such an intervention would include a Security Council resolution applying Chapter VII authority to intervene; the application of sanctions against violators on any side; U.S. and EU financial backing for a UN-expanded AU military contingent to enforce the cease-fire and relief operations for refugees; and U.S., NATO, and EU provision of monitoring and logistical capabilities.

As noted, similar to many places in Africa today, reality--and policy--is not simple. While Christians have been persecuted by self-styled enforcers of an Islamic code of conduct in the South of Sudan, that is hardly the whole story of north-south relations. While darker skinned people from the South have been "sold into slavery" to northerners, that does not mean that racism fully defines north-south relations. While many years of international involvement in Sudanese politics have focused on bringing a north-south civil war to an end, that is not the only civil divide in the country. Indeed, Sudan's geographic boundaries are not historically organic, and the country is crisscrossed by important east-west divisions, as well. Like most

1 "Sudan security chief rejects UN force, calls for martyrdom," *Sudan Tribune*, June 30, 2006.

countries in Africa, Sudan's present boundaries reflect colonial residues and compromises--in its case, by the Ottomans and the British, the latter of whom administered the territory "in partnership" as Anglo-Egyptian Sudan prior to the country's achieving independence.

In the context of the complicated politics of Sudan today and of a sober assessment of U.S. interests and capabilities, an effective U.S. policy is not obvious, and certainly not so clear-cut that grassroots events such as the "Save Darfur" rally held in Washington this past April can solve the problem. But the U.S. has not offered clear leadership, either. At one time or another in the past three years, the U.S. or its official representatives have denounced a genocide and blamed the Sudanese government, called the crisis a tribal conflict, acted as if settling the north-south civil war would spill over to settle the Darfur conflict, called on NATO and the UN to intervene to help beleaguered AU peacekeepers, and supported the Abuja peace accords, which await a UN plan and Sudanese government permission to send peacekeeping forces.

Circles of Conflict in Sudan

To fully comprehend the Darfur crisis and the policy implications, one must conceptualize Sudan and its problems in terms of overlapping circles of conflict. Sudan as a whole has been in the midst of a humanitarian crisis for some years, with drought and desertification pushing south and west, placing cattle-raising nomads in direct conflict with peasant gardeners. This resource conflict is central to the Darfur strife. Peacekeeping alone, in the absence of famine relief and economic development, will be insufficient.

Broadly overlapping is a clan conflict among the Fur people, who are nomads and peasants, and a conflict between government-supported militia and locals, within a context of ethnic, status, and color differences among a governing elite and local peasants. Most recently, these conflicts have morphed into a Chad-Sudan conflict in which rebels against the government of Chad's President Idriss Deby are being supported by the Sudan government as a result of Deby's provision of safe haven for Darfur refugees and his suspected support for Uganda-based southern rebels against the Sudan government during the course of the long north-south civil war.

Darfurians, all Sunni Muslims, attach themselves to three groups: the Zaghawa and the Massaleit, both settler groups, and the Fur. In 2005 the Sudan Liberation Army split into two factions: the SLA-Abdul Wahid, largely Fur, and the SLA-Minni Minawi, largely Zaghawa. The recent maneuverings shadowing the humanitarian crisis have been complicated by internal Sudanese politics and cross-border clashes. An attempted coup in 2006, supported by the Khartoum government, was repelled by President Deby (a Zaghawa) and Justice and

Equality Movement (JEM) forces as the Chadian (and Sudanese) rebels reached the outskirts of Njamena, the capital of Chad. This was seen as retaliation for the help Deby offered JEM against Khartoum in January 2006. Both the invasion and the coup failed.

Complicating all this is a decades-long struggle in Sudan over the nature of the state--how far a supposedly militant Islamist regime can go in reformulating political and cultural life in the country. As early as 1966, Sadiq al-Mahdi, descendent leader of a historical and respected political community and head of the sometime governing Umma party, declared, "The dominant feature of our nation is an Islamic one . . . and this Nation will not have its entity identified and its prestige and pride preserved except under an Islamic revival."[2] Militant Islamists in Sudan, however, push for the programmatic exclusion of other beliefs.

Seeded in the 1940s as an offshoot of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, Sudanese Islamism rose to political prominence in the 1960s under Hasan al Turabi, a European-educated lawyer and articulate philosopher-politician. His Islamic Charter Front political party grew to prominence as the National Islamic Front (NIF) in 1986, pulling together elements of the urban intelligentsia, students at Khartoum University, small business owners interested in challenging big-business ties with the traditional parties, and suffering lower classes. The NIF backed the coup by General Bashir in June 1989. Bashir banned the older parties and utilized the NIF as the ideological basis for the governing Revolutionary Command Council. By 1993, the U.S. State Department Country Report on Human Rights for Sudan declared "The NIF-dominated regime pursued religious, ethnic and ideological discrimination in almost every aspect of society." In 1996 Turabi became speaker of a new parliament, and the next year Bashir assumed the title of president.

In September 2004, the Islamist movement in Sudan split after an unsuccessful coup led by Hassan al Turabi, now the ideological guru of Sudanese Islamism. (Sudanese politics regularly features divisions and realignments, especially, as one would expect, among faith-based ideologies.) Turabi wound up in detention, but his influence and support prevented his full suppression. Turabi actually came out in support of JEM, and was critical of the Abuja Peace Agreement. Alex de Waal, a leading commentator on Darfur and northeast African political history, writes that the war in Darfur is partly the result of the failure to broaden the Islamist base in the Nile Valley to embrace all sympathizers with Sufi (a spiritual theme in Islam, characterized by regional and clan "saints," sometimes erupting into puritanical sects) over the whole of Sudan.[3]

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2 Cited by Abel Alier, "The Southern Sudan Question," in Dunstan M. Wai, ed., *The Southern Sudan: The Problem of National Integration* (London, 1973), p. 24.

3 "Who Are the Darfurians? Arab and African Identities, Violence and External Engagement," *African Affairs*, April 2005.

The Islamist project in Sudan clearly cannot be encapsulated into a committee of radical jihadists who train suicide bombers. At the time of the simultaneous bombings of the American Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998, Al Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden had been savoring the victory of the Afghan jihad over the Soviet forces in the Afghan civil war. By fall 1989 he turned up in Khartoum, invited by Turabi to transplant his organization there. Initially Bin Laden helped Turabi in the campaign against Christian Africans in the south of Sudan. By 1991 Al Qaeda was firmly ensconced in Sudan, at the center of a world network of banks, business enterprises and civic organizations that were underwriting terrorist activities.[4] Al Qaeda represented but one violent entity in a wide-ranging ideological and political projection of power by Turabi and his temporary support in the Sudan government, which encompassed internal and international elements.

Under Turabi's direction in 1991 Sudan hosted the "Popular Arabic and Islamic Conference" that challenged the Arab League and other world Muslim organizations. In the years 1991-96 Islamist forces pursued forcible ideological transformation of local governments inside Sudan and pursued the civil war in the southern provinces in order to crush opposition to Islamism as the adopted state ideology and practice.[5] But concerted and enduring resistance in the south of the country eventually brought about a military-political settlement and a new constitutional arrangement in 2005. John Garang, the long-time leader of the Southern People Liberation Army (SPLA) and finally transformed from rebel to statesman, was poised to assume a vice-presidency of a reconstituted Sudanese Federation when he died in a plane crash.

Shortly after 9/11 the Sudan government supposedly divested itself of Al Qaeda ties and shared intelligence with the U.S. in the war on terror. At present Islamism remains an undercurrent of politics in Sudan as an outlier program to continue a half-century campaign to turn an essentially multi-ethnic Sudan into an Islamic state.

The Darfur Province

The Darfur crisis plays out against this background. Unrest in this province goes back at least to the 1987-89 civil war between militias of the Fur versus government-sponsored militias (similar to today), which was settled by a peace conference arranged by al-Mahdi. Islamists found considerable support in Darfur in the 1980s and it is said that the jihadi militia supporters of Turabi came in large part from Darfur. In 1991 an SPLA uprising in Darfur failed, following a defection from the NIF. In April 1992 the Islamist government sponsored a jihad in Kordofan which resulted in a genocide-like result there. By 1999 western Fur

4 *9/11 Commission Report* (New York: Norton, 2004), pp. 55-58.

5 See Harvey Glickman, "Islamism in Sudan's Civil War," *Orbis*, Spring 2000, pp. 273-279.

supporters of the NIF had deserted the Arabized elite of the Nile valley, a separation reflected in differences among the Darfur rebels today. And among the Darfur rebels, strength to continue the civil war ironically came in the form of international pressure on the Sudan government to rein in the janjaweed, as well as the assumed parallel to the settlement of the civil war in the south of Sudan.

Nevertheless, banditry and atrocities on the part of rebel factions pale in comparison to a multi-year campaign on the part of the Sudan government through sponsored janjaweed militias to kill or displace the peasant population of Darfur. Most of the 200,000 dead and 2 million displaced are not due to rebel in-fighting. As John Prendergast and Colin Thomas-Jensen of the International Crisis Group state, "Sudanese military intelligence agents manipulate local ethnic divisions and exacerbate tensions, and then the government blames the bloodshed on lawlessness and tribalism." President Bashir has said recently, "the so-called Darfur conflict is an invention by foreign interests."[6]

Where from Here

Genocide it is; and it is an international disgrace that it has not been stopped; but unilateral intervention to halt it can only be a stopgap measure, without considerable international, especially African and Sudanese cooperation. Consciousness-raising among humanitarian activists outside Sudan with good intentions unfortunately play into unhelpful stereotypes and distort the political realities. To portray all African Darfurians as victims of historical predatory Arabization aids in mobilizing international sentiments, but it does not accurately depict the political reality and blocks the very humanitarian assistance that is required. To insist on finding only Arab villains –such as characterizing the conflict as "Arabs" attempting to exterminate Africans -- contributes to the stereotype prevalent in the Middle East of the Arabs always as subject to the "Orientalist" Western interpretations of the world. Indeed in the Middle East and many parts of Muslim Africa, the way "genocide" has been characterized appears to some Muslim commentators as an unfair planned denigration of the Arabs. To more partisan Sudanese and sensitive Africans it brings back neo-colonial interventionism. And, of course there are always those who see "a Zionist plot."

Much of the support generated for "the genocide coalition" in the international community stems from an alliance of admirable international human rights groups, African and African American supporters of the SPLA and its long march to recognition of special status for the south of Sudan and its peoples, anti-slavery and Christian political activists--largely in the

6 John Prendergast and Colin Thomas-Jensen, "Matching Rhetoric with Action in Darfur," allAfrica.com, March 17, 2006.

U.S., and some antiterrorism commentators who see the Sudan government as an outpost of a typical authoritarian Islamic regime.

Despite its muddled implementation in Iraq and elsewhere, we have placed our marker since 2001 on the side of democracy and international justice; Darfur and Sudan are a clear test. Arab and African sensitivities aside and despite realists' warning that we need Khartoum's cooperation in counterterrorism, if the secretary of state and the president of the U.S. both implicate the Sudan regime in genocide, how can it not serve U.S. national interests to act vigorously to end this atrocious event? In the words of President Bush, "there has to be a consequence for people abusing their fellow citizens." It is certainly in the realm of near-term possibility that the U.S. work with the AU and NATO to designate a lead country to secure and mobilize a UN-mandated, fully-funded force of sufficient number to help the AU-AMIS stabilize peacekeeping and enforce the cease-fire. That would be a beginning.

STRUGGLE IN THE SANDBOX:
WESTERN SAHARA AND THE "INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY"

By Michael Radu

September 2007

The late ***Michael Radu, Ph.D.****, was Co-Chair of FPRI's Center on Terrorism, Counterterrorism, and Homeland Security.*

Source: CIA World Factbook

The 100,000 square miles of sand in the Western Sahara that until November 1975 were the Spanish territory of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro--the latter an ironic name for an area lacking both water and gold--have been the subject of an international dispute ever since. The UN, former Secretary of State James Baker, the African Union, the Arab League and many others have tried to resolve the fate of an unknown number of people with an obscure past living here, but all have so far failed to balance the competing Moroccan nationalism, Algerian ambitions, wider geopolitical interests and lingering Cold War rhetoric.

There are a few accepted facts regarding the territory. First, there has never been an organized state or administration throughout the territory's history until Spain established its colony there in 1884. Sporadically until then various tribes claimed allegiance to Moroccan sultans in Fez, and occasional Moroccan incursions to points further south passed by. According to the last (1974) census, the population of the territory was 74,000 before Spain's departure. Population estimates today vary between under 300,000 and 380,000; two thirds of the people live in the capital of El Aaiun, nearly half of them Moroccan settlers. In December 1999 the UN claimed to have identified 86,425 eligible voters for a projected referendum, while Polisario (Frente Popular para la Liberacion de Saguia El-Hamra y Rio de Oro), the self-proclaimed "national liberation" movement of the territory, claims that its Tindouf camps' population is 155,000 (it would not permit an independent census).

The population problem is the key to the entire Sahara issue--who is a "Sahrawi" and thus entitled to decide the fate of the territory. This issue is complex and has been used, in opposite ways, by both Morocco and Polisario and its supporters. The truth is that it is impossible to make any definitive determinations on this. It was for good reason that for centuries before the

colonial period Moroccan and Algerian rulers trying to control this part of the Sahara have called the area that today makes large parts of Algeria, Mauritania, Niger, Mali and the entire Western Sahara the *bled es-Siba* ("the land of dissidence"). The Arabized, Hassanyia-speaking Berber nomads never had or liked centralized authority or borders, nor do they today. The Reguibat tribe, the largest of Western Sahara, is still spread out over southwestern Algeria, Mauritania and Mali, its members going in and out of Tindouf, a province in western Algeria, as their needs require. The most important such needs are both economic--Tindouf's camps provide reliable international aid--and political: Polisario is led by Reguibat, whether they are technically Sahrawi, Mauritanian, Moroccan or Malian, and it has always relied on them to recruit its military force.

Viability

The territory has some iron and especially phosphate deposits at Bou Craa. The latter are important but often overestimated. Morocco's state-owned Office Cherifien des Phosphates/Royal Phosphates Office (OCP) is the world's largest producer and exporter of phosphate rock. It controls two-thirds of world reserves, but only 10 percent of that is from Western Sahara, and the sector is capital, rather than labor, intensive. Similarly, the rich fisheries off the coast provide income from concessions to foreign fleets but not many local jobs. Lack of water makes agriculture impossible, and there is no tourist attraction. Today the population is sustained mostly by huge Moroccan subsidies--just as the Tindouf camps are on international welfare, totally dependent on UN and Western (mostly Scandinavian) aid and Algerian political support.

Security

Western Sahara has extensive and virtually indefensible borders: 42 km with Algeria, 1,561 km with Mauritania, 443 km with Morocco, and a 1,110 km coastline. A Polisario-led government in El Aaiun, even if not radical or Islamist, would be unable to adequately control its territory: even much stronger Morocco and Algeria have serious problems controlling their parts of the Sahara. Mauritania, Western Sahara's weak neighbor, has already been targeted by Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM, formerly GSPC), and by Spring 2007 a new transnational Islamist terrorist group, Ansar al islam fi Sahara al bilad al mulazamin ("The partisans of the Prophet in Sahara, the land of those wearing the veil") made its existence known (from Barcelona). As its name implies, the group is linked to the late Al Zarkawi's group in Iraq and includes veterans from that country--although it does not see itself as part of Al Qaeda.[7] The group's

[7] Antonio Baquero and Jordi Corachan , Actividad Extremista en el Desierto. Un nuevo grupo terrorista magrebí amenaza a Espana, *El Periodico* (Barcelona), July 12, 2007; Jean-Pierre Tuquoi, L'ombre du terrorisme irakien au Maghreb, *Le Monde*, July 30, 2007

goal is the defeat or overthrow, via jihad, of the governments of Spain, France, Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and "the corrupt Polisario regime."

Even before the appearance of this group, the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM, now associated with AQIM) has been involved in the area. Mauritanians have been involved in the former's operations in Spain and participated in the latter's attacks against their country, including one in June 2005 that killed seventeen Mauritanian soldiers. As recently as January 2007, AQIM targeted the Paris-Dakar auto rally, which crosses Western Sahara.[8]

Considering this increasingly dangerous environment, an independent and defenseless Western Sahara could only be seen as an ideal theater for Islamists to set up in the Sahel--the desert area between the Atlantic and the Sudan--thereby offering an additional threat to the entire region. It would be another Somalia, at the western end of the Sahara. Alternatively, Western Sahara would have to continue to be completely dependent on Algeria for defense--as Polisario has been since its inception, thus increasing tensions with Morocco. It is unlikely that any international force, like the present UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), could provide for the security of a potential Sahrawi state, given both the UN's past record everywhere and the enormous force size that would be needed to police the area.

Politics and international context

Polisario has established firm control over the people of Tindouf over its thirty year history. It has been led since 1978 by the same person, Mohamed Abdelaziz, and its Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) is a Potemkin village. Proclaimed in February 1976, its people are mostly non-Arab Berbers, based in Algeria. It is a party-state along the lines of traditional Leninist systems, where elections are fictive events rather than expressions of popular will. None of this is surprising: it follows Polisario, which was founded in 1973 by Morocco Communist Party member Mustapha Sayed El Ouali. If the experience of other "national liberation movements," such as Namibia's SWAPO, Zimbabwe's ZANU, Algeria's FNL, the PLO, etc.--is any indication, a Polisario-run Western Sahara is likely to be authoritarian, aggressive and poor.

During the violent phase of the conflict with Morocco, which started in 1975 and ended in 1991, Polisario captured numerous Moroccan soldiers, but it was only in August 2005 that it freed the last prisoners it still held. The 404 men had been imprisoned for almost 20 years and were the world's longest-held prisoners of war. Their treatment while in captivity was so atrocious that it even attracted the condemnation of France Liberte, a militant human rights

[8] Al-Qaeda 'behind' Mauritania raid, BBC NEWS, June 6, 2005; Le rallye Dakar cible en Mauritanie, *Le Figaro*, January 11, 2007.

organization led by Danielle Mitterand who was previously a strong supporter of Polisario's goals. This episode is not an encouraging sign of its ability to run a state responsibly or decently.

Indeed, the Tindouf camp population is closely controlled by Polisario's forces and the nearby Algerian military, both of whom restrict access by outsiders, including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Considering that the UN pays for the refugees, this means that aid distribution lacks all transparency, which in turn has resulted in rampant corruption on the part of Polisario's leadership. All of these are facts confirmed by a steady stream of high-ranking defectors. They, and a few outsiders, also confirm that Algeria directs all Polisario operations, both in Tindouf and abroad. That raises the question of a Polisario-led sovereign state's ability, or willingness, to act independently from Algiers, and of the threat it may become to Morocco.

For Morocco, the Sahara issue is vital. Despite the enormous costs involved in maintaining large numbers of troops along the security wall it has built on the borders between Western Sahara, Algeria and Mauritania, and despite massive subsidies to the territory, the national consensus has not weakened. Indeed, not only the public as a whole, but even political forces opposed to the government support the annexation of Western Sahara by the kingdom.

Ultimately, the persistence of the Western Sahara issue on the international agenda is a throwback to the Cold War, combined with Algerian geopolitical calculations. Algeria, Polisario's protector from the beginning, wants to expand its influence to the Atlantic and thus weaken its perennial Maghreb rival, Morocco. Prior to its present military-dominated regime, Algiers' FLN governments also shared a common "socialist" ideology with the exile Sahrawi elites; now, geopolitics and anti-Moroccan sentiment play the dominant role. All this even though Rabat and Algiers are both threatened by Islamist terrorism and close cooperation would clearly be in the best interests of both.

The African Union has long supported Polisario and its so-called Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. It admitted it as a member in 1984, leading to Morocco's departure from the organization. That decision was made as a result of the influence of radical states (and their Soviet and Cuban friends at the time), especially Qadafi's Libya (which has since changed its mind on the issue). How important the Soviet and radical ideological elements were is demonstrated by the fact that in 1989, prior to "real socialism's" collapse, 79 countries recognized SADR, but only 36 did so in 2006. It should also be pointed out that the Arab League, which is dominated by non-radicals, has always supported Morocco's "territorial integrity"--i.e. its annexation of the territory.

The United States and France, both of which have close ties with Rabat, have supported Morocco's claims, Washington perhaps less openly than Paris but equally strongly. Indeed, President Sarkozy's reaffirmed his support for the Moroccan position on Sahara during his July 2007 visit to Algiers. The United Nations, however, has kept Western Sahara on its list of non-self-governing territories since the 1960s, when it was the Spanish Sahara.

Perspectives

By April 2007 the UN had implicitly recognized its inability to fix the Sahara problem and the failure of its envoy James Baker's second plan (2003), which proposed an interim 5-year Western Sahara Authority to be followed by a referendum. The Security Council asked Rabat and Polisario to engage in direct talks, in the presence of Peter Van Walsum, personal envoy for Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary general. Those talks started in Manhasset, New York, but so far (August 2007) the only result has been a joint decision to hold further talks. The main problem is that Morocco is prepared to talk about any issue other than independence, whereas Polisario's declared goal remains just that – whether immediate or later on, following some sort of temporary Moroccan sovereignty but also autonomy under UN supervision. Indeed, Khalihenna Ould Errachid, the chief adviser on Western Sahara to King Mohamed VI of Morocco, said there was a need for compromise and "a renunciation of extremist positions and demands," which in translation means rejection of Polisario's basic demand.[9] On the other hand, Morocco did radically change its position, from decades of treating Western Sahara as just another province of the kingdom to the acceptance of a separate, autonomous status.[10] That, however, is the maximum extent of Rabat's concessions, given the nationalist consensus regarding Morocco's ownership of the territory.

Meanwhile Madrid, longtime supporter of Polisario's position, changed policy and now supports the UN direct talks approach, while also proclaiming its support for "self-determination," which is a disappointment for Polisario but has little impact ultimately.[11] The main obstacles for a permanent solution remain the same as they were at the beginning: primarily Algeria, but also the chorus of NGOs and their sponsors in the European Left (especially the Spanish communists and friends elsewhere in Europe), who are electorally weak at home but influential on the UN corridors and the media.

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9 Morocco and Polisario in new talks, *Al Jazeera*, August 10, 2007.

10 Bernabe Lopez García, Iniciativas de negociacion en el Sahara Occidental: historia de la busqueda de una 'solucion politica,' Real Instituto Elcano, ARI No. 85/2007, July 23, 2007.

11 L. Ayllon, El Gobierno dice que la resolucion de la ONU sobre el Sahara coincide con su posicion, ABC, May 1, 2007.

Ultimately, the solution is in Algeria's hands. If or when Algiers lifts its protection from Tindouf, and the UN stops subsidizing Polisario, a Western Sahara within the Kingdom of Morocco, with some political autonomy but still essentially part of Morocco and inevitably subsidized by Rabat, remains the only rational, and internationally safe solution. The question is how long Algeria, still threatened by Islamists (as Morocco increasingly is) and by now devoid of the old Soviet bloc and "non-aligned" diplomatic and political support, will continue to place its unattainable regional ambitions (such as access to the Atlantic) ahead of a more practical national security interest that requires cooperation with its Moroccan neighbor.

The rest is just lingering nostalgia for the 1960s and 1970s, when "anti- colonialism" and "anti-imperialism" were fashionable, regardless of common sense, or economic and security realities. The issue of Western Sahara, and Polisario itself, which is now increasingly weakened by internal divisions, are remnants of a passed era and should be buried, quietly if possible. Even if Washington didn't have long-standing and close security and political ties to the Kingdom of Morocco, for the United States in a post 9/11 world, the threat of another potential jihadist black hole in Africa (in addition to the Sahel or Somalia) is serious enough to warrant pressing for a permanent solution on Western Sahara. Washington's growing security and economic ties with Algiers should also help toward a solution.

AMERICAN DIPLOMACY AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

By Harvey Sicherman

September 2010

The late ***Harvey Sicherman, Ph.D.,*** *was the President of FPRI 1993-2010 and a former aide to three U.S. secretaries of state.*

Editor's Note: This is a slightly edited transcript of a lecture Harvey delivered on September 15, 2010, a couple of weeks before he took ill. The lecture was part of a two-day History Institute for Teachers cosponsored by FPRI's Wachman Center and the American Institute for History Education.

I hope to show you that there is a pattern—a kind of rhyme and reason— to American policy in the Middle East, and to distinguish within that pattern how administrations move this way or that depending upon their convictions. Any foreign policy, as a rule, must be evaluated in so far as it achieves or contributes to the achievement of national interests or national objectives. That is the "what" of foreign policy. The "how" of foreign policy is exactly the way the diplomats go about trying to achieve these things.

If we look at American policy in the Middle East, the three objectives that have been essentially constant since 1948 include: access to oil; the security of Israel, and making sure that the Middle East, as a region, is not dominated by a hostile power. This hostile power could be either one from the outside coming into the Middle East or a Middle Eastern state that is hostile to the United States.

The first thing one has to decide, then, is the extent to which American policy toward this Arab-Israeli conflict contributes to those goals. That's a question of the "what." Then, of course, there is the question of the "how." What kind of diplomacy does one follow in trying to bring this thing about? Any president who sets out on this path, of course, is going to be beset by the various domestic interests that have influence on this matter.

Depending upon what interest you focus on, there you'll find what is called politely in Washington, "a lobby." For example, there is a long-standing oil lobby associated with one of the Middle East states, primarily Saudi Arabia, but which also encompasses many other things. This lobby doesn't make headlines, works largely behind the scenes and is a relatively small but influential group. A much more public group is known as the Israel lobby, which consists of those people who focus on Israel and are pushing the United States to act in Israel's interests. There is yet another lobby. It used to be called the Arabist lobby. However, recently,

there's been an attempt to replace that label with the name of strategists or national interest types. These are the people who say that when the United States looks at the Middle East, it has to adopt a policy that is successful in the region and, therefore, should pay more attention, let us say, to the requirements of Arab states than to Israel.

How the United States actually carries out its foreign policy, is not only beset by these factors, but because we have an interest the region's oil, as well as in Israel, we are simultaneously—when it comes to the Arab-Israeli conflict—Israel's ally, and a kind of mediator between Israel and the Arabs. I don't think you have to be a lawyer to understand how difficult it is to play the role of both ally and mediator.

Two Views on the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Since 1948, American presidential administrations have looked at the "what" and the "how" and come to two very different conclusions. One group of administrations has seen the Arab-Israeli conflict as the *key* to the puzzle of how you secure American interests in the Middle East. "If we can reach a comprehensive solution to this problem, our situation in the Middle East will be much easier to resolve," they have reasoned. Another set of administrations have seen the Arab-Israeli conflict as a *piece* of the puzzle, but not necessarily the key to the puzzle. If you succeed in managing or ameliorating the Arab-Israeli conflict, you will be dealing with one part of the puzzle that you need to secure American interests in the Middle East, but not necessarily any of the other parts.

If you have decided that the Arab-Israeli conflict is the key, you will put that at the top of your priorities in Middle East policy. In your diplomacy you will try to involve as many of the local states as possible, because if it is the key, a solution ought to have as many people involved as possible to give as wide a currency as possible. This is sometimes called the *comprehensive* approach.

If, however, you regard the Arab-Israeli conflict as simply a part, albeit an essential part of that puzzle, then you will be inclined to a different diplomacy, and that is a diplomacy that doesn't necessarily invite everybody in the region into it. Rather it tries to narrow it down strictly to the combatants, to the people who are most directly affected by the conflict. That gives you a much narrower range. This is sometimes called "step-by-step diplomacy," whereby you go between Israel and one Arab state, and Israel and another Arab state, until finally you have peace between Israel and its immediate neighbors. And if you can achieve that, the rest of the region will fall in line.

These two views have oscillated back and forth among presidents since 1948 and can essentially be broken into four time periods or phases. The first phase covered 1948 through 1973, when the idea that the Arab-Israeli conflict was the key to solving the puzzle was taken for granted in Washington. It was assumed that this was the concentration of American policy in the region, and that everything else had to be subsumed to that. The second phase took place between 1973 and 1992 when the "part of the puzzle" view eventually triumphed and step-by-step diplomacy was born, which I call three-way diplomacy. The third phase, I've entitled, "false dawns of the eighth wonder" and will be explained shortly. And finally the fourth phase, which is the most recent period, since the onset of the Obama administration, when the key theory that Arab-Israeli peace/diplomacy ought to be at the top of the American list in the Middle East has resurfaced. The negotiations that took place in September 2009 are a kind of hybrid at this point of both approaches.

Phase One

As noted in the first phase, the Arab-Israeli conflict was regarded as paramount as the key to securing American interests. Between 1948 until the late 1960s, the United States—although it had been quick to both recognize Israel and to give it moral support— was stand-offish in military and other parts of its relationship with the new Jewish state. Additionally, the United States made extensive multilateral efforts to try to resolve this conflict between the Arabs and Israel as quickly as possible. During the Suez Crisis in 1956, the United States acted very strongly to impose a settlement on the parties involved. This included the end of British and French imperial interests in the region. It essentially restored everybody to the ceasefire lines of 1949, after the creation of the state of Israel. It didn't produce peace, but it did produce quiet. This formula of a multilateral engagement led by the United States then more or less imposed peace, imposed quiet, as it were, or imposed a settlement on the parties, lasting from 1957 to 1967. A decade in Middle Eastern terms without a major war is a pretty impressive feat in the Arab-Israeli context.

But in 1967, this peace broke down, largely because the multilateral guarantors, whether the United Nations or the United States, did not step up to enforce their own terms when the crisis occurred. Egypt, led by President Gamal abd al-Nasser, along with a group of Arab states, threatened to make war on Israel. The result of the 1967 war was to give the Israelis far more territory than they originally possessed. Consequently, if the Arab-Israeli conflict between 1948 and 1967 had been about the establishment of the state of Israel itself, after 1967 it also introduced territorial issues between Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Syria because those territories had been seized by Israel in the course of the war.

The international community, of course, being very foresighted after 1967, decided that the best thing to do was to return to the pre-1967 situation and fix it a little.. This took the form of the famous United Nations Security Council 242. This initiative said, in effect, that the 1967 line should be restored, but this time Israel should have secure and recognized borders. The tenor of the resolution was basically an exchange of territory for peace. You may be interested to know that the Palestinian issue was referred to in 242 only in terms of "refugees." There is no political solution in 242 concerning the Palestinians because the issue was the relationship between Israel and the Arab states, not the Palestinians at that point.

Between 1967 and 1973, the United States attempted to translate 242 into the same kind of multilateral framework that had existed before 1967. U.N. special representatives held multilateral talks. These four-power talks started badly because then-President Lyndon Johnson, on the eve of the war, when the Israeli foreign minister Abba Eban came to Washington (after visiting French president General De Gaulle) asked: "What did De Gaulle say? And Eban replied, "The general said that we four great powers will have to settle this matter." To which Johnson replied, "Who are the other two?"

This story, widely reported, cast a damper on the four-power talks between the United States, Soviet Union, Britain and France. So those talks were fruitless. There were many two-power talks, however, including a so-called "Rogers Plan," which was supposed to be a formula elaborating on 242 with a war of attrition in between. It didn't amount to anything.

Then, in 1973, the situation was transformed when the Arab states led by Egypt surprised the Israelis in an attack. The Israelis soon found themselves very short on weapons. They required American intervention. Immediately, the Arab-Israeli conflict threatened all three of the American major interests, resulting in a near confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The security of Israel was greatly threatened and an oil embargo was launched in the middle of the war when the United States began to resupply the Israelis with weapons. Paradoxically, it was at this moment (when you might have said the evidence was overwhelming that the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict was the key to the American position in the Middle East) that we began the transition to the other approach, meaning that it was not the key, it was an important part, but certainly not the key.

The man who authored that transformation was Anwar Sadat, president of Egypt. His policy in 1973, as described by one of his cronies was, "taking off with the Russians and landing with the Americans." In so doing, he indicated that he regarded the rest of the Arab countries as so much baggage. Another time, when he was very angry at other Arab states for not supporting him, Sadat said, "Egypt is a state. The other Arabs are just tribes with flags." This statement certainly didn't win him any friends. Sadat, in effect persuaded Henry Kissinger, the secretary

of state under President Richard Nixon, that Egypt wanted to transfer its alliance from the Soviet Union (which had gotten into losing wars) to the Americans who might be able to provide the peace. Yet, he didn't want the other Arab states along for the ride. Egypt was the most powerful Arab state. It had half of the Arab population. Why would they conduct a war anymore? Why would they have to subject it to the veto of either the Soviet Union from outside the region or the other Arab states from inside the region? Kissinger was a quick study. He picked this up, shuttle diplomacy was born, and soon there were some pretty active negotiations between Egypt and Israel and between Israel and Syria with the Americans as the intermediaries. This step-by-step approach was embodied in a series of disengagement agreements. It took the actions of another U.S. president, Jimmy Carter, to bring it to fruition.

Phase Two

When Jimmy Carter was elected in 1977, he was a great enthusiast for settling the Arab-Israeli conflict as the key to everything. He started out in a way that might sound vaguely familiar. He wanted to distance himself a little from Israel to show that he was a mediator. The issue he picked initially for separating himself was to talk about the Palestinian cause, and to try to force the Israelis to stop building settlements in the areas that they had taken in 1967. As the Israelis had concluded, certainly by 1973 but even earlier in some places, such as Jerusalem: if there wasn't going to be any negotiation with the Arabs, these places weren't going to be held in a deep freeze waiting for them to show up. Also, Israel—as those who are familiar with this dispute all know—had its own claims to these regions.

Carter's diplomacy, which also envisioned a comprehensive solution coming out of a big international conference which the United States and the Soviet Union would co-chair, frightened Sadat. It looked to him as if the veto over Egypt was being restored and was going to be given once again to his enemies in the Arab world and to the Soviets. The Israeli prime minister, Menachem Begin, and Sadat came together, through intermediaries and exchanges, culminating in the famous Sadat visit to Jerusalem. All this was done without the United States knowing it. And, thus, was born the pattern for what I call the three-way diplomacy or the two-plus-one of Middle East peacemaking. You get two leaders—an Arab leader and an Israeli leader—who convince each other that they really want to make a deal, and then the United States acts to reduce their risks in making one.

Leadership in the Middle East is tricky business. It's not like in the United States; you don't get an honorable retirement for the most part. You're lucky if you die in bed. There aren't any presidential libraries or triumphal tours. And once you're out, nobody talks to you any more. So if these leaders are going to take these risks, they expect the American president to be in

there completely to help them, although you've got to be careful when that president gets in there. Because as you can recognize with this kind of peace making, it begins with a conspiracy, and a conspiracy to which the Americans are not privy.

Carter was greatly offended, initially, by this, but was persuaded within a couple of weeks that he really ought to take this on, as it was the best chance. And, indeed, he did have his great moment, which was in 1978 at the Camp David Accords, a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, and a second provision which was supposed to deal with the Palestinian issue. That was a partial accord because the second one was never realized. However, the first one, very hotly opposed by the other Arab states, was led by what was called "the Rejectionist Front." The two principal powers in the Rejectionist Front were Iraq—under the late unlamented Saddam Hussein—and Syria—backstopped by the Soviet Union. The Camp David Accords never expanded beyond that immediate vicinity.

Through the subsequent period of the Reagan administration, there was a brief flirtation with the American plan, when George Shultz became secretary of state. He persuaded Ronald Reagan that maybe the Arab-Israeli conflict was the key to the Middle East. That was the thinking when Reagan came in September of 1982, in the wake of the first Lebanon War. Reagan did issue a plan which was ultimately unsuccessful. The Arab states, who said they would go along with it, didn't. The Israelis were offended. The plan disappeared, and Shultz abandoned the idea that the Arab-Israeli conflict was the key to anything. Not much happened during that period.

You know, of course, that on October 6, 1981, Sadat was assassinated, and as a result of that assassination, the government of Egypt became far more cautious in its advocacy of spreading the peace anywhere. It is said that Hosni Mubarak ducked and, therefore, was not murdered himself on that day. But President Mubarak was very careful to preserve the treaty without pushing it on anybody else.

This new model of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a part of the puzzle, and this new method, the two leaders finding each other and the United States reducing their risks, was now essentially the policy adopted by subsequent administrations. The first Bush administration had its own experience in this respect, and something novel happened. It was always assumed that if you had progress in the Arab-Israeli conflict, whether you thought it was the key or whether you had thought it was a piece, it would have a beneficial effect on everybody else. What would happen to the Arab-Israeli conflict if something else occurred in the region? People didn't really look at that. But in 1990-1991 an astonishing thing happened.

At that point the Arab-Israeli negotiations were going nowhere. James Baker, then secretary of state, hadn't had any successes in this area, largely because the first President Bush had a penchant for talking about Israeli settlements. He was the second president to start out that way. The Palestinian issue had been revived by the First Intifada, which unlike the second one had very little use of firearms and was primarily expressed in civilian demonstrations and rock throwing. This had risen to the fore. Nothing was going anywhere. Then Saddam Hussein seized Kuwait in August of 1990, claiming that he had taken Kuwait on his road to Jerusalem. Now one look at a map told you that Saddam wanted to take Kuwait and pretend that it was part of something else. Well, the result of Hussein's defeat was to destroy the Rejectionist front that had effectively prevented the Camp David Accords from spreading to the rest of the region. Iraq was defeated, the Soviet Union was fading from the picture, the Syrians needed a new patron, and Arafat had chosen to side with Hussein. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was cut off from Gulf money. The Rejectionist front, in short, had dissolved as a consequence of a war in the Gulf that had nothing to do with the Arab-Israeli conflict. On the basis of this, the Bush administration launched what was supposed to be the foundation for the next round of peace making, the Madrid Conference.

The Madrid Conference was an interesting attempt to combine the two. It had a multilateral framework as in the key theory, but it also broke down the negotiations into individual parts: the Israelis with the Syrians, the Israelis with the Jordanians and Palestinians (at least it started that way) and then became the Israelis with the Palestinians, and Israel with Lebanon. So that was the attempted breakdown. It didn't work. It really didn't produce anything, and when the Clinton administration came into office, these negotiations were completely stalled.

Phase Three

That leads me now to the third time period, what I call "false dawns and the eighth wonder." In the summer of 1993, something happened that was so close to the Begin and Sadat experience that everybody concluded a new dawn had arrived. This event was the secret agreement, later known as the Oslo Accords, between Israel and the PLO, between Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat. It was another case of two leaders apparently finding each other. The United States knew nothing about it. (The secretary of state, Warren Christopher, was a man known for suppressing his emotions and when he was informed of the deal was said to have arched an eyebrow, which for him was monumental show of emotion.)

The United States embraced this negotiation and it appeared as if the Israel-Palestinian part of the puzzle was now going to be solved. Simultaneously, there was evidence of a breakthrough with the Syrians in which the Israelis and the Syrians had had important exchanges and were coming closer together. As it turned out, this was in the Palestinian case, what I call "false

dawn one." Had the two leaders really convinced each other that they were ready to settle the thing? The Oslo Accords provided for a five-year period of transition called "autonomy"—the same phrase used in the David Accords—but were they persuaded that a final settlement was possible? Clinton was convinced—along with others—that basically Arafat might have been a partner for a partial deal, but he was not a partner for settlement. Arafat had a difficult transition to make between revolutionary and state builder, and in the end he preferred to be revolutionary.

That "false dawn," as I call it, was the apparent conviction of the two leaders, and then after Rabin was murdered, between Arafat and Benjamin Netanyahu, that they were capable of making a deal. Yet by the end of this time, the model broke down because clearly the Americans and Israelis did not believe Arafat was the partner to do that. Simultaneously, during the latter part of the 1990s, you had the attempt to put something together with the Syrians. I call this the "eighth wonder of the world" for this reason; the closer you appear to be to an agreement, the further away you actually are. And the further away you appear to be from an agreement, the closer you actually are, but you never get there.

The United States government spent more time on the Israeli-Syrian track during the 1990s than on the Palestinian track until near the very end, and never quite got there. Between the first "false dawn" and the "eighth wonder," the model, as such, fell into some discredit because you couldn't assemble the pieces. We all know that it worked with Sadat; it had worked with King Hussein of Jordan. There was the peace treaty in 1994, but it seemed that you couldn't bring it much beyond that. And when President Clinton left office, he put forward some American ideas called the "Clinton parameters."

When President Clinton met incoming President George W. Bush, the first thing he said was, "Don't waste any time with Arafat." I mean literally, "Don't waste any time with Arafat. Don't invest anything in Arafat. He's a double dealer. He won't reach an agreement." So this Bush administration, even before 9/11, looked at the Arab-Israeli conflict as one of those things that you'd have to try to manage through rather than settle. The Bush administration after 9/11 changed. After 9/11, it was believed that you might actually be able to push something through. First, because you were going to change the whole tenor of the Middle East in what later became the Iraq War and the push for democracy. Secondly, Arafat couldn't afford to be on the wrong side in the war on terror. It was George W. Bush, who for the first time, endorsed a Palestinian state as part of the solution and it was George W. Bush who tried to get Arafat out of the picture so that a negotiation might take place with a truly committed Palestinian leader.

In this case, it looked like negotiations might take place between Abu Mazen (a.k.a.Mahmoud Abbas) and an Israeli prime minister. However, on November 11, 2004, Arafat finally met somebody he could not threaten, intimidate or bribe, namely Allah. Arafat died, and after his death, the election of Abu Mazen to replace him in 2005, appeared to set the stage for a revival of this three-way diplomacy. But as we know, this was a "false dawn," too. The election brought to power not Abu Mazen's party but rather the Hamas party, which was opposed to anything concerning the Israelis, except war.

Then the Iraqi experiment turned sour. There was a rise in the power of revolutionary Iran and the stoking, with equipment and enthusiasm, first of Hezbollah in Lebanon, and then of Hamas in Gaza. These events drastically reduced the new Palestinian leadership's new found freedom of action. In the summer of 2006, the Palestinians, already fractured between the Palestinian authority and Hamas, suffered a second blow, which was probably more serious.
The 2006 Lebanon war was touched off by Hezbollah's seizure of some Israeli soldiers. That had been preceded by the seizure of an Israeli soldier, namely Gilad Shalit, who is still there, by Hamas in Gaza. Those two seizures and the Israeli attack on Lebanon, and the attack on Gaza, meant that Arafat's most precious legacy, the ability of the Palestinians to act independently of other powers in the Middle East, had been virtually lost. Now the pace was being set by the Syrians and the Iranians, and that veto power in the form of the ability to turn on or turn off violence is still a very complicating measure.

By 2006, the entire American enterprise in the Middle East seemed to be in really bad shape. The Israelis had bungled their best opportunity to knock the Iranians out of the box in the Lebanon war of that summer. The White House came to rely, quite reluctantly, on a bipartisan commission, the so called Baker-Hamilton commission. (James Baker was the former secretary of state, and Lee Hamilton was the former Democratic Chairman of the House International Relations Committee.) The Baker-Hamilton report proposed another comprehensive approach including Iraq. However, it also stated that it was fundamentally necessary to the American position on the region to restart Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy. Today, Baker-Hamilton is remembered because Bush rejected its recommendation on Iraq, in favor of the Surge. The rest of the report represented pretty much the majority thinking, and George W. Bush, in his last year of office, launched the Annapolis Process.

This process was a gathering of all the Middle East countries. Ehud Olmert, the Israeli prime minister, was there with Abu Mazen, and they resolved that they were going to act in a year. Sound familiar? This process culminated in an offer by Olmert to Abu Mazen in September of 2008. The Palestinians never replied to it one way or the other, and the negotiations ended. In late 2008 and early 2009, after a couple of years of being tortured by rocket fire from Hamas,

the Israelis went into Gaza and knocked out a lot of Hamas's military capability in what was called "Operation Cast Lead."

Phase Four

That leads me finally to what we see today: my Phase Four, the Obama administration. To recap: throughout this whole period of time, the idea that the Arab-Israeli conflict was a piece of the puzzle—a part, but not the key—had been the dominant way of thinking. Now, don't be fooled by this panoply of utter multilateralism and all these words— like the quartet consisting of the United States, Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations. This quartet has never made any music, and is entirely dependent on what the United States is able to do or not do. Beneath the veneer, the same model of the two and the United States was still there, except by 2009 there were two important questions. Did you have a Palestinian partner who was willing and able? Did you have an Israeli partner who was willing and able to do anything together?

