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THE AMERICAN POLITICAL CHANGES TOWARDS THE ARAB YOUTH FREEDOM UPRISING

Dr. Mohammad Salim Al-Rawashdeh, Al-Balqa'a Applied University

Amman College for Financial and Administrative Sciences, Basics dept., Jordan –Amman.

ABSTRACT: *The wave of mass protests spreading through the Arabic-speaking Countries may have begun to recede; it has left a wide-ranging impact on the region. It started in Tunisia in December 2010 and spread to the rest of the Middle East throughout 2011. Four authoritarian regimes have collapsed, and some are experiencing varying degrees of duress. If transitioning states fail in retooling their economies, the prospects for reform in other areas are dim. Virtually all the nations of the region have a long, long way to go. With the exceptions of the petro-rich Gulf States, which post impressive economic numbers for obvious and anomalous reasons, the region is in terrible economic shape. In all fairness, the Arabs themselves had not trusted their own ability to overthrow entrenched tyrannies. On the eve of the changes that swept upon the Arab world in late 2010, monarchies and military despots alike seemed to be immovable. Better 60 years of tyranny than one day of anarchy, goes a maxim of (Sunni) Islam. Fear of chaos played into the hands of the rulers. In light of this reality, the United States should seek to trim its military foot- print, thereby limiting its exposure to the repressive actions of nominal allies and aligning its expenditures with actual interests. From the perspective of U.S. interests, regional stability will always pre- dominate, and at this juncture, it is unlikely that transitioning states can adopt a retooled model of repressive stability. This narrows the options for prudent U.S. policy. In a changing Arab world, unconditional support of nominal allies will endanger the very stability that the United States prizes.*

KEYWORDS: Uprising, Arab Spring, Political Development, American Foreign Policy.

INTRODUCTION

Arab Spring, in Middle East and North African states history, antigovernment demonstrations and uprisings that, from late 2010, swept many of the regions' Arab nations. Arising in large part in reaction to economic stresses, societal changes, and entrenched corrupt and repressive rule, the Arab Spring began in Tunisia in Dec.2010, after a street vendor in SadieBoozed set himself on fire to protest his treatment by police and other officials. Local youths quickly protested out of sympathy, and the protests spread, with citizens getting information by satellite television, Internet social media and websites, and mobile phones (all of which played a role in many nations). After failing to restore control by force and by offering concessions, President Ben Ali fled Tunisia in Jan., 2011. In Egypt, thousands of peaceful antigovernment protesters inspired by events in Tunisia gathered in Cairo's Tahrir Square and other locations beginning in Jan., 2011. The government attempted to suppress the demonstrations, but they continued as the army stood aside; a month later President Mubarak stepped down and a military-led government was installed.

For the past two years and a half, the Arab Spring has convulsed the Middle East. It has resulted in the overthrow of four leaders who only two years before seemed destined to rule for life,

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plunged another country into a fratricidal civil war and placed even long-established monarchies under renewed political and economic stress.

What triggered this tsunami of political upheaval? And is it localized to the Arab world, or could it spread? It is no secret that authorities in Beijing and Moscow are playing close attention, attempting to ferret out any indications that a prerevolutionary situation may be building up in their own societies.

Many have cited new social media technology as a key driver of the revolutions. But these devices and the software that powers them are tools. Certainly, they helped to facilitate the uprisings -- allowing people to circumvent traditional filters used to control information and to be able to organize without having to always physical assemble, but their mere presence was not the cause. For those in the West enamored with the prospect of Facebook revolutions, airdropping iPhones is not a democracy promotion strategy on the cheap.Others pointed to the role of Al Jazeera in focusing attention on the uprisings; its coverage of the revolution in Tunisia, it is argued, helped to "seed" the Arab Spring in other countries of the region. A proximate cause, to be sure, but it is also important to keep in mind that Al Jazeera TV has been broadcasting since 1996.

The political and economic developments in Arab world in resent era :

Indeed, political unrest has long simmered in the Arab world, sometimes even flaring up into open revolt, without producing the convulsions we have witnessed.These lagging indicators are exacerbated by the region's demographic youth bulge and, according to the World Bank, the highest levels of youth unemployment on earth. Youth under age 25 represent 60 percent of the region's population. The 2009 Arab Human Development Report, one of a series of controversial reports sponsored by the United Nations Development Programs and independently authored by intellectuals and scholars from Arab countries (and attacked by nationalists and Islamists alike as serving Western interests), estimated that the region would need to create approximately 51 million jobs by 2020 to keep pace with new entrants; some more current estimates for needed employment gains range as high as 80 million new jobs in the coming decade.

