



CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT

FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

Transcript

# MIDDLE EAST UPRISINGS: OPTIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

## PANEL 1: THE NEW PROTAGONISTS

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MARWAN MUASHER: All right, welcome to Carnegie, everyone. My name is Marwan Muasher and I'm the vice president in charge of the Middle East program at Carnegie.

Let me first say what a pleasure it is to do this joint function with Harvard and thank everybody from Harvard for helping us do this. I do need to mention one person who is not with us in particular – Hilary Rantisi, who really was crucial to making this happen. And I hope this is going to be the first of many, many joint activities we can do together.

Let me welcome the professors that we have here from Harvard: Professor Nick Burns – I'm not used to calling you professor, but – (laughter) – who needs no introduction and Professor Stephen Walt and Tarek Masoud also from Harvard. And joining us from Carnegie is Marina Ottaway, the director of the Middle East program, Nathan Brown and Chris Boucek all from Carnegie.

This is, of course, about the Middle East uprisings and options for U.S. policy. As you know, there are many new actors entering the political stage which makes the formulation of policy for the U.S. even more difficult. And this is an attempt to look at the forces that are shaping the region and look at options for the United States. We are going to have this divided into two panels.

The first panel will talk about the new protagonists where Marina will address the transformation of the political spectrum. I will talk about sort of the drive or chances for reform to take place from above and Tarek will talk about the Egyptian situation and where we are there.

And then in the second panel after the coffee break, we will talk about options for the United States. Nick Burns will address the issue of the Obama administration's reaction to the Middle East uprisings. Steve will talk about a new strategy for the new Middle East and Chris will address the question of when the Arab Spring might turn into an Arab Winter. So with that, welcome again and I'll turn it over to Steve.

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STEPHEN WALT: Thank you very much, Marwan. Thank you all for coming. It's a pleasure to be down here in Washington and we're delighted to be collaborating with the Carnegie Endowment on this event. Marwan has just laid out the program. So my job as moderator just got enormously easy. I don't really have to do very much more than introduce the speakers and get them started.

Marwan, as everyone knows, extensive experience as a Jordanian diplomat, as a World Bank employee, now director of studies here at Carnegie; Marina Ottaway, director of the Middle East program here at Carnegie and one of the world's real authorities on the whole process of democratization; and then, finally, my colleague Tarek Masoud, educated at Yale, assistant professor at the Kennedy School and someone who has really become an incredibly valued colleague in his relatively short time there.

I am eager to hear what all of them have to say and I get to pontificate later. So without further ado, I believe we're going to first with Marwan.

MR. MUASHER: Oh, me? Okay. (Laughter.)

MR. WALT: You're up.

MR. MUASHER: I thought I would look at maybe the different categories of Arab states and the different reactions that we've had to the uprisings that have taken place so far plus maybe offer some thoughts about what I think need to happen if we are to see a reform from above work.

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Of course, there are already many, many doubts about whether any reform process in the Arab world is going to work from above. That is to me still the preferred option if we don't want the street to basically set the pace.

Streets are always great at starting change but not at institutionalizing them. And so what does it take for a serious reform process to take place in the Arab world to do that? Until January of this year, of course, the preferred modus operandi for Arab governments – probably for all Arab governments – was to stick to the status quo. The argument in the Arab world was the street is not moving, there is no reason why we should sort of accelerate any pace of serious reform. We are not under pressure.

That, of course, option has been – hopefully has been taken away after the uprisings of the last few months. Basically today in my view Arab governments have only options left to them: either they do start a serious reform process from above – and I'll get into what that process will entail in my view – or they will have to watch it unfold from below. But to do nothing and hope that the status quo will be – you know, will go on forever is no more a sustainable option.

We've had so far three major categories of Arab states with different reactions to the uprisings. Of course, I don't want to go through the ones that have already experienced change – Egypt and Tunisia. And I'm sure Tarek and others will address that. But of those who are left other than Egypt and Tunisia, we have a category which I call “empire is striking back.” (Laughter.)

This is the category that has countries like Libya, Yemen, and Syria, where one factor that may be joining all of them is a sense that any serious reform on their part is going to end up in that – those systems leaving power. These are systems that have been there for a very long time. In Syria, for example, you have a minority system. Any serious reform process, any opening up of the system will necessarily mean that that system is going to leave power.

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And these are countries that realize that and therefore after an initial period where sort of we've seen rhetorical commitments to some reform process, that has now all been all but abandoned and what we are seeing now is battle for survival that has no problems being bloody, no problems killing their own people because the alternative to these people is that if they really do engage in any serious reform process, they will end up leaving.