President Barack Obama came into office convinced that this had been the wrong approach. It hadn't produced anything, and on top of which, it had been advocated by George W. Bush. Now this kind of thinking is not new with Obama. Usually, when a president comes in after two terms of his predecessor, the first thing he does is to say to himself, "Boy, this is a hell of a problem, and my predecessor is to blame." The second thing he says is, "You know what we're going to do about it? We're not going to do what he did." So that's a well-known tendency, but in this particular case, drawing on the Baker-Hamilton and the general establishment kind of view, he thought that the Arab-Israeli conflict was the key to fixing things up in the Middle East. This was Obama's view. He wanted to use this not only as a vehicle for fixing things in the region, but also a larger enterprise of improving relations between the United States and the Muslim world. He thought that this was the key to doing that, and he set out on a path that had been used in part by two of his predecessors—Carter, on the comprehensive view, and George H. W. Bush, on tackling the settlement issue to make a differentiation between the United States and Israel—not one that would harm Israel security, but enough that would restore American mediation credentials. And guess what happened to him? The same thing that happened to his predecessors.

President Obama got into a quick quarrel with the Israelis. Not only did the Arab states refuse to help him along by offering anything themselves, but in the case of Abu Mazen, he said essentially: If the American president said we need a settlement freeze before anything else can happen, how can I be less Palestinian than the American president? And so he issued his own demand, which had not been heard in 17 years of face-to-face negotiations. There would be no face-to-face negotiations unless settlements were frozen. If you've been following events, you

know that President Obama has repented of this several times, although absolution is not yet within reach.

The negotiations that took place in September 2009 appear to be the formula of the two plus one—of the two parties getting together and the Americans reducing their risks. But can the Americans reduce their risks? Can we do anything about Gaza for Abu Mazen? Can we do anything about Iran or Hezbollah with respect to Israel or even, for that matter, with respect to the Palestinian cause? That's not clear. It's also not clear whether the two parties are negotiating with each other or are negotiating with the United States, because they both need peace with the United States, probably more than they need peace with each other. It is not clear, although the administration, by dint of the initial errors, has been forced back into the Arab-Israeli conflict as a part of the puzzle. Yet, has it abandoned its view that it is actually the key to the puzzle? And have the parties themselves figured out a way to manipulate the Americans, in the course of this process, in which they have no intentions of doing anything with each other, but every intention of trying to persuade the Americans to take their side? We must wait and see.

Conclusion

Let me make these final observations about American policy as we've seen it over these four time periods and during the oscillation between the *key* and the *part* approach. The first is that neither approach has brought a comprehensive peace. Neither one of them succeeded. Is it because we've been stupid or foolish? I remember once one of the assistant secretaries of states for Near East policy saying to an American secretary of state, "Sir, if we do something like this, we're going to look foolish and contradictory." To which the secretary of state replied, "Is this new?"

Well, you can blame the United States in part for bungling here. Yet, it's not clear to me that under any circumstances we could have produced something that the parties didn't want. However, the fact is we have not reached that comprehensive peace with either method. My second observation concerns the second method— regarding it as a part of the conflict but not the key to the conflict to the region. This approach has produced two peace treaties—Egypt and Israel, and Israel and Jordan. And these peace treaties have proven to be very tough and enduring. They have survived assassination, war and economic calamity. You can't ask for a lot more out of a peace treaty than that it survive all those tests. So that method has yielded more in terms of American security interests. Yet it has not secured comprehensive peace—at least not yet. The third point is that *some* process is better than *no* process. Everybody concluded that without diplomacy, the way is open for people to do things that they might not otherwise do if they had a diplomatic process that offered the hope of producing something.

And that probably is the major motivating factor in what we're seeing now. And last, it is not simply the president's convictions that matter in this business, but also his personal participation.

Here I issue a conclusive and warning note. As you may have gathered, my estimate from all this is that we are better off with the approach that regards the Arab-Israeli conflict as a part of the regional puzzle, but not the key to the regional puzzle. I think it's produced more benefit to us. And you would also be right in concluding that an American president is an essential element in the model that has the two parties convincing each other, and then we reduce their risks. But my warning is as follows. Even with the approach that you're dealing with just part of the puzzle, the president has to be very careful about when he engages and when he does not. If he engages too early in the negotiation, the other parties won't take the secretary of state or anybody else seriously. They'll want him all the time. And the one thing that American interests in the Middle East cannot stand is a President of the United States who is President of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

CAN HEZBOLLAH COPE WITH A CHANGING MIDDLE EAST?

By Benedetta Berti

November 2011

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While the Middle East undergoes fast-paced, dramatic social and political change, Hezbollah has been trying its best to shield itself from the process that has been redefining the balance of power and reshuffling the political cards in the region—focusing instead on consolidation and continuity.

However, despite the organization's repeated reassurances to the contrary, the level of popular and political support for Hezbollah is not as solid as Hassan Nasrallah, the group's Secretary General, would like us to believe.

Backed by its formidable military strength and by its unshakable strategic partnership with Iran, Hezbollah has spent the past few months repositioning itself at the center of the Lebanese political arena, which has recently seen both the rise of a friendly government under PM Najib Mikati as well as the *de facto* marginalization of the "pro-Western" March 14 forces and their "Cedar Revolution."

A remarkable island of stability in a rapidly changing region, the Lebanese-Shiite militia seems to have managed to overcome several important challenges and maintained its position of relative strength and control over Lebanese political life. Firstly, the group has deftly dealt with the so-called Arab Spring by adopting an enthusiastic—albeit selective (the exception being of course Syria)—endorsement of the "revolutions," combined with a propaganda campaign linking the protests to the group's agenda of "resistance." Secondly, Hezbollah's bet on the Assad regime's capacity to ride out the ongoing protests within Syria has paid off so far, as the regime is still standing and Hezbollah continues to benefit from its alliance with its longtime partner.

Finally, the group has been able to withstand the blow dealt by the UN Special Tribunal's indictments against four Hezbollah militants, now formally accused of participating in the assassination of former PM, Rafic Hariri. The delays and shortcomings of the investigations,

combined with Hezbollah's intensive domestic campaign to undermine the legitimacy of the STL, have managed to convince the backbone of Hezbollah's constituency—the Lebanese Shiite community—to continue to stand by the Party of God.

However, the current success of the Lebanese-Shiite organization in dodging bullets may well prove to be ephemeral.

Ideologically, the contrast between the discourses on the Arab Spring—one which is centered on rights and freedoms and the other, Hezbollah's, which pays lip service to the importance of establishing a free society despite its own staunch support for political repression in Syria—is stark. Hezbollah strongly rejects the accusation of applying a *de facto* double-standard and argues that the Syrian regime is significantly different from other regimes affected by the Arab Spring. In fact, Hezbollah asserts that Syria is the only country able to go against U.S.-Israeli interests in the region, and it is also the only country where the population is strongly divided between pro-Assad and anti-Assad forces.[1] What's more, in the words of Nasrallah, Assad has been willing to engage in an internal process of reform, thus complying with the demands of the protesters.[2] In this sense, the continuation of the demonstrations is more a consequence of Assad's unwillingness to "bow" to U.S.-Israeli interests than the result of concrete and unaddressed social and political grievances, according to Nasrallah.[3] However, despite these attempts to rationalize its stance, there has been widespread criticism with respect to Hezbollah's defense of the bloodshed in Syria. In turn, this has led to Syrian demonstrations against Nasrallah and his group (during which Hezbollah's flags were burned), as well as to harsh criticism within Lebanon as well as in the Gulf countries.

With time, this may translate into a progressive decline of the group's appeal within the region. Put simply by the pro-March 14 newspaper, *Now Lebanon*, "Any ally of a dictator is an enemy of the Arab street."[4]

Moreover, from a strategic perspective, even though Assad has been able to stay in power, the regime is still very much hanging on by a thread. If the Syrian regime were to fall, Hezbollah would lose a crucial ally in the region and may have hard time establishing good relations with the same opposition forces that it accused earlier of being on the U.S.' payroll. In addition, regime change could provide the "Cedar Revolution" and Hezbollah's political opponents in Lebanon with a powerful second-wind.

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[1] "The interview made with Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah by Al-Manar Channel," October 24, 2011, *Hezbollah Press Statement,* October 25, 2011.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Hanin Ghaddar, "A New Resistance, A New Enemy," October 24, 2011. http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?ID=325376#ixzz1cv6lf9Av

But, aside from these very real regional concerns, the most serious challenge that Hezbollah now faces is domestic, and it is largely a product of the organization's own hubris in dealing with its political allies.

In the past few weeks, Hezbollah has in fact taken a series of positions that may lead the group to lose the support of its own political allies, while potentially further alienating the non-Shiite Lebanese population.

First, Hezbollah has firmly stated that it will not allow the Cabinet to approve funding to the STL—a position that openly mocks PM Mikati's pledges to the international community to fulfill all of Lebanon's international obligations. With the Sunni PM having already been accused by his political opponents of being a puppet in the hands of Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shiite organization's intransigence with respect to funding the STL puts the PM in an quite the predicament: either to concede to Hezbollah's dictates regarding the STL—thus losing both credibility in front of the international community as well as the support of his own community—or resign and allow Lebanon to fall into yet another political crisis.

In addition, Hezbollah's behavior has also been problematic with regard to its unwavering support for the Syrian regime. While Mikati has been quietly attempting to downplay Lebanon's support for Syria to the international community (for example, by abstaining in the UNSC vote on the European draft resolution condemning the events in Syria); Hezbollah is making no mystery of its own support for the Syrian regime. Nasrallah has had a decidedly muted response about the ongoing cross-border Syrian incursions.[5] Likewise, Hezbollah's ministers have been contesting the investigations by Lebanon's Internal Security Services into the kidnappings of Syrian dissents within Lebanon.[6] This divergence within Lebanon's political circles indicates, once again, a growing tension, both between the government and the opposition forces as well as within the government itself.

In this context, while the PM continues to clash with the Lebanese-Shiite group over Lebanon's international standing and its pre-existing obligations, other voices from within Hezbollah's political coalition have started to sound more ambiguous regarding their commitment to the current government. One such voices is that of Druze leader, Walid Jumblatt, who, while waiting to see how things turn out in Syria, has thus far decided to remain in the Hezbollah-

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5 "The interview made with Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah by Al-Manar Channel," October 24, 2011. *Hezbollah Press Statement*, October 25, 2011.

6 "Fatfat Holds Hezbollah Responsible for Threats against Him," *The Daily Star*, October 25, 2011. http://www.dailystar.com.lb/2011/Oct-25/152172-fatfat-holds-hezbollah-responsible-for-threats-against-him.ashx#ixzz1cv9TGVOc

led coalition. Jumblatt has, however, emphasized his personal differences with Nasrallah's organization, including on STL funding and on the relationship with Syria.[7]

At the moment, the group's most solid cross-sectarian ally is certainly Christian leader Michel Aoun, and his Free Patriotic Movement (FPM). However, given Aoun's growing unpredictability and his increased political demands, it is not entirely clear whether this alliance is solely an asset to Hezbollah. In addition, and despite their long-standing political partnership, recent reports in the news have given voice to criticism from within the FPM, quietly questioning some of Hezbollah's tactics and practices.[8]

In parallel, Hezbollah's uncompromising attitude with respect to both the STL and to Syria have also brought existing differences to the fore between the Lebanese Shiite group and the March 14 coalition and their political supporters. These tensions further escalated in the past weeks after Hezbollah allegedly tried to extend its own telecoms network into the town of Tarshish, south-east of Beirut in the predominantly Christian district of Zahle. On that occasion, the alleged attempt by Nasrallah's group to extend its own private communications network to the town of Tarshish led to both tensions with the residents, who actively intervened to stop the Hezbollah members from continuing their work, as well as to sharp criticism by the March 14 forces.[9]

These recent clashes, together with mounting internal criticism of Nasrallah's group, seem to indicate that the level of popular dissatisfaction with Hezbollah is growing within Lebanon, and that the party's current attitude with respect to both the Syrian regime as well as the STL may end up backfiring.

The possibility of the Party of God losing its current political backing and of the country falling into yet another political crisis deeply threatens the group's political power and position within Lebanon. It also calls into question Hezbollah's capacity to remain relevant in a rapidly changing region. This would be especially true in the case that the group's longtime ally and partner, the Assad regime, were to fall. In this sense, the Party of God is now facing one of the most serious challenges since its foundation in the early 1980s.

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7 "Jumblatt to Al-Manar: To Remain within Majority Ranks, but 'With My Own Views,'" *Al-Manar,* October 15, 2011. http://www.almanar.com.lb/english/adetails.php?eid=31486&cid=23&fromval=1

8 Imad Marmal, "Aoun: The resistance is not enough to be immune from the corruption eating [the group] from inside. Thus, this is the reason behind increased difference between the Free Movement and Hezbollah," *As-Safir,* October 18, 2011. [Arabic]
http://www.assafir.com/Article.aspx?EditionId=1981&ChannelId=46840&ArticleId=1792&Author=%C3%9A%C3%A3%C3%87%C3%8F%20%C3%A3%C3%91%C3%A3%C3%A1

9 "Hezbollah's Land Communication Network Stops at the Borders Of Tarshish…" *Al-Rai al-Aam,* October 23, 2011. [Translation by MideastWire]

Could Hezbollah attempt to initiate a conflict with Israel to diffuse growing internal tensions? It is possible, although it seems unlikely that the group would risk entering another round of hostilities with Israel while in a position of internal weakness and regional ambiguity. Given the alternative scenarios, Hezbollah may be stuck with trying to preserve the current uneasy status quo, while hoping that Syria rides out the political storm.

WHAT OUR STUDENTS – AND OUR POLITICAL LEADERS – DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST

By Adam Garfinkle

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http://www.fpri.org/education/1110middleeast/

My topic tonight is how we should teach our children, here in the United States, about the Middle East. I was asked to give this little talk in part because I wrote two pieces for FPRI in the wake of September 11, 2001. The first, written just a few days after the event, was a kind of summation of what had just happened that focused on President Bush's plea for moral clarity, which featured in the President's first major address after the attacks. I had to point out that achieving moral clarity, at least so far as policy was concerned, was not going to be easy because at least two and probably three countries with which the United States was technically allied—namely Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Egypt—were the countries whose policies were most responsible for what happened on September 11. Yet of course we had to go to war not with any of them, but with Afghanistan, or rather the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, because that was the prudent thing to do at the time.

The other piece I wrote just short of a year later, dated September 2002, and it was called "What Our Children Should Learn about 9/11." In that piece, I made just four simple points. I tried to keep it simple because I was under the influence of George Orwell, who once said, in the fall of 1939 to be specific, that in certain destabilized times it is the duty of honest men to simply restate the obvious. That's all I tried to do.

My first point was that our children should know the facts. My second point was that, once they had a grounding in the facts, our children should not abjure moral judgment. My third point was that our children should learn to make both analytical and moral distinctions. And last, my fourth point was that our children must learn to live with uncertainty, and specifically to understand the difference between living *in* fear and living *with* fear. That's a subtle distinction in language, but a huge distinction in reality, and in regard to the implications for policy.

Ten years have passed since 9/11 and more than nine years have passed since I wrote that piece. I would not change a word had I to write it over again, but I have learned plenty over the past decade. I have therefore found the exercise of reflecting on this short essay quite illuminating, if also a little disheartening. Without repeating that little essay to you now, I want to go back over each of the four points, especially the first one, in order to reflect on what the past decade has wrought.

The Importance of Basic Facts

How have we done in this country over the past decade in teaching our children the facts, not just about 9/11 but about the Middle East as a whole? I don't know the answer to that question, which might actually be a subject open to empirical research. But my anecdotal experience is that we have done terribly. Not only have we not taught our children very much factually about this region—and by that I mean basic geographical, ethno-linguistic, historical, anthropological and political facts—but our political class in this country seems to demonstrate a learning curve that is virtually flat, as well.

It is not that difficult to find young people who do not know, for example, that Iran is not an Arab country, what an Arab is, or even what kind of term the word "Arab" is. A common error is to assert that an Arab is a Muslim, but a person who asserts that has not been taught, or has failed to learn, the difference between a linguistic category, an ethnographic description, and a religion. If you can't distinguish these elemental differences in the Middle East, you cannot understand anything about the place. You could not even make hide nor hair out of a serious newspaper article about the Middle East.

As I said earlier, the learning curve of the American political class doesn't show a better result, but I don't think there is a direct connection between what our students don't know and what our leaders don't know. Indeed, I think the connection is inverse, if there can be such a thing. I think our students don't care enough, while our leaders have cared too much and in all the wrong ways. But the result, ironically enough, is pretty similar.

As far as our political class goes, I think one reason tracks closely with what I wrote in September 2002, which was merely to point out that emotionally evocative events inevitably produce energetic expression, but such expression in the absence of basic information is, aside from the catharsis it may provide, not helpful or edifying. When we get emotional, we think—if we may call it that—with different parts of our brain than those we use when we are not emotional. I find it very difficult to otherwise explain how the Bush administration could bestir itself to invade Iraq without giving even remotely serious thought to what the

geostrategic implications for the region would be of displacing a relatively strong, Sunni-led government with a weakened Shiite-led one. You don't have to be the strategic studies equivalent of a proverbial rocket scientist to have anticipated that Iran might stand to be the big winner from the collapse and reorientation of the Iraqi state. As far as I know, and I was in this administration at a middling level, no one among America's senior decision-makers even asked this question.

No one asked, either, what the broader regional effects would be of a Shiite-dominated government—and a fairly religious one, at that—in Baghdad in place of a Sunni one. Even before the war began anyone who understood Middle Eastern history could have told you that this would not be a second- or third-order consequence of the war, but a first-order one. Again, as far as I know, this question never even once came up before March 2003.

And now we learn that the current Iraqi government is helping the Assad regime in Damascus, which is not exactly our understanding of gratitude for our having freed Iraq from the bloody hand of the Baath Party. But the Shiite government in Baghdad fears Sunni encirclement just as Sunnis have feared Shiite encirclement, and so there is a natural tendency, all else equal, for the Shia who dominate the government in Baghdad to see the Alawis running Syria as preferable to possibly religiously intense Sunnis who might take their place. Not that the upheavals in Syria were predictable four or five years ago, but had someone posited those upheavals it would have been easy to predict the attitude of a Shiite dominated government in Baghdad toward Syria.

Some of you may remember that a clever journalist (Jeff Stein, a *Congressional Quarterly* reporter) in Washington went around two or three years ago asking mid-to high-level officials to tell him the difference between a Sunni and a Shia—this more than a half-dozen years after 9/11. Not a single person could accurately tell him the difference, and some of the attempts were truly frightening in what they implied about the subject's factual knowledge of the region. A completely flat learning curve a half-dozen years after one of the most epochal events in modern American history: How do we explain that?

What We Don't Know about America, and Why it Matters

I think the overarching explanation has a lot more to do with what Americans don't know about America, and about American history, than it does with anything having to do with the Middle East. Americans tend to think that the universalisms we believe in are manifestly and obviously truly best for everyone. The American exceptionalist belief in representative democracy and market capitalism as the basis for the only good society is precisely that—a belief, and it more resembles a matter of faith than a matter of social science or history. How

many presidents and other senior officials have you heard say something to the effect that people are the same all over the world, and everyone wants the same things for their children, and other politically ecumenical nonsense like that?

Of course there is a common humanity, and of course we are not fools or primitives to think that there are unshakable moral truths about the world. But we are wrong if we think that these truths are really self-evident to everyone, no matter their culture and background, and we are fools if we believe that our political values are really the default "best practice" of the rest of the planet, whose historical experiences have in the main been very different from our own. Because of this innocent, matter-of-fact Enlightenment universalism, we are demobilized before the task of learning other languages and learning about other cultures. We never bothered to learn anything about the Vietnamese during the Vietnam War. Our knowledge at the highest level about Afghanistan today is extremely limited and very late in coming. The same may be said about Iraq. We are just not curious about other cultures because we don't credit the significance, and the dignity, of their differences from us.

Closely related, I think, Americans, like most people, take for granted their own social and cultural predicates and tend to project them onto others without realizing that they are doing so. But Middle Eastern societies and cultures, for historical reasons if not others, really are quite different from our own. For one thing, Middle Easterners certainly do not reflect back toward us our Enlightenment universalisms about the basis sameness of all cultures. So the first thing you need to do, it seems to me, to teach children about a place like the Middle East is to get them to understand, to be self-aware, of the social and cultural predicates they are taking for granted about America.

At some point, there is just no way around describing what patrimonial forms of political organization and authority look like as compared to Weberian forms, because much of the Middle East is organized that way still, and much of the rest of it is at most a generation or two removed. But you can't teach children how Middle Eastern societies are different from American or other Western societies unless you can get them to focus on how American and Western societies work first. But, unfortunately, most American students when they enter high school are not remotely self-aware of how their own society and culture operate. Indeed, the very vocabulary one needs to distinguish Middle Eastern societies and cultures from our own does not yet exist in the mind of the student.

One Good Question is Worth More Than 100 Mediocre Answers

This does not exhaust the panoply of reasons for why neither our students nor our political class, nor most Americans in general, still know practically nothing factual about the Middle East. One of those other reasons concerns basic motivation.

Before you can teach a student anything significant, the student has to be persuaded that there is some good reason to learn it. Unless their curiosity is stimulated, unless they can conceive of some use for what they are learning, you have a serious uphill climb before you. As the late anthropologist Mary Douglas once said, "Information is just not going to rub off on someone who cannot conceive any use for it," and as in most things, she was right. So there you are, trying to teach kids about the difference between the regions of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania and Fezzan in Libya (because if you don't know those things and you don't know the tribal structures in those areas you can't make any sense at all of what has been going on in Libya over the past six months) but some kid in the third row is asking himself, now how is all of this strange business going to help get me a job, going to help me figure out how to pay for that repair to my carburetor, or going to get me a date with Suzy Q. for the prom, or going to help me persuade my parents that I'm actually learning something useful in high school in these frightening hard economic times, because they don't give a damn about Libya either–and like, really, why should they?

So, if it were up to me, my method in trying to excite some interest in the Middle East among students would be to try to figure out a way to get them to ask questions. The process of formulating and then asking a question presumes a great deal, which is why one good question is worth more than a hundred mediocre answers. Besides, finding a way to get students to express questions helps the teacher know where they are in their heads. And unless you know that, you cannot bring them closer to what we perhaps are too quick to call knowledge.

Obstacles to Learning in the Cyber Age

The question that comes before how we teach our children about the Middle East is how we teach them about anything at a time when they are immersed in a burgeoning cybernetic culture that, whatever its benefits and attractions—and there certainly are plenty—has the potential to disorganize our stock of knowledge in three ways: to imbalance the relationship between information and knowledge; to fragment and discount the uses of time; and to so speed up everything as to make what we like to call thought virtually impossible.

Information is not knowledge, and too much information poured out of a fire hose in the absence of any cultivation of a sense of context, or grasp of purpose, does not promote

knowledge but frustrates its attainment. The speed with which children move in what one analyst has called continuous semi-attentive multitasking is not conducive to actually thinking about anything. The apparent fear that so many young people have of ever being quiet enough to listen to the narrator in their heads, and hear what it is saying, is thoroughly dysfunctional. We have plenty of people in this world who can teach our children, and who can teach us, to be eloquent; but who these days will teach our children how to be still?

You are teachers so you know that native intelligence is not nearly as important to success in intellectual endeavors as the nature of the student's orientation to the subject matter. If a student does not respect the subject matter, does not respect the difficulty of mastering knowledge, has no feel for internal standards of excellence so that he knows when something is or is not understood up to the level of his maturity, that student will not succeed despite strong and intense native intelligence. I wonder whether the technological environment in which our students are now immersed mitigates against the development of the proper character for learning, and I wonder whether this factor more than balances against the advantages that the new technological environment provides.

I ask my undergraduate students almost every semester to tell me how many times a day they check their e-mail, with those little bells and whistles going off telling you that you have a new e-mail. I ask how many times a day they check Facebook and twitter and the other social networking technologies. If they are honest, they will answer with fairly large numbers—forty, fifty, a hundred. And then I tell them that they are involved in a classical Pavlovian conditioning experiment, except that they are the dogs, and the technology is harvesting them. I explain that if you use five hours in a concentrated stretch, it is worth vastly more than five hours chopped into 30 small segments.

I believe that there are significant behavioral consequences, and even some literal neurophysiological consequences, to the immersion we are seeing in mediated images that are all part of the cybernetic revolution. I don't think we understand these consequences very well yet, but in my view there is a more than even chance that this technology, unless its uses are taught carefully, is actually imbecilizing us. People think they're smarter because they can look up facts faster, and have all kinds of information at their fingertips—but I wonder whether the very processes they are coming to depend on are instead making them dumber by the day.

So it may be that your problems as teachers in our high schools are far more basic, and frightening, than teaching kids about the Middle East. But it just goes to show that if children don't understand the difference between information and knowledge, let alone between knowledge and wisdom, that in the face of a challenge like teaching the Middle East, in which explaining difference, nuance, and context is absolutely essential, you start at a huge and

growing disadvantage, if anything I have said about the technology challenge is even remotely true.

Children Should Not Be Discouraged from Making Moral Judgments

Let me move quickly now to the other three points. My second point was about not abjuring judgment. I wrote that "once the facts are in hand, it is possible for children to make moral judgments appropriate to their level of intellectual development." I also said that we are wise to resist the judgmental relativism embedded in anti-foundational postmodernism. And I pointed out that the best analysts of a child's psychological life, people like Robert Coles, tell us that children as young as five or six years old have an understanding of basic fairness, of right and wrong, which show that we are moral beings by nature. And I wrote, "if sophisticated adults don't squelch that understanding, our children might actually to grow into responsible adults in a democratic civilization", and I used the example of the word terrorists or terrorism. It is possible to define those terms objectively and it is possible to bring moral judgment about them to bear, and we should.

If we refute the enormously self-serving conceit embedded in the phrase that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter," we can define terrorism the way that both the State Department and the United Nations define it, as the use by non-accountable non-state actors of violence deliberately aimed at civilians. If we take that very sound and consensual definition of terrorism to heart, then we cannot at the same time describe the attack on the *USS Cole*, or the attack on the Marine barracks in Lebanon back in October 1983, as acts of terrorism. Attacks on uniformed soldiers on the territory of foreign states are not by any definition attacks on innocent civilians. These were acts of war, irregular or guerrilla war, which doesn't mean that they are very nice or fair or anything of the sort—but they were not acts of terrorism.

I am not against trying to train our children in ethics, which, contrary to common usage these days is not a synonym for morality. Ethics is the study of moral behavior, not a synonym for it. It is a branch of philosophy, not religion. But I have to admit that I'm now a little bit leery of unleashing the power of moral judgment in the absence of a sound factual base. I have to admit, too, that I did not think it would be so hard to teach the factual basics of the Middle East when I wrote my little piece nine years ago. Evidently, it is excruciatingly hard.

Students Need to Make Distinctions

Now third, we need to make distinctions, and we need to teach our children how to do that. Given the way the world is, our bias when we teach introductory subjects should be to lean

toward distinctions rather than similarities. It is the search for and the awareness of distinctions that best sharpen the mind. But again, if the facts have not been established, then we have to ask ourselves, distinctions between and among what?

Let me give you a fairly simple example of what I mean, something that is actually a pre-example for teaching students about the Middle East.

Americans tend to use the word "country", the word "nation", the word "state" and the hyphenated term "nation-state" as though they were synonyms. Of course they aren't. A country is a place, a physical territory, these days usually marked off by political boundaries. A nation is a group of people who for one reason or another think they have enough in common to manage their affairs as though they have a shared destiny. And a state is the political apparatus that rules the nation in the country.

A nation–state is a normative term that dates from the nineteenth century that, anti-imperialist in essence, held that the nation and the state that ruled it should be coterminous. Borders should align with ethnographic occupancies insofar as possible, so that Finns rather than Russians should rule Finns, and Czechs should rule Czechs, not German-speaking Habsburgs, and so on.

So last month a student came up to me after class and, with a certain amount of youthful enthusiasm, told me that he had had a terrific summer, that he had driven clear across the nation from coast-to-coast. I told him that he had just confessed to multiple vehicular homicide. He had no idea what I was talking about.

If nineteen and twenty-year-old American college students don't know the difference between a country, a nation and a state, how on earth are they, let alone high school students, going to get—assuming for a moment that they even remotely care about it—the difference between a Sunni, a Shia and an Alawi (never mind a Sufi, a Druze and an Ismaili); or the difference between an Arab, a Persian, a Turk, a Berber, or a Pashtun; or the difference between Umayyad, Abbasid, Moghul, Fatimid, Mamluke, Almoravid, Safavid and so on?

Worse, ignorance naturally tends toward conflation. So not knowing basic facts makes discernment and distinctions that much harder to get across. I think we have seen two very disheartening examples of this from the onset of the so-called Arab Spring. The American mass media, especially the electronic media, was both responsible for and a victim of a level of basic ignorance about the Middle East so huge that we still have not repaired it or even much gotten it under control, except by dint of a still unfurling reality that contradicts initial conflations.

Conflation number one: The exit of Hosni Mubarak from the pinnacle of power in Egypt meant that the Egyptian regime had fallen. It did no such thing. It has not fallen yet. What happened was that a dynasty ended because the Egyptian military–bureaucratic regime came to conclude that Mubarak was a net debit to their power and prerogatives.

The truth is that the army in Egypt is more powerful today than it was during the last few years of the Mubarak era because Mubarak's son, Gamal, with his MBA U.S.-educated cronies, actually put a charge into the Egyptian economy, threatening the control of the military over very lucrative chunks of it. The opening up of the Egyptian economy also created opportunities for vast corruption, because the Egyptian state had never been institutionalized in terms of rule of law to handle a private market economy; but the Army, having gotten rid of the father, wasted no time getting rid of the son, so that its control today over the economy is greater than ever.

The difference between the Egyptian regime before the end of Mubarak and today is twofold: the upheavals in *Midan al-Tahrir* have changed expectations on the part of every constituency in Egyptian society as to what government can and ought to do, and so there's a great deal of jockeying around and a certain degree of uncertainty; and while before Egyptian military officers did not wear their uniforms in public, today they mostly do. The other difference, of course, is that the economy is collapsing.

So it is easy to understand the confusion of Americans as to why there is still so much political violence in Egypt, and why the Army—in the person of Field Marshal Tantawi—gets to make all the important decisions along with the other old cronies like Said Ahmed and Omar Suleiman and the rest. People thought that there had been a revolution, but they didn't know what a revolution actually was. People thought the old regime was gone, but they could not have defined the word regime if their life depended on it. People thought that democracy was right around the corner now that the bad guy had gone away.

Speaking of democracy, here, we come to the second of the two main conflations. When people in this country saw on their television screens hordes of Egyptians on the street in Cairo and elsewhere demanding the end of the Mubarak era, they naturally assumed that what the crowd wanted most was democracy—procedural democracy, rule-of-law democracy, just like people in the West have had now for many decades. Many compared what was happening in Cairo back in January and February with the people power phenomenon in the Philippines some years ago against Ferdinand Marcos, his wife Imelda and all those shoes she had.

Now it is true that among the twittering crowd in the square there were some young people who had such ideals in mind, and that is a real change, largely thanks to the social networking technology that is spreading over the globe. But the vast majority of people in the Square, not to mention those beyond it, just wanted to get rid of the government that had been humiliating them, harassing them, exploiting them, alienating them year after year after year. Egyptians and other Arabs had plenty of reasons to be angry at their governments, very good reasons, for the most part. But to assume that people took to the streets in anger because they wanted a form of democracy they have never experienced, and which few even understand for good historical reasons, is to assume something groundless. Thus did Americans project their own frames of reference onto other people because they did not credit the reality of their cultural and historical differences.

It all comes back to teaching the facts. If you can't find some way to do that, which starts with motivating students want to know these things, you can't expect sound judgment or any real capacity to make distinctions. As I put it more than nine years ago, "our children should learn that the easy way out is the hardest way in to genuine achievement or wisdom, about 9/11, about the Middle East, or about anything else." That's still true.

Students Need to Learn to Live With Fear but Not in Fear

Finally, the point about learning to live with uncertainty. Nine years ago it was not yet clear that what happened on 9/11 would turn out to have been a sucker punch, a one off, rather than the advent of a world in which "everything had changed." The main point I made back then about uncertainty is that there is a big difference between living in fear and living with fear. I said that our uncertainties, justified at the time, must not demobilize us. If they do, I said, if we succumb to fear, then the terrorists win because the strategy of terrorism is to cause its target to be untrue to its own values and to distort its normal way of life. I wrote that if we did not learn to cope with uncertainty we wpuld do our enemies' work for them.

My greatest disappointment in looking back over the past decade, my greatest sadness, is that we as a government and we as a nation failed to heed this warning. We have stepped in it, big time. We have done our enemies' work for them here at home, even as we have gone around fairly effectively beating them on the head and neck abroad, to the point where Al Qaeda is on life support these days.

We bureaucratized our paranoia. You can see it in how TSA works. You can see it in the ponderous mess that is the Department of Homeland Security. You can see it in the nonsensical and demobilizing announcements you hear on the Washington Metro system on a regular basis. You can see it on the overhead displays around the Washington Beltway and

elsewhere that no longer just alert motorists to detours and traffic jams but rather ask them to report suspicious activities.

These manifestations of bureaucratized paranoia do not make us safer. They actually function as a goad to would-be terrorists to attack us because they tell the bad guys just how easy it is to discombobulate and bankrupt the Americans, who don't have the sense to be stoic in the face of terrorist tactics. The fact that we have not been attacked at the level of 9/11 or anything near to it in the past ten years *despite* these incentives just shows how much we exaggerated the threat in the first phase.

That doesn't mean that there has been anything wrong with going after the bad guys all this time. We'll probably never know the balance between the weakness of our terrorist adversaries and the effectiveness of our efforts, public and otherwise, over the past ten years in the absence of significant follow-on attacks. But it is prudent to err on the side of safety, and, as long as one's efforts are not counterproductive on their own terms, it would have been irresponsible for U.S. government officials not to have pursued them. So I really like the new U.S. Navy bumper sticker I saw the other day, which read, “life, liberty, and the pursuit of all who threaten them.” Go Navy.

Finally, one thing I could not have predicted nine or ten years ago is how costly our nearly obsessive focus on terrorism and the wars in the Middle East that followed 9/11 have been in terms of their power of distraction. While all this stuff was going on with terrorism and homeland security and the wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq, and at lower levels of intensity in peripheral regions below the line of political sight most of the time, in places like Yemen, Somalia, and all the way to Mindanao, we—most of us anyway, and here I include myself—were not paying close enough attention to what was going so wrong in our own society and in our own economy. I don't think that the literal money costs of the wars played the main role or anything near to it in our financial and economic meltdown, but the psychic opportunity costs I think have been enormous. That is an observation that still requires more thought, as well as more attention in general.

So, teach our kids the facts, encourage them to exercise their innate moral character, guide them toward making distinctions as opposed to pushing disparate concepts together, and teach them the difference between living in fear and living with fear. All that advice stands up well even after all this time. But in the face of the accumulated evidence, I see now that it's just obviously much harder to do than I used to think.

Of Related Interest:

September 11: Before and After, by Adam Garfinkle, FPRI Wire, October 2001
http://www.fpri.org/fpriwire/0908.200110.garfinkle.sept11.html

What Our Children Should Learn about 9/11/2001, by Adam Garfinkle, FPRI Footnotes, September 2002
http://www.fpri.org/footnotes/0705.200209.garfinkle.childrenlearnabout9112001.html

How We Misunderstand Terrorism, by Adam Garfinkle, FPRI E-Notes, September 11, 2008
http://www.fpri.org/enotes/20080911.garfinkle.wemisunderstandterrorism.html

Teaching about the Middle East at the High School Level, by Adam Garfinkle, FPRI Footnotes, December 1999
http://www.fpri.org/footnotes/0510.199912.garfinkle.teachingmiddleeasthighschool.html

Teaching about Jihadism and the War on Terror, by Barak Mendelsohn, FPRI Footnotes, October 2010
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Ten Things Students Need to Know about the Origins of Israel and Palestine, by Alan Luxenberg, FPRI Footnotes, 4/08
http://www.fpri.org/footnotes/1304.200804.luxenberg.originsisraelpalestine.html

Notes on Teaching 9/11, by Alan Luxenberg, FPRI Footnotes, September 2011
http://www.fpri.org/footnotes/1609.201109.luxenberg.teaching911.html

Be sure to review the 10-volume series of books for middle and high school students produced by Mason Crest Publishers in cooperation with FPRI on "The Making of the Modern Middle East."
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WIKILEAKS IN THE ARAB PRESS

By Tally Helfont

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On November 28, 2010, WikiLeaks—a non-profit media organization known for publishing secret and classified information obtained from anonymous sources—released 250,000 American diplomatic cables, detailing high-level meetings between prominent American diplomats and their international counterparts. These cables, many of which dealt with the Middle East and featured frank and often embarrassing statements by several Arab leaders, sent ripples throughout the region.[1] The disproportionately high number of cables dealing with the Middle East has been attributed to the United States' increased focus on the region during the past decade, in addition to the "war on terror."[2] Coverage of the leaks, or more specifically the extent and frequency of the coverage, has varied from country to country. In a region where secrecy is paramount and "public candor is rare," the WikiLeaks cables highlight the great divide between Arab public opinion which, "tends to favor a strong Iran, even a nuclear-armed Iran, as a counterweight to Israel and to US hegemony" and the hawkish views of Arab leaders about "Persians or pragmatism about Israel."[3]

Given that Arab governments enjoy little popular support, its leaders largely express these views in private. WikiLeaks, therefore, exposed some of these leaders in an unfavorable light to their populaces. In fact, given the recent events in Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen, many in the region have begun asking whether the WikiLeaks revelations may have contributed to the sudden explosion of angry protests and demands for regime change in these countries.[4] Looking at the way in which the Arab press covered the WikiLeaks scandal is therefore

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1 See: "Wikileaks Exposes America's Diplomacy (*WikiLeaks Yafdah Al-Diblomasiya Al-Amerikiya*)," *Al-Jazeera (Qatar) – Arabic*, November 29, 2010 www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/5231D282-A1CF-49AF-97A7-F28FF06EA3DF.htm

2 "Analysts: The Focus of the Publication of the "WikLeaks" Documents on the Middle East is Due to American Activity in it (*Muhallilun: Tarkiz Nashar Watha'iq "WikiLeaks" 'ala Asharq Al-Awsat BiSabab Al-Nashat Fiha*)," *Asharq Al-Awsat (Saudi Arabia)*, December 11, 2010. http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&article=598990&issueno=11701

3 Ian Black, "WikiLeaks Cables: Arab Media Hold Back on Revelations about their Leaders," *The Guardian,* December 1, 2010. www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/01/on-the-middle-east-wikileaks

4 Mohammad Kamil, "Experts: "WikiLeaks Leaks" Contributed to the Tunisian 'Popular Uprising' (*Khubara: «Tasribat WikiLeaks» Sahamat fi «al-Intifadah al-Shaabiya» al-Tunisiya*," Al-Masry Al-Youm, January 15, 2011 http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/خبراء-«تسريبات-ويكيليكس»-ساهمت-في-«الانتفاضة-الشعبية»-التونسية

important to understanding some of the main grievances driving current Middle Eastern affairs today.

Outrage has been a dominant theme in many WikiLeaks articles in the Arab press. Al-Jazeera's Larbi Sadiki writes, "The US embassy cables show Western diplomats pursuing with dedication their people's interests. For that they must be respected. By contrast, some Arab politicians are inviting invasion, bombing and conspiring against fellow citizens."[5] Rami Khouri of Lebanon's Daily Star writes that "The assorted Arab leaders who are quoted as asking the United States to hurry up and do something about Iran's growing nuclear technology capabilities reveal an apparent inability to take care of their own countries and citizens."[6] Sadiki, however, takes a bleaker view, saying, "As ever, in the Middle East, one person's viper is another man's 'alpha dog'. Otherwise how does one explain that Abbas [Palestinian Authority] and Al-Salih [Yemen], who collaborate in the bombing of their own peoples, are granted legitimacy, cash, and weapons. Those who resist occupation are threatened with war and international courts!"[7] More than anything, sentiments in the Arab press express a sense of being thrown to the wolves by those in power.

Perceptions of the impact of the leaked cables have been divided. Some in the Arab press, such as Asharq Al-Awsat's Tariq Al-Homayed argue that "the world will inevitably be changed by this…We are truly living in a post-WikiLeaks world today." He goes on to explain that "This does not just mean that nobody will trust the Americans, but that nobody will trust any diplomat." Al-Homayed likened the new circumstances to "everybody playing the game with their cards exposed."[8] Others, such as Zaid Derweesh, have suggested that the impact of WikiLeaks would be negligible considering that "Citizens of the Arab world… know that what is said in public by their leaders differs greatly from what goes on behind closed doors. They also know that their governments will go along with whatever the US asks of them." However, according to Derweesh, "What may come as a surprise to some will be the degree to which this subservience occurs."[9] This sentiment affirms the dominant view on the *Arab street* that its leaders are weak and will bend to the United States' will at the cost of their people.

So what have the U.S. diplomats and their Arab counterparts been chatting about so fervently? As Sadiki puts it, "the cables show linguistic cacophony, and, in terms of interests, harmony. Security, security, security! Terrorists, Gitmo detainees, Iranian nukes, Hamas, and Hezbollah

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5 Larbi Sadiki, "Sex, Lies and Diplomatic Cables," *Al-Jazeera (Qatar) – English*, December 8, 2010. http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/opinion/2010/12/201012510594525649 5.html

6 Rami G. Khouri, "Wikileaks Helped Expose the Indignities of Arab Leaders," *The Daily Star (Lebanon)*, December 1, 2010. www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=10&categ_id=5&article_id=122050#ixzz1AC8x6FC7

7 Larbi Sadiki, "Sex, Lies and Diplomatic Cables."

8 Tariq Alhomayed, "A Post-WikiLeaks World," *Asharq Al-Awsat (Saudi Arabia)*, December 4, 2010. www.aawsat.com/english/news.asp?section=2&id=23266

9 Zaid Derweesh, "Arab Reaction to the Latest Wikileaks Document Drop," *Suite101.com,* November 30, 2010. www.suite101.com/content/arab-reaction-to-the-latest-wikileaks-document-drop-a315333; Black, "WikiLeaks Cables: Arab Media Hold Back on Revelations about their Leaders."

are the addiction as well as the obsession of Middle Eastern diplomacy."[10] Foremost on the minds of these diplomats, however, is Iran and its nuclear ambitions. Karim Sadjadpour, of The Financial Times of London, offers a colorful account, writing that "if extra-terrestrials were to have read Monday's WikiLeaks revelations on the Middle East, they would conclude that the earth's two superpowers are the US and Iran. The Iranian menace dominates Washington's diplomatic discussions." The WikiLeaks revelations make it quite clear that "Arab officials believe Iran to be inherently dishonest and dangerous" and that Sunni Arab leaders, and especially the Saudis, strongly encouraged America "to deliver Shia Iran its military comeuppance."[11]

Anxiety among Arab leaders over Tehran's growing power, according to the diplomatic cables, led to both sharp language and decisive measures. Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah was the most outspoken on the Iran issue, having repeatedly urged U.S. diplomats to attack Iran in order to "cut off the head of the snake."[12] Jordanian officials are revealed in the cables to have described Iran as a shrewd octopus extending its tentacles to manipulate and undermine the plans of the West and of moderates in the region. The Jordanians cited Qatar, Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas, (occasionally) the Iraqi government, and Shiite communities in the region among the so-called tentacles.[13] Likewise, Jordan's King Abdullah II warned U.S. Special Envoy George Mitchell that U.S. dialogue with Iran could provoke divisions between Arab states, undermining the moderate Arabs, without persuading Iran to halt its support for terrorism, freeze its nuclear program, or give up its ambitions to dominate.[14]

However, Arab leaders did not express their fears about Iran solely to the United States. Arab leaders also took decisive action to engage, albeit secretly, with the only other nation that appeared to be taking the Iranian threat as seriously as they were: Israel. The Saudi newspaper Elaph reported that, according to diplomatic cables from 2009, secret, high-level meetings were conducted between Israel and Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the Sultanate of Oman, and the United Arab Emirates. Despite hostile public rhetoric against Israel and the fact that these Arab countries do not recognize the Jewish state, Arab diplomats secretly asked Tel Aviv to convey messages to the U.S. government, urging it to take tougher action against Tehran.[15] This revelation particularly incensed scores of columnists in the Arab world.