Unemployment is also high among the most educated of the region. The 2011-2012 Arab World Competitiveness Report notes that among those with a college education in states for which statistics were available, 43 percent are unemployed in Saudi Arabia, 22 percent in Morocco and the United Arab Emirates, and 14 percent in Tunisia.12% in Jordan as well.

Of course, the economic challenges vary from country to country. The World Bank recently described the region as having a "two-track growth path" between nations that export oil and gas and those that either import or produce small quantities (which include Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia). This divergence is illustrated succinctly by a comparison of the 2010 per capita GDP of two Gulf countries: Qatar, which is one of the world's fastest-growing economies and registered at $72,398, and Yemen, which reached a paltry $1,291. The bank's current forecast for economic growth in oil and gas exporting countries is 4.8 percent in 2012, and just 2.2 percent for importing countries. Why should the Benghazi revolt have turned out any differently from other failed rebellions against Moammar Gadhafi that originated in eastern Libya over the years? Why didn't the Tahrir Square protests fizzle like earlier so-called Facebook protests that had taken place in Egypt?

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Several things have changed, and it is important to look beyond the headlines to examine other root factors.To begin with, in countries like Egypt and Libya, there were growing disputes about political succession prior to the outbreak of protests. Former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's efforts to install his son Jamal as his heir apparent aroused significant opposition from different quarters in the Egyptian power structure, especially the military. In Libya, factions had been developing around Saif al-Islam and Mutassim Gadhafi, rivals to succeed their father as leader of Libya -- and in turn, the elder Gadhafi played these factions off against each other. Elites throughout the region have been fracturing as long-established regimes begin to falter, and it was those divisions among elites that gave revolutionary uprisings a chance for success in 2011 that they had not enjoyed in previous years. Some of the defectors from Gadhafi's regime to the interim government had been associated with the more liberalizing groups that were previously associated with Saif al-Islamincluding Musa Kusa, the former foreign minister and head of Libya's external intelligence organization, who broke with the government after it decided to used armed force to repress protesters. The regimes that had fallen were not monolithic nor, at the end, were they particularly united.

Rising corruption also played a role. There comes a point at which the expected rapaciousness of a leader and his entourage reaches the breaking point. When times are good, some degree of corruption can be overlooked. But the economic crisis of the last several years did not spare these countries, especially not Egypt and Tunisia. Crony capitalism blocked opportunities for members of the middle class. As Leila Bouazizi, the sister of Mohammed Bouazizi, the Tunisian fruit vendor whose December 2010 self-immolation triggered the Arab Spring, commented, "Those with no connections and no money for bribes are humiliated and insulted and not allowed to live." In addition, all sectors of society, but particularly the poor, have been hard hit by major increases in the price of basic staples. Indeed, many have concluded that it was the astronomical rise in food prices over the last several years -- not simply the prevalence of mobile phones -- that provided the impetus for protests in Egypt, Tunisia and other areas.

The economic crisis also changed the calculations of a growing number of young, educated people who do not see any opportunity for advancement. In particular, young educated people, who felt they had nothing more to lose, were willing not simply to protest but to sustain their opposition to the old regimes in the face of initial repression conducted by the security forces. They did not choose to go home after the first incidents of violence.The erosion of trust by ordinary people that current governments and politicians are capable of finding solutions. So while the Arab Spring may be unique in that actual governments are being overthrown, it seems part and parcel of a larger global trend, the "days of shaking" that will be confronting regimes both autocratic and democratic all around the world.

The starting edge of the Arab uprising.

THE Arab uprising is a complex, rapidly unfolding phenomenon of uprisings, revolutions, mass demonstrations, and civil war, a diverse set of movements with diverse instigators and aspirations, including freedom, economic opportunity, regime change, and ending corruption. It started in Tunisia in December 2010 and spread to the rest of the Middle East throughout 2011. Although it is the most significant event to happen in the Middle East in recent history, we do not yet understand its trajectory and cannot predict its outcome. Despite the fact that the process is apparently advancing the values of freedom, justice, and democracy, it can still produce less desirable outcomes, requiring alternate approaches to standard diplomatic and economic approaches with a long-term view.

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We were bound to come to it: a lament for the fall of Gaddafi. Mali had come apart, and there were "strategic analysts" bemoaning the demise of the Libyan dictatorship. Thousands of Malian Tuareg mercenaries enlisted by Gaddafi had returned to Mali with weaponry and little to do. In the Financial Times of Jan. 14, Gaddafi was described as the "West's ally in the fight against jihadist groups." Britain, France, and the United States should have spared him: he had kept the lid on disorder in the Sahara. To be sure, he had intended mass slaughter in Benghazi, but two years later, it was time to utter the impermissible: perhaps the West's strategic interest would have been served by his iron grip on his country.