And in my opinion, in all these countries the end result is going to be, you know, these people leaving. But it will be bloody. It will be long, particularly in the case of Syria and Libya and Yemen. You might have maybe – especially in Yemen – a quicker process. The other category of countries are those that are trying to buy time with money.

These are basically the Gulf states. They have lots of money and they are trying to address these grievances, these uprisings – either to address them or to preempt them – through giving their citizens – and not just their citizens but even those around them in the region – lots of money in an attempt to slow the process, if not thwart it all together.

This is not going to work, in my opinion, in the long-term. Issues like corruption, for example, are not going to be addressed through giving people money and corruption, by the way, I something that is now probably at the top of all demands in Arab countries that we are seeing. So whereas Gulf states do have money and in fact in some of them – in Saudi Arabia you have a monarch which is relatively popular. Kuwait has a fully elected parliament.

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So I mean, I don't see an immediate problem in the Gulf states, although with the exception of Bahrain of course. Although in the long-term or medium term I think that unless these countries also undertake a serious reform process, buying time with money is not going to work in the medium term.

And then the third category is those of monarchies that are promising reform. Okay, this is – under this category I would put Jordan and Morocco. In an attempt to preempt the street or get ahead of the street, we've seen some movement in these countries. In Jordan we've seen two committees being asked to change the election law and also another committee to look at constitutional amendments.

And the result of these two committees' work will be announced shortly. But it's still a far cry, in my view, from what has been done in Jordan a few years ago with the national agenda which actually looked not just at the election law and some constitutional amendment but at the whole range of political, social and economic areas that needed work, which was a lot more comprehensive than the process that is going on now.

Although that effort was shelved, this effort at least has the potential because of the street of coming up with some partial reform if not the total reform that was promised a few years ago. Morocco has gone a step or two further than Jordan.

The king of Morocco in March promised a process that if implemented will lead to some power sharing, will lead to a prime minister that will be selected by the majority in parliament, greater powers to the region, improved independence of the courts, improved women's right and strengthen human rights.

And these also, the king promised, will be put to a referendum. So in both Jordan and Morocco you have promises of reform which go some way in addressing – I don't think enough – but some way in addressing demand of citizens. But so far they remain promises and frankly promises that were given before.

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So some people are still skeptical about whether these promises will be implemented or not. What does it take for reform to work? And I'll be very brief. What does it take for reform to work in my view so that you don't end up with another Egyptian uprising, another Tunisian uprising. If reform from above is to work, what should it entail? And I think I would – I will just enumerate five or six maybe principles that need to be addressed – taken into account if such a reform process is to be serious.

One is that the process should be holistic in my view. That is, it covers all aspects of reform, not limited to an election law here or an initiative there because we've gone through this process in the past and these – what they

have done is they have made limited advancements in some areas but they have not added up to a reform process that went all the way. So the process has to be holistic.

It has to be serious. What I define by seriousness is that a process that leads to power sharing. Any process that does not lead to the dilution of the executive power is not a serious process. Any process that does not lead to stronger parliaments and weaker executives, frankly, is not a serious process.

Three, inclusive – there is no plan for reform that can be done by governments and then handed over to the public and where the public would have the required buy-in unless the plan for reform is also – unless it involves all forces of society.

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Unless it is truly inclusive, I don't think that it has much chance to succeed. Gradual – I believe in a gradual process. Not everything can be done at once. But gradual in the past has been used as an excuse to do nothing, frankly. So gradual and serious, not gradual and ad hoc. And finally, measurable – in other words, reform rhetoric doesn't work anymore.

Okay, we've heard the reform rhetoric so many times from leaders, from governments all around the region. This time it must be measurable. You must have performance indicators. You must have timelines. You must have links to the budget – all the milestones that are necessary for people to see that you are indeed moving well to address all these areas.

If we take this as at least a reasonable set of criteria to judge whether reform processes from above in the Arab world are serious or not, I do not think that so far any Arab country meets all these criteria. They might meet partially some of them but I have not seen yet any process that meets all of these criteria where it is gradual, serious, sustained, measurable, holistic over an extended period of time.

And part of the problem, of course, is Arab leaders have now surrounded themselves with “yes” people. I mean, anybody who would talk to them about serious reform is out of the system now. And “yes” people are still saying to Arab leaders today: don't worry, we can manage this, we are not Egypt, we are not Tunisia, you have more legitimacy, you have more, you know, open systems.