The extent to which various commentators in the Arab press perceive that WikiLeaks will impact the diplomatic environment seems to depend on how seriously they take these leaks.

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10 Larbi Sadiki, "Sex, Lies and Diplomatic Cables."

11 Karim Sadjadpour, "WikiLeaks Should Prompt a Rethink on Iran," *The Financial Times*, November 30, 2010.

12 "WikiLeaks": Saudis Urged the United States to "Decapitate the Snake *("WikiLeaks": Al-Saudiun Hathu Wilayat al-Mutahida 'ala Qata'a Ras Al-Afa'a*)," *Al-Quds (Jerusalem)*, November 29, 2010 www.alquds.com/node/307283

13 "WikiLeaks: Arab Concern Over American-Iranian Dialogue (*WikiLeaks: Qalaq 'Arabi Min Hiwar Ameriki – Irani*)," *Elaph Online (Saudi Arabia)*, December 1, 2010. www.elaph.com/Web/news/2010/12/615124.html

14 "WikiLeaks: Arab Concern Over American-Iranian," *Elaph Online*.

15 "WikiLeaks: Arab Concern Over American-Iranian," *Elaph Online*.

Some question the validity of the cables. For example, Asa'd Abu Khalil, a writer for the Angry Arab blog, voiced his suspicions about the WikiLeaks cables arguing that many of "the revelations about the Middle East were largely either known or expected" and that "there is not a single document that is embarrassing to Israel. Not one."[16] Others have attempted to downplay their content as being, in the words of Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary-General, Abdul Rahman Atiyyah, unreliable and based on "guesses or analyses that can hit or miss."[17] Al-Homayed cautions that "We must take care that not everything written by the American embassies is fact; some of these reports have been taken out of context."[18]

Various Arab leaders, who were caught saying some embarrassing things, have echoed this line. The Jordanians were quick to issue a statement in light of their indelicate views on Iran being aired, declaring that "the Jordanian government officials are the only ones who represent the official positions of Jordan" and that the cables "reflect the analysis of U.S. officials and their readings" of the situation.[19] Even more embarrassing was the Lebanese scandal in which, according to the cables, Lebanese Defense Minister Elias El-Murr offered U.S. officials advice on how Israel could defeat Hezbollah in a future war and vowed to keep the Lebanese army out of the fighting.[20] Despite the almost instantaneous statement issued by Murr's Assistant, George Soulage, that the defense minister's comments were "out of context and inaccurate," the press had a field day. Sadiki sums up the general Arab press account of the scandal, writing "With a Defense Minister like Mr. El-Murr, who needs enemies?"[21]

Another determining factor in the extent of WikiLeaks media coverage has been the strictness of the regimes in power and the fear of retribution by newspapers and columnists. For example, the Lebanese newspaper, Al-Akhbar, which published the Murr story, shut down directly following its publication of the leaked U.S. diplomatic cables, purportedly due to a hacker attack. In Morocco, the Ministry of Communications blocked the distribution of several foreign newspapers including the French Le Monde, the Spanish El-Pais, and the London-based Al-Quds Al-Arabi for publishing information from the leaked diplomatic cables. This censorship was apparently based on an article in Morocco's press code, which stipulates that the Ministry of Communications has the right to prohibit any publication of articles that undermine religion, territorial integrity and the monarchy.[22] In Qatar, Al-Jazeera

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16 Asa'd Abu Khalil, "Wikileaks: Fishy?" *The Angry Arab News Service*, November 30, 2010. http://angryarab.blogspot.com/2010/11/wikileaks-fishy-seclection.html; Black, "WikiLeaks Cables: Arab Media Hold Back on Revelations about their Leaders."

17 Kareem Shaheen, "Sheikh Abdullah Calls for End to Iran Stand-off," *The National (Abu Dhabi)*, December 8, 2010. www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/sheikh-abdullah-calls-for-end-to-iran-stand-off

18 Tariq Al-Homayad, "U.S. Documents Scandal (*Fadihat al-Watha'iqAl-Amerikiya*),"*Asharq Al-Awsat (Saudi Arabia)*, November 30, 2010. < http://aawsat.com/leader.asp?section=3&issueno=11690&article=597471>

19 "WikiLeaks: Arab Concern Over American-Iranian," *Elaph Online*.

20 "(WikiLeaks): 'The Lebanese Minister of Defense' Advised Israel on How to Eliminate Hezbollah (WikiLeaks: *Wazir al-Difa' al-Lubnani Nasah Isra'il BiKayfiyah al-Qada' 'Ala HizbAllah*)," *Watan News*, December 4, 2010.www.watnnews.net/NewsDetails.aspx?PageID=3&NewsID=18134

21 Sadiki, "Sex, Lies and Diplomatic Cables."

22 "WikiLeaks: des journaux étrangers "interdits d'entrée" au Maroc," *Le Monde (France)*, December 14, 2010.

has been coy about reporting its leaders' blunders. These leaders were identified in the cables as deliberately using the Al Jazeera channel as a bargaining tool in negotiations with some countries and offering to cancel some of its critical reports and programming in exchange for certain concessions.[23]

At first, the major Arab news outlets focused less on calls by Arab leaders for strikes against Iran, ties to Israel, and cooperation with the United States and more on American difficulties with WikiLeaks, the legal woes of WikiLeaks and its founder, or general musings on media and diplomacy.[24] However, with the recent events in Tunisia and throughout the Middle East, the focus has shifted somewhat from these topics to coverage on the extent of government corruption in these various countries; a theme which was quite apparent in the WikiLeaks cables.

It remains to be seen whether the publication of this trove of documents will have the resounding impact on Middle East diplomacy that has been heralded by some. However in the press, as the most recent events have demonstrated, the next big story has already displaced the WikiLeaks scandal, leaving diplomats and politicians to return to their craft away from the limelight.

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www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2010/12/14/wikileaks-des-journaux-etrangers-interdits-d-entree-au-maroc_1453404_3212.html

23 "Wikileaks: Qatar Used 'Al Jazeera' as a Bargaining Tool in Negotiations with the States (*WikiLeaks: Qatar Tastakhdim 'Al-Jazeera' Kaadah Musawamah fi Mufawadatiha m'a al-Duwal*)," *Al-Youm El-Sabia*, December 6, 2010. < www.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=314761>

24 For a statistical breakdown of how various Arab news outlets have covered the WikiLeaks story, see: David Pollock, "PolicyWatch #1733: WikiLeaks, Gulf Arabs, and Iran: An Opportunity for U.S. Policy," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, December 15, 2010. www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=3283

TURKEY'S CHANGING FOREIGN POLICY AND ITS INTERNATIONAL RAMIFICATIONS

By Efraim Inbar

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Turkey's geographical location and size bestows on the state strategic importance. Indeed, Turkey carries great regional and international weight. Diverging from the West has serious consequences for the balance of power in the Greater Middle East and for global politics. Currently, the Middle East is divided between ascending Islamic Iran and its radical allies, and pro-Western moderate forces—Israel and most Arab states. Until recently, Turkey appeared to belong to the pro-Western camp, but it crossed the Rubicon when Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Iran in October 2009. Turkey sided with Iran on the nuclear issue when its Foreign Minister, Davutoglu, in a meeting with Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Saeed Jalili, stressed his country's support for Tehran's "peaceful nuclear program." During the meeting held in Tehran, Ahmet Davutoglu also announced Turkey's capital Ankara's firm stance on the consolidation of ties with Tehran.[1] The relationship with Iran remains the litmus test for Turkey's Islamist leanings. During a state visit to Tehran earlier this month, the Turkish president, Abdullah Gull, declared Turkey's desire for further improvement of bilateral relations, unperturbed by the violent repression of opposition demonstrators by the Iranian regime.

With Turkey crossing over, it will be more difficult for the international community to contain Iran and curb its nuclear program. Indeed, Turkey, a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council, angered the West by refusing in March 2010 to support additional sanctions on Iran.[2] In June 2010, it voted against sanctions. Since Turkey borders Iran, its failure to cooperate in the economic sanctions against Iran undermines the West's policy. Ankara's current stance allows Iran to become more immune to economic pressure and enhances

1 Turkish FM: Ankara Supports Iran's Peaceful N. Activities, News number: 881128095314:35, February 17, 2010, http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8811280953

2 Burak Ege Bekdil and Umit Enginsoy, "Turkey Rejects More Sanctions on Iran," March 25, 2010, www.defensenews.com/story.php?i=4555173&c=MID&s=TOP.

Iranian power in the region, which will likely prove to be Turkey's largest strategic miscalculation in the future.

Nevertheless, Erdogan's government views cooperation between Iran, Syria, and Turkey as an important element in regional stability.[3] The three agree on the Kurdish issue since all fear an independent Kurdish state. The U.S. exit from Iraq brings the three even closer. They are also intent on weakening the position of Israel—perceived as a Western outpost—in the region. The political elites of the three states believe the West, and particularly the United States, to be in decline. Their common perception of President Barack Obama as very weak makes their alliance less likely to elicit costly countermeasures from a West in strategic disarray.

Turkey's shift in foreign policy will undoubtedly strengthen Iran's grip over Syria and Lebanon. The "Hizballization" of Lebanon is a corollary process, allowing Iran to establish a "Shiite corridor" to the Mediterranean. Iran will gain an even greater influence in Shiite southern Iraq after the U.S. departure and will strengthen its presence in the Levant (the Eastern Mediterranean at large) through territorial links via Iraq to Syria and Hizballah in Lebanon. Furthermore, Turkey's shift will end any Western illusions about snatching Syria away from the radical camp in order to strengthen democratic forces in Lebanon or to facilitate a peace treaty between Syria and Israel. Backed by Turkey, Syria can more easily resist Western pressures and continue its alliance with Iran.

Such a development will enhance Iran's capability to project power in the Eastern Mediterranean and even further west into the Balkans, whose three Muslim states already show signs of Iranian presence. Turkey has also developed a keen interest in the Balkans—once an integral part of the Ottoman Empire. Muslim communities in European states are in constant danger of radicalization and Iranian encroachment could reinforce such a process. Similarly, northern Cyprus, occupied by Turkey since 1974, could again become a base for Muslim influence in the Mediterranean.

An Ankara-Tehran axis would pressure the pro-Western Arab states to the south. In addition to the current tensions between Egypt and Iran, hostilities are also growing between Egypt and Turkey. While Turkey's international behavior has gained sympathy on the Arab street, the pro-Western Arab leaders seem less enchanted. They view Turkey's current pro-Iranian foreign policy as extremely concerning. Egypt in particular sees the Turkish approach to the Hamas regime in Gaza as a threat to Egyptian vital interests.[4] Moreover, Turkey's open support for the demonstrators against the Mubarak regime was seen as another indication of

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[3] H. Sabbagh, "Erdogan: Cooperation between Syria, Turkey and Iran is Important for Peace in the Region," *Syrian Arab News Agency*, October 27, 2009.

[4] Fulya Özerkan, "Aid convoy spurs crisis between Turkey and Egypt, *Hürriyet Daily News*, January 6, 2010, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=aid-convoy-spurs-crisis-between-turkey-and-egypt-2010-01-06.

the Turkish attempt to weaken Egypt, a traditional rival in struggle for influence in the Middle East. The Ankara-Tehran axis that weakens the pro-U.S. Arab states, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, also hinders U.S. influence in the region, particularly when everyone expects the United States to withdraw in the near future from Iraq.

An attempted rapprochement with Armenia is part of the Turkish desire for "zero problems" with its neighbors, but it is important to recognize that Armenia receives support from Iran and Russia. The geopolitical consequence of better relations between Yerevan and Ankara is problematic. Indeed, the new, maybe temporary, Turkish-Armenian understandings have put strains on the Turkish-Azerbaijani strategic partnership.[5] The latter alliance has been the backbone of the East-West energy corridor, and the geo-strategic balance in the region that has allowed for Turkish (or Western) entrance into the Caspian. Without the Turkish-Azerbaijani strategic partnership, Turkish, European Union and U.S. influence in the South Caucasus is at risk. Baku has feared Iranian influence and hoped that Turkey and the West could balance the proximity of Iran, whom it borders. Similarly, Georgia's pro-Western orientation is at stake. If Turkey and Russia reach an agreement over Georgia, its independence is doomed.

The change in Ankara's foreign policy similarly threatens the Central Asian states, which all have Muslim majorities as well as cultural and linguistic links to Turkey (with the exception of Tajikistan). After independence, following the dissolution of the Soviet Empire, these states adopted a pro-Western orientation and looked at Turkey as a secular model for development.[6] If Turkey becomes an Islamist country, the pressure for Islamization from Iran (and also from Saudi Arabia) will grow in Central Asia. These states may succumb to political Islam, or alternatively, may look to regional powers, Russia or China, thereby abandoning their pro-Western orientation.

Turkey's new positioning will undoubtedly facilitate the ability of Russia to penetrate the Middle East. During the Cold War, Turkey prevented Russian divisions from pouring southward and participating in the wars conducted by its Arab allies. Thus, a Russian-Turkish alignment could expose the heart of the Middle East to greater Russian encroachment, especially since Vladimir Putin has revived the country's imperial ambitions in many regions, including in the Middle East.

If Turkey becomes increasingly Islamist, Europe could lose a great buffer from the turbulent Middle East. Indeed, if the Islamist tendencies in Turkey become entrenched, a strong Muslim revisionist state that is also an heir to the Ottoman Empire could emerge at the edge of Europe,

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5 Fariz Ismailzade, "Azerbaijan Nervously Watching Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement," *The Jamestown Foundation*, September 11, 2009, Eurasia Daily Monitor, Volume 6, Issue 166.

6 Daniel Pipes, "The Event of Our Era: Former Soviet Muslim Republics Change the Middle East," in Michael Mandelbaum, ed., *In Central Asia and the World: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan* (New York: Council of Foreign Affairs, 1994).

with aspirations to extend its influence toward the West. NATO, which may reacquire an active defensive mission, would be significantly weakened by losing the Turkish army, an important component on its eastern flank. Already Turkey has shown reluctance to host U.S. interceptor missiles (part of a planned NATO collective missile defense system) for fear of upsetting Iran.[7] NATO probably needs to adopt greater caution in sharing with Turkey sensitive information and technologies to stop potential leaks and technology transfer to Iran.

Finally, the new direction of Turkish foreign policy raises the question of whether Turkey will continue its nuclear abstinence. Granting legitimacy to Iranian nuclear aspirations might indicate a desire to emulate its nuclear behavior. Pakistan, the main source for the nuclear know-how in Iran has even better relations with Turkey. Russia has already agreed to sell a nuclear power plant. The road to a nuclear bomb is indeed a long one, but it has a starting point, which usually is not very clear. Even if the nuclear appetite has not been whetted yet in Ankara, the loss of Turkey as a Western ally will inevitably become a strategic disaster even larger than the Islamic revolution in Iran.

The reorientation of Turkey's foreign policy should be of great concern to the West. Western capitals are slow in gauging the changes in the domestic and foreign politics of Turkey. Washington still plays with the idea that Ankara represents "moderate Islam." Yet, Turkey's preferences and policies are anything but moderate. Seeking good relations with Iran and Sudan, as well as with Hamas and Hizballah, puts Turkey in a radical Islamist camp. Turkey, along with Iran and other radicals, cherishes the current turmoil in the Middle East. Turkey is an important country whose foreign policy reorientation changes the balance of power in the Middle East in favor of the radical Islamist forces. It affects negatively the pro-Western orientation of the Central Asian republics. It considerably weakens the Western alliance and NATO. Turkey could also revive the historic Muslim threat to Europe from the East.

Thanks to the Islamic roots of its ruling party, Turkey is undergoing an identity crisis. At the same time, the quality of Turkish democracy is deteriorating. Hopefully, Turkish democracy will be strong enough to choose the progress and prosperity that only a Western anchor can grant. The nation is scheduled to hold elections in June 2011, and the current polls show that a secular party should become part of the next coalition government, limiting Islamist influence, despite the remarkable political skills of Erdogan. These skills helped him win the September 2010 referendum on constitutional changes, which will strengthen the AKP grip over the judiciary and the military. The West must grasp that Turkey does not represent "moderate Islam" and should do everything possible to bolster the secularist parties in order to prevent an Islamist triumph in the elections. Turkey's drift to Islamism would be a great strategic loss to Israel and the West, and a tragedy for the Turks.

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[7] Umit Eginsoy and Burak Eke Bekdil, *Defense News*, September 13, 2010.

EGYPT'S REVOLUTION FORESEEN IN FICTION: *BEFORE THE THRONE* BY NAGUIB MAHFOUZ

By Raymond Stock

May 2011

***Raymond Stock**, Visiting Assistant Professor of Arabic and Middle East Studies at Drew University (2010/2011), is writing a biography of Naguib Mahfouz for Farrar, Straus & Giroux; for many years, Mahfouz cooperated in his research. He has translated numerous stories and seven books by Mahfouz, including* Before the Throne *(2009) and most recently,* The Coffeehouse *(2010), all for The American University in Cairo Press, many also published by Random House. A twenty-year resident of Egypt, Stock was detained and deported at Cairo Airport on a return visit last December, apparently due to a 2009 article critical of then-Culture Minister Farouk Hosni's bid to head UNESCO for* Foreign Policy Magazine. *He has also published in* The Financial Times, Harper's Magazine, The International Herald Tribune *and many other venues. This E-Note is partly based on and updates a lecture he delivered for FPRI at the Union League in Philadelphia on June 5, 2007, entitled, "From before King Tut to Hosni Mubarak: Egypt's Past, Present and Future in a Novel by Naguib Mahfouz." It also draws from Stock's Translator's Afterword to* Before the Throne *(publisher's link: http://www.aucpress.com/pc-3593-26-before-the-throne.aspx), and from his doctoral dissertation,* A Mummy Awakens: The Pharaonic Fiction of Naguib Mahfouz *(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 2008). This note is dedicated to the late Harvey Sicherman.*

A rebel firebrand defends the revolution that he led against the ruler and his system—in Egypt's ancient past. Many of his words, however, could almost be heard today:

> "History remembers the elite, and we were from the poor--the peasants, the artisans, and the fishermen. Part of the justice of this sacred hall is that it neglects no one. We have endured agonies beyond what any human can bear. When our ferocious anger was raised against the rottenness of oppression and darkness, our revolt was called chaos, and we were called mere thieves. Yet it was nothing but a revolution against despotism, blessed by the gods."

Change "thieves" to "foreign agents," make the revolt not one of just the poor, but of people from all classes and walks of life, replace "gods" with God, and we are in Cairo's Tahrir

Square of the last few months. But the speech is delivered by a probably apocryphal persona called Abnum, the purported leader of an uprising of that may never have happened at the end of Egypt's Old Kingdom (about 2125 B.C.). And it comes not from some dry-as-dust historical annals, but from a brief but riveting novel in dialogue by Egypt's greatest modern writer, 1988 Nobel laureate in literature Naguib Mahfouz (1911-2006).

There has never been a revolt in Egypt quite like the current one, which has not ended with the stunningly rapid downfall of President Hosni Mubarak on February 11, 2011 after more than twenty-nine years atop the nation's power pyramid. Yet Mahfouz, who did not live to see it—and who backed Mubarak in his last election, in 2005--in a way, actually foresaw it. Five years before his Swedish prize, he published a peculiar novel, *Before the Throne*—largely forgotten but for a recent translation into English--that both justifies and gives the historical background to what is happening now (though some of his other works also point toward it). In it, Mahfouz provides not only the precedents for the revolt itself, but also the arguments for maintaining one of the greatest achievements of the order just overthrown, which itself is now threatened: that is, the peace between Egypt and Israel. The only thing he didn't leave us is the ending.

Judging Pashas, Pharaohs, Prime Ministers and Presidents

In *Before the Throne: Dialogs with Egypt's Great From Menes to Anwar Sadat* (published as *Amam al-'arsh: hiwar ma`a rijal Misr min Mina hatta Anwar al-Sadat* in 1983), Mahfouz takes three score of Egypt's rulers, from Menes, who unified Upper and Lower Egypt in one kingdom at the start of the First Dynasty (roughly 2950 B.C.), up to Mubarak's immediate predecessor before the Osiris Court, the ancient Egyptian tribunal of the soul. There, in the gilded Hall of Justice, he has them defend their rule before a panel of the gods and of those kings and queens, viziers and wise men, rabble-rousers and statesmen, who had been acquitted before them, and thus made Immortals. Crucially, Mahfouz uses the careers of several key figures—especially the 19th Dynasty kings Seti I and his son, Ramesses II—to justify the 1979 Camp David Treaty signed by Sadat.

With more than thirty novels to his credit, Mahfouz hadn't produced a piece of fiction set in ancient Egypt since 1944, and had never written one that sought to cover all of Egypt's recorded history. Two years earlier, in 1981, Sadat—Egypt's bold, flamboyant, and ultimately tragic president—was gunned down in Cairo during the parade marking the eighth anniversary of his victory over the Israelis at the Suez Canal, by Islamist extremists in the army who reviled him as "Pharaoh."

Sadat was beloved outside of Egypt for his initially-popular, visionary peace treaty with Israel and avuncular love of pipes. But mainly due to economic policies that left the poor feeling vulnerable, he was not much mourned at home—though there has been real nostalgia for him

in recent years. Soon after his death, Muslim militants in the Upper Egyptian district of Assiut rose up in a rebellion that took many days of violence to put down. Revolution was in the air.

Like all other attempted revolutions in Egypt's history, the Islamist uprising failed, as did the Islamist terror war against the regime of President Mubarak, Sadat's vice-president and successor, which targeted government officials and tourists in the 1990s. So too did the nationalist uprising led by Colonel Ahmed Urabi in 1882 (which backfired to invite seventy-four years of subsequent British occupation). Also unsuccessful, arguably, was the 1919 Revolution headed by Sa`d Pasha Zaghlul against that British presence, though it did lead to partial independence in 1922 and paved the way for much of the resistance that followed until Britain's final departure after the Suez Crisis in 1956. But even then the British, along with their French and Israeli allies, were ordered out by a foreign leader, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower (who later regretted it)—not really by the Egyptian people.

Perhaps the closest, and now nearly forgotten, precedent was actually Muhammad Ali Pasha's cleverly-packaged coup against Khurshid, the Ottoman *wali* (governor) in Cairo in 1805, in order to seize personal power (which *Before the Throne* covers in the trials of Shaykh Umar Makram, who opposed Napoleon's occupation of Egypt, and of Muhammad Ali). The Albanian adventurer "appealed to the right of the common people, the *ahl al-balad*, to depose an unjust ruler," writes J.C.B. Richmond of the affair. Richmond also noted that it was the common people who provided Muhammad Ali with the force necessary for the move.[1] Just as the people in Tahrir Square arguably provided the Egyptian armed forces the cover needed to remove Mubarak, whose apparent plan to install his non-military son after him had dismayed them.

Neither was Egypt's last, and only successful, "revolution" actually born of a mass movement. Rather it was a movement of tanks around Abdin Palace on the night of July 23, 1952, the work of a small number of officer-conspirators, whose ideological (and, in some cases, genetic) descendants still control the all-powerful Egyptian military elite. True, most Egyptians were glad to see the king and his corrupt circle go. In euphoric gratitude, one of Egypt's then most-respected authors and Mahfouz's mentor, Tawfiq al-Hakim (1898?-1987) naively hailed their clique as "the Blessed Movement." Al-Hakim and many others later cursed the regime it founded for its own corruption, lack of democracy and destruction of the economy after its charismatic great dictator, Gamal Abdel-Nasser, died a literally heartbroken has-been, though still on the throne, in 1970.

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1 J.C.B. Richmond, *Egypt 1798-1952: Her Advance toward a Modern Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 39. Though dated, this remarkable work is a still-valuable and beautifully written reference that has sadly been forgotten.

Mahfouz, who at age seven watched Egyptian nationalist demonstrators shot down in front of his comfortable middle-class home in Islamic Cairo during the 1919 revolt, grew up fiercely loyal to Sa`d Zaghlul, who died in 1927 after a brief sojourn as Prime Minister (in 1924), and his party, the Wafd. Devoted to the cause of Egyptian independence, the olive-and-honey skinned Mahfouz also detested what he regarded as the arrogant Egyptian monarchy, seen as of the same blood as the pallid Turkic aristocracy that had ruled Egypt in various guises since the fall of Salah al-Din's (Saladin's) dynasty in 1250.

Though he cheered the abolition of royal rule and the privileged titles of "pasha" and "bey," Mahfouz was appalled by the Free Officers' cavalier killing of the limited liberal democracy that survived under the king and the British, the suppression of free expression, the expulsion of the nation's vital foreign communities and the reckless seizure and plunder of private business and property, despite his own socialist leanings. Most of all, he resented Nasser's attempt to bury the memory of 1919, a true popular uprising, and especially of its patriotic leader, Sa`d Zaghlul. And, though it cost him enormously for years through the Arab world boycott of his books and the many films made from them, he also came to reject Nasser's legacy of permanent war with Israel.

Ironically, two of the principles that Mahfouz trumpets so clearly in *Before the Throne*—the people's right to rise up against tyranny and the need to make mutually beneficial peace with one's neighbors—are most likely set to clash in the aftermath of today's Egyptian revolution, whomever it finally brings to power. This is true because all of the likely future leaders of the country, both secular and religious, want to annul or emasculate the Camp David Treaty: a recent Pew poll shows that 54% of Egyptians want to scrap it altogether—and not a single major voice speaks out for keeping it.

What is Good for Egypt?

The most important question asked in *Before the Throne* is clearly the one most crucial to Mahfouz's own worldview. That is, what is good for Egypt? How Mahfouz defines what is good for his country, and even who is really Egyptian, provides a fascinating glimpse not only into the author's psyche, but into the historical consciousness of Egypt herself—one that is clearly relevant today.

The Osiris Court, carved and painted in tombs, and depicted on papyrus in the *Book of the Dead*, is the most vivid and enduring image from old Egyptian beliefs regarding the fate of the individual after death. God of the netherworld and chief of the tribunal that judges the souls of the deceased, Osiris is one of ancient Egypt's oldest known deities, with roots deep in the clay

of the northeastern Delta.[2] An ancient folk belief held that he was an actual—and prodigious—king in Predynastic times (a view still debated by Egyptologists). Yet the first known image of him dates to the Fifth Dynasty, one of many minor deities grouped around the king, "with a curled beard and divine wig in the manner of the traditional ancestral figures."[3] In the Old Kingdom, he was associated with the royal dead only, mainly in the great necropolis of Abydos in Upper Egypt, though gradually his popularity, and his dominion over the afterlives of more and more Egyptians, including commoners, grew. His nemesis was Seth, who eventually became an Egyptian prototype of Satan, the Evil One. In one of pharaonic Egypt's most famous myths, Seth twice attacks Osiris, the second time cutting him into sixteen pieces and throwing them into the Nile, all but one of which recovered by his sister-wife, Isis, for burial—and resurrection.[4] One should note that, to the ancient Egyptians, "the dying of Osiris does not seem to be a wrong thing," as Herman Te Velde says, "for death is 'the night of going forth to life.'"[5]

Crucial to *Before the Throne* is the role Osiris plays in the passage of the dead into the next world—or into nonexistence. In the ancient myth, Osiris, in the shape of a man wrapped in mummy bandages, bearing the symbols of royal power (the elaborately plumed *atef* crown on his head, the false beard on his chin, the crook and flail in his hands crossed over his chest), presided. Meanwhile, the jackal-headed god of embalming, Anubis, weighed the heart of the deceased on a great double-scale against a feather representing *Ma`at*, the principle of divine order and justice. If the defendant had committed no grave sins on earth, the heart would balance with the feather—and the deceased would be pronounced "true of voice" (a concept that resonates strongly through all of Mahfouz's work) and given the magic spells necessary to enter the underworld, *Duat*.

But if there was no balance with the feather, the heart was fed to "the devourer," Ammit, a terrifying female beast with the head of a crocodile, the body of a lion, and the hind legs of a hippo. As all of this transpired, the ibis-headed Thoth, god of writing and magic, supervised and recorded the judgments and reported them to Osiris. (Another representation of Thoth, a baboon, sat atop the scale.) Meanwhile, Isis (a radiantly beautiful woman with either a

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2 Herman Te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion* (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1967), 85; and David P. Silverman in his article, "Divinity and Deities in Ancient Egypt," in *Religion in Ancient Egypt: Gods, Myths and Personal Practice*, ed. Byron E. Shafer, authors John Baines, Leonard H. Lesko and David P. Silverman (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 44. However, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Donald B. Redford (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2001), Vol. 2, 615-19, places Osiris' origins in Upper Egypt, as most early images of the god depict him wearing the White Crown of the southern kingdom, though this seems a minority view.

3 Bojana Mojsov, *Osiris: Death and Afterlife of a God* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 33.

4 For Seth's prominence in the development of this concept in monotheistic religion, see Peter Stanford, *The Devil: A Biography* (New York, Henry Holt, 1996), 20-23. More on the sinister aspect of Seth in Marc Étienne, *Heka: magie et envoutement dans l'Égypte ancienne* (Paris: Reunions des Musées Nationaux, 2000), 22-39.

5 Te Velde, *Seth*, 6.

throne—which was her emblem—or a solar disk and horns upon her head), her son, the falcon-headed Horus (who introduced and pleaded for each defendant), and other deities looked on.[6]

Mahfouz seized upon this timeless and quintessentially Egyptian device as the framework for one his strangest and most explicitly ideological books. In it he dramatically presents his views on scores of Egypt's political bosses from the First Dynasty to the current military regime—the deep structure of which has survived not only Mubarak, but will probably outlive his successors as well. He does by putting words in their mouths as they defend their own days in power to the sacred court. Those whom Mahfouz sees as the greatest leaders of ancient Egyptian civilization, under the aegis of the old Egyptian lord of the dead, judge those who follow them, from the unification of the Two Lands through late antiquity and the Middle Ages, right down to his own times. This continuum of Egyptian history showcases his essentialist vision of a sort of eternal Egyptian *ka*—the living person's undying double who, in the afterlife, receives mortuary offerings for the deceased, thus ensuring their immortality.[7]

From pharaohs to pashas, and from prime ministers to presidents, only those who serve that great national *ka*—according to Mahfouz's own strict criteria are worthy of his praise—and a seat among the Immortals. The rest are sent to Purgatory or even to Hell—not the ancient Egyptian conception of the afterlife, but a concession to Mahfouz's modern, mainly monotheistic, readership—and perhaps his own personal beliefs as a Muslim.

Yet that he used an ancient Egyptian mode of judgment (albeit his own version of it) to hold these leaders to account, rather than a more conventional setting speaks loudly of his conviction that Egypt is different and must look to herself for wisdom—as well as offer it to the world. The final chapter even presents a sort of "Ten Commandments"[8] which Egypt must follow in order to fulfill her sacred mission as "a lighthouse of right guidance, and of beauty," in the parting words of Isis. In that sixty-fourth (and final) chapter, ten of the key figures who had faced and survived trial offer their own advice to their homeland. The rebel leader

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6 R.H. Wilkinson, *Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2005), 148, describes Isis' iconography. For a harrowing account of the ordeal before the scales of *ma`at*, see Dimitri Meeks and Christine Favard-Meeks, *Daily Life of the Egyptian Gods*, translated from the French by G.M. Gosharian (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 142-50.

7 The description of the *ka* is largely in the words of David P. Silverman, Eckley Brinton Coxe. Jr., Professor and Curator of Egyptology at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

8 This comparison belongs to the late Akef Ramzy Abadir, Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, New York University (1989), *Najib Mahfuz: Allegory and Symbolism as a means of social, political and cultural criticism*, 1936-1985 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International), 166-7. For a brilliant overall analysis of *Before the Throne*, see Menahem Milson, *Najib Mahfuz:The Novelist-Philosopher of Cairo* (New York and Jerusalem: St. Martin's Press and The Magnes Press,1998), Chapter 9, "In the Courtroom of History."

Abnum, whose rousing speech in defense of the ancient revolt is quoted above, admonishes Egypt "to believe in the people and in revolution, to propel her destiny toward completion."

Abnum initially emerges as the leader of the "rebels of the Age of Darkness that fell between the collapse of the Old Kingdom and the creation of the Middle Kingdom" (the First Intermediate Period) in the book's fifth chapter. Introduced as "a group of people of varying shapes and sizes," Mahfouz makes them seem disreputable as well as uncouth:

> "These are the leaders of the revolution: they directed the angry people in a bloody, destructive revolt. They then ruled the country for the long period that lasted from the fall of the Old Kingdom to the start of the Middle Kingdom. Afterward, they left behind them nothing to mark their former presence but ruined temples, plundered tombs and monstrous memories."

When asked by Osiris to choose someone from among themselves to speak for them, "they all pointed to a tall, gaunt man with a stony face." This is Abnum, a character whom Mahfouz insisted was real, but of which I have found no trace in any of the available sources that one can be sure he consulted—or any others.

Abnum tells the court that in the chaos and lawlessness of Egypt under the aged, long-reigning King Pepi II, he urged the people to rise up, and "quickly they answered the call." This recalls Mubarak's own seemingly interminable rule, and the general sense of things falling apart in the final few years, as well as the underlying tension that long promised an eventual explosion. The last film by famous Egyptian filmmaker Youssef Chahine, released in what no one knew were the waning years of the Mubarak era, was "*Heya Fawda*" (*It's Chaos*, 2007). Despite a booming economy that could not keep pace with the burgeoning population, there was a general sense of dysfunctionality, corruption and stagnation. That is always a dangerous combination, and not entirely dissimilar to the slow, anarchic decline at the end of the Sixth Dynasty as nonagenerian Pepi II resolutely refused to "fly to his horizon," in the ritual obituary phrase for the departed king.

Yet the book does not preach revolution alone. Many of its heroes are pharaohs who believe in their divine right to rule, and who view popular movements against authority as an obscene threat to justice (i.e., order) as well as peace. For example, in the trial of six nearly forgotten kings who each ruled briefly and ineffectually in the period before the great Hyksos invasion at the end of the Middle Kingdom, Abnum laments the lack of a popular uprising against their incompetence. But a fellow member of the tribunal, the Twelfth Dynasty monarch Amenemhat I, himself murdered in a harem intrigue, rebukes him:

> "All you think about is revolution," Amenemhat I upbraided him. "When I was governor of a nome [province], I found the country drowning in chaos. I did not

> therefore call for greater disorder, but trained my own men and took over the throne, saving the land and the people, without violating our sacred custom, and without giving up either lives or honor."

Yet again and again, Abnum the revolutionary raises his voice in praise of the people's right to rebel, and puts a premium on making heads roll, to boot. Addressing Gamal Abdel-Nasser in the book's penultimate trial, Abnum opens with admiration but closes with a chilling admonition:

> "Permit me to hail you in my capacity as the first revolutionary among Egypt's poor," began Abnum. "I want to testify that the wretched did not enjoy such security in any age—after my own—as they did in yours. I can only fault you for one thing: for insisting that your revolution be stainless, when in fact the blood should have run in rivers!"

This arouses the ire of King Khufu (Cheops), for whom the Great Pyramid was built. "What is that butcher raving about now?" Khufu exclaims. This outburst gets him only a tongue-lashing from an indignant Osiris, who demands that he apologize for being so rude to a fellow member of the panel.

Egyptian Exceptionalism

Of course, the Lotus Revolution (the flower itself a symbol of Egypt from ancient times), despite pitched battles (mainly with stones, though many died of gunfire) at Tahrir Square, seemed to follow in the (initially) bloodless footsteps of the 1952 coup—especially in those euphoric days around Mubarak's fall. Yet there were soon calls that the deposed president, members of his family and his corrupt insider entourage should be put on trial, some—including Mubarak--for their lives. In the case of Mubarak himself, that reportedly will soon happen, an event which, whatever the now-helpless old man's transgressions, will only sully the nobility to which the movement at first aspired, and the glory that it could, for a brief moment, claim so credibly. Meanwhile, on Facebook and elsewhere, those who express doubts about the direction in which the country is now headed are often insulted, sometimes even called "scaremongers" or even traitors or enemies of the revolution, as well. This, despite the once easily-dismissed rise of the Muslim Brotherhood and their allies, the Salafis, and the army's own alarming brutality toward both demonstrators and Christians on occasion becomes harder and harder to deny.

Nonetheless, that Egypt's current revolution has set a unique example to all nations is already part of its rapidly evolving mythology. Its roots lie in the same deeply ingrained view of Egypt as "*Umm al-Dunya*"—"Mother of the World"--common among the Egyptians, and fiercely

held by Mahfouz. As a nation, Egypt long ago may have invented the very idea of "exceptionalism."

Wherever Egypt's 2011 revolution—or was it really an army coup assisted by an exceptionally enlightened mob?—ultimately leads, be it to a democratic, harmonious civil society or a bloody civil conflict, it might well lead to war. Yet *Before the Throne*, while trumpeting Egypt's imperial past (both ancient and modern, as in Mohamed Ali's adventures in Arabia, Greece, the Levant and the Sudan) most of all preaches against going to war.

Mahfouz is justly lauded in the West for his early backing of Arab-Israeli peace—a position he began to edge toward as early as winter 1973, when he asked Mu`ammar al-Qaddafi--then meeting with the writers at *al-Ahram*--if the Arabs could beat Israel? When the otherwise irrational Libyan dictator answered, "No," Mahfouz declared that the Arabs must therefore negotiate with Israel for peace. This opinion led to much abuse at the time, and later to boycotts of his books and films. It was largely in response to the huge split that the 1979 treaty with Israel caused among Egypt's intellectuals (most of them opposing it, Mahfouz and a few others endorsing it) that he wrote two key chapters about ancient Egypt, as well as the two final trials—those of Nasser and Sadat—in *Before the Throne*.

Curiously, Mahfouz's view of international relations seems to be based on ancient Egyptian logic. Though he praises his hero Sa`d Zaghlul as well as several pharaohs, such as the doomed Seqenenra (who fell resisting the invading Hyksos) and Psamtek III (executed by the vanquishing Persians), and others for bravely fighting foreign occupation, Mahfouz paradoxically loves Egypt as an empire, lauding such conquerors as Amenhotep I and Thutmose III, even the 18th century rogue Mamluk ruler Ali Bey al-Kabir (the Great). Here Mahfouz demonstrates the divide between what the ancient Egyptians saw as *ma`at* and its opposite, *isfet* (chaos, hence injustice). In their conception, foreigners were always inferior to Egyptians (though an Egyptianized foreigner would be accepted among them). Thus Egypt's control and even seizure of neighboring lands in the Near East and Nubia were considered a fulfillment of *ma`at*, while an alien power invading Egypt was the triumph of evil over the proper cosmic order.[9] Hence Mahfouz bars all but a few non-native rulers who had either become Egyptian or otherwise acted in Egypt's best interest from the right to trial and thus the chance for immortality in *Before the Throne*. Indeed, the work as a whole seems but an expression of Mahfouz's own personal version of *ma`at* as embodied in his nation's history.

This paradoxical attitude toward empire and occupation is remarkably similar to that of "the Pharaonists," a group of intellectuals in the 1920s and 1930s whose ideas Mahfouz admired. Led by such luminaries as Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid (1872-1963), first rector of the Egyptian

9 David O'Connor, "Egypt's View of Others," in *'Never Had the Like Occurred:' Egypt's View of its Past*, ed. John Tait (London: UCL Press, Institute of Archaeology, University of London, 2003), 155-85.

university, Taha Husayn (1889-1973), the great blind Egyptian *belles-lettriste* and novelist, and Mahfouz's "spiritual father," the Coptic thinker and publisher Salama Musa (1887-1958)-the Pharaonists held that Egypt was both much older and much closer to Europe and the Mediterranean in culture than her Arab and African neighbors.[10]

A sensitive and problematic issue is the treatment of Jews (who are mentioned only three times as a group, none in the trials of figures from later than the 18th century), as well as Egypt's often rocky relations with both ancient and modern Israel. Mahfouz, who as an adolescent grew up in a largely Jewish area of suburban Abbasiya, once told me (and visiting Israeli expert on Egyptian Jewry, Yoram Meital), "I really miss" the Jews of Egypt, all but a very few of whom were dispersed from the country in the 1950s and 60s.

Though the king (Merneptah, son of Ramesses II) most often theorized to be the pharaoh of the Exodus—a story found in similar form in both the Testament and the Qu'ran—is given his own trial in *Before the Throne*, the tale itself is neither told nor even mentioned. Israel by name appears only twice (both in the trial of Pharaoh Apries), briefly (and fatally) aligned with Egypt against the Babylonians—while Judah is captured by Egypt in the trial of Pharaoh Nekau II.

In the novel, the current state of Israel does not exist at all except as the formidable but unnamed enemy whose presence dominates much of the proceedings in the final two trials (62 and 63). These are of Gamal Abdel-Nasser, champion of the Arab masses who led them into the catastrophic defeat of 1967. But these chapters would lose their force if not for the arguments advanced in the trials of two seemingly totally dissimilar monarchs, the iconic 19th Dynasty father and son duo, Seti I and his son, Ramesses II.

These twin approving portraits of pharaonic potency—and peace-making sagacity—begin with the following classic lines:

> Next Horus called out, "King Seti the First!"
>
> In came a man tall of stature and powerfully built. He walked, wrapped in his winding sheet, until he stood before the throne.
>
> Then Thoth, Scribe of the Gods, read aloud, "He assumed the throne upon the death of his father. He subdued Nubia, returned Palestine to Egypt, then focused his energies on building and construction."

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10 For the Pharaonists' views of Egypt as an empire, see Charles Wendell, *The Evolution of the Egyptian National Image, from its Origins to Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1972), 236-7. For the movement as a whole and Mahfouz's connection to it, see Stock, *A Mummy Awakens* (cited in the introductory note, above), 40-61.

During his opening speech in self-defense, Seti I explains that he took "Palestine" (a term, like Nubia and even Egypt, not used in his time) back from the Hittites who had seized it, a victory "sealed with a pact of peace."

But when asked by his mighty predecessor, Thutmose III, why he had not continued the war anyway, Seti I replies, "I felt my army was exhausted," adding, "while at the same time the Hittites as a nation are extremely tough in battle." Challenged that there is no glory in not pressing on the fight, Seti I answers, "A treaty of peace is preferable to a war without glory."

His son, Ramesses II, after his overblown triumph of Qadesh—in which he barely beat off a massively superior Hittite force that had tricked him into crossing the Orontes ahead of most of his troops—he too got down to making peace with the same enemy nation to the northeast. Some years after withdrawing back to Egypt, leaving the enemy in his original objective, Qadesh, but with no further encroachments on Egyptian buffer states or territory, he signed a peace pact with the Hittite king—whose daughter he also married in an imperial celebration.

Again, Thutmose II takes up a prosecutorial tone. When Ramesses vainly asks him, "What do say about my routing the enemy's army," his much more martially talented remote predecessor skewers him:

> "I say that you won a battle but lost a war, while your enemy lost a battle but won the war. He enticed you to make peace in order to reorganize his ranks. He welcomed your relationship by marriage in order to fix your friendly attitude before making good his losses. He was content to keep Qadesh as a place from which to threaten any point in your empire in future."
>
> "During all of my long reign, the security of my homeland was not disturbed for even one hour," Ramesses II responded. "Nor was there a single violent rebellion anywhere in our vast empire, while no enemy dared cast an aggressive glance at our borders."