The nostalgia for the Libyan dictatorship was in full bloom. Days later standoff at a natural-gas plant in the Sahara between the Algerian security forces and a band of terrorists led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar, part pirate, part jihadist, was to serve as a vehicle for a full-scale revisionism about the fall of Gaddafi, and about the harvest of the Arab Spring as a whole. In a compelling piece of analysis and reporting, Robert F. Worth in The New York Times gave this revisionism its fullest expression to date. The jihadist surge in North Africa, he wrote, was proof that the "euphoric toppling of dictators in Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt has come at a terrible price." Worth quotes the warning that Gaddafi had made as he attempted to hold off the tide. To the bitter end, the claim that was preferable to the chaos that would sweep in was to fall.

Two years on, we speak of the Arab rebellions in a manner we never did of the fall of communist dictatorships. A quarter century ago, it was only cranks who bemoaned the end of the communist tyrannies in Europe. There was chaos aplenty in those post-communist societies and vengeful nationalist feuds; those captive nations weren't exactly models of liberalism. In Yugoslavia, a veritable prison of contending nationalisms, the fall of the state that Josip Broz Tito held together by guile and fear, ethnic cleansing, and mass murder, had put on display the pitfalls of "liberty" after decades of repression. And still, faith in the new history was to carry the day.

That moment in freedom's advance was markedly different from the easy disenchantment with the Arab rebellions. Those had been dubbed an Arab Spring, and it was the laziest of things to announce scorching summers and an Islamist winter. The Arab dictatorships had been given decades of patience and indulgence, but patience was not to be extended to the new rebellions: these were to become orphans in the court of American opinion. American liberalism had turned surly toward the possibilities of freedom in distant, difficult lands. If George W. Bush's "diplomacy of freedom," tethered to the Iraq War, had maintained that freedom can stick on Arab and Muslim soil, liberalism ridiculed that hopefulness. This was a new twist in the evolution of American liberalism. In contrast to its European counterpart, American liberalism had tended to be hopeful about liberty's prospects abroad. This was no longer the case. The Arab Awakening would find very few liberal promoters.

Nor was American conservatism convinced that these Arab rebellions were destined for success. Say what you will about the wellsprings of conservative thought, the emphasis is on the primacy of culture in determining the prospects of nations. For good reasons, Arab and Islamic culture was deemed to present formidable obstacles to democratic development. The crowd would unseat a dictatorship only to beget a theocratic tyranny. Iran after the Pahlavis was a cautionary tale.

In all fairness, the Arabs themselves had not trusted their own ability to overthrow entrenched tyrannies. On the eve of the changes that swept upon the Arab world in late 2010, monarchies and military despots alike seemed to be immovable. Better 60 years of tyranny than one day of

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anarchy, goes a maxim of (Sunni) Islam. Fear of chaos played into the hands of the rulers. Who in late 2010 would have predicted the fall of Gaddafi? He had ruled for four decades; he had the instruments of repression and the oil wealth of the state at his disposal. There was no national army to speak of, no institutions, no settled bureaucracy, and no room for a free economy. The glue of the realm was the ruler--his megalomania, his cult, his erratic will. On his western border was Zeine al-Abdine bin Ali, master of Tunisia. He had been a policeman before his rise to power in 1987: over the course of a quarter century, he had put in place a kleptocracy that revolved around his family and that of his reviled wife. Tunisians knew better than to run afoul of the extended ruling clan. No one could have foreseen the storm that an impoverished fruit vendor from a forlorn town would unleash on the country with his self-immolation.

And the rule of Hosni Mubarak, anchored in the Army and the police and a servile political party, seemed to confirm the image of Egypt as the "hydraulic society" of Oriental despotism. Egypt had known tumult in the first half of the 20th century and a rich history of labor unrest and political agitation. But in the reign of Mubarak, the country seemed broken and domesticated. So secure was the ruler and his immensely powerful wife, the couple set the stage for dynastic succession. One of the ruler's two sons was everywhere, pronouncing on political matters big and small. Sycophants surrounded the dauphin, placed their bets on him. The ruler had closed up the political universe, and 80 million Egyptians had become spectators to their own destiny.

From one end of the Arab world to the other, this seemed like the dictators' paradise. History's democratic tides had bypassed the Arabs. There was no intellectual class with the tools and the temperament necessary to take on the rulers. The intellectuals had been cowed or bought off or had opted for exile. On the margins of political life, there was a breed of Islamists biding their time. The secularists were too proud, too steeped in the conceit of modernism to take the religious alternative seriously.

