

One Year of the Arab Spring: Global and Regional Implications

Yoel Guzansky and Mark A. Heller, Editors



Memorandum **113**

INSS

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THE INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES
INCORPORATING THE JAFFEE
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TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY
אוניברסיטת תל אביב

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One Year of the Arab Spring: Global and Regional Implications

Memorandum No. 113

March 2012

**שנה לאביב הערבי:
השלכות אזוריות ובינלאומיות**

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Graphic design: Michal Semo-Kovetz
Printing: Elinir
Cover photo: Egyptian woman in Tahrir Square
Courtesy: Khaled Desouki/AFP/Getty Images

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March 2012

ISBN: 978-965-7425-31-2

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Preface

Since an obscure young fruit vendor named Muhammad Bouazizi set himself on fire in the dusty Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid in December 2010, the flames that ended his life have spread across the entire Middle East, both figuratively and literally. The protests, demonstrations, and upheavals originally inspired by his action have acquired a variety of terms – Arab spring, Arab awakening, Arab uprising – and they have ousted, threatened, or at least frightened almost every ruling regime in the region. The terms used to describe this phenomenon clearly connote a sharp break from the decades of political stagnation and quietism that preceded Bouazizi's desperate act and imply that some momentous region-wide transformation has been set in motion.

However, as Amos Yadlin reminds us in his introductory overview, only six of 22 League of Arab States members have experienced the full force of the upheaval, and in only two of those (Tunisia and Libya – the latter in the wake of external military intervention) has the regime actually been overthrown. In two others (Egypt and Yemen), the leader has been ousted but major elements of the *ancien regime* remain in place; in one (Syria) the struggle between regime and opposition continues unabated; and in one (Bahrain), the uprising seems to have been suppressed, at least for the time being. This volume does not delve into the domestic politics and society of those six states. Such issues are ably dealt with by area studies experts. Instead, in keeping with the mandate of the Institute for National Security Studies, we focus here on the regional and international implications of this phenomenon, with special reference to the potential ramifications for Israeli national security.

One year is not a very long time in which to judge the significance of events, especially when they continue to unfold, and historians may rightly criticize efforts of this sort as premature. In validating their criticism,

they will almost certainly enjoy repeating the widely cited (though never really authenticated) comment allegedly made by Chinese Premier Zhou En Lai to US President Richard Nixon about the significance of the French Revolution: “Too soon to tell.” Any rush to judgment should certainly be avoided. Unfortunately, there is no consensus among historians on what does constitute sufficient perspective. More to the point, policymakers and the analysts who are supposed to help them in their deliberations do not have the luxury of waiting until some period of time arbitrarily defined as “enough” does elapse. Instead, they need to identify the challenges they face and constantly formulate and reformulate their policies in real time, notwithstanding the unavoidable fact that they will have to do that on the basis of incomplete or even erroneous information and of inevitably imperfect understanding. The purpose of the authors of this volume, all members of the INSS research staff, is to provide brief, concentrated studies of the international and regional dimensions of the Arab spring in the hope of minimizing analytical imperfections in the ongoing public debate over issues that confront Israel with urgent choices.

Yoel Guzansky, Mark A. Heller
March 2012

Part I
Overview

The Arab Uprising One Year On

Amos Yadlin / 11

The Arab Uprising One Year On

Amos Yadlin

Since the outbreak of the protests in Tahrir Square, which were led by liberal, secular youth and which led to the ouster of President Husni Mubarak, a lot of water has flowed through the Nile. An ailing Mubarak is on trial, possibly for his life, and his declaration that only his regime could block the rise of the Islamists turns out to have been keen and precise. Islamist political parties – the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists – won 75 percent of the vote in free, fair elections, while the liberal secular youth have been sidelined in terms of political influence in Egypt. The army, which has not given up the reins of government for even a moment, has teamed up with the Islamists, makes concessions in every confrontation with “the street,” and retreats further and further from what it declared was its first priority: to promulgate a constitution that would ensure basic rights and a stable democracy. The spirit of Tahrir has changed. What started as an “Arab spring” has ended as an “Islamic Year,” and this is just the beginning. Today, we understand that the phrase “Arab spring” does not properly describe the phenomenon that shook the Middle East in 2011. We are not witness to the flowering of a revolution leading to a liberal, secular, West European-American model of democracy. We are not seeing nonviolent change, and we are not observing a rapid “domino effect” such as we saw in Eastern Europe. We are seeing a phenomenon that is changing and will continue to change the entire Middle East. A year after the start of the process, and looking ahead to the next few years, it is possible to propose ten insights about the Arab uprising, or intifada, which is probably a better term to describe the chain of revolts in the Arab world.

1. How significant is it?

In 2011, the Middle East entered a process that heralds change of historic proportions, equal in importance to the Arab awakening at the end of the nineteenth century that resulted in the creation of Arab (not Muslim) nation states after World War I and the demarcation of the borders by France and Great Britain, or to the changes in the middle of the last century, when the Arabs finally expelled imperialism, replaced many of the royal houses, and tried to realize a pan-Arab vision incorporating socialism as espoused by Gamal Abd al-Nasser and the Baath party.

2. Why did the revolt happen now rather than a decade or two ago?

All the conditions for revolt have been in place for many years. During the 1980s and 1990s, dictatorships were ousted on other continents and in other regions around the world: Eastern Europe, South America, and East Asia. The world saw change in many totalitarian states, a transition to more democratic regimes, economic growth, and technological advances. The question is usually: why did the Arabs not undergo a similar process? In 2002, the Arab Human Development Report indicated three main lacunae constituting significant barriers to growth and change in the Arab world: freedom, knowledge, and the status of women. With respect to knowledge, the report talked about the technological backwardness of the Arab world: internet penetration stood at less than 1 percent. The decade since then brought about a dramatic change in terms of technology: the internet, satellite stations, and the social networks brought the middle class the knowledge that there are other ways to live, and that they deserve more – more freedom, more democracy, more human rights, progress for women, employment, and release from the grip of tyrants. The Arab revolt of 2011 has been nicknamed “the Facebook revolution,” with good reason. But the power of al-Jazeera and Facebook has its own limitations. As the Arab world trades in its Arab identity (that can accommodate different religions) for an Islamic one as its determining feature, questions arise that are as yet unanswered. How will Islamism deal with progress and the desire for freedom carried on the waves of the internet? Will Islamism be able to put back into the bottle the notion that “the people is the sovereign” and that it has an important voice in shaping the nation? Will the next elections in Egypt be as free and fair

as the elections immediately after the revolt? These are key questions for the future of the Arab awakening.

3. A revolution without leadership and ideology?

The Arab awakening is a leaderless revolution. We find it difficult to come up with the names of the leaders of the revolt. There is no charismatic figure, such as Lenin or Khomeini, leading the revolution. The revolts in Tunisia, Libya, and Syria, Yemen and Egypt, all broke out without a clear ideology. It was only once the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists came onto the scene and hijacked the revolts that they started to take on an ideological coloration – that of political Islam. In all those states in which the first phase of the revolution is over, as well as in those where the fighting is still ongoing, there is reluctance to name the source of political authority: is it the people, which finally has a voice, or God and His prophet? What ideology will lead the social and economic change? In the 1950s it seemed that socialism was the right model for the Arabs to adopt, whereas in the 1990s it was capitalism, free enterprise, privatization, and openness to the world that were supposed to have been the engine of growth. What is the economic philosophy that is now supposed to extricate Egypt from its chronic economic crisis: planned socialism for a non-functional state or capitalism that is going to exacerbate the inequality, poverty, and rage of the masses?

4. No domino effect

The scent of jasmine did indeed spread from Tunisia to the entire Arab world by means of mass communication. Still, every state in the Arab world is a unique ethnic, religious, social and economic mosaic, with its own political tradition and particular history. There are two vectors of influence in every state. One is a *lateral process*: similar states of tyranny and the desire for freedom that spreads at the speed of light to large audiences thanks to new technology. There are also *in-depth processes* different in every state, relating to ethnic groups, religions, rich and poor, history, legitimacy. The relative weight of the lateral pan-Arab processes and the local features will determine the directions in which the revolutions will develop. At the end of the first year of upheavals in 22 Arab nations, only six experienced an actual revolution, and it did not even succeed in all of them. In Tunisia and Libya, the rulers and regimes have changed; in Egypt and Yemen, the rulers have changed but the regime has not; and in Syria and Bahrain the rulers and

the regimes are still in power despite the riots, protests, and characteristics of civil war.

5. What is preventing a domino effect?

It is important to understand that, contrary to the optimism and naïveté that assumed that the might of the social networks and the masses activated through them cannot be stopped, the Middle East has its own social networks vastly stronger than Facebook or al-Jazeera. The social network of the mosques, where the masses worship five times a day and the Muslim Brotherhood's welfare, education, and assistance network, *dawa*, supports the needs of the poor, is what really decided the elections in Egypt and Tunisia. There is old but powerful "hardware" that is much stronger than modern "software." Saudi Arabia, which led the counter-revolution, used the financial resources it accumulated when oil prices were high: free education, free healthcare, cheap housing, and 13- and 14-month salaries, at a total cost of \$135 billion, did the trick in quelling the unrest. In Syria, it is bullets that have stopped and are stopping the awakening from toppling the regime, whereas in Bahrain it was the combination of money and the willingness to shoot that stopped the domino from falling.

It is important to distinguish between two groups of states that have not joined the wave of change and revolution, and they are the absolute majority of the Arab world. The first is the group of kingdoms and emirates. Some have a lot of oil and the financial resources to stop the upheavals, but states without abundant natural resources, such as Morocco and Jordan, have also dealt rather well with the Arab awakening. It would seem that a high degree of legitimacy within the public, better management of expectations, better dialogue with the public, and implementing reforms in time stopped the Arab spring at the gates of a group that, historically, has been more susceptible to unrest. The other group is that of the "been there, done that" states, those that have undergone civil war, revolts, and political unrest in the last twenty years. The cost is well known to the citizens of these states: reciprocal killings, the destruction of institutions and state infrastructures, brutal terrorism, and damage to the economy and social fabric. Thus, Iraqis, Algerians, the Lebanese, and even Palestinians are not in a rush to return to the uncertainty and insecurity characteristic of eras of change and revolution.

6. Who are the biggest winners and losers?

It is probably too soon to name winners and losers, because the situation is still fluid, developing into different and contradictory directions, primarily because most of the process still lies ahead. Moreover, most of the regional players see a mixed picture. Nonetheless, one can point to some preliminary results.

The biggest winner of the past year is political Islam – in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and (perhaps soon) in Syria. It seems that the rise of the Shia in the Middle East has been curbed and that the Sunnis are the big winners of the Arab awakening. Turkey is also seen as a winner, even though it has paid a political price for hesitating over Libya, has lost economic investments worth billions in Libya and Syria, and is itself facing significant challenges because of the drawn-out repression in Syria and the Kurdish revolt at home.