Nasser, Sadat, and Arab-Israeli Peace

An entirely different pair of rulers—though again, one succeeds the other in power—faces the tribunal in trials of Nasser and Sadat, the last two in the book. Nasser is attacked not only for wasting Egypt's limited resources on efforts to win every war of liberation around (while spectacularly failing to defend his own territory in 1967), but also for destroying any traces of democracy left by the *ancient regime*. Mustafa al-Nahhas, Zaghlul's successor as head of the Wafd Party, thus the chief initial target of Nasserist repression, berates Nasser for what he has done to Egyptian democracy:

"You were heedless of liberty and human rights," al-Nahhas resumed his attack. "While I don't deny that you kept faith with the poor, you were a curse upon political writers and intellectuals, who are the vanguard of the nation's children. You cracked down on them with arrest and imprisonment, with hanging and killing, until you had eradicated their optimism and smashed the formation of their personalities—and only God knows when their proper formation shall return. Those who launched the 1919 Revolution were people of initiative and innovation in the various fields of politics, economics and culture. How your high-handedness spoiled your most pristine depths! See how education was vitiated, how the public sector grew depraved? How your defiance of the world's powers led you to horrendous losses and shameful defeats! You never sought the benefit of another person's opinion, nor learned from the lessons of Muhammad Ali's experience. And what was the result? Clamor and cacophony, and an empty mythology—all heaped on a pile of rubble."

During his trial, Sadat has a prolonged verbal duel with Nasser, much of which is worth quoting here:

Then Gamal Abdel-Nasser asked Sadat, "How could it have been so easy for you to distort my memory so treacherously?"

"I was forced take the position that I did, for the essence of my policy was to correct the mistakes I inherited from your rule," rebutted Sadat.

"Yet didn't I delegate power to you in order to satisfy you, encourage you, and treat you as a friend?"

"How tyrannical to judge a human being for a stand taken in a time of black terror, when fathers fear their sons and brothers fear each other?" shot back Sadat.

"And what was the victory that you won but the fruit of my long preparations for it!" bellowed Abdel-Nasser.

"A defeated man like you did not score such a triumph," retorted Sadat. "Rather, I returned to the people their freedom and their dignity, then led them to an undeniable victory."

"And you gave away everything for the sake of an ignominious peace," bristled Abdel-Nasser, "dealing Arab unity a fatal thrust, condemning Egypt to exclusion and isolation."

> "From you I inherited a nation tottering on the abyss of annihilation," countered Sadat. "The Arabs would neither offer a friendly hand in aid, nor did they wish us to die, nor to be strong. Rather, they wanted us to remain on our knees at their mercy. And so I did not hesitate to take my decision."
>
> "You exchanged a giant that always stood by us for one who had always opposed us!" Abdel-Nasser upbraided him.
>
> "I went to the giant who held the solution in his hand," pointed out Sadat. "Since, then, events have confirmed that my thoughts were correct."

One may wonder if, given the way the Barack Obama administration so quickly encouraged Mubarak's fall, and then spoke warmly of cooperating with the Muslim Brotherhood (which, in Arabic if not in English, has always said—and recently reaffirmed--that it would terminate the treaty with Israel), that Mahfouz would still write such dialogue now. At any rate, in the end, the tribunal apparently feels that Sadat has won the debate. Osiris invites Sadat to sit with the Immortals--though he had only *permitted* Nasser to do so. The presiding deity had sent Nasser (who had incensed the court by declaring, "Egyptian history really began on July 23, 1952") on to the final judgment with but what he termed an "appropriate" ("*munasiba*") recommendation. Sadat's testimonial, however, was qualified as "*musharrifa*," or "conferring honor."

Mahfouz's defense of Arab-Israeli peace would cost him a great deal, including boycotts of his books and films for many years in the Arab world. And it may have contributed, at least symbolically, to the attempt on his life by Islamist militants on October 14, 1994, roughly the sixth anniversary of the announcement of his Nobel. Though it is believed the attack was in punishment for his allegedly blasphemous novel, *Children of the Alley* (*Awlad haratina*, 1959), it fell on the same day that Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres, and Yitzhak Rabin were revealed to have won the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo.[11] Then, and even now, accused by some of selling out to Israel (which has no discernible influence over the Swedish Academy) for the sake of his prize—devoting most of his Nobel lecture, cited above, to a defense of Palestinian rights, and even endorsing Palestinian suicide bombings during the (much-misreported) 2002 Jenin incursion—he nonetheless never renounced his support for Camp David. Nor did he give up the dream of a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace accord someday.

Yet the question remains, how will this history really end? How would Mahfouz try Mubarak, who will probably be facing judgment both on earth and in the hereafter soon? After five millennia of mainly authoritarian rule, will the new Egyptian democracy be a real one—or at

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11 Raymond Stock, "How Islamist Militants Put Egypt on Trial," *The Financial Times*, Weekend FT, March 4/5, 1995, III, on the military trial of sixteen defendants charged in the stabbing of Naguib Mahfouz.

least the sort of secular liberal version that was the heady, widely touted goal of the January 25th Revolution? Will it go back to war with that other, more established democracy watching nervously from across the oft-bloodied sands of Sinai? Of course, we cannot answer for Mahfouz (or anyone) with certainty now how all this will turn out. Yet, to be sure, more than just Egypt's fate alone shall turn on it.

NORTH AFRICA'S DEMOCRATIC PROSPECTS

By Bruce Maddy-Weitzman

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The year 2011 may well be remembered as a transformative one in the history of modern Arab states, a moment in which societies across the Middle East and North Africa "kicked back," after decades of unbridled domination by authoritarian state structures. But the verdict is still very much out, and already one can say that those who were in the vanguard of the protests have been replaced by a variety of groups, most important of which are Islamist movements.

The intent here is to discuss the dynamics and challenges facing Tunisia, Libya, Morocco and Algeria, the countries of the "Maghreb" (Arab-Islamic "West"), in the wake of the upheavals of 2011. (Mauritania is also a member of the 5-nation "Arab Maghreb Union," but is outside of this analysis). Relevant questions governing the analysis include:

- Which states have the best prospects for promoting effective democratization strategies?
- What is the strength of Islamist movements in Maghreb states?
- Are Morocco and Algeria in pre-revolutionary situations, or are the prospects for continued regime stability there good?
- What are the chances the Libya will be able to constitute itself as a "normal," functioning entity?
- What is the strength of more liberal currents, -- e.g., Berber-Amazigh culture movement, women's groups, secular leftists?
- How might the course of events in Morocco radiate among other Middle East monarchies?
- What is the overall economic profile of the region, and what are the prospects for promoting growth and a greater measure of regional integration?

Owing to its particular mix -- its ethnic composition and linguistic profile, the various forms of Islamic practice, and the region's colonial experiences -- the Maghreb has long been viewed as separate from the broader Middle East. But in today's hyper-connected world, what happens in one place can reverberate in many other places. This is what happened in Tunisia, of all places, where the spark for the region-wide upheaval popularly known as the "Arab Spring" was first lit.

A decade later, contemporary Maghrebi societies still face a host of political, social and economic challenges. The specifics vary from place to place, often widely, but there are common themes.

Underpinning the Challenges

1. Large-scale demographic and economic pressures, particularly the youth bulge, with all of the resulting impact on state-society relations and on relations with Europe. Out of the Maghreb states' eighty million persons, over 50 percent are under the age of 30, and the growth rates of their economies can't meet the demands placed upon it. The result is a high level of alienation, pessimism, and a desire to emigrate. As it is, the large North African emigrant communities in Europe bind the two shores of the Mediterranean together as never before, posing a host of challenges for both European and North African states.

2. The legacy of authoritarianism and violence, both state-sponsored and from opposition movements. The Libyan (Qaddafi) version resulted in the utter emasculation of political life and the country's institutions, which were very limited to begin with. Violence has been an enduring feature of Algerian political life since the colonial era, coloring both the authoritarian state structures and the opposition. In addition, smaller jihadist groups, some of them operating under the banner of al-Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), continue to operate in Algeria, Morocco and the Sahel region.

3. The region's geo-strategic importance (straddling the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean, including the Straits of Gibraltar, as well as its proximity to Europe) and economic resources (hydrocarbons in Algeria and Libya, phosphates in Morocco).

4. The geopolitics of the Arab Spring, which cuts different ways. Algeria came out on the wrong side of the Libyan conflict, and is now is trying to repair the damage by developing relations with the new authorities there. Tunisia, by contrast was on the winning side, and provided refuge for hundreds of thousands of Libyans, straining Tunisian resources. Presumably, they will go home. It will be interesting to see how the relationship between new governments with strong Islamist components develops. Meanwhile, the security of the Tunisian-Libyan border remains an issue. Gulf Arab states, with Qatar in the lead and Saudi Arabia in the background, provided crucial political support for the anti-Qaddafi uprising in

Libya, and can be expected to continue to promote their interests in the new Libya. GCC states also sought to strengthen the Moroccan monarchy, inviting it, and Jordan as well, to join the GCC, and extending promises of generous monetary aid. In that regard, the visit by Qatar's Crown Prince to Morocco just one day prior to nation-wide parliamentary elections in late November was a clear signal of support for King Muhammad VI. Obviously, the destabilization of either Morocco or Algeria would have repercussions throughout the Maghreb and beyond; so would the failure of the victorious Libyan revolutionaries to establish an orderly government. Already, there is great concern with the proliferation of weapons which had been in Qaddafi's warehouses, and have leaked to a variety of radical Islamist groups, in the Sinai Peninsula, for example.

Specific Issues

1. *Regime Legitimacy.* Legitimacy is an extremely slippery concept, particularly in societies which don't choose their leaders through competitive elections. Nonetheless, it is fair to say that the generation which led Maghreb states to independence and ruled for decades afterwards possessed a good deal of legitimacy, thanks to their efforts to shake off colonial rule.

In Algeria, the victorious FLN made their successful revolutionary struggle central to their governing ideology. Ironically, it lost its legitimacy at the end of the 1980s, well before its more conservative pro-Western neighbor in Tunisia. Even if the regime survived the ensuing horrific civil strife, it has not regained any kind of real institutional legitimacy.

In Tunisia, the Ben Ali regime, which came to power in November 1987 in what essentially constituted a palace coup, failed to take advantage of the extended period of political calm and unwritten bargain with the country's middle class that followed the repression of the Islamist current in 1991. Instead, it squandered its legitimacy by privatizing the state for the benefit of family and cronies. Following the Jasmine Revolution, Tunisia is now beginning the long and difficult process of institutionalizing a new, more genuinely legitimate government, and renewing the country's social contract.

In Morocco, the monarchy possesses a special measure of legitimacy owing to its descent from the Prophet Muhammad, but it is not immutable and requires continued tending to. The late King Hasan II sought to remake himself during the 1990s into a more benevolent ruler and promoted incremental change which included the involvement of traditionally opposition parties. His son, Muhammad VI, who has ruled since his father's death in 1999, accelerated the pace of reform, bolstering his legitimacy among large sections of the public, even though Morocco's underlying socio-economic problems remain acute.

In Libya, Muammar Qaddafi initially possessed a good deal of revolutionary legitimacy, after having overthrown the Idrissi monarchy in 1969, in a military coup modeled after Nasser's 1952 coup in Egypt. However, he utterly squandered his legitimacy through brutal repression and bizarre behavior, and survived for decades thanks only to his oil wealth. The new Libyan order is highly uncertain. The National Transitional Council, and the new interim government, clearly possesses momentary legitimacy, having spearheaded the overthrow of Qaddafi, but now it's starting from scratch. Although elections are scheduled, real regime legitimacy will only come if Libya is able to somehow build institutions that will channel, contain, and integrate the various demands emanating from various portions of society. Given the centrality of tribal identities in Libya, establishing a functioning system deemed legitimate by the majority of the society would seem to depend on attaining some kind of power and wealth sharing among the tribes. With Libya awash in weapons, achieving a monopoly on the use of force would seem to be the first daunting task of the new authorities.

All Maghreb countries are in various stages of the process of democratizing, but there is no guarantee that this will result in genuine democracy. Tunisia is farthest along in establishing the institutional underpinnings of democracy; Libya, as mentioned above, is only at the beginning; Morocco has institutionalized political pluralism and undertaken constitutional reform, but the monarchy maintains preponderant power, ruling as well as reigning; Algeria also possesses a certain degree of democratic form—e.g., political parties and a lively press, but real power remains in the shadows, and the regime has only talked about liberalizing political life, without acting.

2. *The Rising Strength of Islamist Movements*. For decades, Maghreb regimes have employed a variety of means to contain political Islam. However, as one former Moroccan official told me a few months ago, “the color of the Arab Spring is green” [the color of Islam]. What this will mean regarding state-society relations, the chances of instituting lasting and genuine democratic forms of government, the relations between different social and cultural forces, and the impact of all of this on the foreign policies of Maghreb states, remains to be seen. In any case, the exact meaning of growing Islamist power differs in each: Tunisia is the bellwether; in Libya, the Islamist current is sure to have a prominent position, and in Morocco, the leader of the legal Islamist party has now assumed the post of prime minister, while remaining distinctly subordinate to the Palace. The Algerian authorities, by contrast, appear determined to keep their own Islamist genie in the proverbial bottle.

3. *The unresolved status of the Western Sahara.* Spain evacuated its Saharan colony in 1976. Morocco’s claim to the territory (it controls more than 80 percent of it) is contested by the Polisario independence movement, which is backed by Algeria. The territory’s juridical status remains unresolved, the only such ex-colony anywhere in the world. While there has not been any fighting for decades, negotiations remain deadlocked. The issue has been the single biggest

obstacle to achieving the normalization of Algerian-Moroccan relations, which in turn has inhibited the promotion of regional economic cooperation and integration, and left the 5-nation Arab Maghreb Union, which was founded with great fanfare in 1999, frozen.

4. *The need to renew and deepen Euro-Maghreb Relations, in both the economic and political spheres*. The Barcelona Process, initiated in the mid-1990s was supposed to do just that, but it quickly foundered. Mutual suspicions and misunderstandings need to be overcome and new mechanisms for cooperation to promote economic development in the Maghreb are vital; failure to do so will have negative repercussions, which will ultimately be felt on the European side of the Mediterranean.

According to a leading expert on North African economies, Francis Ghilès, "faster economic growth able to create desperately needed jobs is essential for stability. Better governance, let alone democracy, stands little chance of taking root in the absence of faster growth." Up until now, he says, the EU's "Neighborhood Policy" has lacked critical mass of investment. According to him, there exists a "colossal investment opportunity" in the energy and mineral sectors, notably phosphates, plastics and renewal energy, one which has the potential to build competitiveness in the region's industry and thus raise its place in the global economy. Given Europe's poor track record thus far and the burgeoning crisis in the Euro zone, the prospects for a major increase in European economic investment in North Africa would seem to be remote. Still, Europeans were reminded again by the crises in Tunisia and Libya that instability in the North Africa will generate accelerated migration to Europe, something which it very much wants to avoid. Hence, it is in Europe's own interest to assist in promoting real economic growth and opportunities in the Maghreb. Germany's recent announcement that it will grant $100 million to Tunisia for that purpose would seem to be an acknowledgement of that fact.

Ghilès also recommends joint industrial ventures between Moroccan and Algerian state and private companies, for example, that Sonatrach (Algeria's oil and gas company) and the Moroccan Phosphates Co. buy into each other's capital, and that leading banks should do the same. Given the long-standing suspicion and rivalry between the two countries, the prospects of this actually happening any time soon would appear to be extremely unlikely

5. *The question of language*. Language serves as one of the foundations of political and national identity the world over. Yet, one of North Africa's particular features is the existence of several languages spoken in each country. Although Arabic is the official language, Tamazight (Berber) and French are widely used as well. Paradoxically, Berber dialects are more widely spoken in Morocco than among Algeria's more overtly politicized Berber communities. French, of course, remains the language of commerce and science, and is spoken by millions across the region, in spite of the fact that French was often viewed in the post-

colonial period as an unfortunate relic of the pre-independence period. The rise of Berber culture movements, which unceasingly demand that Tamazight be recognized as an official national language alongside Arabic, adds another dimension to the complicated North African linguistic landscape.

Developments by Country

Tunisia

A few background observations regarding Tunisia's particular cocktail of factors that have shaped its past and present are in order. Twenty years ago, Samuel Huntington had identified Tunisia as the most likely candidate among Arab states to join the "third wave" of democratization among thirty previously non-democratic states. Tunisia's "democratic potential" included its historically rooted, well-defined national identity, socially and territorially (Tunisians, in Ernest Gellner's memorable phrase, seem "comfortable in their own skin"); its relatively strong educated middle class, achievements in promoting the status of women, and relatively non-traumatic colonial experience, which further deepened Tunisia's already existing openness to Mediterranean cross-currents; and a small, non-politicized military. An additional element in this mix is the fact that under its first president, Habib Bourguiba, Tunisia managed to maintain a healthy distance from radical pan-Arab currents being promoted by Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser and others during the 1950s and 1960s. At the same time, Tunisia's heritage and social underpinnings were an integral part of the Arab-Islamic milieu. Taken together, these elements produced what the political scientist Larbi Sadiki refers to as Tunisia's "syncretism", which heralds, in his view, good tidings for Tunisia's emerging, albeit still fragile democracy. While being careful not to idealize Tunisia's particular synthesis or its achievements, one can hardly dismiss them either.

Election Day has now come and gone in Tunisia, marking the end of the first transitional phase of the post-Ben Ali era and the beginning of another. The achievements during the initial interim period were considerable; the challenges facing the Tunisian polity in the coming period are even more formidable. Much will depend on how the leadership of Tunisia's newly empowered political parties conduct themselves: they are charged with fashioning a viable institutional framework that will enable the country's centripetal forces to outweigh its centrifugal ones. Maintaining political and social stability will also require signs that Tunisia's economic difficulties are being ameliorated. Of course, all eyes are focused on *Ennahda*, Tunisia's long-repressed Islamist movement, and the big winner in the elections for a Constituent Assembly charged with writing a new constitution for the country and appointing an interim government.

Ennahda's decisive victory (41 percent; 89 seats in the 217-person assembly), enabled its Secretary-General, Hamadi Jebali, to be chosen as prime minister for the new interim

government, and confirmed anew that Islamist movements are among the prime beneficiaries of the "Arab Spring" upheavals. Guided by Rashid al-Ghannoushi,. *Ennahda* has long contended that it is genuinely committed to democracy and dialogue with other social forces, as it promotes a modernist-Islamist synthesis, modeled, it says, after Turkey's ruling AKP party. Sadiki characterizes *Ennahda's* worldview as "soft Islamism." This includes a commitment to maintaining the rights of Tunisian women as laid down by Tunisia's personal status law, which among other things is the only one in the Arab world which explicitly bans polygamy, in contradiction to Islamic law. Nonetheless, *Ennahda*'s campaign also employed unabashed appeals to religious sentiment, and with great effect. And when it comes to hot button, populist issues like the Arab-Israeli conflict, Ghannoushi's language has been harsh, and even anti-Semitic, and full of praise for suicide bombers and for Hamas's strategic goal of eliminating Israel.

Ennahda's decisive victory was due not only to its popularity and cohesiveness, but also to the splits within the secular-left camp, which gained nearly as many votes.

What happens now? *Ennahda's* post-election press briefing was a model of consensus, emphasizing its commitment to democratic principles and its wish to cooperate with all political parties, trade unions and other civil society bodies, praising the country's civil servants, whose skills were vitally needed as the country moved forward, and reassuring international markets and actors. For their part, two of the three secular left parties (CPR, which won 29 seats, and Ettakol, which won 20 seats) proclaimed their willingness to work with *Ennahda* in establishing the new interim governing authority and beginning the work on the new constitution. Indeed, the CRP's long-time human rights advocate, Moncef Marzouk, has been named interim president of the country, and Ettakol's Mustapha Ben Jaafar the Speaker of the Constituent Assembly Given the differing world views on a host of issues, establishing a sustained working relationship will be no mean feat. There is no precedent for such a durable secular left-Islamist alliance anywhere in the region.

Paradoxically, it thus appears that Tunisia has embarked on a path of more genuine democratization and Islamization. Amitai Etzioni terms the likely outcome as being a kind of "Islamocracy," i.e., the combining of democratic institutions and an active civil society, with some influence of Islamic law and norms on political and social life. The struggle to determining what that exact combination will be promises to be the central issue shaping Tunisia's democratization experiment. *Ennahda* now has the chance to prove that Islamist movements are not, by definition, antithetical to democratic norms. But the path is also strewn with obstacles. The bargaining and compromises which will be required to maintain a broad-based government and achieving an agreed upon constitutional framework is likely to be difficult at times for *Ennahda* and even more so for its secular coalition partners, particularly since some of the latter's supporters already believe that *Ennahda* is just dissimulating in it

proclaimed fidelity to democracy and the equality of women. In addition, the actions of a small but provocative *salafi* current, which attacks *Ennahda* for not being sufficiently "Islamic" has already demonstrated its ability to polarize society. Nor does the democracy "bounce" of legitimacy conferred by the elections have an unlimited time frame. People, particularly the young and unemployed, will want to see a real change for the better in their everyday lives. Developing viable economic policies that can begin providing solutions to its frustrated youthful population will be the new government's first order of business. Unfortunately, the economy is experiencing a slowdown, marked by a fall in exports, investments and tourism, a rise in the current deficit to 5/7 percent of the GDP, and a fall in hard currency reserves. The annual growth rate for 2011 is expected to be 0 percent.

As for the region, Islamist movements and more liberal advocates of reform were cheered by Tunisia's successful elections, albeit not always for the same reasons. But while Tunisia can serve as an inspiration for those in the Arab world who seek to replace decades of dictatorship with a democratic regime responsive to people's needs, the conditions for actually replicating the Tunisian experience do not exist elsewhere, as recent events in Egypt have shown.

Libya

In terms of political cohesion and a legacy of "stateness," Libya is the polar opposite of Tunisia, possessing very little of either. The country is currently awash in weapons, and tribal and factional militias are reluctant to give them up. The new transitional government contains no one from the long-marginalized Amazigh community of western Libya, which played an important role in the war to overthrow Qaddafi and is clamoring for linguistic and cultural recognition, and representation at the center so as to end the decades of deliberate neglect by Qaddafi. There is significant Islamist sentiment in the NTC; Libyan Islamists resemble the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi current far more than the Turkish Islamist AKP part. Its insistence on the centrality of the Sharia in the new Libya has already provoked controversy. Elections have been scheduled to be held in 8 months' time, and it is hard to imagine that the process will be orderly. Of course, controlling the country's oil resources will be the key to any regime's success, and the involvement of European powers, the prime consumers of Libyan oil, can be expected.

Morocco

Morocco has thus far dodged upheaval, in spite of the fact that the country suffers from many of the same underlying ills that have driven the protests elsewhere—corruption, poverty, and unemployment; the overwhelming concentration of wealth in the hands of a small stratum of elite families intertwined with the authorities; the absence of real democracy; and closed horizons for its large, youthful population, suffering from disproportionately high rates of unemployment and underemployment.

The events in Tunisia and Egypt at the beginning of 2011 were keenly watched in Morocco. Like-minded Facebook protest groups quickly sprang up among Morocco's Internet-savvy, mostly politically unaffiliated twenty-something generation. Unlike their counterparts to the east, their target was not the "regime, (i.e., the monarch), but the corrupt elites who benefited from the existing state of affairs.

While mild compared to upheavals in the rest of the region, the February protests raised the specter of Morocco going down the same road as so many other Arab states and unnerved the authorities. From the beginning, and right through the first half of 2011, the government adopted a multi-pronged strategy: proactive measures designed to appease popular frustration with economic conditions (e.g., increasing state subsidies on basic goods, raising salaries for civil servants, promising government jobs for recent university graduates); proclaiming the right of peaceful protests to go forward while simultaneously working to discredit the protestors; and using occasional police violence to intimidate demonstrators.

Most importantly, though, was Mohamed VI's very public promise of sweeping reforms in an effort to quell the protests. The centerpiece was the promulgation of a new constitution that somewhat enhanced the powers of the prime minister and parliament, while leaving preponderant power in the hands of the king. A nation-wide referendum confirmed the adoption of the constitution in early July. This was followed by the holding of parliamentary elections in late November. The government was determined that the elections be a success, and made it very difficult for the advocates of a boycott to disseminate their message. Still voter turnout was far lower than it was for the constitutional referendum in July (45 percent to 97 percent, according to official, and most likely inflated figures). The low turnout, and the high number of non-registered eligible voters, points to a high degree of cynicism and apathy among Moroccan voters.

The achievement of the Islamist PJD party—coming in first, winning 107 seats out of a total of 395—was consistent with, and influenced by developments in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. In addition, voters were tired of the same old parliamentary faces and the country's widespread corruption: by contrast, the PJD, having been in opposition since its first appearance in 1997, is untainted, and many voters clearly wanted to try something else. Paradoxically, the win further legitimized the monarchy and its top-down reform process. The PJD's win seemed to be genuine, as the authorities seemed to have neither sought to block it nor promote it, allowing the authorities to point to it as additional proof of its desire to see the system evolve, and to the success of its strategy. Given that the Palace will continued to hold preponderant power, the PJD will be challenged to advance its core principles dealing with the Islamization of society, as well as its promises to combat poverty and corruption.

Overall, Muhamad VI has bought further time with his latest measures, and Morocco does not appear to be on the verge of major unrest, but there are obviously no guarantees regarding the future.

Algeria

Algeria has always been unique in the North African pantheon: possessing a pre-colonial past of being far less cohesive than Tunisia and Morocco; having the first to be colonized by France, and in the most thorough-going and socially destructive manner; experiencing the most violent and bloody, by far, of the independence struggles; having vast hydrocarbon resources; and being the first post-independence regime to lose its legitimacy, resulting in the end of the army-single party regime and a sudden democratic explosion followed by a horrific implosion, as the regime's military-security core beat back an armed Islamist challenge during the 1990s, at great cost in lives. Since then, the authorities have sought to establish a veneer of civilian, multiparty rule and a pluralist process which would provide legitimacy, while real power remained concentrated in the shadows, in the hands of a military-security cabal and its civilian allies, with corruption being rampant.

Algeria is a rich country with many poor and frustrated people. It is the world's fourth-largest exporter of natural gas but the central bank recently announced that one-quarter of the country's 35 million people live under the poverty line.

The regional upheaval has reverberated in Algeria too. The country witnesses almost constant protests on a variety of issues—housing, environmental degradation, lack of water, housing, electricity or calling for higher wages, etc. These are often put down forcibly, leading protestors to compare the authorities' heavy handed violence to France's behavior in 1950s (a dubious comparison, but the fact that it is made shows how little legitimacy the regime has).

Until now, however, the widespread anger of ordinary people over bread and butter issues has not coalesced into a united call for change. The ordinary Algerian is often just as suspicious of opposition politicians and democracy activists as of the authorities. Moreover, having experienced the horrors of civil strife in the 1990s, many are either exhausted or unwilling to risk renewed instability and upheaval.

Like his counterparts elsewhere, Algeria's president Bouteflika responded to the initial protests by promising political reform, beginning with the end of the state of emergency and a freer media. He also extended key subsidies and boosting wages for the police, army, government employees and health workers. But concrete reform in the political field has been absent. Parliament is supposedly set to vote on a law at the end of December that would facilitate the creation of parties (dozens are reportedly waiting approval), while banning ex-Islamic

Salvation Front members from forming a party. (The FIS's electoral successes in 1990-91 led to the military's cancellation of the electoral process and the prolonged strife of the 1990s.)

Given the general opaqueness about the inner workings of the power structures in the country, rumors abound: Bouteflika's illness (cancer), is worsening, according to one report. The military has tried, and may try again to replace him, says another.

Regarding regional issues, Qaddafi's overthrow distressed Algeria, for it feared (and fears) that its own Islamist opposition will be emboldened. Algeria is fighting against a low-level Islamist insurgency, and after 9-11 successfully rebranded itself as a vital partner to the West in the "war on terror." Similarly, it is quite distressed over the events in Syria, and the possible collapse of the Syrian regime.

Overall, Algeria would seem to be the next prime candidate for upheaval. It has not been proactive in the reform process, unlike Morocco, and the public's grievances are multiple, and genuine. But, as elsewhere, nothing is certain.

Conclusion

To sum up: the old pattern of complete domination by Maghreb regimes over their societies has been shaken. Two regimes have been toppled, a third has been compelled to initiate reform measures, and a fourth is talking about doing so, but has not yet acted. Islamist forces have risen to the center of political life (apart from Algeria), while the consequences differ from country to country. Liberal forces are present throughout and, while not in the majority and on the defensive, are not inconsequential. Berber ethnic-cultural identity has now been recognized officially in Morocco, and the revived Amazigh current in Libya has been vocal in demanding recognition. Renewed unrest in Algeria is likely to include a Kabyle-Amazigh dimension, as it did a decade ago. Tunisia is best positioned, by far, to achieve an institutionalization of a democratic political order, but even there the road will be rocky. Western nations, especially Europe, have an enormous stake in the evolving political and social order of Maghreb states, but have not developed an overall economic and political strategy to guide its policies and advance their interests. The United States has a stake in the Maghreb's evolution as well, and is currently emphasizing the importance of continued democratization in a way that would ensure the protection of women and minority rights and the rule of law. Economically, too, the U.S. is promoting a variety of development programs, but by themselves will hardly be sufficient. The U.S. appears to be supportive of the active role being taken by its Gulf Arab allies in the region, even if they themselves are hardly democratic. For the time being, however, their overriding common geopolitical interests, first and foremost vis-à-vis Iran, outweigh any differences that they might have regarding the value of democracy. In any case, the GCC states were keen to see Qaddafi overthrown, and the U.S. quickly lined up with them and with Britain and France on the issue; the GCC is a strong

supporter of the Moroccan monarchy, as is the United States; and is keen to see Sunni Islamist parties achieve greater prominence through the ballot box. On this last point, the U.S. Administration has apparently accommodated itself to the reality that democratization and increased Islamist political influence go hand in hand, and prefers it to the previous authoritarian status quo in the region.

Author's Note

- *The analysis draws on recent articles in Middle East Quarterly*
  - *http://www.meforum.org/2977/tunisia-after-revolution*
    http://www.meforum.org/3114/morocco-upheaval
- *Euromesco Briefs:*
  - *http://www.euromesco.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1271%3Aeuromesco-brief-19-tunisia-the-next-phase-&catid=62%3Aeuromesco-briefs&Itemid=49&lang=fr*
- *The Jerusalem Report:*
  - *http://www.dayan.org/frameana.htm*
- *Change and Opportunities in the Emerging Mediterranean (Stephen Calleya and Monica Wohlfield, eds; Malta, Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, forthcoming*
- *An FPRI E-Note on Tunisia in January 2011:*
  - *http://www.fpri.org/enotes/201101.maddy-weitzman.tunisia.html*
- *The preface to my co-edited volume, The Maghreb in the New Century (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007);*
- *And my book, The Berber Identity Movement and the Challenge to North African States (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).*

IRAN'S INTERNAL DYNAMICS

By Amin Tarzi

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http://www.fpri.org/education/1110middleeast/

Since its establishment in 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran has never been free of political intrigue. However, since the disputed June 2009 presidential election, the level of intrigue has increased. And the recent pubic rift between the two highest office holders—the unelected supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and the elected president, Mahmud Ahmadinejad—may very well be pushing Iran and the Islamic Republic regime close to the brink. While the denouement of this latest political wrangling has yet to be written, the "writing on the wall" suggests that the results will be anything but anti-climactic.

Prior to the 2009 presidential election and the internal fallout that ensued, the Islamic Republic's leadership structure, while perplexing and labyrinthine, was intelligible. The office of the supreme leader was, both on paper and in fact, the final arbiter, an impartial entity external to and above the governing administrative structures. The person of Khamenei and his position served as the source of ultimate legitimacy within the Islamic Republic regime and as the regime's guardian. That all changed with the supreme leader's blatant and unquestioned support of Ahmadinejad prior to the election and after his controversial victory. This action removed any lingering sense that the office of the supreme leader and the person of Khamenei were impartial and above political machinations and manipulations.[1]

While most of the world's attention was focused on the activities of the popular opposition and its Green Revolution after the controversial electoral outcome, a rift emerged between the Supreme Leader and his chosen candidate, the reelected president. The alliance formed for political expediency prior to the 2005 presidential election to keep the pragmatist and reformist camps from political position and strengthened in the run-up to the 2009 election now seemed to be unraveling. The confident, newly reelected president began asserting his

[1] Amin Tarzi and Adam Seitz, "Iran at a Crossroad," *MES Insights*, Volume 1, Issue 1 (January 2010).

independence and, in the minds of the conservatives aligned with Khamenei, deviating from the correct path of the Islamic Revolution. In boxing terms, the gloves came off. In July 2009, the president appointed Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei as the first vice president, but Khamenei pressured Ahmadinejad to reverse the appointment. While caving to this demand of the Supreme Leader, Ahmadinejad challenged Khamenei by appointing Mashaei as his chief of staff. Furthermore, in December, Ahmadinejad, reportedly per insistence of Mashaei, fired his foreign minister, Manouchehr Motaki while the latter was on an official visit to Africa. Motaki's dismissal was regarded as a rebuke to Khamenei for preventing Mashaei's appointment to the post of first vice presidency. The tensions between the office of the president and that of the supreme leader continued to escalate, and mostly in public, until the two offices came to blows over Ahmadinejad's dismissal and his forced reinstatement of intelligence minister, Haydar Moslehi, in April 2011. The growing animosity between the two men and their respective offices is evidence of the widening crack in the Islamic Republic's governing regime, something not seen since the very early days of the revolution.

IRGC Flexes its Muscle

Lieutenant General Mohammad Ali Jafari, Commander of Islamic Republic Guard Corps (IRGC), declared in a July 2011 interview that the IRGC, acting as commissars of Iran's judicial branch, arrested a number of deviant individuals on charges of economic and moral violations.[2] These individuals also happened to have close ties to supporters of Ahmadinejad and Mashaei, or the true figures of the "digressive current," as Jafari insinuated. What this announcement suggests is that the IRGC is seeking to expand its authority within the Islamic Republic regime. Yes, the IRGC has in the past warned former president Mohammad Khatami not to stray too far off the path of the Islamic Revolution; however, it was done via private correspondence, not via the press and not without the usual deference to the office to which the IRGC is subservient. The IRGC's main mission is to safeguard the Islamic Revolution, including the office of the supreme leader. Throughout the existence of the Islamic Republic, the powers of the judiciary have been kept, at least ostensibly, outside the authority of the IRGC. Jafari's public declaration that his forces are in fact acting as enforcers of the law is a potential game changer and is an affirmation of what was anticipated in the first issue of the Middle East Studies Insights, in January 2010, that "as the Iranian leadership continues to scramble to regain order and legitimacy, the door has been opened for the… IRGC to step in amid the power struggle with clinched fists to fill the power vacuum–leaving the hardliners in the IRGC ranks as the powerbrokers and eventual deciders of the course of action for the Islamic Republic."[3] The power balance has shifted. With Khamenei's unprecedented overt

2 "*Sepah zabet-e dastgah-e qazayi dar barkhord ba jaryan-e enherafi ast*," *Mehr News Agency*, July 5, 2011, www.mehrnews.com/fa/NewsPrint.aspx?NewsID=1351670, accessed November 3, 2011.

3 Tarzi and Seitz, "Iran at a Crossroad."

support of Ahmadinejad and the subsequent public sparring between former allies, Khamenei and his office lost much credibility, becoming more dependent on the IRGC for safeguarding the Islamic Republic regime and thus, changing the relationship between the supreme leader and the IRGC from one of leader and follower to that of interdependency for mutual survival.

Elimination of the Presidential System?

Khamenei in a recent speech reinforced the elevated position of his office, stressing that the role of the office of the supreme leader was to manage not administer and that he, as leader, was charged with overseeing the administrative branches of the government and guarding the general direction of the Islamic Republic regime. He also hinted during that speech that if necessary the Islamic Republic might change the current presidential system into a parliamentary system of government.[4] This was no veiled threat. Through this speech, Khamenei issued a warning to Ahmadinejad and his supporters that they as individuals as well as the top elected administrative branch of government could be sacrificed if required to safeguard the Islamic Republic regime and that he, Khamenei, has the authority to carry this out. But does he?

End of the Islamic Republic?

The question remains whether Khamenei and the office of the supreme leader enjoy the level of support that they had prior to 2005, especially in light of the 2009 election and ensuing political maneuvering. If not, then that leaves room for the IRGC to "insert self" as the true guardian of the administrative systems of the Islamic Republic and to sideline the office of the supreme leader or to alter its authorities if the Islamic Republic regime or the IRGC itself requires it. This would end the Islamic Republic of Iran as we know it since 1979. In a twist of irony, Ahmadinejad, the man who has come to personify all that is negative about the regime in Tehran, may in fact be the albatross that is now hanging on the neck of the Islamic Republic.

**This article has been reprinted with the permission of the author from: Amin Tarzi, "Iran's Internal Dynamics," MES Insights, Volume 2, Issue 5 (November 2011), www.mcu.usmc.mil/Middle%20East%20Studies%20Documents/MES%20Insights/MES%20Insights%20Vol%202,%20Issue%205.pdf*

4 "*Bayanat-e rahbar-e muazam-e enqelab dar didar ba daneshgahyan-e ostan-e Kermanshah*" *The Office of the Supreme Leader Sayyid Ali Khamenei*, October 16, 2011, www.leader.ir/langs/fa/print.php?sec=bayanat&id=8729, accessed October 31, 2011.

JORDAN, MOROCCO, AND THE FUTURE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

By Ahmed Charai

October 2012

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Amman, Jordan, October 19, 2012 -- Jordan is a tiny, liberal monarchy in a tough neighborhood. To its West, is the West Bank and Israel and the longest running war of rocket attacks and bus bombings in the region. Its Northern neighbor, Syria, is the home of dictator who has killed more than 20,000 of his own people in desperate bid to hold onto power. Tens of thousands of hungry, wounded and war-weary Syrian refugees have poured across the border into Jordan. To the East, is Iraq and Iran, which is building a nuclear device and is the world's largest funder of international terrorists. If Jordan falters or falls, America will lose its strongest Arab ally in the Levant, civilian suffering from war and disease will multiply and Saudi Arabia and Gulf states will tremble as oil prices climb.

Into this cauldron of misery, this week, flew Morocco's young king, Muhammad VI. As I write, the king is visiting a military hospital in Jordan that he established to care for refugees from the Syrian regime's killing machine. He is talking to and consoling some of the tens of thousands of displaced Syrians that Jordan now shelters. But he is coming with more than just a message of charity and mercy, he has raised more than $1 billion—from Saudi and Gulf leaders—to stabilize Jordan and care for Syrian refugees. While no U.S. money is involved in this monumental effort, the king's efforts have the support of the U.S. State Department.

Later this afternoon, he will meet with Jordan's leaders to build consensus on an Arab strategy to support Syria's rebels without enabling jihadists to hijack the revolution. Jordan, bordering Syria, will be the lynchpin in that effort -- but close coordination among the Arab world's remaining dynasties will be essential to implement and stabilize it and Morocco's role as a go-between and enabler will either make it or break it.

The king's initiatives reveal a new alliance that is emerging among the remaining Arab kingdoms and emirates that survived last year's revolutions -- that is, the six "Gulf Cooperation Council" member states (Saudi, Qatar, the UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman) and the kingdoms of Jordan and Morocco. Their collective reach spans the Middle East

flashpoints that are of greatest concern to Washington: To the east, the Gulf states are a bulwark against Iran. In the center, Jordan straddles Syria, Israel, the Palestinian territories, and Iraq. And far to the West, where revolutionary Libya and Tunisia struggle for democracy amid ascendant jihadism, Morocco stands strong, secure, and well on its way toward a European-style parliamentary monarchy. Last year Saudi Arabia invited Morocco and Jordan to join the Gulf Coordination Council as full members, offering a fairer distribution of wealth between the oil-poor and the oil-rich while asking all parties to join hands in holding the region together.

This initiative presented an important opportunity as well as a special responsibility to Morocco. Decades before Egypt established relations with Israel, Morocco under King Hasan II was the primary force pressing for an Arab-Israeli peace settlement. When the Gulf emirates had just begun to establish their own modern states in the 1970s, centuries-old Morocco lent the expertise of its police and intelligence apparatus to build viable security structures for those young nations. When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, King Hasan worked behind the scenes to help the U.S. and NATO ensure that Arab armies joined the coalition to oust the Iraqi dictator. And years ahead of the Arab spring, the new and current king, Muhammad VI, initiated his own approach toward democratization – holding regular local and parliamentary elections, combatting police corruption, securing the rights of women and religious minorities (especially Jews), fostering civil society, supporting human rights and political reform, and ultimately rewriting the constitution to split power with an elected prime minister. These last positive steps are the envy of the neighborhood today, while Morocco's larger track record has created a region-wide footprint for the kingdom as well as a strategic alliance with the United States and Europe. Egypt, engulfed in its own internal challenges at this time, no longer plays the regional stabilizing role that it did for decades under Mubarak. Influential voices across the Arab world -- from the Gulf to the Levant to North Africa -- are calling for Morocco to fill this vacuum and reclaim its historic place as a broker of peace and security.

The king's visit this week to the Gulf and to Jordan epitomizes his embrace of GCC expansion. What's more, Morocco has a vision, warmly accepted by the other states, for how best to make use of the new alliance both throughout the region as well as inside the borders of the member states:

While a hardened Israel and a fractured Palestine remain resistant to peace efforts, Morocco wants to press the two parties to sit down and work out their two-state solution before it's too late. The new GCC alliance will equip Morocco with the powerful tools of statesmanship that are necessary to do so: It can leverage oil wealth and its own political development model to assist the Palestinians. It can offer Israel a gateway to the most powerful economies in the

Arab world in exchange for Palestinian independence. And it has the credibility within the GCC alliance to make good on such commitments. Morocco is a Muslim country that supports the Palestinian cause, but also a friend to the Jewish people -- the birthplace of 265,000 Moroccan Jews who now reside primarily in Israel where their numbers have swelled beyond a million. The role Morocco can play will greatly facilitate America's own efforts toward peace -- and one day, God willing, relieve the next White House of this onerous responsibility.

During the current international standoff with Iran, Morocco stands firmly against Iranian ambitions to acquire nuclear weapons capability. The king agrees that all options should be on the table, and via his GCC, Jordanian, and Western partners, has been working to ensure the toughest application of sanctions. But Morocco also knows that the possibility of a military attack on Iran is real -- and believes that enhancing the military threat against Iran might the last possible way to avoid war, by achieving peace through strength. To that end, Morocco is leveraging its security ties with the Gulf and warm relations with Israel and the West to create a highly intimidating military alliance. Iranians know this -- which is why they have singled out Morocco for acts of sabotage and destabilization. Those attempts have failed. Morocco has accordingly sent home Iran's ambassador, setting a trend that other Arab states have followed. As a result of Morocco's leadership, Iran in increasingly isolated in the Muslim world.

But King Muhammad is also aware that in the long run, regional stability depends on building a culture of tolerance, the rule of law, human rights and democratic reform. As an evolving constitutional monarchy, Morocco is in the unique position of offering political support to transitioning democracies as well as trust to its GCC partners who are at a more junior stage of reform. Thus the new GCC alliance, is not only a support base for the less stable countries outside it; it can also be an accelerator of reform inside its community of members. The path toward change will be difficult for some of the members, much as it was, and still is, for Morocco.

But there is a model for the future of the GCC—NATO. After the 1990 collapse of the Soviet Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization expanded East of the Oder River to include new members in the former Soviet sphere. This fostered political transformations as well as even greater military unity, gradually establishing democratic institutions while providing the safety for those societies to experiment and grow. GCC expansion can follow the same path, offering security and freedom to the peoples of its member-states and the region as a whole.

THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION: GETTING FROM HERE TO THERE

By Asher Susser

October 2012

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For Israelis and for Palestinians, the two-state issue is always relevant no matter what is happening in the Middle East. Those of us who wish to see Israel remain as the nation-state of the Jewish people – which after all is the historical objective of the whole Zionist enterprise – must not give up on the two-state solution. There is no future for Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people outside the framework of a two-state solution. Recalling the history of Palestine, it is the Jews who wanted partition all the time, not the Arabs. The Arabs didn't need partition and today probably need partition less than the Jews do. But over the years both sides have concluded that they must support the two-state solution; yet, despite the fact that both sides support a two-state solution and have conducted negotiations for twenty years, we have failed to get there. I would venture to guess that we are probably not going to get there any time soon through the vehicle of negotiation.

I would like to explain why we haven't got there, why the one-state solution is not a solution, and what we should and can do to get there.

Why We Have Failed to Achieve a Two-State Solution

First, why have we failed? The negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, like the negotiations between Israel and the Arab states, have been based on U.N. Resolution 242. I would argue that's the problem. 242 is a resolution that came into being in the aftermath of the

1967 six-day war. It was a resolution designed to solve the problems created by the six-day war through the equation of land for peace. Israel would return the land it occupied in 1967 in exchange for peace with the Arab states from which this land was taken. The Palestinians were not part of that resolution. They're not even mentioned in the resolution; nor does the word "Palestine" appear there. The thought was that Israel would return Sinai to Egypt, the Golan to the Syrians and the West Bank to the Jordanians. Where exactly Gaza would go wasn't quite clear, perhaps with the West Bank to the Jordanians. 242 is a resolution which works very well between Israel and the Arab states, and two of the three Arab states, in fact, have made peace with Israel on the base of that resolution. Jordan without the West Bank and Egypt have made peace with Israel, and we were not very far from a peace treaty with Syria as well in the 1990s.

But 242 has inherent deficiencies when it comes to the Palestinians. The Palestinians have two major grievances with Israel. One is the product of the 1967 war, the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, but the main grievance is a result of Israel's creation in 1948 and the Palestinian refugee question that results from 1948. There are no Palestinians who think that the problem with Israel began in 1967. If you talk to the Palestinians about "end of conflict," which is what the Israelis did, you are forcing the 1948 questions to the surface. There are two sets of issues that we have with the Palestinians. The West Bank and Gaza and the settlements and the borders and Jerusalem are only a part of the problem; they are the "1967 file," as I call it. 242 does not relate at all to the 1948 file, which is the Palestinians' real problem. With the Arab states we don't have a 1948 file; there is only a 1967 problem.

The dynamic created by the Oslo Accords seemed to narrow down the whole issue of Palestine to the 1967 questions. The Palestinian authority had elected institutions, the Presidency and Parliament, both of which were elected only by the people in the West Bank and Gaza, and the Palestinian authority represented only the West Bank and Gaza, as opposed to the PLO, which represented all Palestinians everywhere. The Israelis saw this Oslo dynamic as reducing the issue of Palestine to the 1967 questions and we saw that as a very positive development. This was going to create the basis for a two-state solution, and it was on that basis that the Israelis went to Camp David in 2000. The Israelis had in their mind a tradeoff. Israel would concede on the bulk of the 1967 issues including Jerusalem, and the Palestinians would close the file of 1948 in exchange and that would end the conflict. But the Palestinians never agreed to such a tradeoff and would not agree to close the file of 1948, which is the refugee question.

On territory where the Israelis were looking for a compromise on the West Bank, the Palestinians found the idea of compromise very difficult to accept. The Israelis understood that the Palestinians as wanting all or nothing – 100 percent of the West Bank. But what the Israelis didn't understand was that, from the Palestinian point of view, to retrieve all of the

West Bank was to retrieve only 22 percent of historical Palestine. Israelis already had 78 percent. So the argument the Palestinians made on territory was in effect to say we want all of the West Bank back and how can you quibble with us on the 22 percent that is left? So both on the 1967 territorial issues and particularly on refugees, Camp David failed.

The Israeli response to this recognition of the centrality of the 1948 questions was to demand of the Palestinians since Camp David to recognize Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people. That is Israel's counterweight to continuing Palestinian demands on 1948. Israelis believe that if they can get the Palestinians to recognize that Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people, there will be no refugee return to the state of Israel. This makes sense from the Israeli point of view. But the Palestinians will not recognize Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people, for to do so would be asking the Palestinians to recognize that Palestine is Jewish, and they won't. So when it comes to these 1948 questions, there has been no progress between Israel and Palestine.

When Ehud Olmert and Abu Mazen conducted their negotiations in 2008 the differences were narrowed down very significantly on the 1967 issues on territory, even on Jerusalem, but not on refugees. Olmert offered Abu Mazen the return of 5,000 refugees in five years, that is 1,000 a year for five years. The Palestinians in their private conversations with the Israelis spoke about the return of 100,000 or 150,000, which was 20 or 30 times more than what the Israelis were offering. And when these numbers were leaked – 100,000-150,000 were leaked by WikiLeaks – the Palestinians denied them and Palestinian public was unwilling to accept even the 100,000-150,000 limitation. There is no possibility in the foreseeable future that the Israelis and the Palestinians will come to an agreement that will include the 1948 issues.

Why Not One State?

So if it is so difficult to arrive at a solution of end of conflict, why not have one state? Because the one-state cure is the proverbial cure that kills the patient. I cannot think of any place on earth where two nations locked in conflict for over 100 years are offered a solution to be thrust together in a boiling pot of coexistence that would end no doubt in mutual destruction. Communities with less historical hostility have fallen apart in recent years – Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Belgium is on and off, Sudan, the Soviet Union, even devolution in the United Kingdom.

Some illustrations may be helpful: When Andy Murray won the U.S. Open, I saw an interview on the BBC with someone saying, "This is not an English victory, it's Scottish." Some years ago, I was in Norway and was asked how long I thought it would take until Israel and Palestine merged into one state. I replied "I bet I can give you a precise answer. It will be 24

hours after Norway and Sweden merge together in one state." They didn't laugh. It is amazing how people expect us to do things that they would never imagine doing themselves!

Mainly I would say the reason why this is a bad idea is because most Jews in Israel and most Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza don't want it. There are people in the Diaspora who may wish for such a solution, but they won't face the music and probably couldn't care less about it. A one-state solution, if there were to be such a thing, would with time transform the Jews in this future Palestinian state into a minority. Looking around the Middle East today, the most unhealthy position one could wish to be in is that of a minority in any one of the Middle Eastern states. It is not a privileged position to be in. The Jews as a minority in Palestine? I hate to think of their ultimate fate without their own state being there to protect them.

The Case for "Coordinated Unilateralism"

If a two-state solution is unattainable by negotiation and a one-state solution is not a solution, what do we do? We have to begin by recognizing the limitations of the negotiating process and the limitations of Resolution 242. We, the Israelis, have to come to terms with the fact that we may have to withdraw for less than peace, that land for peace may be desirable, but not necessarily fully attainable. Why should we withdraw in the absence of full peace? If we don't, we are allowing those who resist the idea of peace with Israel, like Hamas and company, to dictate to Israel what kind of country we will live in in 10, 20 or 30 years' time.

If the prime objective is to preserve Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people, we have to cut our suit according to the amount of cloth we have. There are nearly 6 million Jews in Israel and an Arab population in British Mandatory Palestine which is now more or less equal. There are arguments about the numbers and there is one particular source that keeps on promoting the idea that there are fewer Palestinians in the West Bank than everybody else seems to claim, but I know of no Israeli demographers, government or otherwise, who accept the figures of the minimizers.

By maintaining the status quo, Israel is undermining its long-term capability to remain the nation-state of the Jews, and if we are not the nation-state to the Jewish people, what's the point of the exercise? What have we been fighting for the last 120 years? To become a minority in Palestine? We can be a minority in California. That would be preferable to being a minority stuck out there in the Mediterranean. It's about being a majority. It is about being in that one place on earth where we are the majority, and if this cannot be obtained by a negotiation, then we have to think of unilateralism again. Now I know people will say, "Well, have you lost

your marbles? Don't you know what happened in Gaza after Israel withdrew?" I know what happened in Gaza. Life is about alternatives, not about the ideal.

What we have to improve is the manner in which we conduct the unilateral approach; we can't just walk out of the territories without any coordination with the Palestinians. We should have what I call "coordinated unilateralism." It sounds like an oxymoron, but it isn't. Coordinated unilateralism presumes the United States is the coordinator, and that the Palestinians have their unilateral process as well. Regarding the Palestinian approach to the international community to recognize Palestinian statehood, I don't think Israel should object, so long as the prospective UN resolution indicates that the precise borders and the status of Jerusalem and the refugee question are subject to eventual negotiation between Israel and Palestine. And as the Palestinians proceed to build the institutions of their state, we should withdraw from considerable territories in the West Bank, gradually – withdraw settlements, particularly – leave the military in many places where we still need them. Thereby we will create the possibility of what I call a "two-state dynamic" – instead of what we are presently creating ourselves, which is a one-state dynamic, which is working against our own long-term interests.

This unilateral dynamic will create a two-state reality, not peace in our time. It will look a lot more like an armistice than a peace treaty, but if you look around our relations with the other Arab states today, we are going in that direction with them too. Our relations with Egypt are beginning to look much more like an armistice than a peace treaty. The relations with Syria never were more than armistice, and in Jordan, as in Egypt, the peace treaty never resulted in full, warm relations. This two-state reality would not require a written agreement between the parties, just understandings. No written agreements would mean that neither side would have to give up their historical narratives and we would have a two-state reality on the basis of which or from which eventually negotiations will be held between the state of Palestine and the state of Israel on the outstanding issues like borders and Jerusalem and, eventually, refugees. This is the only realistic alternative to sliding down the slippery slope of an irreversible one-state reality.

Yes, the Middle East around us is falling apart, but even though that is the case, we must not allow ourselves to lose sight of what our historical objective always was. I fear for the moment where we, the Israeli Jews, will wake up in 10 or 15 years' time and say, "The reality is irreversible, and we have lost it." That we cannot allow to happen. It's not in our self-interest.

WHAT EVERY AMERICAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT EGYPT'S MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

By Eric Trager

January 2013

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One of the questions often asked is how is it that an uprising that seemed to feature pro-democratic, secular young people on Facebook and Twitter became one dominated by theocrats of the Muslim Brotherhood? Was the image that you saw on television incorrect? Was this revolution really led by those young people? I'm going to show why that image was not incorrect at all—the revolution truly was led and catalyzed by these young people on Facebook and Twitter—but why eventually the Muslim Brotherhood was able to take control of the revolution.

Two years ago when I was doing my dissertation fieldwork in Cairo, I sought out interviews with leaders from the Muslim Brotherhood, and I was referred to a man named Muhammad Morsi, now the President of Egypt. At the time, President Mubarak was ill and had gone off to Europe for operations amid a lot of mystery surrounding his health. I asked Muhammad Morsi whether the Muslim Brotherhood would run a presidential candidate if Mubarak died tomorrow. Here is what he said:

[From an audio file played by Trager]

> *Eric Trager: You don't see the Muslim Brotherhood nominating a presidential candidate [if Mubarak dies tomorrow]?*
>
> *Muhammad Morsi: No… because society is not ready… Our society is not ready yet to really defend its worth. We want a society to carry on its responsibilities, and we are part of this society. Another thing, if we are rushing things, then I don't think that leads to a real stable position.*

When he made that statement, I don't think he was lying, and I don't think he was being coy. I think that he didn't expect that he would be faced with this reality in a mere six months. He did not expect that Mubarak would step down six months later and, to be completely honest with you, neither did I. My dissertation was entitled "Egypt: Durable Authoritarianism"—until the revolution.

What did Morsi mean when he said that the Brotherhood was trying to build a society? Let me give you some background on the Muslim Brotherhood. It was founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, who was a schoolteacher in Ismailia. The Muslim Brotherhood's goal was then—and remains now—to establish an Islamic state in Egypt. The way it pursues this goal is by trying to Islamize Egyptian society. Through social services, education, and the mosque, it sought to make Egyptians more religious and more Islamic as a grassroots strategy for building an Islamic state. That's very, very different from a strategy that says, "We're going to run for president, run for the Parliament, and use that power to transform society." Rather, the Brotherhood says, in effect, "We're going to Islamize society to build towards power." It was a long-term strategy; it took them 84 years before they ran for and won the presidency. So Morsi told me in 2010 that the Muslim Brotherhood was not going to run for the presidency because it was not done Islamizing Egyptian society.

In addition to this grassroots strategy for Islamizing Egyptian society, the Muslim Brotherhood has been deeply hostile toward the West. Some of this hostility stemmed from the anti-imperialism of the 1920s and '30s, which later became a very virile anti-Zionism. The Muslim Brotherhood participated in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War well beyond the point at which the Egyptian army had stopped fighting Israel. Members are still very proud of that fact and still reference it when discussing their outlook on Israel.

The Muslim Brotherhood's credo is "Allah is our objective, the Quran is our constitution, the Prophet is our leader, jihad is our way, and death for the sake of Allah is the highest of our aspirations." Now I should clarify that when they say "jihad," they do not necessarily mean violent conflict. The way that this credo is interpreted varies considerably among the Brotherhood organizations that now exist in 72 countries. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood does not typically use jihad to refer to violent struggle. It has at various points in history, but not recently. That's different from, say, Hamas in Gaza, which is a Brotherhood organization that interprets the "jihad" clause of this credo as an endorsement of violence.

Let me take you to Tahrir Square. I was there in June of 2012 when Morsi was announced as Egypt's next president. It was like being in the Bronx when the Yankees win the World Series.

I was in the Square that day for a couple of hours prior to the announcement (in part because the announcement took such a long time to make). Before the announcement, the Salafists—those are more radical Islamists—were marching around the Square declaring their willingness

to die in fights with security forces if Morsi were not named president. The Muslim Brothers who had been camped out in the square for two weeks had been told by their leaders to be prepared to fight if Morsi were not named president. So, it's true that the Brotherhood participated in elections and won power through elections; but, had those elections gone the other way, they were prepared to fight. Thus they were not willing to abide by democratic rules in the event that the election didn't go their way.

How did the Muslim Brotherhood go from being an illegal, secretive organization deeply repressed by the regime to capturing Egypt's revolution and now becoming Egypt's new ruling party? There are three factors. First, they have a committed membership; the way they recruit and promote members is very different from the way other parties work. Secondly, they have a strong nationwide structure that allows them to move people in a way that's quite similar to how a militia moves people. Third, they have a controlling centralized leadership that can quickly distribute top leaders across the new bodies of government that the Brotherhood controls.

A Committed Membership: What it Takes to Become a Muslim Brother

There is a popular view in the United States that the Brotherhood, however radical it may have been in opposition, will moderate now that they are in power. That view fails to recognize what it takes to become a Muslim Brother. When you became a Democrat or a Republican or a Green Party member, you just sign a form. Joining the Muslim Brotherhood is not just a matter of signing a form; it is a five-to-eight-year process that begins at recruitment. The Muslim Brotherhood has specially designated recruiters in just about every mosque and university around the country, and they look for signs of piety to see whether someone is a good fit for the organization. There's an assumption that Islamist organizations recruit the losers, the loners, the people who can't find a job. Not so. The Brotherhood looks for winners. The Brotherhood wants the high school president, the best soccer player. Why? Because the Brotherhood is trying to create a grassroots network for establishing that Islamic state. It wants people who will grow the organization, and that requires winners—people that others will want to follow.

Once you're recruited, you become a *muhib* (literally, a "fan" or "lover"). This is a six-month to one-year stage in which you're watched. Do you pray five times a day? Do you fast for Ramadan? Do you give charity? Are you a good person? Do you fit in well socially with the organization? Mostly at this stage you're doing social activities—camping events, sporting events, volunteering. If you pass the exam, you become what's called a *muayyad*, a supporter. That lasts from one to three years, and at this stage you start learning the Brotherhood's curriculum. They have a set curriculum. It includes rote memorization. You're taught how to preach at mosques. You're given certain local responsibilities. Throughout this process you are

guided by three senior Brotherhood leaders who are watching you. If you pass an exam you become a *muntasib*, which means "affiliated." That lasts for a year. At this stage, you're penciled in as a member. They could still throw you out if they don't think that you're a good fit, if you don't follow orders, if you're not really that committed to the organization's principles. But at this stage you also start giving six to eight percent of your income to the Muslim Brotherhood. I get a lot of questions about how the Brotherhood gets its money. Does it get money from the Gulf? Does it get money from other foreign sources? I don't know, but if every Muslim Brother is giving six to eight percent of their income to the organization and you're talking about some 700,000 people, it's pretty clear they have an independent source of wealth.

If you pass the exam at this stage, you become a *muntazim*, an organizer. This lasts for about another two years. This is the first time you're able to vote in Brotherhood internal elections, and you can have a local leadership position. If you pass this exam, you become an *ach amal*, a "working brother," and you take what's called a *bayah* or an oath to the organization to follow its senior leaders' decisions. Again, this is a five-to-eight-year process, during which they're weeding out anyone who might not be committed to the organization's principles and might not be willing to follow the organization's leaders. This is not at all like a standard political party. It is actually much closer to the way a cult works.

The Brotherhood's Nationwide Structure

At the lowest level of the Brotherhood structure is what's called an *usra*, or "family." You can think of this as a cell. This is a group of five to eight Muslim Brothers. They meet weekly for about three hours. They discuss the Quran, religious texts, the Brotherhood's curriculum, politics. They share their personal lives. The members of this group become a Muslim Brother's best friends. The people that you work most closely with are in your *usra*. The *usra* is a mechanism through which the Brotherhood embeds your social relationships into the organization so that you're less likely to disobey it due to peer pressure and you're less likely to leave it because you'll be leaving your best friends. This becomes an important tool for organizing local activities. There's a chief of every family called *naqib al-usra* whose responsibility is to assign people to recruit, to preach, to run social services, to manage voter kiosks, etc.

Six to twelve families makes up a populace or a *sho'aba*. A number of those make up a *muntaqa* or an area. A number of those make up a governorate, which is like a state or a province in Egypt. You have a number of governorates making up a sector. Then at the very top of this pyramid is the Guidance Office, an executive body composed of twenty Muslim Brothers, and the Shura Committee, a legislative body made up of some 120 Muslim Brothers.

Here's how it works: A decision is discussed and voted on in the Shura Committee and then executed by the Guidance Office, which sends the commands down the chain. By way of illustration, in the days preceding the revolution's first demonstrations on January 25, 2011, the Shura Committee voted and the Guidance Office passed down the ruling that members would not participate in those demonstrations. Why didn't they participate in the revolution when it started? First, because the Brotherhood at that time was an 83-year-old organization; it wasn't going to follow kids—as they called them—who were on Facebook and Twitter into the Square. They are an established organization. They have protocols. They don't just follow any movement willy-nilly.

The second reason is that the Mubarak regime had told the Guidance Office that if they participated in the protests, the whole Guidance Office would be arrested. So the Brotherhood passed down a decision that Muslim Brothers should not participate in the demonstrations and that if they did, they should not identify themselves as Muslim Brothers or carry the Brotherhood flag. Despite not participating, on January 26—day two of the revolution—half of the Guidance Office was arrested anyway. So the following night the Brotherhood decided in its Shura Committee and then executed through the Guidance Office that it would participate in the revolution. By the night of Thursday, January 27, all cell phone and Internet communications in Egypt had been shut down. For the Brotherhood, however, that didn't matter because its interpersonal networks were able to move people. The following day—the "Friday of Rage" —Egyptians marched from their mosques after Friday prayers to the central squares. Hundreds of thousands of people participated. They overwhelmed the security forces, defeated the police, and attacked police stations, and the Mubarak regime was probably not going to survive after that. The Brotherhood's decision to participate in those demonstrations at that moment was pivotal for the revolution.

Another example: Last year I was in Egypt during the Parliamentary elections, and at every polling station I visited (during the first round) there were Brotherhood voter kiosks. No other party had this. I asked the young people manning the voter kiosks who told them to be there, and they said that they organized it through their *usra*s, which had been commanded to set up voter kiosks by the Guidance Office. This structure is important to understanding how the Brotherhood moves people very efficiently.

When it came time to form a political party last year, the Brotherhood took three of its top Guidance Office members—Muhammad Morsi, Essam al-Erian, and Saad al-Katatny—and made them the chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary-general of the party, respectively. When it came time to choose Parliamentary candidates, the Brotherhood essentially used this structure as a vetting mechanism. If you wanted to run for Parliament, you first discussed it with the head of your family, and then if he agreed, it was passed up through five different levels of Brotherhood administrative leadership until the finalists were passed onto the party,

which again was headed by three very senior Muslim Brothers, who then signed off on it. If you're sending up files through this process, you're probably not going to get moderates; you're getting people who have been vetted for their commitment to the Brotherhood's cause by multiple tiers of Brotherhood leadership.

Today the Brotherhood will tell you that the Guidance Office, the Freedom and Justice party, and the Morsi presidency are three independent institutions. For example, this summer, I asked a senior Guidance Office leader, "Do you think that President Morsi will meet with Benjamin Netanyahu?" He replied, "Don't ask me. You have to ask President Morsi because I'm not serving the presidency." But then I said to him, "What if he did meet with Benjamin Netanyahu?" He replied, "Well, very simple. We would launch nationwide labor strikes and every Egyptian would join us." So perhaps these three entities aren't so separate. The Brotherhood has ways of reining in Morsi if he does something they don't like.

Also, there is substantial overlap between the Guidance Office, Freedom and Justice Party, and the Morsi presidency –all intermixed with the Shura Committee. All of the Guidance Office are members of the Shura Committee. The four most important members are Khairat al-Shater, Mahmoud Ezzat, Mahmoud Ghozlan, and Mahmoud Hussein. Within the Morsi presidency, at least three presidential advisors are members of the Shura Committee. While there's no public list of the Shura Committee, I would estimate that at least two dozen members of the Shura Committee are also members of the Freedom and Justice Party's People's Assembly Delegation. The point here is that decisions reached by that Shura Committee are binding on all Muslim Brothers. If all these people are meeting in the same room reaching key decisions, then this Shura Committee is a key driver of the Brotherhood's actions in the Morsi presidency, in Parliament, in the new ruling party, and, of course, in the Brotherhood itself.

For instance, when the Freedom and Justice Party decided how many seats to run for in Parliament, it didn't reach that decision on its own; it reached it in consultation with the Brotherhood Shura Committee. When it ran a presidential candidate, that was not a decision that the party reached; it was reached in the Brotherhood's Shura Committee. When Morsi chose governors of Egypt as president, he consulted with the Brotherhood's Shura Committee. This secretive body plays an important role in making political decisions for Egypt now that the Brotherhood has a president.

The Brotherhood, the Freedom and Justice Party, and Morsi will coordinate to use the Brotherhood's mobilizing networks on behalf of their own activities. For example, in the week before Morsi was named president, the Brotherhood used that organizational pyramid to get people into Tahrir Square. It wasn't just a matter of telling people to go sit in the Square until Morsi was declared president; people were seated by administrative district, and they were

receiving commands directly from the Guidance Office regarding what they should be doing and saying within the Square. In fact, the leader of a Brotherhood *sho'aba*—the second-tier administrative level of about 75 to 90 Brothers—showed me a communiqué on Brotherhood stationary with orders regarding what time they were supposed to pray, to keep their areas clean, and to raise their "spirit levels." He received such a memo twice daily from a central figure in the Square who communicated directly with the Guidance Office.

The Muslim Brotherhood's organizational capability is another factor in why it is unlikely to moderate. If you're the only organized political force, you're probably going to win, and if you keep winning, why would you concede anything ideologically? So as long as the Brotherhood is Egypt's only organized political force, there's simply no incentive for it to moderate.

If anything, the current state of Egyptian politics will likely pull the Brotherhood to the right, given that their strongest opponents are the Salafists. Whereas the Brotherhood's approach to *sharia*, the principles of Islamic law, is interpretive, the Salafists are textual literalists. Another key difference between the two is that whereas the Brotherhood is tightly organized, the Salafists are decentralized. They are divided among a host of different parties, movements, and political figures, because being a Salafist does not tie you to a particular organization. Being a Salafist is simply about interpreting the text literally; you're free to follow any of the thousands of Salafist sheikhs. There's a lot more independence built into Salafism, which means that they're a lot harder to mobilize in a coherent way. It's also much easier to become a Salafist than it is to become a Muslim Brother. Becoming a Brother, as I've said before, is a five-to-eight-year process; Salafists become Salafists by declaring themselves a *multazim*, someone who's committed to living according to the life of the Prophet Muhammad.

This will create substantial pressure on the Brotherhood in the long-run in particular. Think of yourself as a young Islamist. If you have a choice either to join the Muslim Brotherhood, which takes five to eight years and requires that you follow a very senior leadership, or become a Salafist *multazim*, which takes five minutes and you can follow any Salafist sheikh you want, it's obvious which choice is more attractive.

The fact that the Brotherhood and Salafists will battle over ideas and recruitment, the fact that these are going to be the two primary competing forces in Egyptian politics means that rather than being pulled toward the center, the Brotherhood will probably be pulled more toward the theocratic right. It will have to protect its rightward theocratic flank from the Salafists who will challenge them on recruitment.

What does this all mean for the United States? The key for U.S. policy is the Sinai. If what we have in Egypt now is the emergence of two theocratic organizations, one of which is likely to win reliably for a long time and both of which are quite hostile toward U.S. interests, our goal should be to reduce the likelihood of a crisis. The crisis most likely to arise is in the Sinai

Peninsula, an unstable area in which roughly thirty Bedouin tribes are effectively fighting each other for lands and control, some of which have been co-opted by terrorist organizations. The concern is what happens if instability in the Sinai spills over into Israel and creates a crisis between Israel and Egypt.

Imagine a scenario in which terrorists from the Sinai Peninsula strike Israel, and Israel responds, shoots over the border into Egypt, and accidentally kills Egyptians. We saw this play out in August 2011 when the military was still in charge, and it culminated in mass protests and an attack on the Israeli Embassy, which almost sunk the Camp David Accords. The Egyptian attackers and the Israeli diplomats in that embassy were within one door of each other and had any of them died, there is almost no question that relations between the two countries and the peace treaty would have been in deep danger. From the U.S. perspective, we need to prevent a reemergence of that kind of crisis. In the short run, we should promote channels between the Muslim Brotherhood and Israel—quiet channels—that would allow them to defuse a crisis. I've asked Muslim Brotherhood leaders, "What happens if this kind of crisis emerged under your watch? When it emerged under the military's watch, the military dialed things down after a very tricky period. Would you dial things down?" Brothers repeatedly have said to me, "No, we would not." The Muslim Brotherhood has made it clear to me that their end goal is to do away with this treaty, which they have long opposed, and I suspect they might use this kind of crisis as an excuse to find an out.

Next, we have to link our military and economic aid to performance on key American interests. One of those interests is, of course, the treaty, but we have others: access to the Suez Canal, over-flight rights, cooperation on counter-terrorism, and pluralism. Military aid should be used for the strategic elements that the military will be primarily responsible for handling—counter-terrorism, Suez Canal access, preventing weapons from getting into Gaza. But on the economic side, we should be using not only economic aid but our influence in the IMF, where Egypt is looking for a $4.8 billion loan, to make sure that Morsi does and says responsible things. And he hasn't done that. For example, when the U.S. Embassy was attacked in September, Morsi waited two days before saying anything at all. Initially, he even seemed to blame the attack on an offensive video. It was only after President Obama read him the riot act that he denounced it. We need to use our aid to make sure that he understands that that aid is contingent on his being a reliable partner.

We also need to change the way we talk about Egypt. Too frequently the administration has referred to the Brotherhood as democratic. The Brotherhood is not democratic; it's theocratic and wants to establish a religious state in Egypt. Not only that, had the presidential election gone another way, I'm convinced from having been in the Square that the Brotherhood would have used violence to reject the outcome. Moreover, when we call the Brotherhood democratic, we signal to non-Islamist forces in Egypt that we have thrown our support behind

the Brotherhood. Frankly, I don't think we have, but the suspicion in Egypt is that we are trying to replace a strong dictator with a strong organization, and we have to do everything we can to make sure that the Egyptian people know that we are neutral within the sphere of domestic Egyptian politics.

Washington needs to speak up more for minority rights. Christians in Egypt feel neglected. There have been a series of church attacks since last year's revolution. There was a military assault on a Coptic protest last year in which about twenty-five people were run over by tanks, and the administration didn't say anything. When we fail to speak out, that's taken as another sign that we've thrown our weight behind the Islamists. And that's why when Hillary Clinton went to Egypt in July she was met by protests – not by Islamists, but by Christians and secularists who felt that the United States had sold them out. These are our friends in a country in which we unfortunately have very few. We need to do what we can to protect that friendship.

Finally, we need to talk about Camp David not as an exclusively American interest, but as an Egyptian interest, as well. I want to share a story that illustrates how we might do this. Last year, I met with a senior Brotherhood leader, and at the time the Brotherhood was saying it was going to put the Camp David Accords to referendum. I told him this was dangerous. He said, no, this is democracy. I said, no, democracy is electing you—what you decide to do with that power is another thing. Will you put your tax policy to a referendum, I asked him. He said, no, this is different. I said, why's it different? People pay a big portion of their income to taxes. You think they care more about the peace treaty with Israel than taxes? He proceeded to rant about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and I stopped him and said, "Listen, you and I can agree to disagree about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but we should not disagree about the importance of keeping a treaty that has prevented war between you and a much stronger country to your northeast for the past thirty years. And let me ask you something, do you want Egyptians to die?" He said no. I said, "Then you'll keep the treaty. And let me tell you something else: if you don't keep the treaty, I'll be very sad because I have many friends in Egypt. But I'll be 6000 miles away. This will be on you." That's the message that needs to come out of Washington: that maintaining peace is on them, that power means responsibility, and that ultimately the peace treaty is beneficial for Egypt.

I'm going to close with what I like to call "fun facts" that I unearthed during my summer trip to Egypt. But, to be honest with you, these are not fun.

1) *Rifaat Mohamed Tahtawi was rumored to be Egypt's next foreign minister*. This is the former Egyptian ambassador to Iran and Libya. He's a strong proponent of strengthened Iranian-Egyptian ties and a strong opponent of the peace treaty with Israel. The fact that he was rumored to be the next foreign minister -- which is

something I heard from multiple governments, by the way, including Egypt's, of course -- shows where the Brotherhood intends to take Egypt. I suspect the military prevented his appointment, and he's now Morsi's chief of staff. Not too shabby.

2) *Three top Muslim Brothers were recruited to the Muslim Brotherhood in the United States, including Morsi himself.* Morsi, of course, is now president of Egypt, Mohammad Ali Bishr is a Guidance Office member as well as the new governor of Menoufiya, and Mahmoud Hussein – the one who told me this -- is the Muslim Brotherhood's current secretary-general. Hussein, studied for his Ph.D. in Iowa, and during that time he was the president of MAYA, the Muslim American Youth Association. And while he was getting to know Morsi and Ali Bishr in the United States, Hussein were also very friendly with Hamas's number two, Musa Abu Marzouk, who was also based in the United States and involved in these Brotherhood networks.

3) *Hamas's point of contact in the Muslim Brotherhood prior to his becoming president was Muhammad Morsi.*

So what we have here is an organization that is well organized; and that vets it members for their commitment to the cause, as well as an Egyptian president who has a long-standing relationship institutionally and personally with Hamas. The assumption was that the "Arab Spring" would lead to democracy and liberalism but in fact that Arab Spring has been overtaken by Islamists who do not hold the same ideals, the same values, or the same optimism as the young people who I think inspired many of us two years ago.

SYRIAN DRUZE: TOWARD DEFIANT NEUTRALITY

By Gary C. Gambill

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Syria's Druze community once played a major role in shaping the country's modern history, despite comprising a mere three percent of the population. Today, however, this enigmatic highland minority that seldom met an anti-government revolt it didn't like finds itself precariously accommodating a dying regime as a gathering rebel alliance slowly moves in for the kill. Though a handful of Druze can be found fighting (and dying) with the rebels, the large majority of the few who have taken up arms in this conflict have done so for the other side.

While some journalists close to the rebels have reported that the Druze community is on the verge of switching sides,[1] this is wishful thinking. Opposition to Syrian President Bashar Assad has clearly increased in the past two years, but so too has apprehension about the increasingly Islamist character of the predominantly Sunni Muslim revolt. With traditional authority structures long co-opted by the state, intellectuals divided in sympathies, and a professional class fearful of provoking the kind of regime reprisals that have devastated much of Syria, the growing buzzword among Syrian Druze is neutrality, not rebellion.

Background

The Druze sect was born in the eleventh century when the caliph of the Ismaili Shiite Muslim Fatimid dynasty in Egypt, Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, was ostensibly revealed to be a divine incarnation. The new faith rapidly dissipated after Hakim's death, except in a few pockets along the frontier of his empire—the largest in the rugged terrain of central and southern Mount Lebanon, with a scattering of smaller communities in the Syrian interior (notably Jabal al-Aala, a hilly region southwest of Aleppo). In these remote enclaves, believers calling themselves *muwahhidun* (roughly "monotheists"), and called by others *duruz*,[2] carved out an

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1 See Babak Dehghanpisheh, "Syria's Druze minority is shifting its support to the opposition," *The Washington Post*, February 8, 2012; Mona Alami, "Druze take up the fight," Nowlebanon (Beirut), August 13, 2012.

2 This was an originally pejorative derivation of the name Muhammad bin Ismael *ad-Darazi*, a subordinate of Hakim executed as a heretic in 1018.

uneasy existence among the multitude of other heterodox religious groups fleeing oppression from the surrounding Sunni Arab world.

An eclectic admixture of Abrahamic, gnostic, and neoplatonic conceptions of the divine, Druze religious doctrine is highly esoteric. Only a small minority of the faithful, known as *uqqal* (the enlightened), are allowed to directly access scriptures, and they have a long tradition of concealing the tenets of their faith from outsiders.[3] They also have a long history of protective dissimulation (*taqiyya*), outwardly adopting many Sunni religious practices (e.g., fasting during Ramadan) to defuse outside suspicion.

Of particular political importance are the religion's requirement of endogamous marriage, the impermissibility of conversion into (or out of) the faith, and the belief that all Druze are linked to one another through transmigration of souls. Because one must, in principle (though historically not in practice), be born Druze to be a Druze, ethnic and sectarian identifications are seamlessly intertwined. Protection of other Druze (*hifz al-ikhwan*) is an explicit religious obligation, giving the community a greater degree of communal solidarity (*assabiya*) than is typical of other sectarian minorities. Druze-on-Druze political violence has been uncommon by regional standards. During the 1975-1990 Lebanese civil war, Druze were largely spared the kind of intra-sect bloodletting that decimated the Christian, Shiite, and predominantly Sunni Palestinian communities.

Druze religious practice accommodated preexisting tribal structures and norms. Most Druze claim descent from Arabian tribes that immigrated to the Levant in the pre-Islamic era, particularly the Qaysi and Yamani. Eleventh century clan chiefs simply adopted the new religion and continued to rule over their flocks much as before. In principle, Druze clerics (*masha'ikh al-din*) restrict themselves to strictly religious affairs, leaving temporal leaders (*masha'ikh al-zaman*) to contend with the material world.[4]

Both of the two great Sunni empires that ruled over Mount Lebanon in the centuries to come—the Mamlukes in Egypt until 1516, then the Ottoman Empire until the end of World War I—found it expedient to grant some form of hereditary feudal tenure to powerful Druze emirs. Periodic Ottoman efforts to roll back this autonomy almost invariably sparked armed revolts, and the Druze developed a reputation for extraordinary military prowess.

The Rise of Jabal Druze

In 1711, a fierce battle erupted between the Qaysi and Yamani Druze clan federations in Mount Lebanon, resulting in the defeat of the latter. Afterwards many Yamani Druze

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3 The rest, known as *juhhal* (the ignorant, or uninitiated) receive only oral religious instruction.

4 Robert Brenton Betts, *The Druze* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p.22-24.

migrated east to a budding Druze community in Hawran, a semi-fertile volcanic plateau in the southwest of present-day Syria, that since came to be known as *Jabal Druze* (mountain of the Druze). A second major influx to the Jabal came after the bloody 1860 Druze-Christian civil war in Mount Lebanon.

While maintaining strong communal ties to the Druze of Mount Lebanon, the Jabal developed distinct modern socio-political traditions. In Syria, the *masha'ikh al-zaman*—dominated by the Atrash family since the 1870s—were less fragmented by centuries-old clan divisions than their counterparts in Lebanon, where the Jumblatt and Arslan families competed vigorously for power, often cultivating rival domestic and regional support.[5]

Whereas the Jumblatt and Arslan families have long intervened directly in the process of choosing the community's top religious figure, known as *sheikh al-aql* (often backing two rival claimants, as is the case today), political and religious spheres of authority have been more neatly separated in the Syrian Druze community. There has been a triumvirate of sheikh al-aqls for the past two centuries, the positions passing by succession within a fixed set of three families (the Jarbua, Hinawi, and Hajari) with relatively little outside interference in the process.

The Jabal is much more homogenous and isolated from non-Druze than Mount Lebanon. There is little history of violent conflict between Syrian Druze and the small Christian minority living in the Jabal (though Ismael al-Atrash sent an expedition to Mount Lebanon in 1860 that committed horrendous atrocities against Christians).[6] The Druze clashed fiercely at times with Sunni villagers and Bedouin who encroached on their lands, but these disputes never devolved into the scale of sectarian conflict that repeatedly embroiled the Druze community in Lebanon.

The Ottomans were another story. Nineteenth century efforts by Istanbul to extend its administrative grip over remote areas of the empire repeatedly sparked violent Syrian Druze resistance. It was therefore no surprise that Sultan Pasha al-Atrash led the Druze to join the Arab revolt that helped defeat the Ottoman Empire in World War I.

The French, who came to control what is now Syria and Lebanon under a League of Nations mandate after the Ottoman defeat, worked to undercut majority Sunni Arab opposition to their mandate by offering Syria's Alawite, (non-Arab) Kurdish, and Druze minorities autonomy and political privileges. An accommodationist branch of the Atrash family and its

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5 While the Arslan family aligned itself with right-wing Maronite Christians and Sunni notables in Lebanon's First Republic (1943-1991), the Jumblatt family allied with leftist Muslims – alignments that are today almost perfectly reversed.

6 Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 55, 56, 63, 64, 67, 185.

allies were given control over the Jabal's administration and security. Rudimentary public education and utilities were introduced.

Sultan al-Atrash remained deeply skeptical of French ambitions, however, and led revolts against the occupation in 1923 and 1925-27, the latter in conjunction with Sunni Arab nationalists in Damascus. His cousin, Amir Hasan al-Atrash, played a major role in the fight for Syria's independence in 1945-46. While these campaigns were launched under the banners of Arab and Syrian nationalism, they also served to consolidate the Atrash family's supremacy in the Jabal (which it guarded fiercely in a bloody intra-Druze power struggle in 1947).

After Syria's independence, a succession of Sunni-dominated governments strove to centralize political authority in Damascus and erode the Jabal's autonomy, an assault that peaked during the reign of President Adib Shishakli from 1949 to 1954.[7] The overwhelmingly Druze province of Suwaida, comprising the Jabal and its environs, was starved of development funds, while vast irrigation projects in other regions boosted agricultural production, driving down prices and impoverishing Druze farmers still further. The Atrash family was forced to rely on illicit drug cultivation to maintain its patronage networks.[8]

While the Atrash family's formidable fighters enabled it to fend off government encroachments for a time, the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and its aftermath saw a massive increase in the size and effectiveness of the Syrian army. In 1954, Shishakli brought this advantage to bear in brutally crushing a Druze revolt. In retaliation, Druze military officers played a major role in the coup that ousted him weeks later.[9] Not for the last time, Druze *assabiya* served to shield conspirators from outside detection and infiltration.

In the period of brief parliamentary democracy that followed, the Atrash family and its allies temporarily regained supremacy in the Jabal. By this time, however, younger generation Druze intellectuals in Syria (and Lebanon) were gravitating toward secular nationalist organizations.[10] Sultan Atrash's son, Mansour, was a founding member of the Baath party, and many rising Druze officers were among its military wing. Though the Baath party was ideologically opposed to representational rights for subnational groups, its staunch secularism and avowed socio-economic egalitarianism were appealing to minorities fearful of Sunni Arab domination after independence.

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7 See Joshua Landis,"Shishakli and the Druzes: Integration and Intransigence," in Thomas Philipp and Birgit Schaebler, eds., *The Syrian Land: Processes of Integration and Fragmentation* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1998), pp. 369-396.

8 Ibid.

9 Shishakli was later assassinated in exile by a Syrian Druze.

10 Kais M. Firro, "Nationalism and Confessionalism: Shi'is, Druzes and Alawis in Syria and Lebanon," in Anh Nga Longva and Anne Sofie Roald, eds., *Religious minorities in the Middle East: Domination, Self-Empowerment, Accommodation* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011), p. 257.

In 1963, Druze military officers joined Alawite and Ismaili Shiite counterparts in launching a coup that brought the Baath party to power for the first time, with Capt. Salim Hatum in particular playing a lead role. They were also instrumental in the 1966 coup that ousted President Amin Hafez and consolidated power in the hands of Lt. Salah Jadid and Capt. Hafez Assad (both Alawites). When the new government acted to marginalize Druze in the military and civilian Baath party apparatus, Hatum and Maj. Gen. Fahd Sha'ir (the highest ranking Druze in the army) began plotting a counter-coup, which failed.

Afterwards, leading Druze military officers and civilian Baathists were arrested, exiled, or sidelined.[11] Hafez Assad, whose ascension to the presidency in 1970 inaugurated more than four decades of uninterrupted authoritarian rule, eventually released many of the Druze detainees and even reinstated some officers. But he and the narrow clique of mostly Alawite officers around him were determined to prevent any independent aggregation of Druze power, particularly in the military. Though Sultan al-Atrash was allowed to retire comfortably and treated with great symbolic deference as a hero of Syrian independence, his family—and the Druze traditional notability in general—lost much of its privileged economic status.

Like other long-neglected corners of the country, the Jabal enjoyed a degree of economic advancement under Baathist rule. While excluded from most sensitive security posts, Druze eventually came to be equitably represented (or slightly overrepresented) in many branches of the civil service, the army's midlevel officer corps, and state-owned industries. The town of Suwaida, provincial capital and center of Druze political life, grew into a bustling city of 150,000 people. Aside from periodic armed clashes over land ownership between Druze farmers and local Bedouins,[12] the Jabal experienced a period of security and relative social tranquility.

The regime developed cooperative relations with the Druze community's three sheikh al-aqls, without interfering inordinately in their affairs. At the time of the 2011 uprising, this triumvirate consisted of Hussein Jarbua of Suwaida, Hamoud al-Hinawi of Sahwat al-Balata, and Ahmad al-Hajari of Qanawat, with Jarbua regarded as *primus inter pares*.[13]

Although Druze intellectuals were well represented in various secular opposition fronts that challenged Baathist supremacy and some were jailed for political activity, the overwhelming

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11 Druze officers made one final, brief appearance on the Syrian stage on the eve of the 1967 Six Day War. For reasons that can only be attributed to genuine patriotism, Hatum and Sha'ir flew home from Amman, expecting to be sent forthwith to the front. Instead, Sha'ir was imprisoned, while Hatum was brutally tortured and later executed.

12 The worst outbreak came in November 2000, when weeks of clashes left a few dozen (mostly Druze) fatalities and hundreds of injured, despite the massive deployment of security forces. See "Sectarian Violence Erupts in Suweida," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, December 2000.

13 Jarbua became sheikh al-aql in 1965. After the death of Sultan al-Atrash in 1982, Jarbua became the leading figure in the Druze community.

majority avoided overt dissent. Many embraced the regime, which isn't surprising given their secular leftist ideological center of gravity. The government's heavy-handed suppression of civil liberties and domination by members of Syria's long oppressed Alawite sect were seen as lesser evils to be fought via reform, not revolution.