And in my view, this really characterizes almost all Arab governments. What we are seeing today is a process that attempts to get away with the minimum rather than a process that is serious about taking the country to a different level of governance that it does not enjoy today.

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And so in the end, I remain skeptical. From what we've seen so far, I hope I'm wrong. But I remain skeptical that the process is moving along the right directions and that Arab governments indeed are learning the right lessons from what has taken place so far in the Arab world. Thank you.

MR. WALT: Thank you very much. That was actually I thought terrific and raised enormous number of questions. But before we get to questions, I want to go to our other two speakers. I'm going to then give them each a chance to react to what they've heard and then we'll go to the audience. Marina, you're next.

MARINA OTTAWAY: Thank you. Let me pick up from where Marwan left it and just point out that this problem of reform from the top and how much reforming will there is at the top exists even in the countries where the presidents have been overthrown. In other words, the fact that Mubarak is no longer in power, that Ben Ali is in exile in Saudi Arabia does not mean that the regimes have been eliminated.

The military are still there, in particular in Egypt. There is still an enormous presence of all the regime elements in the system and the question is, is there a will to reform and how far they are going to be willing to go. But what I want to focus more is the other actors, the other protagonists that are coming out. And I will start looking at the political parties and come back to the protestors.

I'm not forgetting that the protestors are there and they have played a huge role, of course, and are going to play a main role. Let me start with the ruling parties. We know that both in Tunisia and in Egypt the ruling parties have been dissolved. They no longer exist as such.

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And I think we can be pretty sure that they are not going to be reconstituted as such. We are not going to see another NDP I think. Nobody probably wants the name of NDP right now. The question is what is happening to the people who are in these political parties and what is the role that they are going to play going forward. We cannot – we really don't know for sure at this point because the process of formation of new political parties is still very much – very much underway.

But let me point out a couple of things. First of all, we know that in all political systems that have gone major transitions. We have seen that in Eastern Europe and Central Europe essentially. The people who are in the ruling parties earlier tend to come out – tend to survive the change and reappear in some other – in some other political organization, political parties.

Former Socialists did very well in elections in Central and Eastern European countries, which is not really strange because the ruling parties who were in place where people were who had an interest in politics. Political animals, essentially, in single-party systems converge into the ruling political party because there was no other place to go. These were the people who were – who had the ability, essentially knew how to do politics, if I can put it that way.

They were also the people who were – you know, they had the experience. They had the experience in organizing and so on. So there are reasons on the basis – you know, reasoning by analogy. We all know it's always dangerous. But there are reasons to believe that they are going to be – to still do well for themselves. There is another factor that it's very important to keep in mind and this is particularly true in Egypt.

And this is an issue that has not received a lot of attention. If you look at the performance of the National Democratic Party in elections over the years, what you know is that the National Democratic Party never did all that well in the elections themselves, although in the end ended up by controlling the parliament completely.

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Why? Because you always had a large number of people running as independents against the candidate – the candidate of the National Democratic Party – winning – defeating the candidates of the National Democratic Party, taking their seat and then joining the National Democratic Party again.



Now, who are these people and why are they important? And what they are, they are people with the local power bases – (inaudible). In other words, these are individuals who either in the villages or for whatever reasons – and I think here I wish that we had both the personnel and the money to do a detailed study of who they are and so on. But these are people essentially who could get themselves elected just on the basis of their personal support. They had the ties to the community that could get them elected.

Now, these people are not going to disappear. And we are talking about a very, very large number of people. These people are not going to disappear. They are still going to be in politics. They ran as independent before and they are probably going to run as independent before.

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The new election law, if the early reports I have seen are correct, indicate that two-thirds of the seats are going to be run on – only one-third of the seats is going to be elected on the basis of proportional representation, which means essentially that there is plenty of space for independents to run again. And these people will probably run again.

They will probably win seats again and then the big question – and there is – to which I really don't have any answer – which way are they going to jump once they have been elected because they know – in other words, to whom will they throw their support. In the past, they always threw their support to the National Democratic Party because, after all, the governing party is the one that can dispense patronage and that can make money available for your local projects and so on.

We don't know which way they are going to jump. It's quite possible that they are going to wait and see which way the wind blows and jump towards the winner and strengthen the position of whoever wins the election. But this is an enormous group that has not been well-studied, to which their focus has been more on the political parties. These are free agents that have quite a lot of support in their own name.