The certain losers are the rulers who were toppled, the tens of thousands killed in Libya, the thousands killed in Syria, the economic and social systems in each of the six that experienced revolts, the women who had expected equality and instead got inferior status in the Islamist regimes, and the Christian minorities who formerly were equal partners in Arab nation-states and now find themselves inferior and even threatened in Muslim states. The Americans also emerge as losers. They lost important allies in Egypt and Tunisia, their Saudi and Israeli allies find it hard to forgive them for abandoning Mubarak, and the instability in Libya and Yemen could strengthen al-Qaeda. Nonetheless, paradoxically, President Bush's vision of regime change in the Middle East and progress toward democracy seems closer to realization than ever before, even if it is happening as the result of internal rather than external processes. Israel also appears to be on the losing side, though worse situations may yet lie ahead: a new regime in Egypt and perhaps a change in Jordan, chaos in Syria, and the latter's attempt to export the problems, disappointments and unfulfilled expectations across the border.

The Iranians at first seemed pleased with the immediate results of the Arab spring – the fall of pro-Western regimes allied with Israel, the strengthening of Islamist elements in the Maghreb and Egypt, the awakening of the Shiites in Bahrain, and the rising cost of oil. But now, as the spring is over, it turns out that Syria, Iran's major ally in the Arab world, is badly affected by the process, the Saudis and the Sunnis are gaining in strength, and the awakening could reach Tehran too, so that the strategic balance seems quite different than before.

7. Syria is the only place where the first round of the Arab awakening has not yet been decided

As 2011 turned into 2012, Syria remains the only state in which the first round of the awakening has yet to be settled. The combination of a strong, brutal regime with a weak opposition lacking organizational infrastructures places Syria in the position of an asymmetric civil war in which neither side can win, so far. The Syrian regime enjoys two advantages neither Mubarak nor Qaddafi had: a loyal army willing to shoot civilians and Russian protection against international intervention. The Syrian opposition relies on the mass dissatisfaction of those who suffered through years of drought and price increases, corruption, and reserved Sunni-Islamist resentment of Alawi minority rule.

Despite their weakness, the masses are impressive in their willingness to continue to protest, notwithstanding the heavy price they are paying. The public's loss of fear of the regime in Egypt, where the army announced it would not harm demonstrators, was the key to toppling Mubarak. The loss of fear in Syria, where the army is shooting civilians, is thus worthy of much greater respect and sets Syria apart from Iran or Bahrain, where the regimes have restored the fear factor and stopped the demonstrations.

Syria is a majority Sunni state in the Arab world that for geopolitical reasons found itself in the Iranian/Shiite camp, an ally of Iran and Hizbullah. It was interesting to see the initial hesitation of the Saudis (and al-Jazeera) in deciding whether to support the regime – in its fight against the forces of change in key Sunni Arab societies that had developed relationships with Iran and Hizbullah – or to support the opposition. This hesitation is now over, and the Arab League, led by Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, has joined Turkey in the effort to change the Syrian regime.

What is happening in Syria entails risks and opportunities for Israel. If a future Syria removes itself from the radical axis, that will spell a very positive change for Israel. For many years, the Israeli defense establishment recommended reaching an agreement with Syria, even at a steep territorial cost, in order to drive a wedge between Syria and Iran and end Syria's support for Hizbullah and Hamas. Now, if the regime falls, this positive process could occur without Israel's involvement and without the need to make difficult territorial concessions.

8. What does the future hold? Where is the Arab awakening going?

Any prediction about the future of the Arab awakening demands a great deal of caution. Changes are occurring in student dorms, factory dining halls, marketplaces, and mosques. The impact of modern technology is difficult to measure or quantify. Nonetheless, given what has already happened in the past year, one may point to four central parameters that will affect future developments:

- a. The army's loyalty to the regime and its willingness to use force to oppose change.
- b. The support of the religious establishments for the regime or their opposition to it.
- c. The willingness of the international community to intervene against the existing regimes.
- d. The economy.

The economic issue is highly significant and its long-term effect is critical. Almost every Arab state must register enough economic growth to ensure employment for the young joining the workforce. The Arab awakening has choked off growth. Egypt and Syria are both suffering from the same economic regression: tourism has stopped, investments from abroad have dried up, public spending has grown with increased subsidies, and foreign currency reserves are dwindling. Today, Egypt's economy is significantly worse off than it was a year ago, while at the same time there are about one million new mouths to feed.

9. Transitional challenges versus completing a structured transformation

Even after the ouster of their rulers, states such as Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and soon Syria face two types of challenges – transition and transformation.

In the transition phase it is necessary to formulate a constitution, establish institutions, and ensure balances in the young democracies. It is necessary to complete the difficult process of transferring rule, in Egypt with respect to the army, and in Libya, where it is necessary to build democratic institutions and a coherent army. It is necessary to ensure law and order, which were undermined during the riots and demonstrations. In Egypt, the police and internal security services are hardly functional. Above all, it is necessary to stabilize the economy and make it grow again.

In the long term the Arab world should complete an historical transformation. In the face of the argument that Islamic culture will ultimately prevent such a transformation and in light of its structural, religious, and economic problems, the Arab world is going to have to prove that *it is no different from other world cultures and that a free, democratic society that respects human rights is possible in it, too*. In all of human history, profound change of this sort has never taken place in the course of just a couple of years, and we are only at the start of a process that will take a long time, even if modern means of communication and technology can accelerate it greatly.

10. 2012 – Ratcheting up the awakening to another level?

Until the Arab spring comes to two leading powers in the Middle East – Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran – its effect will be important but limited. Saudi Arabia remains an unpredictable enigma. At this point it is handling the winds of change in the Arab world quite well. However, if change occurs there, it will be of an entirely different magnitude compared to Libya and even Egypt. The sites holy to Islam and the oil wells in the eastern part of the kingdom together create the potential for a crisis that could rock the entire world.

In the winter of 2012, we are now asking if politics and accountability will change the Islamists or if the Islamists will change the way political processes are conducted in the Arab world. Will accountability lead to moderation and pragmatism, or will radical political Islam draw the Arab world onto more problematic courses than those pursued by the regimes it is now replacing?

And, finally, despite all the risks of the Arab spring turning into an “Islamic winter,” if it were possible to ensure that the winds of change in the Arab world, which may have started to blow for the first time in 2009 in Tehran, would continue blowing eastward so that the “Jasmine and Lotus Revolutions” come to Iran, that would be the most positive strategic change for the entire Middle East.

Part II
The Global Dimension

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The United States Confronts the Challenges of the Middle East

Oded Eran

Two contradictory vectors have characterized America's policy in the Middle East in the year since the outbreak of the Arab revolt. On the one hand, the US is abandoning Iraq after eight years of occupation, high casualties among its troops, and the massive hemorrhaging of resources. The US will also gradually leave Afghanistan without an overwhelming, unambiguous victory. On the other hand, the US is again being drawn into the Middle East arena as the result of the effort to stop the development of Iranian nuclear military capabilities and the desire to affect developments in the region and maintain its standing there despite the civic uprising.

The common denominator of the two contradictory vectors is that the US finds itself confronting an ongoing financial crisis. US partners, especially in Western Europe, are facing the same crisis, which is threatening the very existence of the European Union and also reducing the trans-Atlantic partners' ability to extend massive economic aid to the Arab states to help them implement the social and economic reforms whose deferral in the past greatly contributed to the upheavals in the region.

The US is in the early stages of its response to Iran and to the new reality taking shape in the Middle East, and it is still too early to determine the degree of success. While the two efforts differ, they share a common goal, namely defending strategic American allies and partners that help the US promote its interests.

An American success in curbing the Iranian nuclear program will have long-term ramifications for the way Arab states as well as potential enemies view the US, as does the withdrawal from Iraq (which generated lowered expectations of America and fear about the vacuum and chaos it is leaving

behind). Iran's defiance of the international community is above all defiance of the US. In light of the failure to date to stop the Iranian nuclear program, the states of the region, especially Saudi Arabia and Israel, find themselves threatened, and their response is forcing the US to reexamine its policy on the issue. The results of this reexamination include harsher anti-Iranian rhetoric, the dispatch of troops (even if only at a symbolic level) to the Persian Gulf, and more stringent American and European sanctions against Iran. The presidential and congressional election campaigns in the US are also conferring a more aggressive image on America's policy on Iran, since President Obama cannot allow himself to be depicted as too conciliatory or willing to compromise in contrast to the strident, hyper-belligerent presidential contenders in the Republican Party.

At the same time, the American administration is working to preserve positions in Arab states that have undergone civic revolts, especially in those that have also experienced regime change. The different conditions in the various Arab states require the administration to calibrate its various tools and adapt them to each state separately. Thus, the rhetoric adopted by the administration against President Mubarak surprised many of America's allies, especially the conservative ones, but one may assume that the US will not be able to use the same vocabulary should the protests and civil uprisings intensify in the Arabian Peninsula or Jordan.

The use of military force in Libya does not necessarily indicate a US willingness to carry out a repeat performance in similar (or even worse) circumstances elsewhere, and Syria is, of course, a significant test case. One should note that American decisions about the use of force are dependent on an Arab League imprimatur and also on a Security Council resolution. As was the case with Libya, one may assume that in any action in Syria, the US will also be asked to "lead from behind," though the European states that extended the political umbrella for the American operations have by now fully exhausted their military capabilities and will not rush into another military action. It is thus doubtful that President Obama will want to assume the political and military responsibility for ousting Assad and that whatever points he might gain against the Republican candidates for the White House would be worth the possible damage from an entanglement in which other states, such as Russia or Turkey, are liable to intervene, at least in a political sense.

The American administration is investing a great deal in an effort to preserve its positions in the region and ensure the establishment of regimes with which it can start and maintain a strategic dialogue like the one it had, for example, with the ousted Mubarak. So far its success is partial, as indicated by the situation in Iraq and Libya. The global financial crisis is making it hard for the US to mobilize the economic resources that would be needed to save the economies of Egypt or Syria, or alternately Jordan, should any of those states undergo regime change. This is why the US will again have to turn to the Arab oil producers, especially Saudi Arabia. The position of these producers vis-à-vis the US will be affected, at least in part, by their perceptions of America's determination on the Iranian issue and of the extent to which America criticizes them for their lack of democracy.

The totality of factors underlying the image of the US also includes America's ability to jumpstart a political process between Israel and the Palestinians and to prevent the two sides from taking unilateral steps that could pave the way for violence. Beyond the difficulty in persuading both Israel and the Palestinians to sustain a meaningful political process, the race for the White House also limits President Obama's freedom of action. This difficulty will be multiplied as Israel also heads for national elections. The US is also trying to prevent erosion in Israeli-Egyptian relations after the extent of the Muslim Brotherhood's election success became clear. So far, Egypt and Israel have conducted a reasonable political dialogue that has allowed them to avert a political, or even military, deterioration in the region. But the public statements of some Muslim Brotherhood leaders have raised concern, and the US role as chief matchmaker in the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement remains critical.

So packed an agenda represents a huge burden even for a superpower, and at this point it is hard to assess the success of the different campaigns the US is conducting in the Middle East. It is clear, however, that Israel's strategic standing will be greatly affected by American successes, and that underscores the need for Israel to assist the American effort to reshape the Middle East in the aftermath of the Arab revolt.

The European Union and the Arab Spring

Shimon Stein

The “Jasmine Revolution” in Tunisia and the “Lotus Revolution” in Egypt that followed in its wake both surprised and confused the members of the European Union. Until then, the EU as an institution and many of its member states had encouraged cooperation with Arab rulers, which was intended to ensure the regular supply of energy, to contain the spread of radical Islam, and to prevent illegal immigration.