The strength of Syrian Druze communal identity after four decades of Baathist rule is unclear, as the strong tribal and patriarchical norms underpinning it have eroded substantially under the twin weights of modernization and authoritarianism. Although kinship ties are still important, they are much less a determinant of socio-economic status than in the past (or in present-day Lebanon). Many educated Druze consider this an achievement of Baathist rule.

Druze in Lebanon also came under the dominion of Assad, who sent Syrian troops to occupy much of the country in 1976. After assassinating the leading Lebanese Druze political leader, Kamal Jumblatt, the Syrian regime forced his son and successor, Walid, into a patron-client relationship that lasted for a quarter century. Walid Jumblatt eventually turned against the Assad regime after the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.

The Uprising

The late Hafez Assad's son and successor, Bashar, had good reason to expect continued Druze quietism as flickers of protest began to proliferate in early 2011. But just to be sure he paid a rare visit to Suwaida on March 12 and was photographed by the state-run media with beaming Druze elders.

When mass demonstrations erupted in the nearby Sunni city of Deraa days later and began spreading to other areas of the country, the Jabal remained relatively calm. On March 27, several dozen members of the lawyers syndicate in Suwaida held a sit-in to demand government reforms. In April, several small demonstrations took place in Suwaida and Qraya. But there was nothing approaching the kind of mass mobilization that rippled through remote Sunni-dominated areas in the early months of the uprising.

Druze disaffection with the regime simply didn't approach the level of acute hostility commonly felt by Sunnis, many of whom view secularism as anathema and consider Alawites (and Druze) heretics. Economic conditions were better in the Jabal than in Deraa. Higher emigration rates and lower birth rates in the Druze community reduced the relative size of its youth demographic,[14] a critical driver of popular uprisings elsewhere in Syria and the Arab world.

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14 Phil Sands, "Syria's Druze community: A silent minority in no rush to take sides," *The National* (UAE), February 22, 2012.

Moreover, the Druze clergy remained broadly supportive of the regime. All three sheikh al-aqls at the time of the uprising denounced the protest movement (especially Jarbua) and strongly discouraged dissidents from taking part. This support was not unlimited (they refused to denounce Druze army defectors, for example)[15] and grew considerably less emphatic as the civil war escalated, but it was critical in defusing opposition to the regime. There are no secular Syrian Druze leaders of comparable stature.

Consequently, the regime found it easy to contain opposition activity in Suwaida province without resorting to the kinds of horrific atrocities that backfired in Deraa. The security forces avoided killing or egregiously mistreating Druze protestors, so there were few early martyrs to inflame public antipathy to the regime.

Outside of the Jabal, some notable Druze intellectuals joined the protest movement. Rima Fleihan, a prominent playwright and activist, was arrested for demonstrating against regime abuses.[16] Outside Syria, many others expressed solidarity with the protestors. Montaha al-Atrash, a daughter of Sultan al-Atrash, was particularly vocal.[17] Paris-based singer-songwriter Samih Shuqair wrote one of the most famous opposition anthems, "Ya Haif" (How Shameful), during the first month of the uprising.[18]

However, most Druze public figures inside Syria drew the line at endorsing armed struggle against the government, which left them marginalized as the Sunni Arab uprising transformed into an insurgency in the summer of 2011. This reticence was partly due to personal safety concerns. Fleihan, now a member of the Syrian National Council, had a change of heart only after fleeing to Jordan in September 2011.

Threats and intimidation have surely been employed behind the scenes to secure the quiescence of Druze notables, though details are sketchy. The regime may have been responsible for the May 2011 disappearance of exiled Syrian Druze dissident Shibli al-Ayssami while in Lebanon visiting relatives.[19] When sheikh al-aql Hajari was killed in a March 2012 car crash, pro-opposition news outlets were quick to accuse the regime of involvement.[20] Two

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15 Tony Badran, "A Thorn in the Lion's Paw," Nowlebanon (Beirut), January 19, 2012.

16 After escaping to Jordan in September 2011, Fleihan joined the Syrian National Council and its successor, the Syrian National Coalition.

17 "Fear barrier crumbles in Syrian 'kingdom of silence'," Reuters, March 22, 2011.

18 Samih Shuqair, "How Shameful- Ya Haif- Arabic Song with Translation," Youtube, May 31, 2011.

19 Lebanese media outlets cited eyewitness accounts of Ayssami being kidnapped and quoted security officials in Beirut as casting suspicion on henchmen of Wiam Wahhab, a sycophantic Lebanese Druze ally of Assad. See "Where is Shibli al-Ayssami?" Nowlebanon (Beirut), August 16, 2011. Although the 86-year-old Ayssami had not played a role in the current uprising, the fact that he was living in the United States would have cast suspicion on him in the eyes of the Assad regime.

20 Some sought to re-christen the deceased sheikh al-aql as an "anti-regime Druze spiritual leader." See Anti-regime Druze spiritual leader killed in Syria," yalibnan.com, March 25, 2012.

Druze political activists previously jailed for many years, Fadlallah Hijaz and Kamal Amoush, also died in mysterious car crashes.[21] Whether or not foul play was involved in these cases, the cloud of suspicion surrounding them underscores that few in the Jabal have felt free to openly articulate their feelings.

Not so in Lebanon, where the Druze community's political leaders split into different camps. Talal Arslan and longstanding Syrian ally Wiam Wahhab (as well as their self-appointed sheikh al-aql, Nasreddine al-Gharib) have worked to persuade Syrian Druze to fight for the regime.[22] Walid Jumblatt, who had just reconciled with the Assad regime prior to the revolt,[23] also remained loyal initially.[24] However, the mercurial ex-warlord changed his tune as it became clear that Assad could not stamp out the uprising, first urging Syrian Druze not to participate in government atrocities, then vocally endorsing the rebel cause[25] and denouncing Druze collaborators.[26]

Nevertheless, rebel leaders have had great difficulty recruiting Druze into their ranks, even in the Jabal al-Aala pocket near Aleppo, where Jumblatt's influence is strong and Druze villages have sheltered and aided insurgents.[27] The most notable exception was First Lt. Khaldoun Zeineddine, who defected from the army in August 2011 and formed the Sultan Pasha al-Atrash Battalion of the Free Syrian Army (FSA). Another prominent defector, Air Force Lt. Col. Hafez Jad Al-Kareem Faraj, joined the FSA in June 2012 amid much fanfare[28] and was subsequently named commander of the FSA Military Council for Suwaida.

Dozens of Druze reportedly joined Zeineddine's battalion, mainly from neighborhoods and villages outside of the Jabal that came under rebel control. In mid-January 2013, however, Zeineddine and many of his men were wiped out while taking part in a rebel assault on regime forces in Suwaida. This appears to be the extent of organized Druze participation in the armed struggle against Assad (though some others have fought in an individual capacity). There have

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21 "The Killing of Druze Sheikh al-Aql Ahmad al-Hajari: Accident or Assassination?" (Arabic), Metransparent.net, March 24, 2012.

22 In February 2013, Arslan met with Assad in Damascus and urged residents of the Jabal "to confront Western Israeli plots aimed at targeting the Syrian state and people." "Arslan Holds Talks with Assad in Damascus," Naharnet (Beirut), February 17, 2013.

23 "Druze chief Walid Jumblatt apologises to Syrian president for insults," The National (UAE), March 17, 2010.

24 In April 2011, Jumblatt described the uprising as a U.S.-Israeli plot to divide Syria. "A new sultan for the Syrian Druze," Nowlebanon (Beirut), January 22, 2012.

25 For an overview of his evolution, see Tony Badran, "A Thorn in the Lion's Paw," Nowlebanon (Beirut), January 19, 2012.

26 When the long-ailing Jarbua died of cancer in December 2012, Jumblatt said he would "not shed even one tear for a man who supported until the end a regime that massacres its people." "Syrian pro-regime Druze leader Jarbua dies," *The Daily Star* (Beirut), December 21, 2012.

27 "Syria Druze back Sunnis' revolt with words but not arms," Agence France Presse, September 8, 2012.

28 Nowlebanon (Beirut, Arabic), June 26, 2012.

been Youtube videos of other purportedly Druze rebel units, such as the so-called Bani Maarouf Battalion in the mixed Jaramana suburb of Damascus,[29] but little verifiable evidence of their participation on the battlefield.

In contrast, thousands of Druze have been helping prosecute Assad's war against the rebels in some capacity or another. The most notorious is Issam Zahreddine, a Republican Guard brigade commander who has played a major role fighting rebels on several fronts. Close to 300 Druze soldiers have reportedly died in the fighting.[30] There have been few defections among Druze conscripts, but some have been jailed for refusing to fight and it's rumored there have been quite a few desertions by soldiers returning to the Jabal.[31]

In addition, many Druze villages have established militias, ostensibly to ward off rebel incursions into Suwaida province. The late Jarbua's son Nazih is rumored to have played a major role in arming them with regime support.[32] These militia forces have frequently assisted Syrian soldiers in thwarting rebel operations in the Jabal, which contains numerous assets that directly support the regime's operational strength against the rebels, such as Thaala military airport and the Syrian army base at Mjeimar, which has been used repeatedly to shell nearby Sunni villages in Deraa province. The growth in these militias has also freed up more soldiers to fight the rebels on other fronts. The involvement of so many Druze in defense of the regime is an impediment to rebel recruitment in the Jabal, as even the staunchest opposition sympathizers blanche at the thought of fighting other Druze.

In late 2012, rebels in Deraa, including the notorious salafi-jihadist group Jabhat al-Nusra, resolved to bring the war to the Jabal, whether its inhabitants welcome the intrusion or not. In the largest rebel attack to date, Jabhat al-Nusra led nearly 300 insurgents in a desperate, failed bid to seize the Mjeimar base on December 19.[33] In January 2013, the rebels struck numerous checkpoints along the road from Suwaida to Deraa, ambushed several security vehicles, and struck Thaala airport. The strategy is reminiscent of the battle for Aleppo, which remained largely supportive of the regime until rebel infiltration forced the government into heavy-handed, indiscriminate bombardments of the city in the spring of 2012.

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29 "Formation of the Bani Maarouf battalion in Damascus and its countryside," Youtube, December 31, 2012.

30 In February 2013, sheikh al-aql Hinawi estimated that 300 soldiers from Suwaida province (90 percent Druze) had died. Azzaman (Arabic, Baghdad), February 26, 2013. At the end of 2011, around 100 Druze soldiers had been killed in the fighting. "Jumblatt and the Druze of Syria," *Al-Akhbar English* (Beirut), January 26, 2012.

31 Interview with Rima Fleihan (Arabic), Al-Arabiya, February 24, 2012.

32 "Syrian pro-regime Druze leader Jarbua dies," *The Daily Star* (Beirut), December 21, 2012. According to Fleihan, these fighters receive 1,500 Syrian pounds (around $21) a day from the regime. Interview with Rima Fleihan (Arabic), Al-Arabiya, February 24, 2012.

33 "Loyalist Sweida, rebel Daraa wage war in Syria," Agence France Presse, January 25, 2013.

However, it's unlikely that major rebel advances into the Jabal will win many hearts and minds. Aside from untested promises to govern democratically after the smoke clears, the Islamist fighters leading the charge haven't offered a vision of Syria's future that specifically appeals to Druze and other minorities, and they certainly haven't behaved as liberators. They have kidnapped hundreds of Druze civil servants, policemen, and ordinary civilians to barter for the release of their own fighters from regime prisons,[34] including a grandson of the late Amir Hasan al-Atrash.[35] In February 2013, they seized an entire bus of mostly Druze passengers. Although there have not been any major terror attacks in Suwaida province, four suicide bombings in the Jaramana suburb of Damascus over the past year may be a harbinger of things to come if security in the Jabal breaks down.

Conclusion

Claims that the Syrian Druze community "is shifting its support to the opposition"[36] are off the mark. No more than a trickle are joining the rebellion. The belief of many outsiders that this will change derives largely from an erroneous tendency to attribute Druze collective behavior to a kind of political *taqiyya*, aligning with the strongest party to a dispute.[37] However, while Israeli and Lebanese Druze leaders have arguably exhibited this tendency, it doesn't have a close analog in Syria.

That said, more and more Druze are growing deeply apprehensive about the role some of their brethren are playing in the regime's war. On February 16, a group of midlevel Druze clerics issued a statement calling on all Druze to cut ties with those bearing arms in the conflict, and for soldiers in particular to "leave the army and return immediately" to the Jabal.[38] The regime is so concerned about such calls that it has cracked down on Druze dissidents who emphatically preach non-violence.[39]

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34 According to sheikh al-aql Hinawi, hundreds of Suwaida residents have been abducted by rebels. Azzaman (Baghdad), February 26, 2013. In December 2012, rebels attacked a government checkpoint in Suwaida, killing and kidnapping several Druze. Druze residents counterattacked and kidnapped several rebels, who were then exchanged. "Syrian rebels say will target Aleppo airport," Reuters, December 21, 2012. An earlier wave of kidnappings occurred in May and June 2012.

35 "Loyalist Sweida, rebel Daraa wage war in Syria," Agence France Presse, January 25, 2013.

36 "Syria's Druze minority is shifting its support to the opposition," *The Washington Post*, February 8, 2012.

37 For an overview and critique of this view, see Kais Firro, *A History of the Druzes* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), pp. 22-23.

38 Elaph (Arabic), February 18, 2013.

39 In August 2012, Druze nonviolent activist Rami al-Hinawi was arrested (along with an Alawite associate, Kifah Ali Deeb) and has not yet been released. Phil Sands, "Syria's youth found peaceful protest 'became irrelevant'," *The National* (UAE), August 16, 2012; "Syria steps up assault on Homs while asking refugees to return," *The National* (UAE), January 26, 2013.

Although activists have continued to stage sporadic anti-government demonstrations in the Jabal, they lack the resources, organization, and protected public space to effect a major change in the community's disposition. It's unlikely that even non-violent defiance of the regime will gain further traction unless senior clergy take the lead.

This may yet happen. With the deaths of sheikh al-aqls Jarbua (of cancer) and Hajari last year and their replacement by lesser known relatives, sheikh al-aql Hinawi—unquestionably the least pro-regime of the triumvirate—is today the most influential Syrian Druze public figure. There are signs that he is gravitating toward a more neutral position, notably his response to the bus hijacking last month. Rather than denounce the "terrorists," he declared that the Druze "do not want to be party to the fighting" and will "never take up arms against [even] one of the sons of the Syrian people."[40] While dissidents are hopeful that Hinawi will eventually go further and explicitly call on *soldiers* to put down their weapons, it's very difficult to tell if that's where things are heading in the inner sanctums of the Druze clergy. Chances are, Assad is wondering the same thing.

40 Al-Sharq al-Awsat (Arabic), February 28, 2013.

THE GEOPOLITICS OF THE SUNNI-SHI'I DIVIDE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

By Samuel Helfont

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This essay is based on a lecture for FPRI's Butcher History Institute conference for teachers on "The Invention of the Middle East, Post-World War One, and the Reinvention of the Middle East, Post-Arab Spring," part of a series of a weekend-long professional development programs developed by the Foreign Policy Research Institute for the benefit of high school teachers. Held at the Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh on November 2 – 3, 2013, the conference was supported by a contribution from Robert A. Fox and was cosponsored by the Senator John Heinz History Center and the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh.

In 2006, during the heart of the Global War on Terrorism, a New York Times reporter went to Washington in an attempt to ascertain the extent that American officials understood the ideologies underpinning Islamist terrorism. The reporter began with a simple question: could senior counterterrorism officials identify which groups were Sunnis and which were Shi'is? Remarkably senior officials and lawmakers – including the Chief of the F.B.I.'s national security branch, and members of the U.S. House of Representatives' committees on intelligence and counter terrorism – had "no clue" whether actors such as Iran, Hezbollah, or al-Qaida were Sunnis or Shi'is.[1] A number of questions emerged from this encounter. First, who are the Sunnis and Shi'is? Second, where are they located? And, finally, does it matter?

As this essay will outline, sectarian tensions between Sunnis and Shi'is are even more pronounced today than they were in 2006. Thus, the questions that the New York Times

[1] Jeff Stein, Can You Tell a Sunni From a Shiite? *The New York Times*, October 17, 2006. http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/17/opinion/17stein.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&

raised seven years ago remain pertinent. Accordingly, this brief essay will attempt to answer the who, what, and where of Sunni-Shi'i relations and attempt to address the extent to which any of this matters for the geopolitics of the Middle East today.

Who are Sunnis and Shi'is?

Sunnism and Shi'ism are the two most important sects in Islam. The division between them traces its origin to debates over the rightful successor to the Prophet Muhammad. In brief, the Sunnis believe that Muhammad did not name a successor, and that the best of his followers should lead the community of Muslims. In other words, succession should not be hereditary. The Shi'is reject this view. They claim that Muhammad designated his cousin and son-in-law, Ali, as his successor. Muhammad had no surviving sons and therefore Ali was his closest male relative. As such, the Shi'is believe that leadership of the Islamic community should be hereditary.

Immediately following Muhammad's death, those who would later become Sunnis triumphed. The first three Caliphs (literally successors) were not the Prophet's kinsmen. However, the Shi'is succeeded in installing Ali as the fourth Caliph. Both Sunnis and Shi'is recognized the legitimacy of his rule. Nevertheless, following Ali's death, violent clashes broke out between the followers of Ali, who insisted that his sons had the right to rule, and his rivals, who insisted that leadership of the Islamic community was not limited to Ali's hereditary line. This conflict came to a head at the Battle of Karbala (680CE) in what is today southern Iraq. In the battle, representatives of the Sunni Umayyad Empire (661–750 CE) defeated the followers of Ali and slaughtered his offspring – including his son (and Muhammad's grandson), Hussein.

The battle marked a major turning point in Islamic history from which the Sunnis emerged triumphant. From that point forward, they would become the dominant sect in the Middle East, and would come to rule most of the Islamic world. Even today, the Shi'is continue to mourn the martyrdom of Hussein in the annual Ashura ceremonies, which are a major marker of Shi'i identity.

Following Karbala, the Shi'is became a powerful, yet largely disenfranchised minority. They continued to insist that the line of Ali should rule, but they soon began to diverge over which of his descendants possessed that right. The dominant faction believed that Ali was the first of twelve leaders, or Imams, who possessed a divine right to rule the Islamic community. The twelfth Imam, they claim, went into hiding, or occultation, to protest corruption in the Islamic community and will eventually return as a messianic figure. Shi'is who believe this are known as "Twelvers." Other sub-sects of Shi'is believe that there were only five, seven, or nine Imams. Some Shi'is believe that the Imam never went into hiding and that Imams continued to

rule into the modern period. For example, Shi'i Imams from the Zaidi branch of the sect ruled the highlands of Yemen until the 1960s. Some Shi'is splintered even further, forming pseudo-Shi'i sects such as the Druze and the Allawis, who hold many Shi'i beliefs but are often considered heterodox by mainstream Muslims.

Throughout the centuries, various Shi'i factions have risen to power in a number of instances. At times, they even coalesced into powerful empires such as the Fatimids (10th to 12th centuries CE), but in most places and at most times, they have been oppressed minorities in a larger Sunni-dominated region.

Where are Sunnis and Shi'is?

The locations of Sunnis and Shi'is have shifted dramatically over time. The medieval Fatimid Empire, for example, was based in Egypt, which today has almost no Shi'is. Iranians were mostly Sunni until the arrival of the Safavid Empire in 1501, which encouraged their conversion to Shi'ism. The Shi'is of southern Iraq are descendants of Sunnis, who converted in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Geographical divisions between Sunnis and Shi'is in the Middle East today owe a great deal to pre-World War One imperial borders. Turkey and most of the Arab-speaking lands fell under the rule of the Sunni Ottoman Empire and remain mostly Sunni today. Iran, on the other hand, was ruled by various Shi'i dynasties and continues to be predominantly Shi'i. Of course, these borders are not exact. Some Sunnis remain in Iran, and pockets of Shi'ism survived in Ottoman lands. Tellingly, many of the Shi'i areas of the former Ottoman Empire were found in geographically isolated territories or in border regions, which allowed them to resist homogenizing imperial trends. Thus, today, Arab Shi'is are found in the mountainous terrains of northern Yemen and southern Lebanon as well as along the old imperial boundaries between the Ottomans and Iranians in southern Iraq and on the western shore of the Persian Gulf. The clear demographic and political center of Shi'ism today remains Iran.

Does the Sunni-Shi'i Divide Matter?

Despite sectarian conflicts in the Middle East today, the political importance of sect is not straightforward. While at times, the Sunni-Shi'i divide appears to define Middle Eastern geopolitics, at other times it plays a more attenuated role. For example, the Iraqi general Abd al-Karim al-Qassim, who overthrew the Iraqi monarch in 1958 to become the first ruler of republican Iraq, was half Sunni and half Shi'i. From his biography, we learn not only that it was acceptable for Sunnis and Shi'is to intermarry, but also that the offspring of such marriages could rise through the ranks of the military and eventually garner enough support to

rule the country. It is difficult to imagine such a career would be possible in a political climate defined by sectarian conflict.

Another example of sectarian ecumenism comes from an unlikely source – revolutionary Iran. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was clearly a Shi'i leader. The revolution that brought him to power in 1979 was deeply rooted in Shi'i political philosophy and Shi'i power structures. However, Khomeini made an effort to reach out to Sunnis. He insisted that Iran was an Islamic state, rather than a Shi'i state. He instilled a policy of "*takrib*," meaning the bringing together of sects, and he accordingly abolished prohibitions concerning praying behind a religious leader from another sect. He also adopted a number of Sunni assumptions about Islamic law and promoted Sunni Islamist heroes in Iran. The Egyptian Sunni Islamist, Sayyid Qutb, was even put on an Iranian postage stamp.

Khomeini's outreach bore fruit. The Sunni Muslim Brotherhood across the Arab world largely supported the Iranian Revolution.[2] The Brotherhood adopted some aspects of Khomeini's political theology, and some Sunnis, such as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, broke with their Sunni counterparts to adopt an explicitly Khomeinist ideology.[3] As these examples demonstrate, geopolitics in the Middle East are not *always* defined by Sunni-Shi'i strife.

However, in many cases, sectarian divides do appear to define politics in the region. Furthermore, when sectarianism matters, it *really* matters. Conflicts in Lebanon during the 1970s and 1980s, and in Iraq during the 2000s, highlight the sheer ferociousness that often accompanies sectarian clashes. These conflicts were defined by mass violence against civilians in which the belligerents employed tactics that were tremendously creative in their brutality. Such sectarian violence, when its breaks out, is extremely difficult to quell.

The Geopolitics of Sunni-Shi'i Relations Today

The current wave of sectarian tensions in the Middle East was inaugurated by the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Saddam Hussein was a Sunni Arab, but Iraq was then, and remains today, a majority Shi'i state. Geographically, Iraq links several of the Shi'i communities in the Middle East. On one side are the Shi'is of Iran and the Persian Gulf. On the other side are the Allawis – and thus pseudo-Shi'i leadership in Syria of Bashar al-Assad – and the Lebanese Shi'is, including Hezbollah. The 2003 the toppling of Saddam Hussein brought representatives of the majority Shi'i population to power in Iraq. Consequently, an

2 The main exception to this trend was the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. The Syrian branch of the Brotherhood opposed Iran because it had allied with the pseudo-Shi'i Syrian dictator, Hafez al-Assad.

3 For more on this phenomenon, see Samuel Helfont, "The Muslim Brotherhood and the Emerging 'Shia Crescent'" *Orbis*, 53:2 (2009).

arc of Shi'i power beginning in the Persian Gulf and Iran, running through Iraq and Syria, and ending in the southern Lebanese highlands extended across the Middle East. This configuration was aptly became dubbed by King Abdullah II of Jordan as the "Shi'i Crescent." For the first time in centuries, the Sunni Arab heartlands of former Ottoman Empire had been bisected by Shi'i powers. This caused a good deal of consternation among traditional Sunni Arab elites and hardline Sunni clerics.[4]

However, one should not overemphasize the role of Sunni-Shi'i tensions in the first decade of the 21st century. Other than Iraq, the two major issues that dominated regional politics were the Arab-Israeli conflict and the rise of Iran. On both of these issues, regional actors were divided, but not along sectarian lines. Khomeini's old ties with the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood continued to influence geopolitics. For example, Israel fought two wars during the decade – the first in 2006 against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, and the second in 2008-9 yet again against Hamas. In each of the conflicts, Israel's opponents were supported by Shi'i Iran, Shi'i Hezbollah in Lebanon, the pseudo-Shi'i regime in Syria, Sunni Hamas, the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood, and increasingly by the Sunni AKP government in Turkey. Clearly, this grouping was a mixed sectarian bag. The opponents of war with Israel included Sunni Arab leaders, who were allied with Western powers, and hardline Sunni clerics, who opposed Shi'ism theologically. A similar alignment was evident on the issue of Iran's rising power. While pro-Western Sunni Arab regimes and hardline Sunnis clerics opposed Iran, Hamas, the Sunni Muslim Brothers, and increasingly the Sunni AKP government in Turkey did not oppose Iranian ambitions. Accordingly, regional alliances during the decade were not defined by a Sunni-Shi'i divide.

However, the upheaval of the Arab Spring transformed the geopolitics of sectarianism in the region. The conflict in Syria has been particularly transformative. Prior to the Arab Spring, the pseudo-Shi'i regime in Syria was closely allied with Shi'i Iran and it hosted the headquarters of Sunni Islamists, such as Hamas, in its capital, Damascus. The regime also enjoyed strong ties to the Sunni AKP government in Turkey and the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

The Arab Spring brought waves of protests across the region, which Sunni Muslim Brothers supported and sometimes led. These protests intended to overthrow the various dictatorial regimes in the Arab World. In Syria, this manifested in a conflict between the pseudo-Shi'i dictator, Bashar al-Assad, and a growing Sunni Islamist-led insurgency. In that conflict, Assad's Sunni allies such as Hamas, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and the AKP government in Turkey were forced to choose between their pseudo-Shi'i ally, Bashar al-Assad, and their fellow Sunni Islamists. After a period of indecision, all of the Sunni actors in the

4 Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007).

region eventually turned against Assad and his regime. However, Shi'i Iran and Shi'i Hezbollah continued actively to support Assad. Thus, the Syrian conflict segregated the region along sectarian lines in way that had not occurred previously. On one hand, many Sunni Islamists, including in the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, blamed Iran for supporting Assad's brutal crackdown on their Sunni Islamist counterparts in Syria. On the other hand, Iran and the Syrian regime felt betrayed by Sunni groups such as Hamas, which they had aided for many years. This drove a wedge between the erstwhile allies and helped define the conflict as a sectarian war between Sunnis and Shi'is. The breakdown in sectarian relations has metastasized across the region. Other states with mixed Sunni-Shi'i populations, such as Bahrain, Iraq, and Lebanon, have seen a rise in sectarian violence and are increasingly worried about the prospects of civil war.

Looking Forward

The conflict in Syria has, more than any other factor, helped proliferate sectarianism in the region. However, the Syrian civil war will not continue forever. No one knows for sure when, or how it will end. It could last for years, or only a few more months. Nevertheless, one day it will end. The question observers of the Middle East need to ask is what will happen next. Are the scars of the conflict too deep to heal? In that case, sectarianism could shape regional geopolitics for the foreseeable future. However, that is not the only possibility. The sectarian strife, which currently defines Middle Eastern geopolitics, was not inevitable. As we have seen, Sunni-Shi'i divisions have not always shaped regional politics. This is an important fact to keep in mind as we look toward the future. Regional actors could move beyond the Syrian conflict. As was the case prior to the Arab Spring, other interests could again shape their actions.

Either way, the length and outcome of the Syrian civil war will certainly have an impact on future political alignments in the region. To take just one example, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, having been forced from power in a military coup, may find it convenient to rekindle its alliance with Iran, which also opposes Egypt's current military government. Such an outcome would be greatly aided by a quick end to the conflict in Syria, especially if Assad's regime is toppled and Iran is seeking new allies. In contrast, if the conflict drags out, a renewed alliance between Iran and the Egyptian Brotherhood would be strained at best. This is only one of many scenarios that will be affected by the length and outcome of the Syrian violence.

As dissatisfying as it sounds, the best conclusion one could draw is that sectarianism may, but will not necessarily, shape future geopolitics in the region. Either way, all eyes need to be on Syria. The ramifications of the conflict there will provide the best indicator of future regional alignments.

ALTERNATIVES TO U.S. HARD POWER:
THE SAUDI RESPONSE TO U.S. TACTICS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

By Brandon Friedman

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The conventional wisdom today is that Saudi Arabia will ultimately accept recent U.S. policy decisions that currently it rejects[1] because it has no viable alternatives.[2] While it is true that there is no equivalent to U.S. power, there are certainly alternatives to it.

Historically, the Saudis have pursued regional security according to four broad principles: (1) preserving the internal security of the kingdom, (2) maintaining a regional balance of power, (3) preventing conflicts that may damage the kingdom, and (4) relying on the U.S. to be the dominant power in the region.[3] The Obama administration's decision to reduce the role of U.S. military power in the region's active conflicts,[4] means the Saudis are now searching for alternate sources of military power to achieve their regional security goals. Therefore, it is important to understand what the Saudis are doing and why they are doing it.

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[1] See also: Jay Solomon, "Saudi Royal Blasts U.S.'s Middle East Policy," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 15, 2013.
[2] F. Gregory Gause, "Why the Iran Deal Scares Saudi Arabia," *The New Yorker*, November 26, 2013; Zaki Shalom and Yoel Guzansky, "U.S.- Saudi Relations: On the Verge of a Crisis?" *INSS Insight* 504, January 1, 2014.
[3] Efraim Halevy's review of *Saudi Arabia and the Conflict in Palestine* (2012, in Hebrew), by Michael Kahanov, *Bustan* 4:1 (2013), 92.
[4] In contrast to the Saudi critique of the U.S. decisions to back away from employing force in the region, some observers see it in positive terms: David Ignatius, "Obama's relentlessly pragmatic diplomacy," *Washington Post*, December 12, 2013; and, Gideon Rachman, "The year the US pivoted back to the Middle East," *Financial Times*, December 23, 2013.

Prince Turki al-Faisal, the director general of the Saudi intelligence agency from 1977 to 2001, and a former ambassador to the U.K. and U.S., recently explained that "As 2014 begins, there is no more important question in world diplomacy than this: Has Iran changed?" He added, "Saudi Arabia has two large concerns about the Islamic Republic [of Iran]: its quest for nuclear weapons and its interference in its neighbors' affairs." In other words, the Saudis are concerned that Iran, through its involvement in Iraq and Syria, as well as its nuclear program, may be changing the regional balance of power. Moreover, from the Saudi perspective, this is happening with tacit U.S. approval. As Roula Khalaf points out, "Seen from Riyadh, the combination of US inaction on Syria, the interim nuclear deal in November with its arch-rival Iran and the shale gas revolution that is weaning America off Middle Eastern oil represents an unsettling shift in US commitment to the region."[5]

Saudi Arabia is determined not to allow Iran to win Syria the way the Saudis believe the Iranians won post-2003 Iraq.[6] Today the Iraqi state is disintegrating and Syria is riven by a civil war in which Lebanon has increasingly become the rear. More than one million Syrians have been pushed into Lebanon by the war.[7] Sunni-Shi'i sectarianism fuels the fighting between the militia proxies backed by Saudi Arabia and Iran, who have exploited the ideological divide to enhance security in what they view as a zero-sum geopolitical competition.

The Saudis fear being encircled by pro-Iranian forces. Iranian-backed Shi'i militias have already attacked and threatened Saudi Arabia along Iraq's border with Saudi Arabia. Only a thin strip of Jordanian desert separates the pro-Iranian government in Syria from a long, unsecured Saudi Arabian border. The Saudis' oil infrastructure, located in its Eastern Province, and Bahrain along the Gulf coast are within short striking distance of Iranian ballistic missiles.

The Saudis also face internal pressure to take action to prevent the slaughter of Sunnis in Syria. The Saudi monarchy runs the risk of a public outcry and an attack on its legitimacy, if the king is viewed by leading Wahhabi religious figures in the kingdom as too passive in the face of the strong Iranian military support for Bashar al-Asad's regime in Syria.[8] Many

[5] Roula Khalaf, "Middle East Terms of Engagement," *Financial Times*, January 5, 2014.
[6] For the Saudi view of how Iran won Iraq, see: Joseph Kostiner, "The GCC States and the Security Challenges of the Twenty-First Century," *Mideast Security and Policy Studies, No. 86*, September 2010 (Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel), http://besacenter.org/mideast-security-and-policy-studies/the-gcc-states-and-the-security-challenges-of-the-twenty-first-century-3-2/.
[7] International Crisis Group, "Too Close for Comfort: Syrians in Lebanon," *Middle East Report No. 141*, May 2013, http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iraq%20Syria%20Lebanon/Lebanon/141-too-close-for-comfort-syrians-in-lebanon
[8] The Saudi Grand Mufti has officially discouraged Saudis from going to fight in Syria, however, many Saudi religious leaders have been instrumental in financially supporting jihadis in Syria. See: Elizabeth Dickinson, "Playing With Fire," Saban Center at Brookings Institution, Analysis Paper No. 16, December 2013.

Wahhabi religious leaders in Saudi Arabia view 'Alawis and Shi'is as unbelievers, and the death of tens of thousands of Syrian Sunnis at the hands of Asad and Iran is unacceptable to them. Therefore, in order to maintain regime stability at home, the Saudi royals believe they must do everything they can to stop the slaughter of Sunnis in Syria.

Contrary to what some believe, the Saudis are not exclusively seeking a military solution to Syria. They want the slaughter and gassing of Sunni civilians to end and they insist that any solution must include removing Asad from power.[9] To these ends, they are pursuing a two-pronged strategy to ensure a satisfactory political deal to end the conflict.

First, many believe the Saudis had a hand in using their vast wealth as leverage to broker the November 22, 2013 unification between all non al-Qa'ida Islamist militias in Syria. In essence, this means the Saudis are backing groups in Syria that are fighting both Asad and al-Qa'ida at the same time.[10] The Saudi-backed Islamic Front (*al Jabha al Islamiyya*) is a large, unified (in relative terms) fighting force (some estimates say more than 40,000).[11] Recent gains by these forces, particularly against the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), will give the Saudi-backed opposition more negotiating leverage at the Geneva II conference, if and when it takes place. Second, the Saudis removed Qatar and its Syrian Muslim Brotherhood clients, and reorganized the opposition leadership outside of Syria into a Saudi-backed government-in-exile led by Ahmed Ta'meh al-Khadr.[12]

The Saudis are gambling that its clients in the Syrian opposition leadership in exile will assure the Saudis of strong post-Asad influence in Syria. Therefore, if the Saudis, working through the provisional government-in-exile, can negotiate Asad's exit and reasonable post-Asad terms at Geneva II, they would likely reduce their funding, support, and arms supplies to the Islamic Front on the ground. However, they are only likely to do so if they believe Iran will, as part of a negotiated agreement, reduce its support and funding to the the varied Shi'i militias from Iraq that are fighting in Syria and order Hizballah to withdraw its forces from its embattled neighbor. In this scenario, the fighting in Syria would eventually wind down because the belligerents would soon be starved of resources and support from regional patrons, and a negotiated solution would create a means to share power and reach political accommodations on essential interests.

The Saudis also believe the ongoing crisis in Syria may provide an opportunity to weaken Hizballah's grip on Lebanon. For example, the Saudis recently offered $3 billion in military aid to the Lebanese army, which is nearly double the Lebanese military's annual budget and may

[9] See also: Dickinson, p. 15.
[10] Hassan Hassan, "Why Syria's Islamic Front is bad news for radical groups," The National, December 3, 2013.
[11] Charles Lister, "The Next Phase of the Syrian Conflict," ForeignPolicy.com, December 23, 2013.
[12] Samer Abboud, "Hard Road Ahead for the Syrian Exile Government," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 15, 2013.

be intended to prompt sitting President Michel Suleiman to abandon the March 8 coalition and weaken Hizballah's political influence.

For example, an authoritative source on Saudi political rumors, who tweets under the pseudonym "mujtahidd," and who has been described as "the Saudi Julian Assange," recently posted a series of blog entries about a Saudi intelligence operation that secretly listened in on sensitive Hizballah communications during the last few months of 2013.[13] The operation revealed that Hassan Nasrallah was frustrated with the way Maher al-Asad was using Hizballah forces in Syria because it repeatedly led to heavy losses for Hizballah.[14] Mujtahidd claims that the Saudi intelligence operation discovered that Nasrallah asked Iran to intervene with Maher al-Asad, fearing that Hizballah's "enormous sacrifices" (*tadhayat ha'ila*) would lead to the disintegration of the party.[15]

Further, mujtahidd claims the Iraqi militias fighting with Iran's support in Syria have lodged similar complaints against Maher al-Asad.[16] The Iranians have been reluctant to press Maher too hard on these issues because they believe Bashar al-Asad would not survive without Maher.[17] The Iranians, according to mujtahidd's report, are concerned that the dynamic between Maher and Hizballah could lead to a dismantling of Hizballah and Iran's defeat in Syria.[18] The Saudis appear to believe Hizballah's weakness may give them more leverage to break the political stalemate in Lebanon and secure a pro-Saudi government. A key component of the Saudis' $3 billion military aid offer to the Lebanese army included revealing the identity of the prospective arms supplier: France.

After the U.S.-Russia deal on Syrian chemical weapons, it appears the Saudis turned to France to achieve some of their regional goals. During November and December 2013, there were several reports of joint French-Saudi military exercises.[19]

Further, the French share the Saudi view that the U.S. negotiated interim deal on Iran's nuclear program is a bad one. While some believe French and Saudi interests on Iran and Syria converge, others see the French alignment with the Saudis as a cynical ploy to win commercial

[13] These micro-blog "tweets" were posted in Arabic on December 28, 2013.
[14] @mujtahidd, Twitter Post, December 28, 2013,02:22 a.m., https://twitter.com/mujtahidd/status/416876896299675648
[15] @mujtahidd, Twitter Post, December 28, 2013,02:28 a.m., https://twitter.com/mujtahidd/status/416877094203715584
[16] @mujtahidd, Twitter Post, December 28, 2013,02:27 a.m., https://twitter.com/mujtahidd/status/416878037058060288
[17] @mujtahidd, Twitter Post, December 28, 2013,02:27 a.m., https://twitter.com/mujtahidd/status/416878108856156160
[18] @mujtahidd, Twitter Post, December 28, 2013,02:27 a.m., https://twitter.com/mujtahidd/status/416877953318809600
[19] Ariel Ben Solomon, "Saudi and French forces carry out joint military drill," *Jerusalem Post*, November 14, 2013; Khamis al-Zahrani, "Saudi Arabia and France continue joint military exercises," *Al Arabiya News*, November 18, 2013.

military contracts at the U.S.'s expense during a period of French economic weakness.[20] Be that as it may, from the Saudi point of view, the French are providing an alternative means to achieve Saudi regional goals.

Just as the Saudis have turned to the French as a tactical ally to achieve strategic interests in Lebanon and Syria, they appear to be backing a $2-3 billion deal between Russia and Egypt to supply the 'Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi government with military aid. The Saudis view a strong military government in Egypt as a vast improvement over Muhammad Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood led government. The Saudis would also like to see a strong Egypt, friendly to Saudi Arabia, assume its natural position of leadership in the Arab world. If the U.S. is unwilling to back al-Sisi's military, then the Saudis appear willing to fill the void by funding alternative sources of the military equipment necessary for Egypt to maintain its hard power.

Mustafa Alani argued in Anne Barnard's article in the *New York Times* that the Saudi offer of billions to fund French military aid to Lebanon was a sign that the Saudis "are washing their hands of Obama." This is undoubtedly an overstatement, but it may accurately reflect the Saudi frustration with recent U.S. behavior in the region.

Looking beyond the Fertile Crescent, and assuming the U.S. and Iran extend their "detente" beyond the initial six-month period outlined in November 2013, Saudi Arabia has at least three potential alternatives given the new U.S. regional posture, and it may choose to pursue all three options in parallel in order to address its short, medium, and long-term security.

First, in the short term, it may turn to enhanced security cooperation with China as an alternative or insurance policy for what it perceives as unreliable U.S. security commitments. Second, it may begin improving and developing the fighting capabilities of its own military forces. This might include importing a greater number of former Pakistani, Moroccan, and Jordanian military officers, as well as the possibility of offering citizenship to non-native Sunni Muslim mercenaries in exchange for military service. In combination with this step, Saudi Arabia appears to be showing interest in building its own military manufacturing and production industries. Improving its military fighting capabilities is likely a long-term process that will take decades to achieve meaningful results. And, third, Saudi Arabia is likely to coordinate with Pakistan, and perhaps China, to develop its own indigenous nuclear weapons capability, particularly if the current Western negotiations with Iran result in institutionalizing Iran's nuclear breakout-capability.

While Obama adviser Bruce Riedel argues that the Saudis have "consistently cited" the objective of a WMD-Free Zone in the Middle East, he ignores the true thrust of Turki al-Faisal's remarks on three separate occasions in 2011, when Turki strongly suggested that there

[20] John Vinocur, "France, Iran and 'The Front of Mistrust'" *The Wall Street Journal*, January 6, 2014.

should be an Arab nuclear weapon if Iran obtains such a capability.[21] More recently and explicitly, Prince Turki wrote that "Faced with a nuclear-armed Iran, the Gulf Cooperation Council members, for example, will be forced to weigh their options carefully – and possibly to acquire a nuclear deterrent of their own."

If the Saudis indeed have nuclear ambitions, they will need considerable time to develop the infrastructure, personnel, and institutional knowledge necessary to make rapid progress toward a nuclear capability. And Saudi Arabia is not likely to place all of its eggs in the Pakistan basket when it comes to developing its nuclear program. Turki al-Faisal has claimed Saudi Arabia will invest $100 billion to build 16 nuclear reactors by 2030. On January 16, 2012, Saudi Arabia signed a nuclear cooperation agreement with China. A joint statement outlined a legal framework to build scientific, technological, and economic cooperation between Riyadh and Beijing. On a practical level, a nuclear cooperation agreement with China would provide Saudi Arabia with the means, experience, and expertise to develop and supply nuclear-power plants and research reactors, and manufacture nuclear-fuel elements. China has adopted advanced technology from Westinghouse Electric Co. to develop a domestic version of the company's AP1000 nuclear reactor.[22] Saudi Arabia may be looking to China to provide it with a stable nuclear supply chain as well as training facilities for a new generation of Saudi nuclear technicians and scientists. Saudi Arabia also has nuclear cooperation agreements with France, Argentina, and South Korea, but the agreement with China may be the most significant and symbiotic, in terms of the strategic goals of both states.

Unlike the U.S., China is not likely to achieve energy independence in the near term. Saudi Arabia and China have similar authoritarian postures toward domestic dissent, and they both resist outside pressure to accelerate domestic political reform. China is also looking to expand the reach of its sea power by creating port facilities from Asia to Africa in the Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea in what some have characterized as a thinly disguised "string-of-pearls" strategy of naval military expansion. The western coast of Saudi Arabia, along the Red Sea leading to the Suez Canal, might be an attractive location to the Chinese navy given China's energy interests in Sudan, South Sudan, and elsewhere in Africa. Finally, Saudi Arabia and China have a historical track record of discreet security cooperation. In the mid-1980s, Saudi Arabia secretly acquired Chinese DF-3A intermediate range ballistic missiles.

Steven A. Cook, the Hasib J. Sabbagh Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, has argued that there is no reason to fear that the Saudis will obtain a nuclear weapon. He wrote that "given the fact that the Saudis have very little

[21] In March, June, and December 2011. For more detail, see: Brandon Friedman, "The Concept of Deterrence in Arab and Muslim Thought: The Arab Gulf States," Project Supervisor Shmuel Bar, Herzliya Conference Working Paper, June 2012, http://www.herzliyaconference.org/eng/_Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/BrandonFriedman.pdf.
[22] *The Wall Street Journal*, 17 January 2012.

nuclear infrastructure to speak of, this kind of statement is little more than posturing designed to force the U.S. hand on Iran." He added that "Riyadh's rhetoric about acquiring nuclear weapons is empty. What is amazing is how many people take the Saudis seriously."[23] Cook is right to be skeptical, Saudi Arabia is often noted for being risk averse and cautious, yet it engaged in high risk behavior by going behind the backs of its major security ally, the United States, in order to acquire the Chinese made DF-3A ballistic missiles in the 1980s. What triggered the Saudi deviation from its traditional behavior?