There is no need to retrace the course of the storm that upended the autocratic order. We know it broke upon Tunisia, but that it was in Egypt, on Jan. 25, 2011, that the rebellion found a stage worthy of its ambitions. Eighteen magical days of protests in Cairo's Tahrir Square overthrew the Mubarak dictatorship, and provided the impetus for a wider Arab revolt. This had always been Egypt's role and gift in Arab life to show other Arabs the way in record time, revolts would hit Libya, Bahrain, and Yemen. Even Syria would succumb to the contagion. Two years later we can see both the things Arabs had in common, and the specific maladies that afflicted each of the lands. Egypt and Tunisia had a strong sense of national identity, and old bureaucracies. The regimes had fallen but the state had survived. There was no massive bloodletting: the ballot was the arbiter of the new order, and it went the way of the Islamists Annahda in Tunisia, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt which I do not think that they will stay in power for long because they do not have a clear political vision to face the heavy political heritage in Egyptian economic and political conditions. The chasm between the Islamists and their secular rivals would come to shape Tunisian and Egyptian politics alike for a short time.

Libya was a ruined country; a war had been fought to topple the Gadhafi’s regime. The foreign intervention had given the Libyans freedom from the despotism. The country was awash in arms, but the Islamists had not carried the day. A national election in 2012 thwarted them. Old tribal alliances, and a nascent secular coalition of professionals and ordinary Libyans who had taken up arms against Gaddafi, along with former exiles who returned to reclaim their country,

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prevailed at the polls. Regionalism remains a nemesis--the split between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica had not gone away, indeed it had intensified under the dictatorship.

Bahrain's rebellion, a principally Shia revolt against a Sunni dynasty, came up against the harsh limits imposed by Saudi power. There is a causeway that connects Bahrain to Saudi Arabia, appropriately named after the late King Fahd. The causeway was put to use as the Saudis dispatched their troops to Bahrain to put down the rebellion. The regime rode out the challenge, but the crisis endures, and there is no end in sight to the estrangement between the populace and the rulers. An American naval base serves as the headquarters of the Fifth Fleet; it gives the Bahraini dynasty room for maneuver. Yemen rid itself of the cynical acrobat Ali Abdullah Salah, who had kept the wretchedly poor land on edge. But Yemen's troubles are bigger than a ruler's failings. The place, the Arab world's poorest country, is running out of water, and there are secessionist movements in both north and south. The sacking of a despot has not ameliorated the misery of the land. This is Afghanistan with a coastline, al Qaeda's new frontier.

The Arab Awakening met its cruelest test in Syria. The fissures of the country had been concealed by the Assad's regime, and they were to give the new rebellion the fury and poison of a religious schism. It had been forbidden to speak of the Alawi-Sunni cleft in the country. The orthodoxy of the regime had insisted on its secularism, the sectarian identity of the rulers was the truth that was off-limits for four decades. No sooner had the rebellion erupted in the Sunni countryside than Syria was to be plunged into a sectarian war. As the rebellion approached its second anniversary, an estimated 60,000 people had been killed. In the north, the ancient city of Aleppo was reduced to rubble. Several hundred thousand Syrians had fled to neighboring countries. The rebellion has not been able to topple the regime, and the rulers have not been able to crush the rebellion. The very future of Syria--its borders and territorial unity--has been called into question. Clearly, this was not the place for a peaceful, democratic transformation. This was the forbidding landscape of an unsparing religious war. A rebellion that is answered by fighter planes and cluster bombs and Scud missiles bespeaks of a country with pathologyall its own.

These were, on some level, prison riots that had erupted in the Arab world. The dictators had robbed these countries of political efficacy and skills; in the aftermath of the dictators, we were to see in plain sight the harvest of their terrible work. These rulers had been predators and brigands: they had treated themselves and their offspring, and their retainers, to all that was denied their subjects. The scorched earth they left behind is testament to their tyrannies. Liberty of the Arab variety has not been pretty. But who, in good conscience, would want to lament the fall of the dictators.

Decentralization

Autocracies are characterized by centralization—power in the hands of one oligarchy, one group, one junta, sometimes one person. Democracies are characterized by decentralization power dispersed across different branches and levels of government, intended to give citizens and their elected representatives a bigger say.

The countries of the Middle East and North Africa lag behind the rest of the world with respect to decentralization. There are myriad historical explanations for this state of affairs, and a recent study by the World Bank pointed to the still-potent legacy of the Ottoman Empire, with its centralized approach to tax administration and the experience of decolonization in the

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region. Throughout the region, deconcentration is the norm, where administrative management and responsibilities are simply redistributed among different levels of the central government and geographically dispersed rather than being shared with autonomous local governments.

Decentralization should be seen as an opportunity to explore and refine development strategies, since local governments often have a clearer under- standing of issues that affect them, including transportation and social services. Localized administration also reduces administrative costs and streamlines procedural requirements.