To realize these aims, frameworks were established for regional cooperation (such as the Barcelona Process, the Mediterranean Union, and the European Neighborhood Policy), backed by bilateral (cooperation) agreements. The purpose of these frameworks was to promote structural reforms intended to create economic growth and jobs and to encourage democratization, political pluralism, and the promotion of individual rights. Implementation of the reforms was supposed to contribute to political, economic, and social stability, and in this way, to serve the European need for stability and security.

While in economics and trade there were a number of initiatives to improve the situation, in the political realm, the European Union did not activate the levers that were provided for in agreements, thereby enabling the rulers to violate their commitments without being “punished.” Furthermore, the European Union allowed the Arab rulers to dictate the agenda while ignoring the lofty principles it sought to promote. In other words, the problem was not a mistaken policy, but a lack of determination to implement it.

The dramatic events in Tunisia and Egypt, and later in Libya and Syria, forced the EU to assess the situation and come up with a new strategy. After some delay, a document was formulated with the title “Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean.” This partnership is intended to develop relations in three dimensions: democratic

transformation and institution building, a strong connection with civil society, and aid for economic development. This “updated” approach is based on three assumptions:

- a. Differentiation – Because there are similarities between the states but also significant differences, it is necessary to build the partnership in accordance with the needs of each individual state.
- b. More for more – Within the framework of the new rules of the game, the willingness to help will be conditioned on a clear commitment to universal values and the democratic institutions that will be established. In other words, the faster a state progresses in implementing the required changes in the areas mentioned above, the greater will be the support, which will be expressed, *inter alia*, in increased aid, entry into the domestic market, and access to loans from European financial institutions.
- c. Less for less – Since the basis for relations will be values, countries that violate the democratic rules of the game will not receive aid, and sanctions will be imposed on them if necessary (as happened with Syria and prior to that, Libya).

As part of the situation assessment, the European Union will need to pronounce on the future of the regional framework, that is, the Mediterranean Union established in 2008 at the initiative of President Sarkozy. Even if at this point, the tasks (and the budgets) that will be assigned to the organization are not yet clear, it is clear that the change in policy will require a change in the way the organization functions. And in connection with organizational deployment, the appointment of a task force for the southern Mediterranean (consisting of separate task forces for each state) and of a coordinator is noteworthy.

Beyond the principles that will guide the new partnership in the realm of values and democracy, the dismal regional economic situation, which has grown much worse in the wake of the Arab spring, will require the EU to make a greater economic and financial effort than it has made in the past. It is doubtful that the amounts allocated in the past year (to some of the countries) will be sufficient to aid them in the short term to overcome their distress (especially considering that some of the additional budget was intended to help build democratic institutions and strengthen civil society). Unfortunately, the upheavals are occurring in the southern Mediterranean precisely at a time when the European Union is in the midst of an economic

and financial crisis of its own that is significantly reducing its ability to provide aid.

Aside from assistance in the realm of democratization and economic prosperity, the EU attributes importance to resolving conflicts as a means of increasing security and stability. An important element in this context is the effort to settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the past year, European spokesmen have gone to great lengths to stress the urgency of rapid progress in the peace process. In this context, the EU has continued, through the high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, to invest efforts within the framework of the Quartet to bring about the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. In contrast to the position of the government of Israel, which believes that this is not the time to take risks, the EU believes that the situation also provides opportunities that must be exploited to the full.

Along with the effort to cope with the political upheavals, the European Union has been forced to confront the bloodshed in Libya resulting from the Libyan leader's refusal to give up power. The difficulty in obtaining EU (and NATO) agreement on sanctions; the decision by French President Nicolas Sarkozy to recognize the transitional council as a legitimate representative without coordinating with his EU colleagues; his willingness, together with British Prime Minister David Cameron, to undertake military action; and the decision by Germany to abstain on a Security Council resolution to authorize military action, reflect the European Union's continuing difficulty in formulating a common foreign and defense policy.

In conclusion, the European Union's operating assumption in its relations with the countries of the southern Mediterranean is that there are reciprocal relations between the security and stability of Europe and the situation in the region. The Arab awakening leaves the region in a transition period whose end is not in sight, a period that will include uncertainty about the direction of developments, which will increase instability and will be felt in Europe as well. As part of the lessons learned from its conduct up until the outbreak of the awakening, the EU has decided to reorder its future relationship with the region, on the basis of a partnership founded on the assumption that states in the region must choose a socio-political and economic model for themselves. The European Union will make an effort, within the framework of the budgetary constraints on aid and subject to those states' adoption of new rules of the game that conform to universal and democratic values.

The extent of the aid to be offered will be directly related to progress in implementing reforms in the areas mentioned above. It is not yet clear to what extent the EU will insist on fulfillment of the conditions it set, some of which at least were part of its policy prior to the upheavals. There is no doubt that the standard it has set for its Arab partners is a high one, but given the economic crisis most European Union members are experiencing, the EU too will find it difficult to live up to the high expectations of its partners.

Russia Faces the Results of the Arab Spring

Zvi Magen

The revolutionary process in the Middle East is creating a new situation with complex ramifications on the regional and global levels. Among the prominent characteristics of this process is the involvement of the major powers, which are working to promote their own strategic interests. In the meantime, there is a continuing clash between Russia (in cooperation with China) and the West, and this is having an impact on the Arab spring as a whole.

Russia, like everyone else, was caught unprepared by the revolution, in the course of which it lost important assets. Since then, it has been working, in conditions of uncertainty, to minimize the damage and to adjust to the new situation. Before the upheavals began, Russian policy was based on providing sponsorship to the anti-Western axis in the Middle East (Iran, Syria, and radical organizations supported by Iran – Hizbullah and Hamas). At the same time, it conducted an ambiguous policy and competed with the West for influence in the region. In Russia's view, efforts to appear as an active international player and an effective mediator gave it credit in the international system. Curbing Islamist subversion on its territory, which is today becoming a real threat, was also among its motives for acting in the region, as was promotion of economic aims, with an emphasis on energy sources and arms exports.

From the start of the upheavals, Russia worked to adapt its policy in order to preserve its prior achievements and even benefit from the new situation. In this context, Russia cooperated with the international community and with the new regimes in the region while turning its back on collapsing authoritarian regimes. It even supported international intervention in Libya, a decision it later regretted. There was a change in Russia's approach when it lost its important strongholds and was left with only its relationship with

the states of the crumbling “axis of evil,” Iran and Syria, in whose defense it is waging a tough rearguard action.

Thus far, damage control brings Russia to the unwelcome conclusion that the revolutionary process in the Middle East is being translated into sweeping Islamization. In Russia’s opinion, this is being promoted by the Sunni states, led by Saudi Arabia, which are forming a regional front against the Shi’ite alignment involving states from the anti-Western axis — Iran and Syria. In Russia’s view, the Sunni alignment, with Western backing, is succeeding in promoting Islamist regimes in all the countries undergoing revolutions, while pushing aside Iran, whose strategy, as the leader of the united Islamic effort against the West and Israel, is now collapsing. In this situation, Russia, in its enthusiasm to protect Syria from the revolution and from international pressure, and Iran from international sanctions, has actually remained trapped in the Shi’ite camp. Russia, which remembers the lessons of the Middle Eastern involvement of its predecessor, the Soviet Union, is therefore trying not to appear to be choosing a particular side in the regional conflict but is nevertheless finding itself pushed to choose a side, and not necessarily the winning one.

In this complex situation, Russia is working feverishly to find a way out of the maze in which it is being channeled toward a shared fate, undesirable from its point of view, with the Shi’ite alignment. Moreover, it feels exploited by the local actors. Indeed, in Russia’s understanding, its firm support for the crumbling “axis of evil” still gives it international relevance. However, one of the negative results of this approach is an increase in the emerging threat to Russia from the Sunni camp in the Middle East. Russia’s policy does, in fact, arouse the ire of regime opponents in Syria and of the Sunni camp as a whole, and Russia is anxious now about their mobilizing against it, including sending radical forces for anti-Russian activity. Likewise, in its heart it fears, not without foundation, future Sunni-Western understandings, which might be translated into Russia’s expulsion from the Middle East. Conflict with Turkey is also becoming increasingly relevant, with Turkey establishing itself as a major regional player and quickly translating the results of the Arab spring to its advantage. (It should be noted that the Russian navy has already faced the Turks in the waters off Cyprus.) After Hamas’ abandonment of the Shi’ite camp, the Palestinian dimension of Russian Middle East policy is also failing to deliver.

Russia is now pondering how to proceed in the face of the challenge of loss of influence in the region. What are the possible directions from Russia's point of view? Russia appears to believe that it still has a real role to play in a situation of instability and uncertainty. Russia has a clear interest in attempting to form a bloc of supportive states as its strategic asset, on the assumption that in the future, the common sentiment in the Middle East will remain anti-Western. Therefore, it seems that the preferred direction for Russia would be an attempt to create a dialogue with all parties in the region, including the new Islamist alignment, at any cost. In addition, Russia is pursuing its traditional role, which confers many advantages, of mediator between the regional camps and the regional players. This includes an attempt to aid Iran in bridging the Shi'ite-Sunni rift. Moreover, at the same time as it is defending Assad, Russia is working to mediate between the rebels and the regime in the hope that if the regime collapses, Russia will benefit from its positive relationship with the future government. Another essential channel is the revival of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, to whatever extent possible under Russian auspices. Therefore, in spite of the difficulties, Russia is continuing to promote a peace conference in Moscow this year, as the Quartet agreed, and the fact that the process ostensibly continues appears to Russia to be a fitting gain.

As against all this, some in Russia are calling for the country to abandon its current Middle East policy, including support for Russia's dubious partners – the Shi'ite camp – who are becoming a burden. However, it is not likely that the Russian leadership would easily give up what appear to be assets, at least not without something appropriate from the West in exchange. And it is possible that this, in fact, is the name of the current game.

In conclusion, Russia still identifies itself as an important player in Middle Eastern affairs and will work to stabilize its weakened status. It appears that its willingness to compromise with the West on the Middle East is now great, given that its strongholds are in the process of collapsing and it is being channeled into an uncomfortable position. It is reasonable to assume that such a compromise will indeed be found soon. That would intensify international pressure on the Syrian regime and sanctions on Iran and would also grant Russia an honorable way out. However, even this scenario, if it materializes, will not last longer than the time needed for Russia to reorganize and once again return to the affairs of the region, which is essential to its interests.

Al-Qaeda and its Affiliates in Light of the Turmoil in the Arab World

Yoram Schweitzer

With the outbreak of the uprisings known as the Arab spring, many commentators and academics have insisted that al-Qaeda and its affiliates in world jihad are on the losing side in the new political map. Some have even gone so far as to suggest that the Arab spring was a death blow for jihadists and the ideas they represent. This feeling stems from the fact that those who set the protests in motion were acting in the name of liberal democratic ideas and waged their struggle with largely non-violent means, in stark contrast to the message and practices of al-Qaeda and its affiliates.