In Prince Khalid bin Sultan's book, *Desert Warrior*, published after the 1990/1 Gulf War, he states: "In brief, our aim was to give us the capability to counterattack in the event of an attack on us by either Israel or Iran, both in their different ways hostile at that time."[24]Yet Prince Khalid devotes only a brief paragraph to explaining the Israeli threat, while devoting two full pages to explaining the Iranian threat to Saudi Arabia. He finishes the explanation with perhaps even a sharper statement on the Saudi decision to acquire the Chinese ballistic missiles: "It was against this background of Iranian violence and belligerence that, I assume, King Fahd decided we needed a weapon to improve the morale of our armed services and our people; a deterrent weapon not intended to be used, except as a last resort when it should be able to demoralize the enemy by delivering a painful and decisive blow; a weapon which, once launched, could not be jammed or intercepted; a weapon which would make the enemy think twice before attacking us."[25] In short, Prince Khalid, the former deputy defense minister of Saudi Arabia, framed the Saudi acquisition of the Chinese missiles as a deterrent in response to Iranian belligerence in the 1980s.

Today, it is likely that outside of the Fertile Crescent Saudi behavior will appear to remain much the same. The Saudis are slow to change and despite the very real Saudi discontent with current American leadership, it is unlikely that the Saudis will take any radical public action that signals an abrupt shift in its security policies. It is more likely that they will move incrementally on a number of fronts, hedging their bets depending on the regional and international security context. It is not just the Iranian nuclear program that concerns the Saudis. They also sense that the shifting fortunes of supply and demand in world energy markets may be moving against them in the medium to long-term, and vast cash reserves they have generated during the past decade may not be a permanent feature of the budget in the long-term. In line with the possibility of diminishing energy resources due to rapidly increasing domestic consumption,[26] a fast growing and youthful population will tax the regime's resources and force it to move a bit more aggressively than usual to create suitable

[23] Steven A. Cook, "Don't Fear a Nuclear Arms Race in the Middle East," *Foreign Policy*, 2 April 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/02/don_t_fear_a_nuclear_arms_race.
[24] Khalid bin Sultan (with Patrick Seale), *Desert Warrior: A Personal View of the Gulf War by the Joint Forces Commander* (Harper Collins, 1995), p. 142.
[25] Ibid, p. 145.
[26] Yitzhak Gal, "Arab Use of Energy: Oil Out, Renewable Energy In," *Iqtisadi* 3:7: September 15, 2013.

employment opportunities for its youth. In other words, the Saudis are going to assess the future impact of major shifts in international energy markets, domestic demographic changes, regional security threats, domestic dissent and regime cohesion, and the nature of the current leadership of the international system. Ultimately, Saudi Arabia's decision to pursue nuclear weaponization will depend on a multi-dimensional calculation of how best to protect Al Saud rather than a narrow response to one specific external regional security threat.

At the end of 2011, following the tumultuous changes in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, the *Washington Post's* foreign affairs columnist David Ignatius noted, perhaps somewhat prematurely, "that Saudi Arabia has increasingly replaced the United States as the key status-quo power in the Middle East - a role that seems likely to expand even more in coming years as the Saudis boost their military and economic spending." Ignatius noted that Saudis described the kingdom's expanding security role as "a reaction, in part, to the diminished clout of the United States. They still regard the U.S.-Saudi relationship as valuable, but it's no longer seen as a guarantor of their security. For that, the Saudis have decided they must rely more on themselves - and, down the road, on a wider set of friends that includes their military partner, Pakistan, and their largest oil customer, China."

The Saudis were clearly using Ignatius to deliver a message that if the U.S. is not a reliable security partner, then the Saudis have other options -- namely, Pakistan and China, and, perhaps in the medium and long-term, themselves. Whether or not this was a Saudi bluff, intended to refocus the U.S.'s attention on the Middle East during a period when it seemed as if Washington was focused on its security "pivot" to East Asia, simply discussing a turn toward Pakistan or China as a regional security partner represents a sea-change in terms of Saudi perceptions.

Today, the Saudis are worried, not confident (if indeed they were in fact confident in 2011). They fear the U.S. will make a deal with Iran that will leave Iran's nuclear program intact. The Saudis believe that a deal that legitimizes Iran as the threshold nuclear weapons state is a deal that comes at the expense of their security. It would be a mistake for Obama officials to accept today's conventional wisdom, which holds that the Saudis will simply accept that they have no alternatives, for the Saudis are trying to cobble together a patchwork of tactics to achieve their regional goals. Yet it remains to be seen whether these moves will bring the Saudi monarchy more security or in fact lead the kingdom and the region into a period of even greater security competition and instability.

A Saudi Psychologist on Jihadism, Clerical Elites, and Education Reform

An Interview with Abdullah al-Garni by Joseph Braude

April 2014

Clinical psychologist Abdullah al-Garni serves a niche clientele: recovering jihadists. He heads the mental health division at the Mohammed bin Naif Center for Counseling and Advice, a halfway house for members of Al-Qaeda and other groups who have served prison time in Saudi Arabia or at the US Government-run Guantanamo Bay detention facility. The Center aims to persuade its "beneficiaries" to forswear terrorism, then release and reintegrate them into Saudi society. To these ends, a team of Muslim clerics use traditional Islamic legal texts to argue against jihadist ideology, while teachers offer vocational training in other fields. Garni employs psychotherapy techniques to address personal problems which may have played into the violent mindset, and families of the fighters pay visits to ease their homecoming. Claiming a recidivism rate of 12 per cent, Center staff say they hope to create a model which can be exported to the region – and have indeed begun to work with officials in nearby Yemen and the United Arab Emirates in building similar, nascent facilities.

Garni, for his part, believes in a more expansive goal: He would like to see reforms implemented throughout Saudi Arabia that serve to preempt religious radicalization in the first place. Like a growing number of voices in the Saudi public discussion, he faults a group of activist clerical elites in the country for imposing a severe interpretation of Islam that lends itself to terrorist recruiting. But Garni's views are particularly significant because he is neither a media personality nor an opponent of the monarchy, but rather a fierce stalwart of the kingdom's security establishment. His ideas are a window into the state's internal discussion about its own future – and provide insight into the potential for Saudi Arabia to achieve systemic change.

Joseph Braude *is a Senior Fellow of the Foreign Policy Research Institute and the Al-Mesbar Studies and Research Center in Dubai. He is the author of two books,* The New Iraq *(Basic Books, 2003), and* The Honored Dead *(Random House - Spiegel & Grau, 2011). Since 2010, Joseph Braude's weekly program in Arabic, Risalat New York (Letter from New York), has aired nationally on Morocco's MED Radio. He appears frequently as a commentator on Al-Arabiya, writes a biweekly column in Al-Majalla, the largest-distribution magazine in the Arabic language, and contributes regularly to the daily newspaper Asharq Alawsat.*

Q: What psychological methods do you use to counsel jihadists at the Center?

A: We use schema-focused therapy[1] to address the beneficiaries' maladaptive behavior, and we work to identify and dispel "irrational beliefs."

Q: Which ones?

A: There are eleven universal irrational beliefs that were identified by Albert Ellis in his book *Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy*. We are concerned about all of them. But in addition to these, two were introduced by the Jordanian psychologist Suleiman Rihani as particularly common in Arab societies. One is the view that in relationships between a man and a woman, the man is the basis and the woman follows. I see this as a quality of Arab culture that predates Islam. The other is the bifurcation between private and public behavior. That is, when I'm in the company of certain people I follow the social norms, whereas when I'm at home I think and act differently. If you believe in yourself as a unique person, you have to learn to behave by and large consistently. We try to instill this principle.

Q: Is mental illness common?

A: Some of the clients have panic attacks or obsessive-compulsive disorder, or suffer from depression. Others have somatization disorder, meaning complaints of physical pain that may or may not actually have a physical cause. The latter may stem from their long years in prison. There are manifestations of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, leading us to employ trauma-focused therapy in addition to schema therapy. We are also interested in the psychological traits of criminals broadly speaking, and accordingly are appropriating a version of the Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles that is taught at Texas Christian University. We're tailoring it to our own society, thanks as well to Saudi research on common criminals in our own prisons.

Q: But can jihadism be reduced to a combination of psychological factors, or isolated from ideology and religion?

A: People who say they can reduce terrorism to any one or handful of factors are wrong. What I do at the Center is one component of a multidisciplinary approach that we call "bio-psycho-social-spiritual." And while Islamic legal counseling is another crucial component, we believe that terrorism at heart has no religion, and find ourselves benefiting greatly from studies of terror groups in non-Islamic cultures, ranging from the Irish Republican Army to the Tamil Tigers.

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[1] http://www.schematherapy.com/

Q: How did Islam come to be used as a justification for terrorism among Saudis?

A: It is a matter of how a group of so-called clerics interpret, or misinterpret, Islam. In Surat Al 'Imran of our Holy Book, it says, "No one knows [the Qur'an's] true interpretation except God, and those who are well-grounded in knowledge say, 'We believe in it. All of it is from our Lord.'" But some clerics stop in the middle of the verse, and just say, "No one knows [the Qur'an's] true interpretation except God and those who are well-grounded in knowledge." Then they put it to you that they alone are well-grounded in knowledge, and go on to use the half-sentence as a divine mandate for their own authority. If we claim that our religion is a peaceful religion, calling for peace between nations and between religions, then these false foundations need to be addressed.

Q: Is the Saudi government doing so?

A: This Center is an example of an area where the government is doing its part. After finding a terrorist and punishing him for his actions, we take him in and try to reacquire him, reeducate him, and fit him into the society again. This is good. But the question is whether it's enough, and whether other divisions of government are doing their part as well.

Q: Which divisions do you have in mind?

A: The educational system and the religious institutions. Regarding the educational system, it is a problem of both the content of the curricula and the teachers. We need to review the content. We also need to focus on the teachers. But in Saudi Arabia we say, "A day in the government goes on for a year."

Q: What are some examples of changes you'd like to see?

A: For one thing I would like to see a lifting of the ban on teaching philosophy and logic in Saudi universities.

Q: But many clerics regard those fields as "innovations" and therefore heretical.

A: Yet philosophy and logic as understood today are in large part a credit to Islamic civilization. We hear today about the "Frankfurt School" of philosophy, for example – but there was once a "Baghdad school" under the Abbasid empire. There was a Granada school. There was [tenth-century Abbasid philosopher] Al-Farabi's seminal work of political philosophy, *The Ideal State*. There was Al-Kindi, Averroes, and Avicenna.

Q: So you believe in making arguments within the framework of Islamic tradition in order to expand the educational space.

A: That's part of it. But the other part is simply to say, No, philosophy is not forbidden. No, logic is not forbidden. We can teach it. We can modify it. We can tailor it based on our societal norms.

Q: Are there clerical elites who can be persuaded by your arguments?

A: You have to start by putting the right people at the top of the religious hierarchy.

Q: Where are the right people going to come from?

A: The three Islamic universities in our country are Al-Imam Muhammad University here in Riyadh, the Islamic University in Madinah, and Umm al-Qura University in Mecca. The next generation of clerics come from there. Considering this, I think it is instructive to observe that Christian universities in the West don't devote all their resources to teaching the religion itself. They also have technology, medicine, and so on. I think that the mixture of students is an important element of the change – which is why I'm encouraged that, for example, Al-Imam Muhammad University has now introduced engineering and psychology faculties. Umm al-Qura has brought in engineering and medicine.

Q: On the matter of public schools and schoolteachers, what are some measures you think should be taken to challenge hardline messaging in classrooms?

A: In the US, for example, there are educational boards that certify teachers – and also have the power to revoke the certification of a teacher – on the basis of objective criteria. In Saudi Arabia, our health council certifies health professionals, but we do not have an equivalent for teachers. Perhaps it is time to introduce such a system in the Saudi schools, and have a conversation about what the criteria for teacher certification should be.

Q: How would you achieve that?

A: You have to start with the planners – those in the ministry who draw up five-year plans, ten-year plans.

Q: It sounds like a lengthy process. What about children who are in school right now?

A: Some Islamic jurists, as well as giants of Islamic literature such as Ibn Khaldoun and others, have suggested a division of responsibilities, whereby schools teach only the essential precepts of Islam, while the parents bear responsibility for elaborating on those precepts with their children.

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Over several visits to the Mohammed bin Naif Center, the training academy for the Mabahith al-Amma *(General Security Directorate), and the maximum security prison at Al-Ha'ir, I found Garni's views to be largely consistent with those of numerous security sector officials. The prevalence of these sentiments warrants consideration in the American debate on Saudi Arabia's capacity for "change from within." So, alas, does the grievance shared by several of the officials I met that other Saudi ministries are not shouldering their share of the responsibility to reduce extremist inculcation in the country.*

In the days before President Obama's visit to Riyadh last month, activist groups, media, and a think tank urged him to add human rights, gender issues, and educational reform to his agenda. Amnesty International, for example, called on the President to appoint a female Secret Service agent to drive him around the city as a show of protest against the Saudi ban on women's driving. Others advised him to raise specific human rights cases in talks with King Abdullah bin Abdelaziz. A think tank report, apparently timed to the visit, asked why the State Department had declined to release a new study on Saudi textbook reform. These efforts tend to be predicated on the belief that outside pressure on the monarchy makes internal reform more likely. There is also a tendency to dismiss the US Government's so-called "soft approach" to Saudi reform as kowtowing to broader regional security and oil-related interests.

But input from Garni and his colleagues suggests that a more nuanced discussion about Saudi reform is in order. It demonstrates that the Saudi state is not a monolith, and that some actors and institutions within it support at least some of the changes Americans would like to see. Garni's willingness to speak bluntly and on the record with a foreign, nongovernment researcher, moreover, shows not only that Saudi officials today have the capacity for self-criticism, but also that they enjoy greater latitude than in the past to express it publicly. It suggests, as well, that the US government need not be the only actor to engage state elements in dialogue about domestic reforms. Thus the choice between "outside pressure" and "change from within" may be a false dichotomy, and there could be a more consensual role for Americans in and out of government to play in fostering systemic change.

WINNING THE WAR OF IDEAS IN THE ARAB WORLD: A VIEW FROM THE UAE

By Ambassador Omar Saif Ghobash

September 2014

***Ambassador Ghobash** is the United Arab Emirates Ambassador to Russia. This essay is based on his September 17 lecture to the SEI Center for Advanced Studies in Management at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business.*

World Foreign Ministers have just met in Paris to decide how to defeat ISIS. But military action is only a small part of the strategy that they need because ISIS is above all an ideological movement, which gains its strength by winning recruits and sympathizers across the Arab world and beyond. So how can ISIS be defeated ideologically?

Although I am the UAE Ambassador to Moscow, I also see myself – first, as a liberal, in the positive and broad sense of the word; second, as an Arab who insists on thinking as deeply as possible about the Arab world; and third, as an individual. That's how I would like to you to hear me: as a liberal, a conscientious thinker and an individual, not as a government official.

Why am I speaking about this topic today and why do I intend to speak on this subject in other places? Because I, and many others like me, are horrified by the violence shown by ISIS in the name of Islam and in the name of the Arabs.

ISIS has slaughtered its critics, including many among the Sunni Arab community, which it claims to defend. It strangely and arrogantly claims a right to rule over all Muslims everywhere in the world. It has persecuted minorities which every decent Muslim individual should cherish and protect. It's not unique in that respect, because other Islamist movements have done much the same. And indeed one of the points that I shall make in this lecture is that other Islamist movements, including the Muslim Brotherhood, also need to be confronted.

Most coverage of the reaction to ISIS has been of the West and its Arab allies marshaling a coalition to defeat ISIS militarily and eradicate it from the territories it claims. But ISIS is much more dangerous as a model in the minds of my fellow Muslims. It is the shell into which any substance can be inserted. And it is this aspect of ISIS that must be fought above all. I have five proposals for how to do so.

They aren't exhaustive by any means. I am not focusing on the measures that need to be taken to stop individuals from funding ISIS; and I am not going to set out economic or political measures, such as concessions to Iraq's Sunni Arab minority or policies to reduce unemployment. That's not because I think these are unimportant; but there are others who can discuss them better than I can. I want to talk about the ideological debate within the Arab world, and how it can be turned against ISIS and other Islamists.

This is a debate primarily to be had between Arabs. And it should be done in terms that Arabs understand. Worrying whether Western society or media will like what we say distracts us from speaking to each other. When we talk of moderate Islamists, or Islamic democracy, it is often clear that we are not talking to each other, we are talking to an imagined Washington. These are not coherent concepts – at least not yet, and they are not high up the real list of priorities.

So as a Sunni Muslim, as distinct from a Sunni Islamist, what are my concerns? I, and many of my compatriots, are deeply concerned about:

1. Our moral state

2. The violence within our Arab Muslim society

3. Our theological leadership

4. The role of laymen and people of goodwill in redirecting the path of the Arab and Muslim worlds

5. Jobs and the economy

These five themes - morality, tolerance, religious moderation, inclusivity and good government, or what I will call technology - are critical ones for undermining the appeal of militant Islamist movements like ISIS and the Muslim Brotherhood.

We should:

First, point out that although they say they will make Muslims more virtuous, they do not. Their prospectus of forced morality and imposed religious norms is not just illogical, it is also bound to fail.

Second, we should highlight that their program of violence and intolerance is in contrast to the historical Caliphate. It is a reductive sketch of Islamic history.

Third, we should tackle the issues of the Muslim clergy who either back the extremists and license their violence, or do not interest themselves in their pastoral duties to Muslims in, and of, the 21st century.

Fourth, we must tackle the question of how our societies should be guided – what the right path is to a better future, with inclusive government and security for all citizens.

Last, we must show that Islamists govern badly. They govern badly not just because of inexperience but because their ideology prevents them from governing well.

"Islam is the Answer": What is the Question?

Islamists are fond of saying that "Islam is the Answer." This was a motto promulgated by the Muslim Brotherhood, and also by Shi'a militant movements in Iraq. Many of the rest of us have asked: what was the Question? Islam is our religion, and it is a deep and powerful influence over our lives. And for many of us it is the answer to our spiritual and existential needs. However, when it is reified by Islamists and used as a promotional tool for their lust for power, then we need to push back.

One way of pushing back is by asking why Islam is the Answer to specific questions, and why specifically in their hands. The Islamists' explanation never moves beyond vague assurances that all will be good when we implement Islam. But that still does not answer the question why a purely technical or administrative or biological, or societal problem will be solved through piety. In fact, it seems that utilizing our religion in this way is a disservice to it. The focus of our religion is ethical, moral and spiritual in its essence. Deciding pension fund politics is not the realm of religion. Nor is economic development directly the realm of religion. There will be ethical matters to take into account – principles of fairness, equity, justice – but it is too much to say that there is an Islamic answer to these matters. The truth is that there are many answers to these questions.

I often find it interesting that corruption is cited as one of the vices that will be stopped by implementing Islam under the Islamists. We are told that pious people will hold positions of responsibility and that this will bring corruption to a halt. This is wishful thinking at best. Why not try some tried and tested administrative procedures that will ensure enough transparency to make corruption much more difficult to hide?

My worry is that we are asking too little of our great religion. When our holy text and our moral principles can be directed towards personal regeneration, we instead demand of it to convert the publicly pious into the morally infallible. We can more easily and quickly build administrative systems that will perform this function without regard to the moral worth of the administrator and be of greater service to our fellow citizens.

What is also worrying is to see religion's noble goals being used to justify evil and cowardly means. It is used, for example, to glorify violence, which is something that ISIS's religious propaganda does all the time. And it can be used to cover up another kind of violence – the violence of bribery, corruption and exploitation. It is also a kind of psychological violence that we do to each other when we enforce religious standards on each other to the point where we monitor each other's mental states searching eagerly for moral weakness.

Tolerance vs. Violence

ISIS and other movements are reading history incorrectly and selectively when they claim to be the modern successors of the early Muslims. There is no doubting the power of the claim that they make. Let me focus on ISIS for a moment. Although both ISIS and the Muslim Brotherhood are Islamist movements, and fundamentally hostile to the kind of Arab society that I want to see, ISIS is more worrying for me than the Muslim Brotherhood. Why? The Muslim Brotherhood is a more cult-like organization, a fraternity of sorts with all sorts of tests and demonstrations of absolute loyalty to a religious-administrative leadership. It is a closed system that is mired in its own mythmaking and worldview. The Muslim Brotherhood is a modern hierarchy that is not reflected in the early history of Islam.

ISIS, on the other hand, is an open system. It is violent and makes an appeal to the basic elements of Islamic history. ISIS intends to replicate the spread of Islam by the sword throughout the region – in a kind of replay of 7th century history. It is a seductive approach that makes use of many commonly held references. It claims the forms of ancient Islamic history for itself in a way that many Muslims recognize, including me.

ISIS recalls the Caliphs and the battles where so many early Muslims proved themselves or sacrificed themselves to defeat the enemies of Islam. ISIS appeals to this sense of re-enactment and this is where its true danger lies. They have articulated and referenced a misleading and one-dimensional narrative that, unfortunately, has wide purchase in our region. Why? Because of institutional pressure that refuses to examine and re-examine the implications of poorly understood beliefs about our religion, our history, our present societies and the ways in which we can improve our lives.

Here, we Sunni Muslims need to ask ourselves some critical questions: Why would the form of an Islamic State and the declaration of a Caliphate so excite certain populations on social media? Do they know what they are excited about? Do they understand the difference between the form of an announced Caliphate and the substance of daily murder in the name of our dear religion? Do they realize that ISIS would likely behead them if they were under its rule?

Do they know enough history to realize that in the time of the actual Caliphate, the Caliph Yazid was said to spend his evenings in long and friendly discussions with his Christian

Minister, who later became a Christian saint? Or that the Caliph al-Mansur sought advice from Hindu astronomers before choosing the time to lay the foundation stone of Baghdad?

ISIS's so-called Islamic State is a perversion of history – but it is not a completely alien proposition. The set of actions ISIS has taken, and the set of references they make, are very well known in the Arab world - at the very least. And that makes it particularly dangerous. This is where our religious authorities need to step up and devise narratives that attract a new generation of young Arab Muslims. Let me turn now to the question of those religious authorities, how they behave and how they are constituted.

The Need for New Religious Leadership

I believe in free speech: indeed, I am exercising it here. Yet there are limits to it. Religious leaders, who claim in effect to speak for God, have great power to sway people's minds, especially the minds of those who have not been taught to think for themselves. It is unconscionable in my opinion that a cleric with such authority as Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who lives in Qatar and has great influence with the Muslim Brotherhood, can be allowed to say as he did in 2009 that Hitler "put [the Jews] in their place" and that "the next time will be at the hands of the believers." In the context of Syria, though obviously the Assad regime has done many terrible things to the Syrian people, those clerics who have encouraged viciously violent Islamist groups like ISIS have done a great disservice to the Arab world and to humanity.

But perhaps militant clerics give license to these groups because of their own insecurity. Perhaps, in turn, this insecurity is a result of their apparent inability to engage with the questions thrown up by modernity, telecommunications and globalization.

One of the key problems of the Muslim Brotherhood and ISIS narratives is that they are one-dimensional, disconnected, reductive sketches of Islam's history and that of the modern world. However, this is precisely why they appeal to existentially disenfranchised young Muslims. If our traditional religious authorities are unable to recognize that their grasp of Islam's narrative in the minds of our youth is slipping, then it is for laymen and people of goodwill to take up the baton.

Today we need to think in terms of Islamic structures and institutions that are more responsive to people's existential needs; and of how they can be of service to the people, rather than how the people can be of service to their visions of glory. We need religious leaders who show a concern for the well-being of each and every individual in their community. We need a religious leadership that thinks about the modern world, that understands political science and economics, that is well-read in the social sciences, that speaks multiple languages and that looks at young Muslims, Arab or not, as individuals to be educated and cared for, not as cannon fodder in an Islamist onslaught against modernity.

Democracy oOr Inclusiveness?

I don't see democracy as the answer to the Islamists – and would rather focus on inclusion instead. Here's why.

When I saw the protests in Tahrir Square in 2011, and protests against Ben Ali in Tunisia, and uprisings against Gaddafi in Libya, I and many of my friends wanted to believe. I wanted to believe, as the Western press did, that these protests were an expression of the noble aspirations of the Arab people, a flowering of the demand for freedom by the oppressed of the region, and the end of the Arab exclusion from history.

Now in 2014, we see that Tunisia is unsettled and that the question of Islamist control of government is still undecided. Libya is in great trouble with the proliferation of arms and militias threatening the unity of the state. Egypt experienced its non-coup and is at the heart of the battle between an ideological Islamist worldview and a worldview that is more inclusive in scope. Yemen does not make the headlines these days, but the economy is suffering tremendously and various low level conflicts continue to tear at the fabric of the country. Syria is the shame of the Arab world with over 200,000 dead and a merciless and brutal civil war that has morphed into the specter of radical and violent religious extremists dominating more and more territory.

What has gone wrong?

First, despite the virtues of democracy, it can be divisive – much more so when it is coupled with Islamism. It can be a puzzle to people new to democracy to understand that winning the election does not mean that the minority has no further role to play and no rights that remain. Many Islamists will welcome democratic elections on the basis that we are all Muslim societies and that therefore the most Muslim of parties will win. And win again, and again and again. The point of designing political systems that are genuinely just and stable involves the expression of wider and deeper principles such as the protection of all, winners and losers, majorities and minorities, men and women – so that the chance of renewal always remains a possibility, and so that people can still live in peace and security irrespective of their personal religious beliefs.

Islamist election winners in Egypt and Iraq were not willing to make any such concession. Yet in our society, which is still divided along regional, tribal, ethnic and religious lines, there are many minorities. Faced with the threat of suffering from arbitrary power, many are willing to fight when confronted with the prospect of democracy, as they would fight any change that may threaten their freedom. It is no coincidence that ISIS was born in Iraq, which is an electoral democracy of just this kind – one which is run by Shi'a Islamists. Those who benefit from dividing the country on religious lines, and can then appeal to their home base for votes,

have no interest in treating citizens on an equal basis regardless of their religion. It is partly because of Islamist movements that democracy in the Arab world will be so difficult to implement.

It is also because of the lack of institutions that can rise above partisan politics. When every Minister who is elected, in a country like Iraq, evicts the existing staff and replaces them with his or her own partisans, the stakes in an election are raised very high. Given the social, cultural and educational realities of our part of the world, many of us recognize that an introduction of electoral democracy that precedes the development of effective, impartial institutions may exacerbate tribal and sectarian divisions. Even the voting in something as apparently innocuous as a regional poetry competition in the UAE often takes place along tribal lines. This does not mean that western style democratic processes will never happen; simply that overnight changes in civil relationships are fraught with dangers.

On the other hand, the Islamists demand that we all obey the utterances of a shadowy Spiritual Guide and his business-savvy henchman. Islam is the Answer to all questions, and I emphasize this ALL Questions - and the conveyor of those Answers is a person whose infallibility is never in doubt. What happens when such a movement is elected? How can it ever be expected to yield up power peacefully? When is the last time that any movement which saw itself as having a God-given right to rule, stood down in favour of an allegedly "godless" opposition?

So the challenge is to find a way to include all citizens and give them a voice, without risking the ripping apart of the social fabric.

Good Government, Technology, and Unfettered Inquiry

I'd like to address the issue of good government: how to deliver jobs and security. Let me address this first through the lens of technology.

The Arab and Islamic world has an illustrious history with technology. The Muslim world produced some remarkable technological achievements, in the areas of mathematics, astronomy, geography and medicine.

Modern-day Islamist movements are not as open-minded. They want to accept the technological product but refuse the premises upon which the technology came into existence. We are always in search of a pure and idealized past where ethics, morality and the path to the Good Life were clearly set out and where the right choices were always clear.

Introducing an environment that would allow for us to flourish technologically means that we would have to open the doors to inquiry. And the best inquiry is free inquiry. Given that our current theological masters are not ready yet to face the puzzling questions of science and

modernity, they prefer to dictate against the inquiry, but to accept the product of the inquiry. And thus we have the injunction against innovation, invention, importation of foreign and alien ideas. What is the area of application of this injunction? Who decides its limits? The reality is that this injunction may be of limited scope in theory. The way it is taken up by various groups in the Muslim world is less selective.

This is a point I would like to emphasize, as it is critical for the future of the Arab world. Technology is the product of inquiry and is premised on the creation of a free space of inquiry. Without the freedom to inquire, to question, and to challenge, we have no ability to create. However, inquiry cannot be limited to those areas permitted by religious authority. Inquiry quickly escapes its master's grip – just as radicalism does. This inquiry is limited more by religious injunction and ideologists of religion than political censorship.

Does this attempt to limit our interaction with the 'immoral' world of inquiry mean that we will be saved from evil? No. In fact, we are doubly disadvantaged.

Firstly, it puts us in a place where we will find our lives produced and manipulated by other people's design of technology.

And secondly, we lack the ability to create it ourselves. We want the product but reject the principles that led to the creation of the product.

The spiritual guide of the Muslim Brotherhood said recently that God had produced the West to provide Muslims with technology. And thus there was no need for us to create our own. At the very least, this is an incoherent approach.

It seems that when it is a Western invention, we do not have the moral burden of the consequences of the product. We are merely its weak and weakened object.

What does make sense is that this approach will increase the tension in the Arab and Muslim worlds between those who insist on going backwards in time, and those who are in the present time. This tension is reflected in the battle between radicalism and progressive thinking; and between those who want time to stop still, and those who recognize that life is about mastering change. This is not a moral issue; it is simply the logic of contrasting existences.

As well as physical technology, let me speak briefly about political technology.

You will be pleased to know that the time I have spent in Russia has been put to good use. As I am out of the way of home politics, I enjoy the privilege of letting my mind wander.

The Russians often refer to political technologies in their public discourse. This is interpreted in the West as a euphemism for political manipulation. This may or may not be the case, but it

did prompt me to think of political systems as intentional systems – by which I mean systems that are intended to produce certain outcomes.

So rather than dividing the world up into those that are democratic and those that are authoritarian, I began to see political systems more in terms of the outcomes they were likely, or, in some cases, guaranteed to produce.

So one interpretation of the demonstrations in Tahrir Square is that the protesters were demanding political change – the fall of Mubarak, democratic elections, the victory of youth over age.

Another view of the events says that people were demanding firstly, social justice, secondly, an end to corruption and thirdly, jobs.

What they got was the Muslim Brotherhood.

I was puzzled by the enthusiasm that the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood demonstrated in the pursuit of political power in the 2012 Presidential elections. I simply could not understand what they wanted to do with political power in case they won. They already had tremendous social and cultural power through their compelling though reductive and vague narrative that Islam is the Answer to any problem facing individuals or the nation.

In order to better understand this matter, I looked at the election platform of Morsi and compared his platform to those of other parties. My reading of the Muslim Brotherhood's agenda was the following:

1. They wanted to correct the moral state of the Egyptian people first, and then that of others later.

2. They wanted to enforce Sharia law.

3. They wanted to root out corruption.

4. They wanted to ensure social justice – however vaguely defined.

How did they propose to achieve all of these aims? The moral state was to be corrected with personal piety, Sharia law was to be enforced by a pious Parliament, corruption was to be eradicated by the piety of government administrators, and social justice was to be the outcome of overall and generalized piety.

This is not a caricature of their approach. It is the legacy of years of insisting that Islam is the Answer, without delving into how and why piety, Sharia law, prayer, devotion and the range of religious exercises that are central to our lives as Muslims, was going to translate into

administrative and economic excellence. Moral excellence, perhaps, but in a state of failed economics and disastrous public services.

In conclusion, piety and holiness are key to our lives as Muslims, but they are not systems or technologies of governance.

The UAE Model

Having spoken about five themes that must be emphasized in the fight against radical Islamism, I would like to say something about my own country and its political system.

With the events of the Arab Spring and the loud calls for immediate democratization or Islamization, many of us in the UAE asked ourselves the following question: did it make sense to risk or sacrifice what we have achieved up until now, for an idealized democratic polity, or for an Islamist state, either of which could unleash destructive forces that we know are within us?

Why do I say this? For two reasons:

1. In establishing the Emirates, our leadership overcame divisions and antagonisms that were deeply rooted in tribal, nomadic culture. These features of our society are never too far from the surface. This is a feature common to all Arab societies. The fact that we overcame these obstacles of distrust and competition for limited resources and built an economic success in our region is to be commended.

Once upon a time, we in the Emirates could have been like Libya today – a war zone of militias and Islamists and smugglers and terrorists. But we in the UAE are the product of a judicious understanding of what we have within our historical tribal selves and what we could become.

Changing our system by a radical reordering of existing relationships is highly likely to lead to people falling back on traditional allegiances of family, tribe and blood to the detriment of the social cohesion we have today.

2. We also know what happened in country after country in the Arab world. Extremists are better at grabbing power than moderates who take an accommodating system for granted.

Rather than being radical and revolutionary, our approach has been to uncover our own potential, and to reveal to ourselves what is already present.

I will go further, and propose that key features of the UAE system can form the basis of positive development in other parts of the Arab world. Why? Let me return to the five themes with which I began this talk: morality, tolerance, moderation, inclusivity and technology.

Firstly, I would say that in contrast to the Islamists' relentless and often hypocritical focus on moral virtue, we recognize human weakness. Though we set high standards for ourselves, we recognize that perfection is an attribute of Allah and not people. There is a remarkable readiness to forgive errors and move on. This translates into the rise of the entrepreneurial class amongst Emirati youth, as well as a lenient approach to other people's moral conduct. We believe these matters are a choice for the individual. We do not engage in moral witch-hunts.

Secondly, I would say that the UAE's rulers are decidedly tolerant Muslims and definitely not Islamists. The Islamist assumes that he is right and that you are wrong. The President and founder of the UAE, HH Sheikh Zayed, God rest his soul, made clear his opposition to movements like IS:

"In these times, we see around us violent men who claim to talk on behalf of Islam. These people have nothing whatsoever that connects them to Islam. They are apostates and criminals." He also rejected the Muslim Brotherhood's agenda. He met with the Brotherhood's leaders in the 1970s and refused their proposal to set up an office in the capital Abu Dhabi. When asked why he responded: "If you are the Muslim Brothers, then who are we?" In our approach, all are included - as long as they include others. This key feature translates into the allied notion of tolerance. If we are prone to error, and we do not exclude those who are different, this expresses itself as a deep tolerance and acceptance of other ethnicities and other faiths. We have over 190 nationalities in the UAE and over seventy churches. Mosques are full and churches are full.

Thirdly, the UAE takes action to suppress religious hatred and extremism by maintaining rigorous controls on the content of clergy's sermons. It also hosts the International Centre of Excellence against Violent Extremism ("Hedayah") in Abu Dhabi. The Centre is engaged in capacity-building and best-practice exchanges in countering all forms of violent extremism. In order to further promote peace in Muslim communities, the UAE announced on 19 July 2014 the establishment of the "Muslim Council of Elders," an independent, international body of scholars from Muslim countries, promoting the core tolerant values and practices of our faith.

Fourthly, our system is both consensus and leadership driven. The UAE does have some explicitly democratic mechanisms allowing for formal voting and voicing of opinion. However, more significantly, the UAE has social mechanisms and platforms for debate, analysis, polling, idea-testing and consensus-building. These are not immediately visible to the outsider, but they are there and they exist. Going forward, there will inevitably be a need to

further develop and refine these indigenous systems of signaling. And that will be done, and done by us. Consensus is allied with leadership. Historically, the leaders of the tribes of the region were men who had proven themselves with natural leadership abilities. It is the combination of communal consensus and strong, decisive leadership that we move as a society. And as a society, we face the uncertainty of the future, not as a source of anxiety and an excuse for autocracy, but rather as a challenge and with determination.

Fifthly, we are not afraid of technology. We focus on getting things done, in a manner that can be measured in the welfare of our people. This means that we focus on technological innovations like:

1. Rule of law.

2. Efficient judicial systems.

3. Administrative effectiveness, measured encouraged and rewarded by the state.

4. Schools and a broad education.

5. A functioning and adequate health system.

6. Airlines that connect us with the world.

7. Government as a platform provider.

8. An economy that is open to outside investment, and is freeing itself from dependence on oil.

These are some of the key features that explain the success of the UAE over the last forty odd years. The first step involves leadership with a vision for what is possible, and the second step is the vital work of building and reinforcing trust between key members of society. This work of trust building cannot be underestimated. We want our fellow Arabs to engage in the same step-by-step approach that we have followed always reaffirming and demonstrating goodwill to each other.

Toward a New Arab World

In my analysis, I tentatively put forward the idea that we in the Arab world are pursued by a variety of fundamentalisms, by rigid ideas and preconceived notions of what people are like, and of what the outcomes should be. And it is these dogmas that distract us from building our societies today, as well as tempt us with instantaneous Utopias that we may want but need to work towards.

ISIS is the proof that we all needed in Sunni Islam to recognize that there are, and must be, different interpretations and that laymen of goodwill are obliged to enter the fray. Laymen need to wrestle back Islam from the embrace of violence. ISIS makes a mockery of all the values that we believe and know Islam to embrace.

There are three thoughts I want you to take away today:

1. We in the United Arab Emirates believe wholeheartedly that the Arab world has the capacity, and the knowledge to create a path of intellectual and economic productivity. And that violence is the least effective means of achieving what the silent majority wants – an Arab world that is at peace with itself and confident in its position in the community of nations.

2. Most young Arabs prefer our model to that of the Islamists. The 2014 Arab Youth Survey showed – not for the first time – that when asked what country their countries should emulate, Arab youth name the UAE above all other countries – above the US and UK, above Turkey and Iran.

3. We Muslims, and the Muslim communities of the Arab world in particular, have within us the capacity to reformulate our approach to ourselves and to the rest of the world, and thereby to share the beauty of our great religion with all.

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THE HISTORY OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE PROCESS

By Shibley Telhami

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This essay is based on a lecture he delivered to FPRI's Butcher History Institute on "Teaching about Israel and Palestine," October 25-26, 2014. The Butcher History Institute is FPRI's professional development program for high school teachers from all around the country.

The Arab-Israeli peace process is a broad subject; therefore, this paper will briefly touch on some of the major peace agreements and negotiations that have taken place. It should be noted that as of today—and based on public opinion polls that I have conducted—most Israelis, Palestinians, and Arabs outside of the Palestinian territories believe that peace will never happen. This has resulted in a real problem, where people in the region no longer take the term "peace process" seriously. In order to understand how we got to this point, we need to look back at the history of the peace process on both the Israeli-Palestinian front and also on the Arab-Israeli front.

There are two important wars that help frame the Arab-Israeli conflict better than any other: the 1967 and 1973 wars. These two wars highlight the regional recognition of the necessity of a peaceful solution and also frame American diplomacy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The 1967 War was a major war between Israel and its Arab neighbors. It resulted in an impressive Israeli victory that led to the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and also to the loss of Egyptian and Syrian territories. At the time, most Arabs expected that this war would result in an Arab victory because Arab nationalism, led by Egypt, was strong, and also because Arabs viewed Israel as a temporary historical entity that was bound to disappear. Arabs states fighting in that war suffered a humiliating defeat in 1967 and were faced with the reality that Israel might not be as temporary as they had assumed. The 1967 War not only established

Israel's presence in the region but it also transitioned the sponsorship of Israel from Europe to the United States. Since then, the United States has been the principal military backer of Israel.

Six years later, Israel and the Arabs were once again engaged in warfare with one another in the 1973 War. Until then, no one expected the Egyptians and the Syrians to launch this war, let alone fight effectively after the devastating defeat in 1967. The Israelis had assumed that they were superior militarily. They also believed that the Arabs would not be able to recover from the 1967 War so quickly, especially after losing a large amount of territory. The Arabs' impressive performance in 1973 brought more realism into the Israeli position and demonstrated the need for diplomacy to address the conflict.

Up until the 1973 War, the United States and Israel both thought that the Arabs were not in a position to threaten Israel. They had little incentive to reach out to the Arab nations or to encourage serious diplomacy. The United States did try to reach out through the Rogers Plan of 1970, but that plan received little support from the Nixon White House. Even Henry Kissinger was reluctant to respond to Anwar Sadat, the new president of Egypt in 1970, when he reached out to him because he did not take him seriously. As a result of the 1973 War, the United States found itself more directly involved with the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In 1973, there was a profound change in the way the United States began defining its interests toward the Arab-Israeli peace conflict. On one hand, in the 1973 War, the United States was Israel's main backer and wanted to protect Israeli interests. On the other hand, this war generated the Arab oil embargo, which greatly impacted the United States' economy. The Arabs used the oil embargo to encourage the United States to pressure Israel into withdrawing from the territories captured in 1967. The 1973 War and the subsequent oil embargo placed a major strain on the United States' interests in the Middle East because supporting Israel came into direct conflict with protecting the flow of oil to the West at reasonable prices.

The 1973 War was not used to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, but instead kicked in an American diplomacy focused on defusing the immediate crisis. To this date, there is a whole debate about whether Israel's insecurity and the domestic backing of the President of the United States in times of war should have been exploited to develop a more comprehensive peace plan. Others believe that a ceasefire would have been the best way to delay the possibility of revived conflict.

Regardless of the options pursued immediately after the war, the American conclusion was that mediation between the Israelis and the Arabs was the only way to resolve the conflict while simultaneously protecting American interests in the region; in essence, diplomacy was not only to resolve the conflict between Israel and the Arabs, but also the derivative conflict among US interests in the region. Thus, Arab-Israeli peace became an axiom of American foreign policy and consequently spurred American active diplomacy in the region. This trend

continued with Henry Kissinger's diplomatic efforts to produce disengagement agreements with Egypt, Israel, and Syria and planted the seeds for what came a few years later in the Camp David Accords of 1978.

The conclusion that Arab-Israeli peace was an American interest was shared by both Presidents Nixon and Carter and also by members of Carter's administration such as Zbigniew Brzezinski and William Quandt. However, the initial impetus for diplomacy was to have bilateral agreements between Israel and Egypt.

Following the disengagement agreements mediated by Kissinger, the Geneva process was commenced. The aim of this process was to produce a comprehensive peace deal whereby Israel would negotiate with the Arab states. The Geneva process was unsuccessful for many reasons: the Israelis were uncomfortable with it, there were disagreements on who would represent the Palestinians, if the Israelis would even recognize the Palestinians, and the Arabs did not see eye to eye with each other. While in principle the Geneva negotiations seemed like a good idea, the likelihood that they would succeed was small. It was only after Anwar Sadat, the president of Egypt, decided that he was going to break the deadlock and go to Jerusalem and speak at the Knesset in 1977 that a major breakthrough occurred in the peace process.

Sadat was invited by the Prime Minister of Israel, Menachem Begin, to deliver his famous speech at the Knesset. This speech was monumental because Egypt was always Israel's main enemy. Delivering this speech was a dramatic move by Sadat in showing his acceptance of Israel. Sadat's speech reshuffled the deck in the Middle East and with it there was an American embrace of Egyptian-Israeli peace. However, this speech did not come as a surprise for the United States, especially since President Carter gave his support to Sadat in his pursuit of this particular path. It was this move from Sadat that ultimately led to the Camp David Accords of 1978.

It has been said that the Camp David Accords of 1978 were an example of negotiations between the Israelis and the Arabs that were successful. A testament to the negotiations' success is that they have lasted throughout all of the recent changes in Egypt. It is important to look at the historical context behind the Camp David Accords of 1978 because it is central in determining the prospects of success and failure. Take Anwar Sadat in this situation for example: Sadat wanted to get his territory back and wanted to advance the interests of Egypt. He wasn't doing it simply because he loved peace. This is the same president who waged a surprise war in 1973 and was now waging the battle of peace. Therefore, when you look at these acts in a historical perspective, you might gain some insight into prospects of success and failure of American diplomacy. Comparing the 1978 Camp David negotiations with the 2000 American mediation efforts between Israel and the Palestinians in the same location provides helpful insights.