How can top-heavy regimes decentralize? Arab governments have a broad array of potential approaches. Most important are credible municipal and provincial elections, which establish greater political accountability and help to break patterns of regional neglect. True accountability in turn will depend on service provision, and devolution of authority will be necessary to create the basis for such judgments. While this will vary dramatically among and within countries, it will entail some authority to design, finance, and manage the deliv- ery of services to constituents. This will require the delegation of some degree of financial authority to impose taxes and/or borrow funds for development and infrastructure purposes.

In Yemen, Libya, and Syria, protests in early 2011 led to prolonged conflict that approached or turned into civil war. Yemen's President Saleh offered concessions and promised not to seek reelection, but rallies and then civil strife continued. Saleh himself was severely injured in an attack in June, and in December, after protracted and previously fruitless negotiations, an interim government that included opposition members were established. In Libya, protests against Qaddafi beginning in Feb., 2011, soon became a revolution that, with protection from a UN-approved no-fly zone enforced by NATO and Arab aircraft, overthrew the longtime dictator in October. Nationwide antigovernment protests in Syria in Mar., 2011, at first resulted in concessions, but persistent demonstrations were violently suppressed by Bashar al-Assad's security forces. Despite that, protests continued throughout 2011, and some security forces joined the protests and attacked government forces. Syria's unrest also had a sectarian component, with Sunnis dominant in the opposition to the Alawite-led government, and as the conflict there became a civil war in 2012, militant Sunni Islamists played a prominent role.

In general, the political changes were greatest in those nations ruled by authoritarian leaders rather than monarchs. Marked foremost by an opposition to repression and corruption, the events brought together a mix of prodemocracy and human-rights activists and Islamists groups that overlapped to varying degrees in most nations. Although moderate Islamists were prominent in many of the protests, more conservative Islamists emerged as a significant political force in Egypt in the post-uprising elections that took place in Dec. 2011–Jan., 2012.

The USRole and interests in Arab region.

As the old colonial era powers faded from the Arab world, America’s role in the region gradually but steadily increased throughout the second half of the twentieth century. U.S. strategy was driven by the region’s abundant natural resources, a commitment to Israel, and the Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union. With the collapse of communism and the rise of Islamist militancy, recent decades have seen an additional focus on terrorism that has further entangled the United States in the geopolitics of the Middle East, often in disastrous ways. The challenge now for the United States is to adopt a more balanced posture in keeping with its national interests while remaining engaged with a transforming and still-volatile region.

A first step is to properly assess U.S. interests and threats in the region, which are often

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exaggerated. Protecting the free flow of oil, which is not currently threatened, does not require an imperial footprint or a sprawling U.S. under written regional security architecture. The outdated Carter Doctrine the 1980 declaration that the free flow of oil from the region was of vital importance to U.S. economic and national-security interests should be updated to more realistically reflect both interests and strategy. The United States should also be clear that Israel is no longer a besieged state fighting for its existence but the region's unparalleled military power facing no serious threat from Arab armies. Lastly, the United States should assess accurately the threats it faces from the region. It has nothing remotely resembling a peer competitor, including Iran, a country with limited expeditionary military capacity. The terrorist threat, while persistent, is not existential and cannot serve as the unifying link of American grand strategy.

In light of this reality, the United States should seek to trim its military foot print, thereby limiting its exposure to the repressive actions of nominal allies and aligning its expenditures with actual interests.

United States should liquidate its positions and abandon its allies in the region. In fact, predictions of American decline in the Arab world are often rooted in a misconception of the historical role of the United States. In his description of Arab politics in the era of Jamal Abdel Nasser, Malcolm Kerr, a leading American Arabist of the day, observed, "From 1959 onwards, apart from one or two peripheral exceptions, the crucial decisions governing Arab affairs lay in Arab hands." The United States remains the most prominent external actor in the Middle East, but it has rarely dictated political outcomes—nor will it now. Accepting these limitations is an appropriate starting point to constructing more effective strategy. From the perspective of U.S. interests, regional stability will always pre- dominates, and at this juncture, it is unlikely that transitioning states can adopt a retooled model of repressive stability. This narrows the options for prudent U.S. policy. In a changing Arab world, unconditional support of nominal allies will endanger the very stability that the United States prizes. As the necessity for representational politics and good governance grows, the policy dilemmas of old might begin to fade; the outmoded desire for client states might be supplanted by mature relationships with states that share important strategic interests with the United States. In this light, the ideal of democracy will likely come to be seen as a more necessary ingredient to stability and protection of American interests.

The United States must make clear to regimes that its support cannot substitute for the support of a country's own citizens, and that the judgments of those citizens regarding their regime's legitimacy must ultimately dictate the position of the United States. This is a critical message for America's undemocratic allies in the region, and this conditional engagement represents the only plausible path forward for the United States.