Today, it is apparent that these assessments were, at best, premature. It is true that al-Qaeda, under the leadership of Dr. Ayman Zawahiri, Bin Laden's successor, is still under pressure from an intensive worldwide anti-terror campaign that has effectively neutralized many of its senior commanders and is preventing it, at least at this point, from carrying out spectacular terror attacks in Western countries. On the other hand, it appears that the Arab spring has actually created for al-Qaeda and its affiliates more opportunities to relocate to and act in countries that have been harmed by the turmoil in the Middle East. In fact, the instability of the new regimes, the dismantling of the security apparatuses that previously acted firmly and efficiently against their people, the emergence of uncontrolled territories that provide refuge and allow almost unhindered activity, and the release of their prisoners, who are again filling their ranks, are all clear gains for the organization and its affiliates. Thus, for example, the governmental vacuum created with

I would like to thank the interns in the terrorism project, Asia Shenkman, Ido Shoham, and Tal Furst, for their contribution to this article.

the departure of President Saleh from Yemen — the country in which the activity of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the closest partner of al-Qaeda (Central) is concentrated — allows the organization freedom of action in the tribal areas in the south of the country and even in the major cities like Zinjibar, Rada, and others. It has also enabled it to take over several of these cities and free many of its members from the country's prisons. Those who were freed rejoined the organization, beefed up its ranks, and increased its strength. In Libya, too, it appears that forces belonging to al-Qaeda supporters are exploiting the country's lack of governmental stability to establish their hold on parts of it, to reinforce their ranks with released prisoners, and to stockpile sophisticated weapons that were found in Qaddafi's abandoned warehouses. These activists also export weapons to various areas of fighting around the world in order to upgrade their affiliates' ability to cause damage in a way that is likely to constitute a significant threat, in general, to civilian life, and in particular, to civil aviation around the world.

The turmoil in the Arab world creates more complex security and diplomatic challenges for Israel. Previous regimes, and certainly the regime of Husni Mubarak in Egypt, were sworn enemies of al-Qaeda and stopped its members from approaching the border with Israel and harming Israeli interests in their territory. Even governments hostile to Israel, such as Syria, Lebanon (mainly Hizbullah), and Hamas in Gaza prevented activity by al-Qaeda and its affiliates because they wished to avoid incidents with Israel that were not initiated by them or under their control. Mubarak's ouster and the resulting hope of replacing him with a regime of Islamic law in the most important Arab country, which Zawahiri sees as the main vision of al-Qaeda under his leadership, has not been realized. Nevertheless, the dismantling of the internal security apparatuses in Egypt, which pursued al-Qaeda members with cruel efficiency to the bitter end, killing, imprisoning, and torturing them, is an important message for jihadist organizations in Egypt, including in the Sinai. Many members of these organizations have gone free, and some of them, especially the young ones, are likely to be an important reserve of manpower for al-Qaeda. The Salafist group's achievement in the parliamentary elections also ensures important political backing for the organization's activities and ideas.

However, it is nearly certain that at this point, the pragmatic positions declared by the heads of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (which won 216 out of 498 seats in the Egyptian parliamentary elections), their avoidance

(thus far) of an unequivocal declaration of intent to cancel the peace treaty with Israel, and their emerging willingness to maintain correct relations with the West – including the United States, the declared enemy of al-Qaeda – all suggest the possibility of a continued conflict between the old-new regime in Egypt (including pragmatic Islamist elements) and al-Qaeda and the Salafist organizations. Thus, terrorist activity aimed at Israel from the Egyptian border, including the repeated attacks on the pipeline that supplies gas from Egypt to Israel and Jordan, the violent incursion into the Israeli embassy in Cairo, and the attack on Eilat by a mixed Palestinian-Egyptian squad from Sinai in August 2011, which caused the death of eight Israelis and led to tension in Israeli-Egyptian relations, indicate the great potential for friction between Egypt and Israel, which al-Qaeda and its affiliates will try to stir up. The increase in terrorist activity by extremist Islamist elements in Sinai, chiefly Bedouins, backed by al-Qaeda members who were freed and came to the desert region armed with sophisticated weapons smuggled from Libya, and the strengthening of Salafist elements in Gaza, who are increasing cooperation with them, constitute an opportunity for direct action against Israeli territory by al-Qaeda and its partners in the worldwide jihad.

In conclusion, it appears that governmental instability and looser control by new Arab governments over the sovereign territory of their countries is providing al-Qaeda and its affiliates with room for action, the ability to recruit people, and access to more weapons. This will probably enable al-Qaeda and its affiliates to develop operational capabilities and more convenient access for actions against Israel on its territory, which they have sought in the past and failed to obtain, and for inflicting harm on Israeli and Jewish interests in Arab countries – all in the spirit of the times, which depicts Israel as an illegitimate state or, at least, as a state that acts brutally against all Arab and Muslim interests. However, in the coming years, al-Qaeda and its partners are likely to find themselves between a rock and a hard place. In addition to the need to survive the West's prolonged war on terror, they will have to deal with a new and no less difficult challenge: conflict with regimes in which the Muslim Brotherhood – whose relatively pragmatic policy is heresy to al-Qaeda and its affiliates – is expected to be dominant. That may well result in a head-on collision.

Part III

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The Regional Ramifications of the Arab Spring

Shlomo Brom

In the first months of the Arab spring, the conventional wisdom held that the developments were creating a more difficult and convoluted Middle Eastern environment for the United States and Israel, who were seen as the biggest losers because they were faced with the loss of major, influential assets in the Arab world. In Israel's case, the new reality also meant added security threats, including concerns about the fate of the peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan and the chaos in the Sinai Peninsula that has turned Israel's long border there into a source of friction. At the same time, it seemed that the biggest winners were the radical elements opposed to the US and Israel. However, after more than a year, it appears that the reality developing in the Arab Middle East is more complex and the definitions of "winner" and "loser" are far from simple.

During the first stage of the Arab spring, there was a tendency, at least in Israel, to look at the developments primarily through the lens of the struggle between the two major axes in the Middle East – the radical, "resistance" axis led by Iran, and the axis of the pragmatic Arab states, led by Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The assumption was that the fall of a regime such as Mubarak's in Egypt would weaken the pragmatic axis and strengthen the radical one. No one denies that the fall of Mubarak's regime and the damage to the stability of other regimes, like the Jordanian one, that were within the circle of influence of the United States, preserved stability and ties with Israel, and supported peace with Israel, have damaged the standing of the US and Israel. Furthermore, the chronic lack of stability as a result of the uprisings against the regimes and the difficulties inherent in the transition to the new state are certainly not good for the West and Israel in the short- and mid-term. However, in practice, the new balance that is emerging is more complex and not at all unambiguous.

First of all, in recent years, alongside the struggle between the two axes, we have also seen the emergence of a rivalry between the two rising non-Arab actors in the region – Iran and Turkey. The Arab spring has only brought this contest to the surface and intensified it. The Iranian model and the Turkish model compete for the hearts and minds of the Arab public that has risen up against its leaders. In this contest, the Turkish model is the clear winner. The Arab spring also created an interest on the part of Turkey and the US to strengthen their cooperation. It is safe to assume that the new governments made up of Islamist parties that won the elections will strive to cast themselves in an image closer to the Turkish model. It also appears that these governments will aim to maintain their ties to the West on which they are economically dependent. Two conclusions emerge: one is that the importance of Turkey as a player with regional influence is greater than that of Iran. At the beginning of the upheavals, Turkey lost some assets and investments, such as the relationship it created with Bashar Assad and its economic ties with Libya, but it has adapted quickly and seems to be able to restore its assets and enhance them. The second conclusion is that the prophecies about the death of Western influence, especially that of the United States, were premature. The rebels and protesters in the various states are in fact greatly concerned about the West and the US and are hoping for assistance, at times even including military intervention (as was the case in Libya). Their values are the values of the West, so that while Islamic political parties are winning various elections, they too have to adopt, at times unwillingly but at times with open minds, the values that the protesters (the revolutionary youth) are championing.

Secondly, it is precisely at the time when the US and Israel are facing difficulties that there is also the potential for positive changes in the balance of power in the Arab world. The most prominent example is Syria, where the uprising is threatening the regime of Bashar Assad. Should the regime fall, one of the cornerstones of the radical axis, closely associated with Iran, will have crumbled. While the new regime is also liable to be hostile to Israel, it will at least not work together with Iran and Hizbullah, seen as allies of the old regime. Even if Assad's regime does not fall, it will challenge the US and Israel less than in the past because it will be weakened, and it will thus be easier to deal with it. In addition, the longer the crisis in Syria lasts, the greater the alienation between Iran and its allies and the Arab street

becomes, because Iran is seen as an ally of the repressive regimes and as being on the wrong side of history. This is a far cry from the time when Iran enjoyed wide support in the Arab streets and was seen as the leader of the rising trend in the Middle East.

Thirdly, the Arab spring also affects the positioning and conduct of other Arab players. On the one hand, Saudi Arabia and the other conservative states in the Gulf have been stirred to action. They are currently conducting a more assertive foreign policy than in the past and in that context a more anti-Iranian stance, because of the concern that Iran is meddling in their internal affairs. On the other hand, Egypt, whose internal arena is in chaos, has become a more important player regionally, and paradoxically its internal weakness is not being translated into external weakness. The reason is that the Middle East power struggle is also an ideological struggle. Egypt's external weakness in recent decades stemmed in part from the fact that in the years of governmental stagnation the country also suffered from an ideological vacuum. It had no message it could sell to the Arab public. Now, after the toppling of Mubarak, Egypt has a message of democracy that can include the Islamist parties. As long as this dream remains unbroken, the Arab world will continue to look to Egypt as a role model. It is not surprising that, suddenly, Egypt has more weight in the Palestinian arena, is a more effective mediator in reconciling Fatah to Hamas, and can, in the middle of all this, also broker a prisoner exchange between Israel and Hamas. The Arab spring has a great deal of influence also on the conduct of the Palestinian players. Hamas felt very uncomfortable at finding itself on the "wrong side," along with Syria and Iran. The movement is now busy repositioning itself, and as such is seeking new patrons in the form of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Hamas leaders are hoping that control exerted by the Islamist parties in the new governments in places such as Egypt will prove useful to them. This situation has also moved them towards the reconciliation with Fatah.

In conclusion, the new reality taking shaping contains elements that strengthen the influence and maneuvering room of the West and weaken Iran and its allies, but because of the election victories of Islamist parties and the uncertainty about the nature of the future regimes in which these parties will take leading positions, the balance of losses and gains in the region may yet change.

Iran and the Turmoil in the Arab World

Ephraim Kam

The turmoil in the Arab world is providing Iran with both opportunities and increasing risks. In the first stage, the Iranians emphasized the opportunities inherent in the new situation. They saw the awakening in the Arab world and the strengthening of the Islamists as a continuation and a consequence of Iran's Islamic Revolution.

Furthermore, Iran saw the changes taking place in the Arab world as a basis for expanding its influence in the region. Firstly, it viewed the fall of the Mubarak regime as a positive development. Mubarak, a very close ally of the United States and the pillar of the peace with Israel, led the Arab struggle against Iran's growing strength in the region and against the radical Shi'ite axis. Now the Mubarak regime has fallen, Egypt is busy with its internal affairs, and it is certainly not addressing regional issues. Furthermore, in the wake of Mubarak's fall, there are those in Egypt who have expressed support for renewing diplomatic relations with Iran, which were cut off after the Islamic Revolution, and this has been well received in Iran. In general, the significant strengthening of Islamist forces in Egypt and other Arab countries, even if they are Sunni, seemed to provide Iran with an opportunity to build a relationship with them.