The Camp David Accords of 1978 came at a time when the United States was seeking an agreement with Egypt—even aside from an Israeli-Egyptian treaty--because it wanted to gain influence over the Soviet Union in the region during the Cold War. The United States had a strategic interest in seeing an agreement and thus had an incentive to be an even-handed mediator between Israel and Egypt. This did not mean that the United States was less supportive of Israel, just that it needed to take into account what Egypt wanted because Egypt had leverage. Egypt had more leverage with the Israelis than the Palestinians because Egypt was a large country with an influential military power. In addition, Egypt had far more weight with the United States given that the bilateral agreement was important. In fact, Israeli Defense Minister, Ezer Weizman, wrote in his memoirs that he was worried about Camp David. Weizman was concerned for Israel because he believed that Egyptian and American strategic interests were closer to each other than Israeli and American interests and that Israel might be cornered in these negotiations. This was the opposite of the situation in the 2000 Camp David Summit when the Palestinians thought that Ehud Barak, Prime Minister of Israel, and President Clinton would corner them in those negotiations.

Sadat believed that history was on America's side and he wanted to consolidate his strategic relationship with the United States. Therefore, he was prepared to go to Camp David and was prepared to fail as long as he was able to maintain his relationship with the United States at the expense of Israel. It can be argued that both Sadat and Begin were prepared to fail in order to preserve their relationship with the United States. Jimmy Carter was aware of both Sadat and Begin's intentions, which has been confirmed in recently released declassified CIA documents. These documents demonstrate that Carter was prepared to play the necessary cards to get each party to move forward. For example, when Menachem Begin was not compromising, particularly on the issue of settlements in the Sinai, Carter threatened to tell the American people that he was to blame for the failure of the negotiations. And then later, when Anwar Sadat packed his bags in an attempt to leave and declare the negotiations a failure, Carter went to his cabin and threatened to tell the American people that Sadat was the reason they failed. In the end, Sadat and Begin both stayed and came to an agreement.

This is the opposite of what happened at Camp David in 2000 when President Clinton brought the Israelis and the Palestinians together in an attempt to reach an agreement. Clinton came into office after the Cold War, during an era of Pax-Americana. The United States had just won the 1991 Iraq War and was considered the only superpower in the world, following the end of the Cold War. Clinton's agenda was to focus on the economy when he came into office, not on foreign affairs. He didn't particularly care about the Israeli-Palestinian question. However, he did care about the supporters of Israel, who were an important part of the constituency for him domestically. This angered a lot of Arabs who believed that he was ignoring the issue of Arab-Israeli peace. Though Clinton continued on the path of the Madrid process started by his predecessor, the process was stalled. He did not focus on the issue with

any urgency until the Israelis and Palestinians asked him to sponsor the Oslo Accords in 1993, after secretly reaching out to one another to conclude this deal. Clinton agreed to sponsor the Oslo Accords because he believed the Israelis wanted it and also because it was a nice opportunity for the United States. Part of the reason for the failings at Camp David in 2000 was President Clinton's view of Arab-Israeli peace principally as a humanitarian gesture—not as a vital American strategic interest. His administration prepared poorly for the negotiations, with little inter-agency coordination, and made decisions at the end without much consideration for the broad strategic consequences. The issue became somewhat personal for Clinton, but there is no indication that it ranked highly as a strategic priority for the United States. Although that was not the principal reason for failure, it certainly was one that contributed to it.

The Camp David Accords were significant in that they were successful from the point of view of the Israelis and the Egyptians, they transformed strategic priorities, and they reshaped the distribution of power. They also reduced the chance of a major Arab-Israeli war because Egypt was the most effective Arab party in any conceivable war. And yet, there were also negative results. For example, many hoped that other Arab countries would join the project, but they did not. Egypt was thrown out of the Arab League and even the Saudis who were its allies abandoned it. Egypt was seen to have betrayed the Arabs, which hardened Arab positions and brought about the "Arab rejection front." On the Israeli side, Camp David toughened Israeli positions because it reduced the incentive to compromise on the West Bank, which was the cornerstone of any long-term peace with the Arab states. Consequently, the Israelis held onto the West Bank in a way that went beyond the fact that they continued to build Israeli settlements there. To make things worse, Camp David was principally a bilateral agreement between Egypt and Israel and although it produced an autonomy agreement for the Palestinians at Camp David, there was no link between the two. Even though there was a short-term agreement on a settlement freeze that was disputed by the Israelis and the Americans, there was no agreement on a long-term settlement freeze in the West Bank. The absence of a connection failed to produce an incentive for additional peaceful moves from either side. This was the case until the first Intifada in 1987, when Palestinians who were dissatisfied with the occupation took matters into their own hands. It was this act that finally created an incentive for diplomacy.

When the United States went to the Europeans and the Arabs and asked them to help dislodge Iraq from Kuwait in 1991, it was asked to promise to start genuine efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict immediately after the war. This led to the Madrid Conference of 1991. This conference was put together by the Bush administration through the efforts of Secretary of State James Baker in Madrid, Spain in an attempt to bring the Arabs and the Israelis together. The Madrid Conference was a major breakthrough, even though it did not lead to any major agreement. At the time, Israel had a hardline government led by Yitzhak

Shamir, who did not want to go into a negotiated settlement. During this time, the Bush administration came out of the Iraq war strong and had enough influence to manipulate Shamir into going to Madrid. In addition, the Syrians, who had initially rejected negotiations with the Israelis, were brought in to talk with the Israelis. In the end, it was the Palestinians' participation within the Jordanian delegation that became the avenue for real Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, even though it was not formalized in Madrid. Overall, the Madrid Conference did not succeed. This is partly due to the fact that the new Clinton administration, which succeeded Bush, focused on domestic issues—and also because the Palestinians were represented by the Jordanian delegation, meaning the Israelis did not have the opportunity to speak directly with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

The Oslo Accords in 1993 resulted from the lack of progress of the Madrid process. But the Oslo Accords had their own flaws. In spite of this, they were hugely important, not so much because of their flawed details, but because the main breakthrough was psychological. With these accords, there was a mutual recognition from Yitzhak Rabin, the Prime Minister of Israel and Yasser Arafat, the chairman of the PLO. That recognition was important not only as a breakthrough that defined new opportunities, but it was also important psychologically across the board, especially in so far as it generated the perception that peace was inevitable at the time—something that is essential for successful negotiations and building coalitions.

One of the problems with the Oslo agreements was initially thought to be one its strengths: postponing all major issues of contention—such as borders, Jerusalem, refugees, etc.—till the end. In the meanwhile, it was hoped that there would be confidence-building measures that would make it easier to resolve these issue. But this ended up being more a detriment than an asset. For one thing, delay was bound to give opportunity to opponents on both sides to try to derail the process. More centrally, nobody wanted to make a compromise for fear that it would result in paying a political price in the final status; why pay a heavy political price on a small intermediate step when you need all the political leverage to make the final deal? That fear was evident more than ever when Ehud Barak became Prime Minister of Israel in 1999 and contributed to the failings of the negotiations.

Now, let us discuss briefly the Obama administration's role in the peace process. Obama appointed George Mitchell to the post of United States Special Envoy to the Middle East almost on day one. However, American diplomacy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict under Obama has not been successful for many reasons. One reason is Obama's failure to demonstrate that he is prepared to pay a price. The second reason is the broken Palestinian and Israeli political scenes that Obama faced as he entered office: Palestinians were divided between Hamas and Fatah and between the West Bank and Gaza. And in Israel, elections resulted in a new hardline Israeli government. In addition, the Arab uprisings that occurred in

2011 transformed Obama's political priorities in the region, meaning that the Arab-Israeli conflict was not at the forefront of his priorities.

Where does this leave us now? First of all, people on all sides have never been more pessimistic about the prospects of peace; most don't even believe that peace is going to happen. Secondly, Arabs are preoccupied with the massive Arab uprisings and their aftermath; therefore, Arab-Israeli peace is not the central issue for many. Thirdly, the Obama administration is currently preoccupied with more than it can deal with both globally and in the Middle East. However, Secretary of State John Kerry still thinks that he might have an opportunity to move forward before the end of the administration. But barring some new development that creates urgency or new opportunities that shift the strategic priorities, it is hard to see how the current environment can produce an agreement.

Let me end with a thought—one that you are free to interpret optimistically, despite the gloomy picture that I managed to draw. Most profound change in history comes unexpectedly, and when there seems to be nothing but bad options—especially the status quo itself—things often turn on a dime. This was certainly one of the lessons of both the surprising 1973 war, and of Sadat's shocking journey to Jerusalem.

ISIS AND OIL: IRAQ'S PERFECT STORM

By Frank R. Gunter

January 2015

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The combination of the ISIS insurgency and low oil prices are producing an economic shock unprecedented in Iraq's troubled history. The ongoing conflict will require a sharp rise in security expenditures at the same time that government oil export revenues are collapsing, forcing the government into deficit spending. This deficit spending, combined with a loss in reserves from the Central Bank of Iraq, calls into question the much-vaunted stability of the Iraqi dinar.

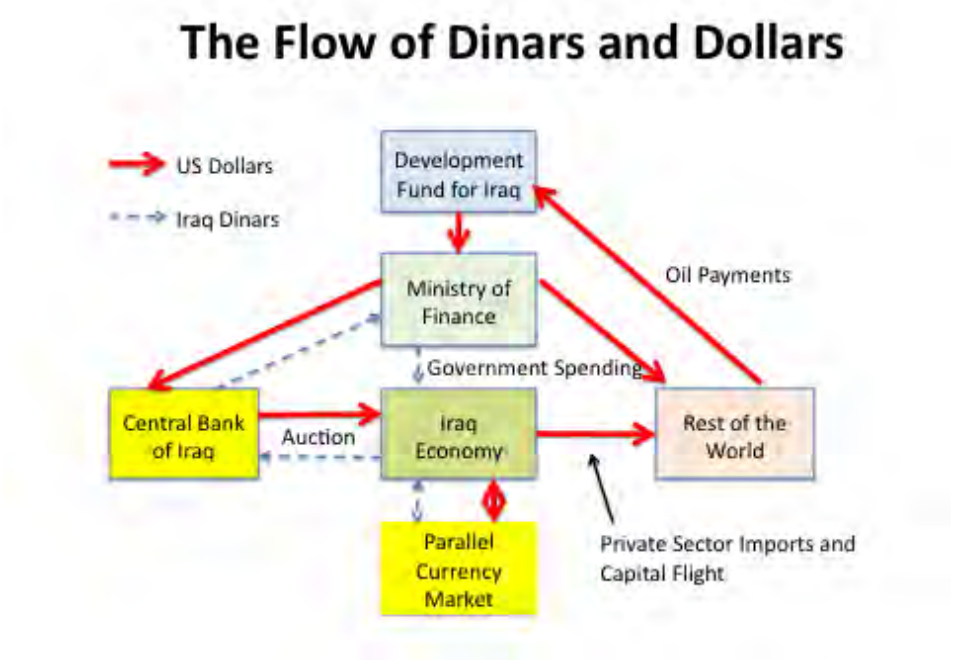
In the eleven years since the U.S.-led invasion overthrew Saddam Hussein, Iraq has faced brutal conflict and sharp drops in oil prices but – until mid-2014 – never both at the same time. Following the destruction of the Golden Mosque, Iraq descended into what many analysts saw as a full-fledged civil war in 2006-7. However, not only was a large proportion of Iraqi security expenses paid for by the United States but also world oil prices rose sharply. Combined with a gradual increase in oil export volume, this resulted in a substantial growth in government revenues. And when oil prices collapsed in 2009, the level of violence and associated expenses was the lowest since before the 2003 invasion. The recent combination of an acceleration in violence and an oil price collapse is unprecedented.

Dollar Flows in Iraq

The flow of dinars and dollars within Iraq is critical to dealing with the ongoing crisis and yet little understood even within the country. The figure below illustrates the pattern of these flows. As is well known, the primary source of government revenues – over 95% – is from oil exports. For over a decade, the dollars earned from these exports have been paid into the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI), which is held by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. The primary reason for having oil export payments paid to the DFI rather than directly to

Iraq's Ministry of Finance (MoF) is to avoid confiscation of these funds by foreign courts in settlement of Saddam-era lawsuits.

Upon request, dollars from Iraq's oil exports are transferred from the DFI to the MoF. At this point, a divergence occurs. Over half – about 60% in 2013 – of the dollars flow out again to the rest of the world as payments for government imports, debt service, and miscellaneous transactions. The remaining dollars are sold to the Central Bank of Iraq (CBI) for dinars at a rate of 1166 Iraqi Dinars per US Dollar. The MoF then uses these dinars to pay for the Government of Iraq (GoI) expenditures in the Iraq economy such as salaries, pensions, social safety net, security, etc. The dollars accumulated by the CBI through these dinar sales are, of course, the nation's international reserves.



However, many of these dollars immediately flow out again. The CBI holds daily auctions to provide dollars to the Iraq economy. Financial institutions buy dollars from the CBI in order to provide them to individuals and organizations that want dollars as a more secure savings asset, to facilitate domestic transactions, to purchase legal and illegal imports, and for capital flight. This demand for dollars is quite large. For example, during the first 14 auction days of December 2014, CBI dollar sales totaled $2.25 billion. Those Iraq individuals or organizations that are forbidden by the CBI to directly access the currency auction must purchase dollars at a premium in the parallel currency market. On December 18, 2014, the exchange rate in the

parallel market was 1199 Iraqi Dinars per US Dollar – about 3% higher than at the CBI auction.

In every year but one over the last decade, the inflow of dollars to the CBI from the MoF exceeded the outflow of dollars through currency auctions resulting in an increase in the country's international reserves. For example, in 2013 the MoF sold about $55 billion to the CBI while about $53 billion flowed out again through the currency auctions resulting in about a $2 billion increase in international reserves. The large increase in international reserves since 2004 has been the major support for the country's enviable exchange rate stability. However, the results for 2014 were grim.

Because of political disputes, Iraq never passed a 2014 budget. Instead, government expenditures in 2014 were based on an arguably unconstitutional extrapolation of the 2013 budget. And the Government of Iraq (GoI) has continuously delayed even a partial accounting of 2014 revenues and expenditures. However, recent data from the International Monetary Fund support the view that Iraq's fiscal and monetary situation is deteriorating. At the same time that oil export earnings are declining, GoI security-related dollar imports have increased dramatically. One effect has been on fiscal reserves held at the DFI, which have fallen from almost $18 billion at the end of 2012, and $6.5 billion at the end of 2013, to about $4 billion at the end of November 2014 (IMF Press Release 14/560, 9 December 2014). Equally worrisome is the drop in the country's international reserves.

From $77 billion at the end of 2013, the international reserves held by the CBI fell to about $67 billion at the end of November 2014. This is only the second year-over-year fall in international reserves in the last decade. In the absence of reliable data from the GoI, there are two possibilities. Either there has been a decrease in MoF sales of dollars to the CBI and/or a substantial increase in dollar auction sales to financial institutions. However, through November 2014, auction sales of dollars by the CBI have totaled about $47.4 billion, which is roughly in line with 2013 dollar sales. Therefore, the cause of the drop in Iraq's international reserves is more likely a result of the collapse in oil export revenues combined with increasing security-related dollar expenditures by the Iraqi government and, possibly, accelerating capital flight. Thus in 2015, Iraq not only faces a fiscal crisis from falling oil export revenues but also a monetary crisis because of the loss of international reserves. The fiscal crisis might be best understood by distinguishing between the "break even" price of oil and the "crisis" price of oil.

Break Even and Crisis Prices

Despite the fact that the country's 2015 fiscal year starts this month, the crucial assumptions underlying the budget are uncertain. Over the last several months, no sooner has the GoI

announced a planning price for oil for the 2015 budget then world prices have fallen below this level. The most recent announcement on December 25th was for a $102.5 billion budget based on an annual average oil price of $60 per barrel resulting in a large deficit (Gulf Research Center, December 25, 2014). Expenditures of $102.5 billion in 2015 means that the GoI expects to spend almost $22 billion less than its actual expenditures in 2013! Where will the cuts occur? The drop in oil prices to similar levels in 2009 provides insight into both the reactions of the GoI and the effects on the Iraqi economy.

In 2009, as total revenues decreased by about 33%, salary and pension expenditures *increased* by about the same percentage. This necessitated sharp cuts in the other major expenditure categories, safety net transfers and public investment, in order to reduce expenditures. The remaining deficit was financed through the sale of GoI treasury bills and the MoF "clawing back" unspent government funds from the state owned banks. The economic effects of the draconian cuts in public investment were severe and long-lasting. Since public investment accounts for over 90% of Iraq's fixed capital formation, the cuts in the investment budget caused most economic development activities to grind to a stop. Work on improving roads, increasing electricity generation, opening schools and clinics, increasing access to clean water, and so on was abandoned until oil prices finally recovered in 2010. And when the projects were eventually restarted, it was often discovered that previous work had to be completely redone due to looting, vandalism, environmental damage, or planned revisions. By some estimates, it was not until 2011 that public investment returned to the levels achieved at the end of 2008.

Of course, if 2015 oil prices turn out to be higher than expected, the GoI might be able to restore some of the cuts. However, rather than have the reader chase daily changes in oil price predictions, it might be more useful to consider the implications of two oil prices: the break-even price and the crisis price.

Assuming oil exports of about 3.3 million barrels per day, Iraq needs an oil price of about $80 a barrel in order to break-even and to be able to pay for its sharply reduced 2015 expenditures without running a budget deficit. An oil price this high would provide sufficient revenues to pay not only for current expenditures and security costs but also for essential infrastructure investment. Since world oil prices are already less than $60, it is extremely unlikely that Iraq will be able to break-even in 2015. But at what price of oil will the required reductions in GoI expenditures become politically destabilizing?

That depends on the crisis price of oil. The crisis price is the lowest oil price that will allow the GoI to pay salaries and pensions, purchase the necessary supplies for the police and army, maintain a minimum social safety net, pay interest on its debts, pay war reparations, and

continue the absolute minimum infrastructure maintenance and construction to allow a steady increase in the volume of oil exports. If the world price of oil falls below the crisis price for an extended period of time and other revenue sources are not available, then the necessary expenditure cuts can be expected to be politically destabilizing. In 2009, this crisis price was an estimated $50 a barrel. Therefore, while the world price of oil in 2009 was below Iraq's break-even price, it was above the crisis price.

However, in 2015, the crisis price of oil is expected to be much higher. Not only has there been a steady increase in government salaries and pensions since 2009, but also the GoI expects to sharply increase its security expenditures to fight ISIS. As a result, the 2015 crisis price of oil is an estimated $70 a barrel. Since world oil prices are expected to remain below the crisis price in 2015, the GoI faces a difficult challenge – either find another source of revenue, borrow the needed funds, or make politically unacceptable cuts in salaries or pensions. The latter option can be expected to lead to widespread political protests by government employees and retirees as well as threats of a government shutdown.

If world oil prices average $60 per barrel in 2015, then the GoI needs at least an additional $12 billion to fund its minimal crisis budget and an additional $12 billion – $24 billion in total – to rise to the break even point. While its international and domestic options to raise these funds are limited, the GoI has a high probability of funding its crisis budget. However, the GoI faces a much lower probability of being able to fund its 2015 break-even budget.

Options for international lending are limited. Government to government loans from the United States and other countries involved in the current war on ISIS are likely to face strong opposition in Washington and other world capitals. It will be argued – with an element of truth – that Iraq's budget problems are mostly self-inflicted, the result of GoI mismanagement and corruption. In addition, it will be pointed out that the U.S. and other states have already forgiven 80% or more of their Iraqi debt and that these countries have spending needs at home. Iraq's regional neighbors such as the UAE and Kuwait – who generally did not participate in the loan forgiveness program – are facing their own budget challenges resulting from the collapse in oil prices. However, it is likely that the GoI will be able to borrow several billion dollars. In addition, it appears that Kuwait has agreed to a one-year suspension of war reparations. These reparations were imposed under an agreement with the UN, where Iraq agreed to pay Kuwait 5% of its gross earnings from oil exports to compensate for the damages incurred during the Iraq invasion of Kuwait in 1990. With a world price of $60 a barrel, a one-years suspension will free up about $3.6 billion.

There are at least five other sources of funds to meet the fiscal deficit. First, the GoI can readily access the funds held at the Development Fund on Iraq that were an estimated $4

billion at the end of November 2014. Second, in 2009, the GoI was able to transfer about $7.7 billion from state-owned banks back to the MoF. These funds represented amounts that had been budgeted but not yet spent. In view of the constraints on spending in 2014, it is unlikely that more than several billion can be clawed back from state-owned banks in 2015. Third, the GoI could attempt to borrow domestically although the amount raised would probably be less than $1 billion. While there have been several bond issues since 2003, demand for such instruments is limited especially since there is no liquid secondary market for government debt. Fourth, although the country has an income tax system, tax revenues in previous years have been *de minimis*. It is unlikely that increasing the tax rate will raise substantial revenues in 2015. Finally, and most controversially, it has been proposed that the MoF obtain part of the country's $67 billion in international reserves by encouraging/forcing the CBI to buy dollar denominated bonds from the MoF. Until a few years ago, it was believed that the CBI could resist such GoI pressure to monetize its debt, but former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki was able to remove the head of the CBI without the approval of the National Council of Representatives and replace him with a Maliki loyalist. This event severely undermined the perceived independence of the CBI.

Adding together these various sources of funds, the GoI should be able to raise or borrow enough to pay not only for its crisis budget in 2015 but also move part of the way towards its break-even budget. However, if sub-$60 per barrel oil prices continue into 2016, then the GoI will face an even wider budget gap while having exhausted its borrowing options. It may be impossible for the GoI to even pay for its crisis budget in 2016. But a more immediate challenge than the future price of oil is the increasing stress in early 2015 on the Iraqi exchange rate.

Exchange Rate Options

A great source of pride for the CBI has been its ability to maintain a relatively stable exchange rate despite intense conflict in 2006-7. In fact, the CBI actually allowed a 20% appreciation of the dinar during this period. However, as discussed above, CBI reserves are falling as a result of lower dollar sales to the CBI by the MoF combined with large auctions of dollars by the CBI to financial institutions. In addition, there is the possibility that the GoI will attempt to relieve its current fiscal crisis by encouraging or forcing the CBI to buy GoI dollar denominated bonds. This would replace liquid assets in the CBI accounts with illiquid assets, GoI bonds. If either or both of these events occur, then there will be a loss of confidence in the ability of the CBI to maintain the current exchange rate of 1166 Iraqi Dinars per US Dollar. Anticipating a depreciation of the dinar, speculation against this currency can be expected to increase. The CBI and GoI have few options to curb this speculation and prevent a loss of the nominal anchor of the Iraqi economy – its stable exchange rate.

One possibility is to further restrict access to the daily currency auctions. This was the primary policy response when the exchange rate came under attack in February 2012. Buyers of dollars were required to be registered and provide documentation for the precise purpose of the dollar purchases. Further restricting access can be expected to lead to a widening gap between the official exchange rate of 1166 Iraqi Dinars per US Dollar and the rate in the parallel currency market. An expansion of a dual exchange rate system can be expected to increase corruption as institutions use their political influence to gain access to the more favorable currency auction rates. In addition, by restricting access to dollars for less favored groups – primarily in the private sector – it can be expected that there will be a further slowdown in the growth of the country's non-oil economy, exacerbating the economic crisis.

A more cynical or possibly realistic policy response to the loss of the country's international reserves would be a sharp pre-emptive depreciation of the Iraqi dinar. This would not only lead to an increase in import prices and a decrease in the prices of non-oil exports boosting domestic production but also reduce – at least temporarily – speculative pressure on the dinar. The experience of countries in similar situations over the last several decades show that if the depreciation option is chosen, then it is better is to depreciate sooner rather than later and by a larger rather than smaller amount. One view is that the GoI should immediately announce a return to the pre-2006 exchange rate of about 1470 Iraqi Dinars per US Dollar – roughly a 25% depreciation. However, with a new government, it is unlikely that there will be an aggressive dinar depreciation. Typically, governments wait until a crisis brought about by a substantial loss of reserves occurs before depreciating their currency. And there is the fear that without fundamental changes in the Iraqi economy, any depreciation will only be the first of many.

A more long-term solution to the country's loss of reserves and accompanying exchange rate crisis would be a return to using a currency board such as the one that provided Iraq with a stable exchange rate during the tumultuous period of 1930-49. Unlike the CBI, the former Iraq currency board guaranteed full dollar convertibility of dinar notes and coins only. This immunized the currency board from the speculative attacks that are often the downfall of fixed exchange rates such as Iraq's. However, the adoption of an orthodox currency board can be expected to face serious political opposition since it would reduce the GoI's ability to divert financial resources in order to favor particular economic sectors or to benefit friends of government officials.

Iraq's Perfect Storm

The combination of falling world oil prices and the ISIS conflict has resulted in the most serious fiscal and exchange rate challenges since the 2003 invasion. It is tempting for the new

government of Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi to seek only limited modifications of fiscal and exchange rate policies so as not to run the risk of further destabilizing an already complex situation. And if low – sub-$100 a barrel – oil prices are a temporary phenomenon with higher oil prices returning in 2016, then this limited strategy should work. However, if deceased oil demand from the BRIC countries combined with an increased oil supply driven by both the fracking revolution in the United States and Saudi Arabian attempts to rein in the world oil market, then Iraq may face several years of oil prices substantially below $100 a barrel. It should be noted that, even after adjusting for inflation, the world recently experienced two decades, 1985-2005, of sub-$60 a barrel oil. A future of low oil prices will require difficult and, to a great extent, irrevocable decisions about both fiscal and exchange rate policies. Rich countries with long histories of stable government can afford to make stupid decisions. Iraq cannot.

SEVEN FLAWS IN THE U.S. STRATEGY TO COUNTER ISIS

By Clint Watts

January 2015

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The past week's debate on how to counter ISIS has proven just how effective terrorism is as a tactic for extremist groups. Two videos showing the beheading of American hostages have provoked the largest U.S. response since the attacks of 9/11, compelling President Obama to hastily gather up a strategy to counter ISIS. Aside from the general confusion over what to call the group, there is even greater disagreement over what to do. Overall, I don't disagree with most of the actions the U.S. is taking to counter ISIS, but I am baffled why ISIS, America's third or fourth most pressing national security concern right now, requires such a reaction. The lesson for other extremist groups scattered from Morocco to Malaysia is clear – fly a black flag, film an atrocity and post it on the Internet and you too can capture the American media cycle and provoke a U.S. response.

Aside from my quibbling over the U.S. need to be out front in countering ISIS, it is clear that something needs to be done to counter the rise of the group. The U.S. actions to counter ISIS to date are not necessarily wrong. Building up rebels, airstrikes to protect key allies, and working with partners all represent sound actions the U.S. will need to take at one point or another. As a comprehensive strategy, however, the plan will likely fail from seven fatal flaws presented by the current situation in Iraq and Syria. The U.S. can do whatever it wants to militarily, and probably will, but these apparent weaknesses will prevent any meaningful defeat of ISIS and, in the process of being the global leader to counter ISIS, the U.S. has confirmed the jihadist narrative it so desperately sought to escape in the past decade – the "Far Enemy" propping up "Near Enemy" apostates. (See my post from two weeks ago "Why Does The U.S. Want To Be ISIS 'Far Enemy'?" for a larger discussion on this issue.)

Seven Flaws in the U.S. Strategy to Counter ISIS

My thesis remains that the "U.S. Can't Destroy ISIS, Only ISIS Can Destroy ISIS", but neither my proposal nor the current U.S. plan being put forth, "Airstrikes and Allies" (or maybe "Mitigate and Pray" might be more appropriate), can achieve its goals without addressing seven obvious challenges present in Iraq and Syria (See Figure 1).

1. **Syrian Civil War** – Two years of Syrian civil conflict has created a gapping wound in the Middle East exploiting many religious, regional and international friction points. A wound left untreated turns into an infection, an infection today known as ISIS. Fearful of blowback after Qaddafi's collapse in Libya and mired in the 2012 reelection campaign, the Obama administration accompanied by the West has avoided the Syrian conflict for years allowing ISIS to fester and grow amongst the chaos. The U.S. will be unlikely to defeat ISIS in a meaningful way without developing a strategy for resolving the Syrian conflict.

2. **Turkish Border** – Foreign fighters and resources pour into Syria and ultimately ISIS through Turkey. A strategy of containment and annihilation will not work when there is a gapping hole in the perimeter. Recent news suggests that the Turks may be deploying up to50,000 police to seal the border. But how effective will this be when Turks compromise a large base of support for ISIS and a steady supply of foreign fighters?

3. **The Double-Edged Sword of Saudi Arabia** – Saudi Arabia quickly signed up as a partner in the U.S. coalition to counter ISIS – a logical and smart move for the Saudis who may be most threatened by hundreds of their citizens helping power ISIS. Saudi Arabia was one of thefirst to arrest ISIS operatives in their country back in May and is a natural terrorist target for the group. Of course, partnering up with Saudi Arabia affirms al Qaeda's old narrative for attacking the U.S. – the "Far Enemy (US)" is propping up "Near Enemy (Saudi)" apostates. The current U.S. plan includes sending military trainers to Saudi Arabia , another justification used by Bin Laden for attacking the U.S. dating back to the 1990s. More importantly, the U.S. plan re-opens the 13-year debate about the tradeoffs encountered with counterterrorism partners. How can the U.S. promote democracy to counter a terror group that beheads people and observes Shari'a law, while partnering with a government that just beheaded dozens of people "according to Shari'a"for offenses that include drug trafficking and *sorcery*?

4. **Arab Partner Nations** – Defeating ISIS will not come without a wide base of support from Arab partners. However, most Arab countries, to include what might be the United States' most important ally Jordan, seem reluctant to join forcefully into the coalition for two reasons. First, these countries have disenfranchised communities that sympathize and even support ISIS with fighters and money. By joining the U.S. coalition, they are putting themselves at risk domestically. Second, ISIS's campaign to date has largely focused on killing Shi'a and countering the Assad regime. Thus ISIS has become a

convenient proxy army for Sunni nations wanting to meet what they see as Iranian (Shi'a) expansion in the region.

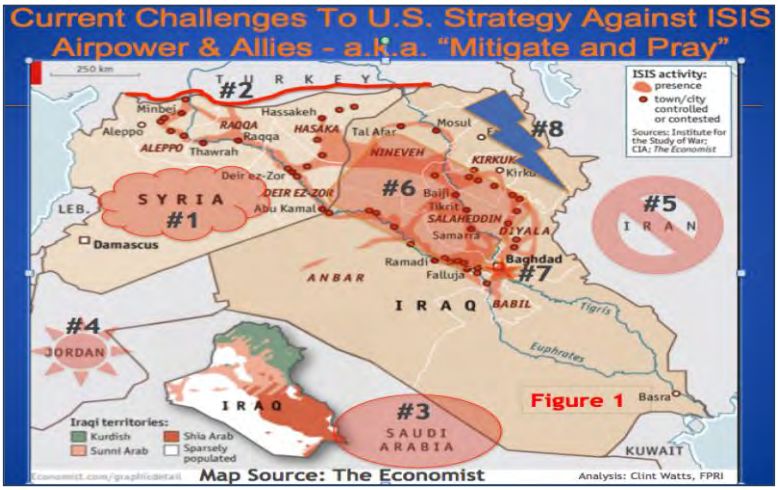
5. **Iran is a bigger adversary to the U.S. than ISIS** – By engaging ISIS, the U.S. is simultaneously 1) acting as a proxy air force for Iran whose IRGC has become a line of defense for the Shi'a dominated Iraqi government and 2) becoming the savior for Iran's regional ally; the Assad regime in Syria. By destroying ISIS without addressing the Syrian Civil War, the U.S. is rewarding its adversary Iran who bloodied American noses the past decade in Iraq.

6. **Sunni partners in Iraq** – The U.S. must create some lasting stability in the Western and Northern Sunni areas of Iraq if it wants to permanently root out ISIS. ISIS gains correlate with Sunni disenfranchisement in the so-called democratic system left by the U.S. The U.S. has noted the need for a more inclusive and representative Iraqi government, but the plan to counter ISIS must go further and regain the buy-in of Sunni leaders in Iraq.

7. **Shi'a Dominated Iraqi Government** – The Iraqi government looks to Iran for direction and the U.S. for support, while undermining the country's new democracy by reinforcing ethnic divisions. Meanwhile, Shi'a divisions of the Iraqi army, despite being numerically superior, refused to fight for Sunni areas of Iraq instead turning tail and retreating only to be executed in mass by ISIS. The U.S. must address the challenges of the past decade and explore new possibilities for how to stabilize Iraq in terms of both governance and security.

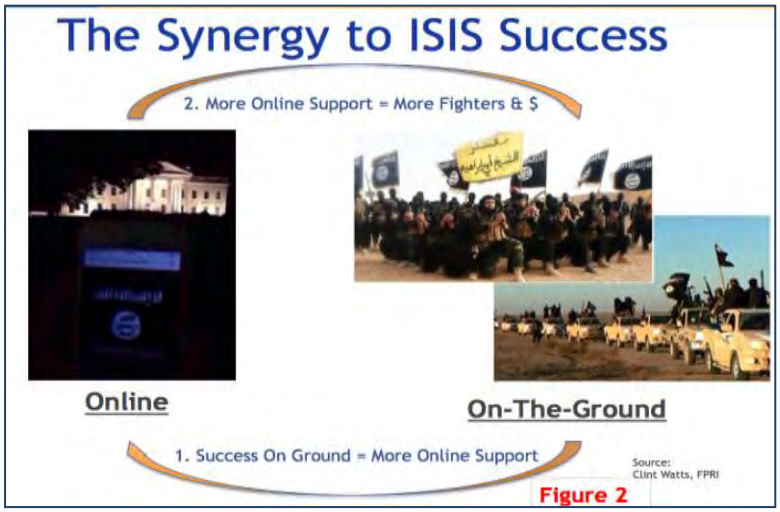
Two Fronts for Defeating ISIS: On-The-Ground and Online

Along with these seven challenges, the U.S. media has made ISIS's success difficult to understand. Defeating ISIS requires the U.S. to meet and defeat ISIS both "On-The-Ground" and "Online." These two fronts of ISIS aggression though are symbiotic. ISIS's success building an Islamic state and conducting widespread violence on the ground in Syria and Iraq has empowered their well planned and technically sound media strategy on the Internet. As seen in Figure 2, ISIS's increased success leads to greater online support. Greater online support equals more recruits and more resources for ISIS from their international base of support. Thus, the U.S. can't really defeat ISIS online, without degrading ISIS on the ground. Fortunately, foreign fighter recruits are a fickle bunch. In general, when a terror group begins to fail, recruits tend to decrease and donors start to dry up. Everyone likes a winner, even terror group supporters.



ISIS's two fronts also speak to U.S. interests with regards to defeating ISIS and should shape the amount of effort the U.S. puts into its counterterrorism actions. ISIS's on-the-ground success threatens the security of the Middle East and American allies in the region. ISIS's online success threatens the U.S. homeland and U.S. personnel abroad. The U.S. strategy against ISIS will ultimately have two campaigns and countering ISIS online will depend on U.S. success defeating ISIS on-the-ground.

My next several posts will be a series called "Thoughts On Countering ISIS." The first in this series actually came out last week – the "Let Them Rot" strategy -- which I still contend is the more appropriate approach for defeating ISIS, although it appears the U.S. lacks the patience to execute it. In the upcoming posts, I'll try to provide some perspective on how the U.S. can fight the two campaigns against ISIS's two fronts while addressing the seven challenges I noted above.



A NEW KING FOR SAUDI ARABIA

By Rachel Bronson

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Saudi Arabia's smooth leadership succession is exceptional in today's violent and bloody Middle East. In neighboring Yemen, a coup upended local politics and is threatening to turn very ugly very quickly. In Iraq, Washington, Riyadh and Tehran forced a power transition when the Maliki regime failed to contain and defeat the Islamic State. Even Egypt has careened from Hosni Mubarak to Mohammed Morsi to Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, three presidents in 4 years.

And yet Saudi Arabia, the country that produces endless discussion about leadership succession will, for the 6th time in its history, experience a peaceful transition to the Kingdom's seventh king. The only real tussle for power in the Kingdom's modern history occurred a half century ago when King Faisal wrested control from his brother then King Saud. Even that transition didn't result in anything near the level of violence and chaos exhibited today.

Saudi Arabia's new king, Salman bin Abdel Aziz al-Saud, the son of the King's founder Abdel Aziz al Saud, is expected to assume his new title without controversy. What's more, his successor is also in place. Prince, Muqrin bin Abdulaziz, the new Crown Prince will follow Salman. Who comes after Muqrin is rife with speculation but that transition is probably more than a decade away – an eternity given what's going on in the region today.

The Legacy of King Abdullah

King Abdullah served as Saudi Arabia's first post-Cold War King. His predecessor King Fahd, like his brothers before him, had involved the Kingdom in one way or another in global pursuits to roll back communism. Whether it was King Khaled's stepped up activities in Africa in the 1970s or Fahd's support of the Contras in Central America in the 1980s, the Saudi

leadership like many others was deeply engaged in the global struggle between the two super powers. Along with the increases in oil prices after the 1970s the massive defense deals and offers of foreign aid allowed for a level of corruption that reached grave heights under King Fahd.

Although Abdullah took power in 2005 after the death of King Fahd, he had been slowly amassing power since King Fahd's debilitating stroke in 1995. Perhaps because he served so long as the head of the National Guard, King Abdullah gave greater focus to solidifying power at home, and raising Saudi Arabia's profile in the region, rather than across the entire globe.

Abdullah will be remembered for identifying poverty inside the kingdom as a national priority, reaching out to women and the Shi'a minority through a series of National Dialogues early in his tenure and trying to nudge a stubbornly conservative population toward increased engagement if not tolerance. He brought Saudi Arabia into the WTO to help stamp out endemic local corruption and created a co-ed university in his name to ensure it was protected. Although he never moved as fast as many inside and outside the Kingdom would have preferred, he seemed intent to move in a more inclusive direction. This helped Saudi Arabia weather the dangerous homegrown terrorist attacks that targeted the regime in and after 2003. By focusing on domestic reform, he hoped to create a less toxic local environment that, until then, was producing idle disillusioned recruits to terror.

Two sets of events eventually stymied Abdullah's reform: Iran's increasing advances throughout the region in places such as Iraq, Syria and Yemen; and the Arab spring that began in 2011. Both posed significant threats to Riyadh and eventually overshadowed domestic reform.

Washington seemed unable or unwilling to help the King address either of these two realities. The US-Iran nuclear negotiations unnerved the Kingdom, whose leaders did not believe that the US fully shared their concern with Iran's growing regional role. Because he no longer believed he could count on US support to help shape the region to Saudi's liking, King Abdullah attempted (with not much success) to raise Saudi Arabia's profile and forge a more independent foreign policy. This focus on foreign policy drew significant attention away from the promising domestic agenda that defined his earliest years as King.

Abdullah's legacy is therefore one of considerable promise in the beginning followed by slowed if not-stalled domestic efforts. The newly assertive Saudi foreign policy developed at the back half of his rule did not yield many successes. Abdullah will be credited for maintaining stability in the Kingdom during very unstable times. Unfortunately, he never

achieved many of the larger signature reforms for which many advocates inside the Kingdom and out had hoped.

He has, however, helped the Kingdom transition from the sons of the founder to the grandsons in a stunning appointment made upon the announcement of his death. Mohammed bin Nayef -- a grandson of the Kingdom's founder -- has been named deputy Crown Prince. A close ally of King Abdullah and the United States, Prince Mohammed's appointment may be Abdullah's most long-lasting contribution to his country.

What We Know about the Next King, King Salman

Not only is the Saudi leadership transition likely to be smooth, but King Salman is a well-known figure in Saudi politics. Salman has played important roles in Saudi leadership including serving as the Governor of Riyadh, an important position given that most of the Saudi leadership resides there. He oversaw the transition of a city that grew from less than 200,000 in 1963 to 7 million today. By most accounts he did so with considerable skill.

In foreign policy, Prince Salman has been an active and visible player for a long time. In one of his more high profile roles he played a key part in funneling significant amounts of cash to Pakistan and Afghanistan during the Afghan war, which aligned with US policy and defined interests.

In terms of energy policy, Salman has publically declared his support for oil minister Ali al-Naimi's decision to allow oil prices to drop without decreasing Saudi production to urge prices up. It would be surprising if Salman made any sudden changes regarding this controversial pricing policy.

On the economic and foreign policy front, King Salman is therefore likely to pursue policies similar to his half-brother King Abdullah. He is old (around 79) and in ill health, but he is well known to the US and others and will likely continue to plod along on the course set by his predecessor.

It was unlikely a coincidence that Prince Muqrin was appointed deputy crown prince only a day before President Obama touched down in Riyadh this past March. The King seemed to be getting his house in order, ensuring that the US understood its successions plan, and that key US practitioners had the opportunity to meet their soon-to-be counterparts.

The appointment of the new deputy Crown Prince is also quite important. Prince Mohammed bin Nayef the current Interior Minister is another important outcome. The US has established

deep ties with Prince Mohammed and has worked with him extensively in counter terrorism operations. His professional career has been devoted to domestic security, meaning he will bring a security lens to his rule. But the royal family is leaving nothing to chance and has quietly if suddenly ended the decades-long speculation about whether they will ever be able to peacefully transition from the sons of the founder to the grandsons.

The Challenges Facing King Salman

The challenges facing Saudi Arabia are profound ranging from ISIS to Syria to an expanding Iran but three issues stick out as requiring immediate attention: the coup in Yemen, contentious oil policy, and the need to rethink domestic reforms.

Saudi Arabia has historically viewed Yemen with enormous concern. Yemen's population of 27 million rivals if not surpasses Saudi Arabia's. The border between the two countries has been traditionally porous, and Saudi has fought wars and skirmishes there throughout its history. Saudi Arabia interprets events in Yemen through a sectarian lens. Yesterday's Houthi coup in Yemen is viewed by Riyadh as a direct gain for Tehran. Yemen will be Salman's first international crisis and happily for him the US is similarly worried. A mutual concern about events in Yemen will provide US and Saudi leaders the opportunity to engage each other directly and immediately.

King Salman will also have to consider how long oil prices should remain low before the Kingdom considers reducing its own supply. Many in the kingdom, including Prince al-Waleed bin Talal think the Kingdom should be doing more to raise prices. Saudi Arabia is expecting to run a fiscal deficit for the first time since 2011, and although spending will continue, investments will decrease. The new king is on record backing al-Naimi's position on low prices which aligned with King Abdullah's views. Still, there is only so long that King Salman will be able to raid the Kingdom's international investments to pay for domestic programs.

Finally, there is the issue of reform. King Abdullah had made domestic reform a priority early in his tenure but backed off toward the end of this life. How will a King Salman respond? He has given little reason to believe he will pursue policies much different than his half-brother toward the end of his life. But one has to wonder whether the Kingdom's leadership can survive the visible torturing of prisoners in public, for example the public flogging of a blogger alongside the continued gruesome violence of the Islamic State and its affiliates. The coincidence of the flogging and the terrorist attacks against Charlie Hedbo's offices in France was an uncomfortable one for the Kingdom. Can King Salman continue to marginalize free speech and local activism and keep a lid on the domestic tensions that exist in the Kingdom?

The Road Ahead

King Salman faces a tough road ahead. Given the orderly transition, the Kingdom appears well positioned to muddle through. But can it do more than that? What the region and the Kingdom need are new leaders who can take brave new actions and act decisively and quickly. Given the age and failing health of King Salman, this kind of vibrant leadership is unlikely. The Kingdom may be in store for a period of sclerotic stability rather than the chaos and uncertainty that many forecasted just a few days ago. Still, inertia brings its own problems. Brave and bold leadership may be in short supply at a time when the Kingdom most needs it.

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