The uneven performance of the region's democratically elected Islamist leaders also suggests a policy approach toward states that have suppressed the forces for change namely, encouragement of bottom up democratizationDoing this would include taking steps such as pressing for municipal and provincial elections as a precursor to broader reforms. In pushing such a course on countries that have avoided regime change, the United States can explore anew the feasibility of more gradual reform, which has often been employed rhetorically by authoritarians to avoid actual reform. Further, an approach thatseeks to impart governing responsibilities upon opposition groups will ease their potential transition to national leadership.The United States also should not make assumptions about the inevitable role of Islamists. While they remain the most organized and potent political force in many countries

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in the region, the United States shouldn't view the Arab world with an essentialist lens that sees in Islamist rule the natural equilibrium. Such an approach will alienate non-Islamist political forces and encourage the monopolization of power by Islamist groups. The emerging politics of the region are likely to be dynamic and the prevailing political order in transitioning countries will be fluid. Assuming Islamist predominance will also create a misplaced permissiveness with respect to religiously based repression. What might be termed the soft bigotry of Orientalist expectations would undermine notions of universal values and encourage an inherently unstable model of governance that will ill serve U.S. regional interests and undermine the prospects for peaceful and sustainable change.

Finally, any retooled U.S. approach to the region will require a more robust commitment to diplomacy that understands interactions with friend and foe alike less as a conferral of legitimacy and more as a means for furthering U.S. understanding and preparedness.

These course corrections by the United States would represent a welcome shift, but they will not fundamentally determine the trajectory of social and political change in the region. That can be decided only by its citizens. Prior to the uprisings, the Arab world was headed toward further stagnation and malaise.While that grim outcome is no longer certain, the region is now in the midst of a transformation that will likely require a generation's progress before definitive judgments can be made about its success or the lack thereof. That success will be tied directly to how Arab societies and governments deal with the seven challenges described above. While progress will be variable, these seven pillars will offer a useful measure of the Arab world's growth.

As pro-U.S. Arab regimes stumble and fall, Washington's influence in the Middle East is on the decline. This is partly due to the Obama administration's deliberate "multilateral retrenchment, designed to curtail the United States' overseas commitments, restore its standing in the world, and shift burdens onto global partners, and partly to its confused, contradictory, and inconsistent response to unfolding events in the Middle East. The administration was far quicker to call for the resignation of Egyptian president Husni Mubarak a staunch U.S. ally for three decades than that of Syrian president Bashar Assad, whose role in fomenting terrorism against the United States and its allies is rivaled only by the Iranian regime. Washington's turn against Mubarak was viewed throughout the region (approvingly or not) as a betrayal of a loyal friend.

The U.S. criticism of Riyadh's military intervention in support of the Sunni ruling al-Khalifa dynasty in Bahrain in March 2011 raised eyebrows in Arab capitals, which viewed the emirate's Shiites as Iranian proxies. Many in the region were also puzzled by the U.S. abandonment of Qaddafi, who had cooperated with the West by giving up his weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in 2003. The lesson learned by Middle Eastern regimes--the Iranian mullahs in particular--is that it is better to hold on to WMD programs. Qaddafi's fate has become a cautionary tale for tyrants.

By contrast, the brutal suppression of the local opposition by the anti-U.S. regimes in Tehran and Damascus elicited only mild and very late expressions of criticism from the Obama administration. Washington's July 2011 decision to open a dialogue with Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood has further eroded its credibility as an astute political player and credible ally.Alongside the U.S. retreat from Iraq and Afghanistan, the Obama administration's proclivity for betraying friends and appeasing enemies, such as Syria and Iran, strengthens the perception of a weak and confused U.S. government. Israelis ask whether Washington is

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capable of exercising sound strategic judgment. The animosity displayed by the Obama administration toward Israeli prime minister Netanyahu reinforces a growing consensus among U.S. friends and foes alike that "Obama does not get it.