Secondly, the changes in the Arab world are thus far having a negative effect on the position of the United States in Arab countries. US policy regarding these changes is seen as inconsistent. The US administration is attempting to build ties with the Islamist elements that will take part in the future government of Egypt, but it is not clear how successful it will be. The Obama administration's pressure on Mubarak at an early stage to resign from the government did not contribute to the credibility of the administration in the eyes of its other Arab allies. The American hope that processes of

democratization would develop in the Arab world has not yet been realized, and so far, this is playing into the hands of the Islamists.

Thirdly, the changes in the region also present new risks to Israel. The Islamists' rise to power in Egypt calls into question the future of peaceful relations between Israel and Egypt. The first cracks are also emerging in the foundation of the Hashemite regime in Jordan, in whose stability and survival Israel has a strong interest.

Fourthly, the Arab world has been weak for a generation, and it is having a hard time cooperating and uniting to address its problems in a unified fashion, including the Iranian threat. This weakness is likely to increase as a result of the current turmoil, with Arab rulers having to invest most of their efforts in domestic problems and the survival of their regimes. This weakness plays into the hands of the Iranians, especially given that the domestic turmoil has weakened some of the Arab regimes at home, and the stability of other Arab regimes connected to the West and the United States may be damaged.

These are the positive points that Iran can see in developments in the region. Yet in recent months, aspects that are negative from Iran's point of view, which stem from the changes in the Arab states, have become more prominent. The most important aspect is the deterioration in Syria and the possibility that the Assad regime will collapse. Syria is Iran's main and in fact only state ally in the Arab world. This is the longest-standing alliance between two states in the Middle East – over thirty years – and the duration of the alliance reflects their common interests. If the Assad regime falls and is replaced by a Sunni regime that seeks to turn toward the United States and the West, this would be a great blow to Iran. Not only would it lose its closest ally; its position in Lebanon, its ties to Hizbullah, and its efforts to build a radical Shi'ite axis would also be harmed.

There is no doubt that the Iranians are worried by the possibility that the Assad regime will fall, but there is not much they can do to prevent it. Of course, to the outside world, Iran expresses support for the Assad regime and presents the deterioration in Syria as being the result of a Western plot. It is attempting to aid the Syrian regime economically; in its confrontation with demonstrators (for example, by supplying equipment to block cell phones); and in mobilizing support in the Arab world (for example, Iraq). But it is clear that none of this helps the Assad regime to a real extent, and it is reasonable to assume that Iran is preparing for the possibility of losing

its ally. In fact, Iran has no suitable alternatives beyond hoping that if the Assad regime falls it will succeed in building ties with the next regime in Syria as well, and continuing to expand its influence in Iraq.

Iran's expectations of the Arab spring have not yet been met. Calls in Egypt to restore relations with Iran have waned and relations have not been restored. Iran's attempts to draw close to Islamists on the rise in the Arab world, especially in Egypt and Libya, have not yet produced real results. Iranian attempts to encourage Shi'ite unrest in Bahrain have failed thus far, after Saudi Arabia, with backing from Gulf states, sent a military force to Bahrain. Iranian subversion in Bahrain, the preventive action by the Saudis, and Iranian involvement in terror attacks against Saudi Arabia have raised the tension between Iran, on the one hand, and Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, on the other, in a way that is contrary to Iran's interest in improving its relations with them. And Iran's relations with Turkey, which had improved in the past two years, have once again deteriorated as a result of differences of opinion between the two on the situation in Syria. Iran's relations with Hamas, which have developed since Hamas took power in the Gaza Strip, have been somewhat disrupted as a result of friction between Hamas and the Assad regime and Hamas' rapprochement with Egypt.

And finally, there is no doubt that the Iranian regime is worried about the possibility that the unrest in the Arab states will spill over into Iran. The potential for this to occur in Iran is there, as was illustrated by the riots that took place in Iran in the summer of 2009. The Arab spring has not yet brought about further disturbances in Iran, other than limited outbreaks of protest at the beginning of the year, which quickly abated. The reason for this is the regime's success in deterring the protesters in 2009 through the use of brutal means, and the protesters' possible assessment that their chances of changing the regime are not great at this point. Yet unrest is still liable to break out because the factors that led to the protests in 2009 still exist and because the increased economic pressure on Iran as a result of its conduct on the nuclear issue is liable to contribute to increased domestic pressure on the regime.

The Gulf Monarchies: Is Spring Far Behind?

Yoel Guzansky

One year after the onset of the Arab spring, the Gulf monarchies have proven to be notably resilient. With the exception of Bahrain, Gulf states have not faced serious threats to their regimes and have had little difficulty suppressing the few protests that have erupted. The conventional explanation for this outcome is money. Throughout the Gulf, governments have used their petrodollars (perhaps as much as \$160 billion) to fund generous new subsidies of goods and services. As a result, the masses in the Gulf have mostly sought to influence the regimes' conduct rather than to replace them outright. This is unlikely to change as long as Gulf citizens continue to enjoy the benefits of huge oil revenues.

After all, economics were a major factor behind the unrest elsewhere in the Arab world. In the Gulf, however, regimes can "buy" the opposition at home (as well as defense against external threats). According to the unwritten social contract between regimes and citizens, the former will provide very cheap or free goods and services and the latter will not try to undermine the existing political structure. In other words: "No taxation, no representation."

Money, however, does not tell the whole story. The monarchies are seen as more natural and legitimate forms of government. Unlike the pseudo-republics that are in various stages of collapse, these governments never pretended to be something they are not and therefore have not created significant gaps between vision and reality, making it easier for subjects to accept the kings' authority. Moreover, despite significant urbanization in recent decades, the tribal character of society remains strong. This makes it easier for the royal families, with their similar hierarchical structure, to sustain an unmediated connection with their subjects through tribal mechanisms, first and foremost the *Majlis* council, which allows for a certain amount of ventilation and direct transmission of messages to the elites. These

political assets are further buttressed by the religious legitimacy enjoyed by some of the regimes, whether as the descendants of the Prophet's tribe or as the keepers of the holy sites. Finally the very size and ubiquity of the royal families make it difficult to undermine the stability of the regimes.

Notwithstanding these financial and other advantages, some of the royal families are signaling that they understand the need to begin implementing gradual changes in the established political order. For example, a few days before the elections for local government councils (which are in charge only of marginal issues, and half of whose members are appointed), the King of Saudi Arabia granted women the right to vote and be elected to office in the next elections, apparently to be held in 2015. Abdullah also announced that the kingdom will look into the possibility of women voting for and being elected to the *Shura* Council, an exclusive institution, though devoid of any real authority. These moves – and similar initiatives undertaken shortly thereafter by the Emirs of Kuwait and Qatar, who announced they will hold elections in 2012 and 2013, respectively – are mostly cosmetic, but they do communicate, both internally and externally, that the monarchs are willing to go quite some distance in order to adapt to and/or preempt the rapid changes occurring in the region.

The royals themselves are not sure whether, when, and how the movement for change will reach the Gulf in full force. That is why they have spent so heavily to avoid the popular uprisings that have toppled other Arab regimes. The concern that more profound unrest will come calling in the future is not totally unfounded, as some of the ingredients behind protests elsewhere – corruption and skyrocketing youth unemployment – are also present in the Gulf, and because of the seemingly contagious character of the turmoil.

The kings and emirs have thus far been unable to decide on the direction in which to take their societies, and much of their “activism” amounts to little more than trial balloons and lip service to the causes championed by their critical allies in the West. In addition, their policies are complicated by the ironical dynamic of the global market: the more successful they are in preempting local unrest, the more the price of oil stabilizes or even falls, making it harder for these regimes to meet their commitments and ward off future protest. But over time, the monarchs will not be able to avoid accelerating the pace of reforms, and they will have to respond to the pressures exerted from without and within by going beyond merely cosmetic change.

Jordan: Demonstrations and Reforms on the Back Burner

Oded Eran

In Jordan, the ingredients of economic rage and political unrest were well known even before the outbreak of civic revolts in various Arab states at the beginning of 2011. Those revolts exacerbated what was already happening below the surface in Jordan and forced King Abdullah to act more forcefully than before. What is surprising about the visible manifestations of the unrest in Jordan is the involvement of the non-Palestinian elements of the population. Since the establishment of the kingdom and the waves of Palestinian immigration (in 1948, 1967, and 1990-91), the Bedouin tribes and the Jordanian army were the main pillars of support for the monarchy. However, since the beginning of 2011, even non-Palestinian demonstrators in Jordanian cities have raised demands, not just about the regime's performance but also about its very nature.

King Abdullah II has therefore initiated measures designed to absorb some of the criticism by means of reforms to the 1952 constitution and the election laws. However, the changes inserted into the Jordanian constitution have not altered the dominant status of the king in any essential way. And the election law by which the regime rules through a certain numerical ratio between Palestinian and non-Palestinian members of parliament has still not been amended. Abolishing the affirmative action that favors representation of non-Palestinians is liable to trigger an actual revolution. It is therefore doubtful whether King Abdullah would go so far as to authorize such a dramatic change and risk potential confrontation between the parliament and the royal household. A new election law will therefore require the king and the Palestinians to find a compromise that would reduce the degree of

affirmative action but still leave the majority of parliament to represent the non-Palestinian segment of the population.

Most of the demonstrations in Amman have been led by the Muslim Brotherhood. The movement's impressive success in Egypt certainly represents a boost for its Jordanian affiliate, and one may assume that the two movements maintain extensive relations. Demonstrations by the Muslim Brotherhood and by supporters of the regime – sometimes the two sides clash violently – indicate that the elections planned for 2012 will be neither peaceful nor orderly.

In addition to internal tensions stemming from the uprisings in other parts of the Arab world, Jordan is facing difficulties resulting from the global economic crisis, the potential results of a deterioration in Israel-Palestinian relations, the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq, and the ongoing chaos in Syria. After efforts lasting several months, Jordan and the Quartet (the US, the EU, Russia, and the UN) succeeded in launching direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians. This was a personal success for King Abdullah and promised to strengthen his standing inside Jordan, but Jordanian involvement was also a gamble and the not unpredictable failure of Israeli-Palestinian talks may well expose him to criticism and scorn.

In the Palestinian-Israeli-Jordanian context, one should also note the dialogue taking place between the royal household and Hamas about the organization's possible move from Damascus to Amman. For obvious reasons, the Jordanian regime has viewed Hamas activities and the movement of its leaders within the kingdom with great suspicion. The possible end of the Assad regime is forcing Hamas to seek alternative locations for its offices and residences of its senior operatives. One may assume that the talks between Hamas leaders and the King are focused on this topic. It would appear that Jordan has no interest in authorizing a Hamas presence in the country, but the royal household may be tempted to accede if it thinks that an agreement with Hamas could have a positive impact on relations with the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan or on the chances of getting significant financial aid from Qatar.

The withdrawal of US troops from Iraq increases the possibility that Jordan's internal security could be undermined. Iraqi instability has prompted the immigration of several hundreds of thousands of Iraqis to Jordan. This has had severe economic repercussions for Jordan – inflation and rapid urban

growth, especially in Amman. A further undermining of internal security in Iraq is liable to trigger another wave of refugees to Jordan.

The same may be true with regard to the continuing uprising in Syria. Even the fall of Assad's regime is no guarantee of rapid political and economic restabilization in Syria, and continued chaos there could well prompt thousands of Syrians to seek a solution, even if only temporary, in Jordan, with all of the attendant economic ramifications.

Israel-Jordan Relations

In light of the talks between Israel and the Palestinians in Jordan, it is clear that Israel and Jordan maintain a channel for dialogue. The willingness of the Israeli government to have the talks take place in Jordan, including a certain Jordanian presence, demonstrates the Israeli desire to extend political assistance to King Abdullah. Even the declaration by Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, to the effect that anyone who views Jordan as an alternative solution to the Palestinian question causes harm to Israel, must be understood in this context. Among the considerations guiding the Israeli government's actions and decisions about the Palestinian issue, Israel must also take into account the ramifications in other Arab states, especially Egypt and Jordan, especially in a period of heightened sensitivity.

Israel's ability to assist Jordan economically is limited but not non-existent. In the field of water supply, some steps have been taken that could ease Jordan's chronic water shortages. Israel and Jordan could usefully jumpstart an accelerated discussion, with the assistance of the international community and global financial institutions such as the World Bank, about regional economic solutions to the water issue based on a combination of desalination and natural sources. In light of the tremendous damage done to both Israel and Jordan by the ongoing interruptions in the supply of natural gas from Egypt and in light of the discoveries of natural gas in the Mediterranean, it is already possible to discuss the promotion of regional cooperation in this field as well.

Finally, while most Israeli leaders have viewed the stability of the Hashemite regime in Jordan as a clear Israeli interest, the uprising in Jordan, although low-key compared to what is happening in the other Arab states, has given renewed hope to those in Israel who believe that the toppling of the regime and a shift to Palestinian-majority rule would allow Israel to continue controlling Judea and Samaria without international and Palestinian pressure,

on the assumption that Jordan would become the solution to the Palestinian statehood issue. However, it is unlikely that the fall of the Hashemites would cause such pressures to abate. Furthermore, this assessment ignores the security and political risks to Israel of Palestinian control of Jordan without any agreement on the political future of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. Israeli assistance to Jordan is therefore the right thing to do in order to preserve – to the extent that it depends on Israel – an expanse of stability on the eastern front, particularly in light of growing instability on the southern front and profound uncertainty about Syrian-Israeli relations.

The Uprising in Syria and the Implications for Lebanon: All Quiet on the Levant Front?

Benedetta Berti

In the aftermath of Lebanon's 2005 "Cedar Revolution" that led to the withdrawal of Syrian forces and the end of the Syrian "tutelage," many commentators began referring to Lebanon as a potential model of successful democratization in the Middle East and expressing the hope that this experience would soon be extended to other countries in the region. However, in the years since then, it has become clear that the "Cedar Revolution" did not truly revolutionize Lebanon's political life, much less inspire further democratization in the region.

More recently, in the so-called Arab spring which began in 2011 to break the status quo elsewhere in the region, Lebanon has been conspicuous by its absence. In fact, Lebanon has been witnessing the political demise of the forces that were behind the "Cedar Revolution" and the rise of a "pro-Syrian" government heavily influenced by Hezbollah. However, although Lebanese political life has not been directly transformed as a result of the Arab spring, it would be inaccurate to conclude that regional turmoil has not had any impact on Lebanon.

Firstly, as a result of the regional uprisings in general and of the growing internal strife in Syria in particular, the country has become even more polarized along political and sectarian lines. Specifically, the "March 14" forces that had been behind the "Cedar Revolution" – led by Future Movement Leader Saad Hariri and by the Sunni community – have been strongly supporting the anti-Assad opposition movement in Syria. By contrast, Hizbullah and Amal – representing the Shiite community – and their political allies have taken the opposite stance, backing the Alawite regime in Syria and speaking harshly of the protesters. In the past few

weeks, as the situation continues to deteriorate within Syria, Sunni-Shi'ite relations inside Lebanon have also become more tense.

Secondly, the Syrian crisis has also spelled trouble for the government, as Hizbullah's virtually unconditional backing of its long-time ally Assad has generated friction between the group and some of its political allies, including Prime Minister Najib Mikati and the Druze leader, Walid Jumblatt, who are much less sympathetic to the Assad regime.

Thirdly, the Syrian turmoil has also had a direct security impact on Lebanon. Cross-border shooting by the Syrian army, an influx of Syrian refugees seeking safe haven in Lebanon, abductions of Syrian dissidents residing in Lebanon, and a surge in attacks on UNIFIL troops have all weighed heavily on Lebanon's internal security.

Finally, Lebanon has also been suffering economically from the Syrian crisis and the sanctions imposed on the Assad regime, as roughly one-third of Lebanon's foreign trade is conducted either with Syria or through Syria.

In other words, contrary to the common perception of Lebanese "immunity" to the ongoing regional change, the Arab spring has been very much felt within Lebanon, mostly because of the historically tight economic, political, and geostrategic relations with Syria. And Lebanon's political future will continue to be strongly affected by developments within Syria.

In the short term, the most likely scenario with respect to Syria is a continuation of the internal violence. In the absence of forceful international intervention, neither Assad's coercive apparatus nor an increasingly popular but still fragmented opposition seems capable of delivering a decisive blow to the other side. From a Lebanese perspective, this "quagmire" scenario means that the country should expect to continue suffering in terms of its own security, economy, and internal cohesion.

In the longer term, the demise of the Assad government in Syria would have an even more profound effect on Lebanon. The departure of Assad and his entourage could lead to a real realignment of political forces within Lebanon, giving new power and credibility to those who led the "Cedar Revolution." By the same token, Hizbullah, deprived of its ally in Damascus, could well lose political capital, power, and popularity. Still, Hizbullah would probably be able to withstand this political crisis thanks to its superior military apparatus, its strategic partnership with Iran, and its ability to reinterpret itself and adapt to changing circumstances.

The potential ramifications for Lebanon of regime change in Syria should not be underestimated. The fall of Assad could truly be the key to transforming Lebanese politics and fulfilling the promises of the “Cedar Revolution.”

Turkey and the Arab Awakening: The Glass Half Full, the Glass Half Empty

Gallia Lindenstrauss

The Arab awakening has placed the “Turkish model” on the regional agenda. While the Turks themselves sometimes have difficulty defining what this model is, it is quite clear that those using this term are talking about a mix in Turkey of Islam, democracy, and a market economy. Those who think that Turkey could be a role model emphasize the similarity between the Justice and Development Party and parties affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood movement in various Arab states. Others, however, note the uniqueness of the Turkish case because of Turkey’s membership in NATO and its desire to become a member of the European Union. Even if the relevance of the Turkish model to the countries experiencing upheaval in the Arab world is questionable, the very fact that the issue is being widely raised symbolizes Turkey’s soft power and adds to its previous successes in this realm.

The discussion of the extent of the possible integration of Islam and democracy in relation to Turkey and its relevance for the processes of democratization in the Middle East is not new. Such a discussion was also held in the context of the debate over the “clash of civilizations” thesis, and especially after September 11. At the time, the Turks were very weary of connecting this discussion to the Gulf War of 2003, which they opposed. Today, it appears that the Turks are more ready to “take upon themselves” the position of role model, even though there are still doubts. For example, when Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was asked in an interview with *Time* magazine in September 2011 about the relevance of the Turkish model to other countries, he replied: “If they want our help, we’ll provide any assistance they need. But we do not have a mentality of exporting our system.”

Even if there are variations on the elements that might be adopted from the Turkish model, it is already possible to see that the sister parties of the Justice and Development Party are achieving success. In Tunisia, for example, the Ennahda (Awakening) Party won some 41 percent of the vote, and in Egypt, the Freedom and Justice Party won nearly half of the seats in parliament. As the commentator Jackson Diehl claimed in the *Washington Post*, the Turkish government is now the new normal in the Middle East to which developments in countries that have undergone upheaval are being compared. Parties similar to the Justice and Development Party are becoming a legitimate option with which international actors are conducting negotiations.

Beyond that, the Arab awakening has contributed to the growing importance of Turkey from the perspective of the West in general and the United States in particular. The Arab spring has brought relations between the two countries to a high point. In an interview with *Time* magazine in January 2012, US President Barack Obama listed Erdoğan as one of the five foreign leaders with whom he has formed a relationship based on trust. Discussions held in the past in Washington and other Western capitals on the questions “Who lost Turkey?” and “Is Turkey moving east?” (against the backdrop of the rapprochement between Turkey, Syria, and Iran, and the deterioration in Turkish-Israeli relations) have disappeared as the turmoil in the Middle East has continued.

Although we can identify many advantages from Turkey’s point of view in the current situation, there are also disadvantages. On the most basic level, the lack of regional stability does not suit Turkey’s interests. The Turkish strategic view in recent years has been that Turkey is interested in stability in the areas bordering it in order to continue to develop its trade and thereby contribute to Turkish economic prosperity. Events in Syria are especially problematic from the Turkish point of view. Beyond the fact that Turkey has invested a great deal in recent years in improving relations with the Bashar al-Assad regime, there is a fear that the violence there will lead to large refugee flows to Turkey and force Turkey to become involved, and that activists from PKK, the Kurdish rebel group, will once again find sanctuary in Syria after being expelled from there at the end of the 1990s. Beyond that, Turkey has also attempted in recent years to promote mediation initiatives whose goal was to reduce tensions in the region and to build up its international position. The new strategic environment resulting from the Arab

spring has created an incentive to launch competing mediation initiatives. In this context, one should note the role played by Egypt in mediating the Shalit deal and the inter-Palestinian unity deal and the attempts by Jordan to bring about a resumption of talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

The Arab awakening has also created tension in relations between Turkey and Iran. Iran opposed international intervention in Libya, in which Turkey took part, and disputes arose with greater intensity regarding Syria, Iran's ally. As the crisis worsened in Syria, criticism from Turkey increased, until it reached a point where there was a clear call for Assad to resign, Turkey imposed sanctions on Syria, and according to various assessments, Turkey is actively aiding the Syrian opposition. The nadir in relations was in December 2011, when officials in Iran threatened Turkey that if the United States or Israel attacked Iran, it would respond by attacking NATO's radar system in Turkey. While the Iranian Foreign Minister denied that these threats were official and the Turkish Foreign Minister continues to claim that the system placed in Turkey is not aimed at Iran, the exchanges on this issue left their mark on the relationship. This tension is not a development connected only to the turmoil in the Arab world; it is also due to the progress in Iran's nuclear program. Nevertheless, the combination has intensified the fears on both sides. The tension between Turkey and Iran should also be seen in the context of greater tensions in the region due to the Sunni-Shi'ite rift, as manifested in Bahrain. While Turkey is constantly attempting to downplay the importance of this rift, the turmoil in the Arab world has led to a warming in relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia, which was expressed, for example, in Turkey's inquiries concerning the option of purchasing Saudi oil at a lower price than it pays today for oil from Iran.