The Arab uprising or the Arab Spring is not a homogeneous social movement or set of national events. The people ineach country are calling for something different. Some want to overthrow their government, while others are simply calling for an end to corruption or for increased economic opportunities like Jordan. Thecountries involved are witnessing different outcomes. The internal dynamics between eachcountry's military and political leadership, as well as between the military and society in general, may explain the diverse outcomes.For example, in Tunisia, people demanded political change after a single event (MuhammadBouazizi, a young vendor, set himself on fire outside his local municipal office when the policearbitrarily confiscated his cart). In Egypt, people demanded the fall of the regime, starting outwith a peaceful demonstration that turned into social unrest. In Yemen, mass peaceful protestsdemanding an overthrow of the regime turned into demonstrations, unrest, and violence. InBahrain, the protests centered on the lack of economic opportunity and political freedom, andeventually became a sectarian dispute between a Shi'ite majority and a Sunni minority. InSyria, people called for political change after a history of repression, with events leading to abrutal crackdown on disaffected citizens. Libya experienced civil war.Other countries did not experience such dramatic events. Kuwait experienced politicalturmoil not necessarily related to the Arab Spring. Oman faced demonstrations as part of the ArabSpring, but they have not threatened the regime. Demonstrators confronted the government, butdid not call for the resignation of Sultan Qaboos. Instead, they demanded a strong legislature toserve as a counterweight to monarchical power. Their main demands and frustrations had to dowith a lack of economic opportunity. It would be too hard for countries with such diverse histories, cultures, motivations, and trajectories to adapt the Turkish model exactly. Different groups would embrace different versions of it, rejecting the other aspects, creating disagreement. As such, the best model will be different for each country and each country's political development will happen according to its own political history, sociology, and motivations. Ironically, some in the "Arab street" see Turkey as a model because of its Muslim identity, its democratic government, its successful economy, and its relations with the West, while others say that it cannot be a model because it is notMuslim enough, not democratic enough, and not distant enough from Israel and the West.

U.S. Military Considerations

What made Turkey a hero in the Arab street was its harsh rhetoric against Israel, its increased self-confidence and independence from the West, its open society, successful economy, and Prime Minister Erdoğan's success in reining in the military. When Turkish Foreign Minister AhmetDavutoğlu visited Libya in July 2011, crowds in Tahrir Square chanted, "Thank you, Turkey," and"Erdoğan, Turkey, Muslim!" When Prime Minister Erdoğan took his Arab Spring tour, which included visits to Egypt and Tunisia, thousands of adoring supporters at Cairo's airport received him like a rock star.16Turkey's military approach in the region reflects its popularity and self-confidence. It has sent officers abroad to Arab military schools and hosted exchange students at home. Turkishmilitary expertise (gained from the United States and NATO) has also been sought in other states,as demonstrate d by joint exercises and programs with Pakistan. Turkish security forces are trainingother armies in the region as well. Lessons they have learned and will learn through U.S. trainingprograms will, in turn, be taught to these countries through their own exchanges. In fact, Turkey has taken the lead in training the

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security forces of many countries. It has been a key contributor in training local police and military forces in Afghanistan, having recentlytaken the lead within the NATO training mission to train 15,000 Afghan police officers over the next decade. Turkey has also trained the forces of Albania, Bangladesh, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, and Syria under its "Guest Military Personnel Program."17 Turkey leverages its close relationships and cultural and religious tiesto advance military-to-military relations with those countries. Despite all the talk about Turkey the fact remains that the Turkish military has had decades of U.S. assistance and trainingby Westernized officers. Thus, Turkey's current position provides an opportunity. The U.S. Army can leverage its decades-old relations with its NATO ally to influence the Middle East through increased military training programs. Increased U.S. Army training of Turkish forces via exchange programs, coupledwith Turkey's initiative to take the lead in training the security forces of other Muslim countries, couldenable the United States to guide the military training and education of security forces in those countries. This is important because Arab countries in the Middle East also look at Iran. Iran represents the Muslim world's defiance of the West, but more precisely, the ability to develop without Western assistance and in spite of Western resistance. Turkey represents a model of Muslim democracy, a legitimate political system, and a popular actor in the Middle East. Turkey is leading Iran by a wide margin, but it must be ensured that it remains the ore attractive end state.The desire to assume a leadership role has created competition between Iran and Turkey for influencein theregion. Egypt is also a rival, due to its Arab culture and language. There are also the Saudis, whohave tried to contain Iran while viewing Turkey's ambitions with suspicion. Saudi Arabia is a hugepower in the Gulf, with the largest population (27million), the greatest wealth, and a wide influence.The Middle East may be heading toward a futurein which countries will adopt variations or synthesesof a Turkish model (secular democracy), an Iranian one (Islamic dictatorship), an Egyptian one yet to be determined, or a Saudi Arabian one.(Efrain,2011) The long-term future of the Middle East may therefore depend on what happens in Turkey, Iran, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, and the relationship among these countriesand their policies toward the rest of the region.20 The U.S. Army's support to Turkey in its efforts to further its democratization process and become the influential Middle Eastern player that it wants tobe should ensure Turkey becomes a more attractive model than the alternatives. As the effort to train and equip the Turkish Armed Forces matures, the U.S. Army might consider bolstering its support to the Turkish forces to counter Turkey's long-time terror problem with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, a problem that undermines Turkey's attractiveness to the Arab Spring countries. However, these efforts could remain in the background and be jointly coordinated such that they do not to play into narratives that see U.S. involvement as a negative factor or the United States as controlling Turkey. A Turkey that benefits from U.S. Army engagement resources would be even more attractive in terms of local and grassroots acceptance in the Middle East. A shift from strictly military relations within NATO to a relationship that entails increased training and exchanges may be more beneficial than weapons programs for the United States, Turkey, and the Middle East.