Although thus far, we can enumerate losses for Turkey as well as gains from the Arab awakening, it appears that Turkey, thanks to its flexible policy and successful gambles, has achieved quite a bit from the current developments. Erdoğan was among the first international leaders calling for Husni Mubarak's ouster, and in spite of its initial hesitation, Turkey was among the active participants in NATO involvement in Libya. If Assad ultimately falls, Turkey already has a good relationship with opposition elements. The awakening in the Arab world has strengthened Turkish-American relations, and the numerous discussions on the Turkish model reflect Turkey's soft power. All of this strengthens Turkey's international standing and thus contributes to achieving one of the main goals of current

Turkish foreign policy: to have global influence. These Turkish aspirations in recent years have been perceived as coming at the expense of Turkey-Israel relations. The Arab awakening does not fundamentally change this perception, but the increasing tension between Turkey and Iran and between Turkey and Syria, as well as the improvement in Turkey's relations with the United States, create a possible platform for cooperation, even in a limited manner, between Israel and Turkey.

The Turmoil in the Arab World: Implications for WMD

David Friedman, Ephraim Asculai, and Emily B. Landau

One of the less-examined aspects of the Arab spring is the impact of the domestic turmoil in the various Middle Eastern countries on the issue of weapons of mass destruction. Internal changes in regimes and the instability characteristic of the recent period raise questions about existing WMD programs and arsenals, and about the possible impact on future programs, including the dangers of further proliferation, or even use, of weapons of mass destruction, intentional or unintentional. While discussion of non-conventional weapons in the Middle East usually tends to focus on the emerging nuclear dangers, the current turmoil in the region actually sheds light on the potential dangers connected to chemical and biological weapons.

Chemical and Biological Weapons

In the 1960s, Egypt was the first country in the Middle East to enter the realm of WMD when it developed, stockpiled, and made operational use of mustard gas in Yemen. During the uprising in early 2011, these capabilities did not play a significant role, although there were accusations made by domestic opposition figures – albeit unconfirmed – that during the suppression of the demonstrations, tear gas (CS) and perhaps CR were used, and maybe even nerve gas. At this point, it does not appear that the direction in which Egypt is moving will create a situation in which chemical and biological weapons will slip out of the current tight control or deviate from the present rules of use. On the other hand, it appears that the prospect of Egypt agreeing to forgo the chemical option and joining the Chemical Weapons Convention – participation in which it has until now conditioned on Israel's joining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty – will be further diminished.

Syria is considered a superpower in the chemical and biological realm, with a powerful array of chemical weapons that includes various chemical materials and means of delivery. The chemical weapons are stored, protected, and controlled by Assad's loyal forces. For years, Syria viewed its chemical weapons as a strategic response to Israel's strategic capabilities, and until the outbreak of the riots last year, it was commonly assumed that the chemical-biological threat stemmed from the possibility that the Syrian ruler might order their use during an all-out war with Israel. But the new situation has raised additional scenarios. One is the domestic Syrian scenario, in which Assad might find himself in a desperate situation and decide to use these weapons against the rebels, or, alternatively, that the latter take control over weapons stores. Another scenario is that Assad, realizing that his time is running out, attacks Israel with chemical weapons in the desperate hope of diverting attention elsewhere. Another possibility, perhaps even more likely, is that at a certain point during the uprising, as a result of weakened safeguards and control over the weapons arsenal, terrorist organizations, mainly Hizbullah, will get their hands on a portion of these weapons. The worrisome implications of this scenario stem from the fact that as a non-state organization, Hizbullah has less of a footprint and is therefore more difficult to deter.

In the past, Libya had plans to develop and stockpile chemical and biological weapons, and had succeeded in developing operational stores of chemical weapons. When it joined the Chemical Weapons Convention it began a process of destroying them, but when the battles broke out in 2011, it still had some of the stores in its possession. During the battles there were fears – similar to those regarding Syria – that if Qaddafi's situation became desperate, he would attempt to use chemical weapons against the rebels, or that the rebels would gain control over the chemical stores and use them. There were also fears, given the chaos in the country, that control over weapons stores would break down and that the weapons might find their way to non-state actors such as the Taliban, al-Qaeda, Hizbullah, and Hamas. And indeed, there are partial, unconfirmed reports that following deals made with Iranian mediation and funding, weapons did reach these organizations. In addition, after Qaddafi's fall, weapons caches were discovered that Libya had not declared to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). That raises doubts about the true inspection capability of the organization.

In conclusion, the conditions that have now been created in states in the region where riots broke out during the Arab spring have created a new situation. Governments confronting internal turmoil may face “no choice” scenarios, in which they decide to use these weapons against opposition elements or other states. Likewise, as a result of the chaos and loss of control by the government, these weapons can more easily reach terrorist organizations. If this happens, it will be more likely that such weapons will be used in some scenario in the region.

Nuclear Weapons

While the Arab spring did not have an immediate and direct impact on any nuclear programs in states in which changes have taken place, it is possible that it will have a delayed impact, especially against the backdrop of the growing threat of a nuclear Iran. The most interesting case in this context is that of Egypt. President Mubarak had relatively strong views against developing nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, he declared more than once that if the need arose for nuclear weapons, he would not hesitate to develop them. A number of findings by inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency indicated possible R&D activity with regard to nuclear weapons. Currently, while the military establishment is ruling Egypt, there is some doubt about whether Egypt will continue to adhere to this route.

There is no doubt that Syria had military nuclear plans. It is not clear, however, whether it still has such aspirations, and a change in government could either revive the nuclear program or eliminate it. While Saudi Arabia has not been directly affected by the Arab spring, it is liable to consider developing nuclear weapons in the shadow of the threat from Iran. If other states in the region also go down this path, this will have a clear impact on Saudi Arabia, and the Saudis, with help from Pakistan, may decide on an accelerated timetable to develop a Saudi response.

If these scenarios materialize, the implication would be to undermine the foundations of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. There is no doubt that the role of the Arab spring in this process is secondary, but the emergence of new regimes, some of them Islamist, could tip the balance in such a development.

Conclusion

The dangers of WMD programs and arsenals, in the shadow of the Arab spring, have not yet come to the fore, and at this point are still hypothetical. Nevertheless, the instability in some of the Arab states, chemical weapons in a number of states, the probability of the existence of biological weapons, and the ambitions of a number of states to achieve nuclear weapons are likely to bring about a situation in which in practice, WMD could even be used. There is no doubt that this situation will require greater vigilance and closer monitoring than in the past.

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The Arab Spring and the Israeli-Palestinian Arena

Anat Kurz

The residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip have not been carried away by the riots that swept the Middle East. The institutional, security, and economic rehabilitation of the West Bank in recent years under President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad is an obvious explanation for the fact that the Arab spring has not spread there. This was the case despite vehement opposition to continued Israeli rule in the area, and despite the widespread, sometimes sharp criticism of the Palestinian Authority for its inability to bring about diplomatic-territorial change and promote the vision of sovereignty. Even in the Gaza Strip there were no riots, though for a different reason. Demonstrations of support for the Egyptian protesters in Tahrir Square, who called for the overthrow of Husni Mubarak's government, were suppressed with an iron hand by local security forces, who sought to prevent the demonstrations from developing into a protest against Hamas rule.

Nevertheless, at the time that popular protests were sweeping throughout the region, and possibly with their inspiration, rallies were held in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where there were calls to put an end to the rift between Fatah and Hamas, that is, between the PA, led by Fatah, which controls the West Bank, and the government led by Hamas, which controls Gaza. The call to regulate relations between the movements, or "national reconciliation," in the language of the demonstrators, was presented both as a national goal in and of itself and a means of facilitating the end of Israeli rule in the West Bank.

The leaders of Fatah and Hamas responded positively to the call. In the absence of tangible political accomplishment, the Palestinian Authority chose to try to reconcile with Hamas in order to expand its own base of popular support. Against the backdrop of the diplomatic stalemate, the PA correctly

estimated that its international image would not be substantially harmed even if it reached institutional understandings with Hamas. Hamas' leaders, for their part, saw inter-organizational dialogue as a means of strengthening their position beyond the boundaries of the Gaza Strip. In addition, the civil war that has erupted in Syria and the undermining of Bashar al-Assad's rule have threatened to deny them their foothold in Damascus at a time when the Supreme Military Council that replaced Mubarak's government has promised to defend its foothold in the Gaza Strip from Israeli attack.¹ In these circumstances, Hamas' representative agreed to sign a "reconciliation agreement" with Fatah, which had been drafted by Egyptian intelligence in October 2009 and deferred by the Hamas leadership under pressure from Syria and Iran.

Thus, the Arab spring played a part in laying the groundwork for the signing of the reconciliation agreement. The document focused on willingness to hold elections for the presidency and Legislative Council. It did not, in fact, express reconciliation, but rather, the intention of Fatah and Hamas to continue to fight for the national leadership through electoral means. As for the Palestinian public, after the festive signing ceremony it was pushed from center stage, while the organizations' leaders focused on an effort to formulate understandings that would allow elections to be held in May 2012.

Can the leaders of Fatah and Hamas draft an election procedure? And if so, which organization will achieve victory? Can Fatah and Hamas bridge the intense hostility and the ideological and political differences that separate them and agree to a division of power and influence? These are open questions. However, even if Fatah does win an election, a PA government controlled by it would probably have to work hard to prevent Hamas from continuing to subvert its domestic and international legitimacy, *inter alia*, by fanning the flames of violent conflict with Israel.

As always, clashes could erupt between Palestinian demonstrators and Israeli security forces as a result of a local incident spinning out of control. In such a case, Hamas activists would try to place themselves at the forefront of the confrontations, and it is hard to imagine that Fatah's activists would stand idly by. Furthermore, in recent years, Hamas has repeatedly proven its ability to spark a conflict, which would impel Israel to respond militarily and

1 Alex Fishman, "A New Law," *Yediot Ahronot*, May 5, 2011.

precipitate international criticism. At the same time, this would embarrass the PA, since it would illustrate its powerlessness regarding events in the Gaza Strip. An uprising could also develop as a result of cumulative frustration over the slowdown in the PA's diplomatic momentum at the UN.

In any case, renewed violent conflict, if it breaks out, will not be a direct outgrowth of the Arab spring. The Israeli-Palestinian arena has its own dynamic, especially considering that the residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip could teach the masses in Arab countries a lesson about popular uprisings. At the same time, renewed conflict would erode the chance, remote in any case, to bring about a breakthrough in the diplomatic process. This development would be added to the other consequences of the turmoil in the Middle East, which reinforced the well-known components of the diplomatic stalemate.

The fear of widespread public protest, inspired by the assertiveness of the masses in the region, would prevent the PA from softening the demands it made of Israel as a condition for resuming dialogue. The government of Israel, for its part, will be wary of any new territorial deployment in the West Bank because of concerns about elevated security threats as a result of radicalization among the Palestinians and throughout the region. The growing strength of Islamist forces in Arab states will limit the willingness of both established and new regimes to support the resumption of negotiations aimed at promoting an historic compromise. And all of these will reduce the ability, and in fact, the desire, of international players, chiefly the United States and the European Union, to put forward a new initiative for resumption of dialogue.

Against this backdrop, all that remains for Israel and the Palestinian Authority is to continue to concentrate on managing the conflict. This means that they must persevere in the joint effort to prevent an outbreak of popular protest among the Palestinians, which could develop into an all-out conflict.

The desire to prevent conflict should be a good enough reason for the government of Israel to attempt – despite the known political difficulties – to ease the burden on the residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and *inter alia*, to reach understandings with Hamas in this context and withdraw its objection in principle to a thaw in relations between Fatah and Hamas in order to ease the obstacles to the establishment of a unified Palestinian Authority, which could well serve as a counterweight to belligerence among the Palestinian public and in the ranks of Hamas. The Palestinian Authority,

for its part, must take seriously the danger that in the absence of diplomatic dialogue, even if only about subjects connected to conflict management, it will face a hopeless situation in terms of public confidence and risk public protests that would spill over into a renewed violent confrontation with Israel. If that were to happen, the trend toward economic and institutional development in the West Bank would be stopped, the PA's grip on the West Bank will be loosened, and the way would be paved for Hamas ascendancy.

Such a course of events evolving in this direction would strengthen the Islamists' foothold in the arena and further diminish the chance for Israel and the PA to resume their dialogue in order to reach a settlement. It could also be interpreted as an accelerated albeit indirect Palestinian manifestation of regional trends emerging from the Arab spring.

The Upheavals in the Arab World: Implications for the IDF

Gabi Siboni

From Israel's perspective, the upheavals in the Arab world over the past year have a number of possible military ramifications.

The Gaza Strip

The possibility remains that the Israel Defense Forces will have to take action against Hamas and jihadist organizations in the Gaza Strip. Should this need materialize, the new political reality in Egypt means that one of the most significant challenges facing the IDF will be to contain the action in the Gaza Strip. Regardless of its objective, a military operation in Gaza would inevitably prompt a harsh response in Egyptian public opinion and a demand to react against Israel. In anticipation of such a response, the IDF would be denied the relative freedom of action it enjoyed during Operation Cast Lead. Instead, the IDF would have to plan, train for, and carry out a swift campaign. Without the protracted use of preparatory firepower, the IDF would instead have to rely on simultaneous firepower and ground maneuver in order to inflict damage on terrorist infrastructures and assets. More importantly, the political echelon would have to ensure the support for the legitimacy of the action. This would require the continuous, systematic clarification to global and Arab (including Egyptian) public opinion of the necessity of the action in light of the continuing rocket fire from the Gaza Strip, along with effective coordination with the United States.

The Sinai Peninsula and the Israeli-Egyptian border

Despite an increased troop presence in the Sinai Peninsula, the Egyptian government is losing control of the area, and terrorist organizations are

increasingly free to operate there. Construction of the border fence will reduce the scope of smuggling and infiltration by migrant workers but will not foil flat- or high-trajectory fire at Israeli targets. Moreover, instability in Egypt also requires the IDF to prepare a defensive response to a more extreme scenario in which the Egyptian army moves into Sinai in contravention of the peace treaty. For years, it was claimed that the IDF could build its force in response to strategic warning of a change in the situation in Egypt. The upheavals in Egypt and the Middle East appear to provide such a warning and oblige the IDF to identify applicable solutions that can improve defensive capabilities here without neglecting needed response capabilities in other theaters. In the absence of additional resources, one of the tools to improve the response would be to develop the capability to move necessary ground forces quickly from one arena to another, as is already the case with air and naval assets. This could be achieved by establishing mission-oriented HQs with no assigned forces, first at the division level and, in the future, at the corps level as well. These HQs would be stationed along Israel's western border and be required to enhance readiness and operational knowledge so that in an emergency, they would be assigned combat forces and command them into battle.

Jordan

Although there is discontent on the Jordanian street, the kingdom has thus far been spared major upheavals. However, things can change quickly. The border with Jordan is largely unsecured, and after the fence along the western frontier is completed, the focus of hostile activity might well shift to the eastern frontier. Much time will pass until the proper facilities are put in place there. Meanwhile, the IDF needs to prepare for various contingencies, with the major effort directed at identifying weaknesses along the border and providing local responses to them. At the same time, it would be advisable to think about a comprehensive defense concept for borders with states with which Israel has peace agreements, based on small, intelligence-driven rapid reaction forces.

The Golan Heights

It is unclear where the unrest in Syria will lead but the current inconclusive struggle is likely to end at some point in political change. Even if such a change turns out to be positive over the long term, the current calm along the

Golan Heights border may well be disturbed in the short term. Tension might escalate for a number of reasons, including infiltration by hostile elements exploiting weakened central Syrian control and attempts by the regime to heat up the border in an effort to enhance its chances of survival. In any case, the IDF needs to prepare for unrest and terrorism on the Golan front. The response could include identifying weak points along the border and strengthening them by improving defensive infrastructures designed to stop organized infiltration attempts. In addition, the IDF should form designated units to deal with such events. The inherent instability also necessitates stepped up intelligence collection and the active alert of forces on appropriate timetables. There is also a need to maintain the regional defensive array and ensure that civilian settlements in the Golan are equipped, trained, and drilled to act in various escalation scenarios. Finally, there should be better coordination with the UN forces stationed in the area; these may turn out to have the ability to mediate and mitigate the impact of events as they unfold.

The Palestinian arena

The image of stable security in Judea and Samaria could turn out to be illusory. A slide into large-scale confrontation might develop either from an internal upheaval in Palestinian society, fed by the regional instability, or from a conscious decision by the Palestinian leadership that such a confrontation would serve its political needs. In either case, the IDF must be ready to deal with disturbances and demonstrations on a scale reminiscent of the first Intifada. That implies forces trained and equipped with non-lethal means to deal with these contingencies. At the same time, regional defensive readiness in the Jewish settlements should be enhanced in order to confront organized and/or spontaneous infiltration attempts.

The changes in the Middle East are only in their infancy. It may be that in the long term, the processes of democratization and the desire of citizens to improve their living conditions will entrench stability in the region. However, the short-term risks inherent in these changes require the IDF to ensure that it can provide responses to various scenarios. At the same time, the political echelon must act with regard to the international community in order to provide the legitimacy Israel will need if it is obliged to use force. In terms of maximizing Israel's ability to confront the regional upheavals, political readiness by the government is no less critical than is operational readiness by the IDF.

Israeli Responses to the Arab Spring

Mark A. Heller

Israel's initial reaction to the onset of the Arab spring could be fairly described as one of apprehension bordering on high anxiety. Such a response was not altogether groundless. After all, the Arab uprising's first targets – Zein al-Abdin bin Ali in Tunisia and Husni Mubarak of Egypt – were known quantities and Mubarak, in particular, was the central pillar of a regime holding a critically important Arab state to a political course that complemented Israel's vital security interests. Mubarak was hardly the Zionist sympathizer caricatured by some of his domestic and regional opponents. For example, he allowed the unchecked circulation of virulent anti-Israel, anti-Semitic, and anti-American propaganda while Egyptian media were strictly forbidden even to speculate about the state of the President's health. Mubarak did, however, consistently interpret Egypt's national interest to require maintenance of the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty, confrontation with Islamist extremists, active suppression of terrorists, and close coordination with the United States. From an American perspective, what Franklin Delano Roosevelt is alleged to have said about the Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza (or, in a different version of what might may well be an apocryphal tale) about his Dominican counterpart, Rafael Trujillo), could have been said with equal validity about Mubarak: "He may be a son of a bitch but he's our son of a bitch." And given the importance to Israel of American regional influence, the ouster of leaders in the American orbit necessarily augured badly for Israel, too.

Israeli concerns were further exacerbated when it began to appear as though the forces most likely to benefit from and exploit the fall of established regimes were not the secular, liberal, middle class youth who featured so prominently in the early breathless coverage of events by Western media, but rather the long suppressed but highly resilient Islamist movements that had

built their own social networks, not just in the less affluent neighborhoods of the major cities but also throughout the vast, under-reported countryside.

However, it soon became apparent that the assumption that had so discouraged Israel and so encouraged Iran and its allies in the region, including the regime in Syria, namely, that the only ones at risk were the “good guys,” i.e., moderate or pragmatic authoritarian rulers, was quite unfounded. The spread of the Arab spring to places like Libya, Yemen, and especially Syria held out the promise that whatever setbacks were implied by the weakening or overthrow of regimes congenial to Israeli interests might be compensated, at least in part, by the weakening or overthrow of regimes unreservedly inimical to those same interests. And that potential gain would be magnified almost beyond calculation if the impulses that led to the brief uprising in Tehran in 2009 that was, in some ways, a precursor to the Arab spring, were to return to Iran with enough force this time to result in the overthrow of the regime there.

Furthermore, the Islamist movements that began to thrive as political space opened up have shown some signs of being rather more ambivalent about their hostility to Israel, or at least about the urgency with which they intend to act on it. How authentic expressions of relative moderation or pragmatism actually are remains an open question, and it is entirely possible that they are merely lip service meant to reassure domestic and especially foreign audiences. But even in the latter case, the felt need to relate to Israel in a manner less diametrically opposed to the course chosen by their predecessors and unlike what their established ideologies would have indicated at least raises the possibility that the consequences for Israel of their coming to power might represent something less than an unmitigated political disaster and intolerable security threat.

What to Do

The predominant Israeli approach to the Arab spring is that Israel must prepare itself to deal with whatever the consequences may be, but without any pretensions to influence the manner in which it evolves, even in the dimensions most relevant to Israel. To a large extent, that approach is fairly realistic. After all, outside actors, even major world powers like the United States, are limited in what they can do to shape the course of events in directions they favor. Still, marginal influence is not the same as no influence at all, and some possibilities to mute or divert negative

consequences for Israel of political change in the Arab world can at least be considered, both at the bilateral and the broader regional levels. One example of preemptive bilateral damage containment might involve Jordan, whose regime's character (like that of Egypt under Mubarak) is largely congenial to Israel security interests. To the extent that challenges to such a regime are fuelled by economic discontent, Israel, as Oded Eran suggests in his article, might be able to take advantage of proximity and manageable scale to help alleviate economic stress, especially with respect to water and fuel. Another example, proposed by Gallia Lindenstrauss, is to search for common perspectives on the implications of the Arab spring in the hope of checking and reversing the deterioration in Israeli-Turkish relations. Thirdly, Israel might try to explore whether channels of communication with Islamist and other emerging political forces in the region might be opened (as the United States has done) in an effort at least to reduce misunderstandings and discredit harmful stereotypes. Finally, at the regional level, Israel might consider whether the need to lower the toxicity of Israel's image in light of ongoing political upheaval and uncertainty might not give added urgency to a constructive reference to the Arab Peace Initiative and a renewed search for some kind of Palestinian-Israeli understanding on how to proceed toward a resolution of the conflict.

There is, of course, no assurance these initiatives or others in the same vein would actually further either their immediate or more comprehensive objectives. Nor are they certain to invalidate the underlying calculation that it is beyond Israel's capacity to alter the course of such profound developments. Still, motorists and homeowners believe that they can do something to "winterize" and "summerize" their cars and houses against what are truly elemental forces of nature. Any effort to "springerize" Israel's foreign and defense policy might well be equally worthwhile.