CONCLUSION

The extraordinary events associated with the Arab Spring have produced a chaotic mix of transitioning democracies, reactionary autocracies, and civil strife. But, the Arab Uprising, regardless of the fate of individual rulers or the course of particular movements, the nature of politics in the Arab world has been forever transformed. A new generation has leveraged 21st-

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century technologies and tapped into a sense of interconnectedness and common identity to obliterate the old order. Nobody is better suited to navigate the reader through these turbulent waters than Lynch, one of the world's top Middle East scholars and a pioneer in the study of new media and social activism in the Arab world. Lynch has produced the most comprehensive and balanced account yet written of the origins and implications of the changes currently sweeping this vital region. The Arab Uprising promises to remain essential reading on the subject for years to come.

This internal struggle for power will go on for years. Because it involves societies afflicted with severe economic woes, which have little experience with free governance, the new regimes will be preoccupied with merely maintaining power in the face of tumultuous domestic politics. Such weak, preoccupied regimes will have limited capacity to wage war. This is the opposite of the situation in Asia, where governments have consolidated military and governing institutions through decades of economic growth and can now project power out ward leading to territorial disputes in the maritime sphere.

The fact that Arab regimes are inhibited from waging interstate wars is offset by the fact that they have difficulty controlling their own borders and the militant elements within their societies. Thus, the Sinai Peninsula has become more insecure after decades of relative quiescence, and armed groups unconnected to the elected government roam Libya, where geographic distance and tribal identities bedevil central control. Libya is an apt metaphor for the region: It has an elected government but little governance.Indeed, the Middle East has evolved in stages from organized interstate warfare during the Cold War decades (1956, 1967 and 1973) to the relative anarchy of the Cold War's aftermath. The possibility of interstate warfare remains, though, because of one non-Arab state, Iran – even as major Arab states such as Iraq, Syria and Libya have in varying degrees weakened or dissolved while Islamic militants run amok and intercommunal tensions flare.

Last but not least, the “Arab Spring” is not the simple vision of emerging democracy that the US supported and thought it was. Egypt’s transition has been bumpy and marked with dissatisfaction, while fundamental debates are taking place on the role of women, the military, religious freedom, etc. So the strategic situation that arose after the Arab Spring is less favorable for Arab governments in general, and for Egypt in particular.

These are but a few arguments that justify why we should not be expecting much of the US. Egypt’s wellbeing and progress lie internally rather than externally. We have to put our house in order first to help ourselves before we can look for external assistance and help from othersCairo University political science professor NevineMosaad posits another possible scenario. “The Brotherhood is likely to suffer internal divisions, rifts between young activists who want the group to be more democratic and open to the outside world and an aging elite devoted to the Qutbist ideology which a majority of Egyptians have made clear they reject after just one year of Morsi in office. The army leader general Al-Sisi and other top brass were meeting with representatives from political forces, including Islamists. It was not clear as the Weekly went to print whether Al-Katatni had heeded calls to join the meeting to allow the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) to take part in the next government. “We are hoping to see all the key parties, including the FJP, at the table. We are not here to exclude any political group but to help Egyptians sit together and fix their differences in a way that allows the country to move away from polarization,” said a military source. But what is the post-Morsi roadmap would be?
Egypt, it appears, is heading for a new interim phase to be co-managed by the head of the

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Supreme Constitutional Court, an independent government and the army, with the latter insisting they are not at the wheel. The controversial constitution that was adopted last winter with the support of just 20 per cent of eligible voters will be suspended and revised. A prime minister mandated to focus on the economy will be asked to form a national unity government. It is not clear how Islamists opposed to this deal will react, or how far they will go in defense of a legitimacy they do not realize they have squandered.
The Weekly went to press after the military ultimatum had ended and still no statement had been released. However, media reports stated that Al-Sisi was to address the nation at 9pm attended by the Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar Ahmed Al-Tayeb, Patriarch of the Coptic Church Tawadros II and opposition leader Mohamed Al-Baradei. A flurry of reports circulated that Morsi was under house arrest and senior Muslim Brotherhood leaders, including Khairat Al-Shater and Essam Al-Erian, banned from travelling abroad pending investigations into their roles in the mass escape of prisoners from Wadi Al-Natroun prison two years ago.(al-ahram weekly).

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