The second category of actors that we need to look at is that of the parties that I will insist calling the “secular parties.” It's a very controversial term that people don't like the term “secular” because it makes them sound – or they fear that it makes them sound they are – you know, they are not Islamic, they are atheists and so on. I don't have a better word to use. Some people use the term “liberal parties.”

I'm not convinced that all of them are liberal parties and that's why I'm hesitant in using the word. People are talking about – you know, when talking about the state, more and more people are talking about the civil state rather than the secular state. I don't like them to call them civil parties because it makes everybody else sound uncivil, which I don't think is quite accurate either. So I stick with the terms – the term “secular parties” now.

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We know from work we have done before here at Carnegie that secular parties have in the Arab world in recent years have had two huge problems. One has been that of language, that secular parties essentially have been parties led by intellectuals that have really not found a language that most of their countrymen understand.

There are parties, from my experience going and interviewing people, that spend half an hour telling you why article so-and-so of the constitution needs to be amended. There is no doubt that article so-and-so of the constitution needs to be amended. But you don't organize for election purposes by discussing article so-and-so of the constitution.

In other words, they truly have had trouble developing a language that people understand. Now, there is a new language in the streets of – in the streets of Tunisia and in the streets of Egypt that is the language of the protestors. It's still not clear to what extent the secular parties can successfully adopt that language, to what extent they are going to end up clashing with the protestors if they try to appropriate that language.

So and I have not seen anything so far that tells me these parties have learned to talk to the population, have learned to go beyond their base. The second issue that secular parties have in the past had difficulty building their constituencies.

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Essentially these are parties that have fought their political battles through op-ed in newspapers, if I can put it that way, or by going to, you know, meetings – high-level meetings – of representatives of similar parties from different countries and so on. There has been very little work in terms of going down and opening offices in the neighborhoods and trying to talk to people and, you know, doing the things that you need to do in order to get out the vote on election day, to convince people to vote for you and so on and so forth.

What I find very interesting is that there is a great deal of awareness in the leadership of these parties. There was even before that that was their weak spot, that they would not – you know, they were out-organized by the Muslim Brotherhood and by other Islamist groups all the time because the Muslim Brotherhood was there and it was organizing.

These parties were fighting their battles in the editorial pages of the newspapers and so on. Despite the fact that this knowledge is there at a theoretical level, that they know it – we have parties meeting with these people.

For example, we had a meeting in Beirut a few years ago – I think Nathan was there as well – which we originally had said was the crisis of the secular parties. Then we got cold feet and said that's not very diplomatic way of putting it. So then we called it "Secular Parties: Crisis and renewal." And the answer that we got from all of them – what renewal are you talking about? – (laughter).

You know, they know what the problem is. What do we see happening now is something which makes it even less likely that they will do this job of constituency building very successfully and that is the extreme fragmentation of the secular spectrum. The parties are multiplying. There are over 60 secular parties in Tunisia at this point. There is a good number of Islamist parties as well. I have not counted how many parties are springing up in Egypt yet. The process is not finished.

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But there are a lot of them, and of course the more they fragment, the less likely it is that they are going to have the resources to do the constituency building, that they are going to be able – that they have the money and that they have the organizers and the support to really establish the presence out there where people live which means in the slums of Cairo and Alexandria, in the villages of – you know, in the hinterland of Tunisia outside Tunis and so on – that will allow them to do well in elections.

So it seems to me that we are likely to see the continuation of this problem that the secular parties have been experiencing. There is a difference which might make a big – which might turn out to be important – that there is a much larger – that the population is much more mobilized than it was 10 years ago, than it has been in the past.



That is, you have a lot of people who are not necessarily Islamist, who don't necessarily favor the Islamist parties, who essentially were not voting before because they did not trust either the government nor the Islamists nor had much use for the secular parties as they were, who might in fact be attracted to these parties.

The question is – I think the demand for secular parties is there. I do not see at this point either in Tunisia or in Egypt a clear evidence that there is an offer to satisfy that demand. In other words, that there are organizations capable of satisfying that demand. And finally, we have the third set of actors which is that of the Islamist parties.

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And these Islamist parties – you know, that's always the question that always gets asked about the Islamist parties and are they going to sweep the elections, how well they are going to do and so on. Let me preface what I have to say by a very simple statement that I think we cannot believe anything that we hear on this. I don't believe some of the things I have said at times and what I'm going to say now – (laughter) – because the way you make prediction is by extrapolating from the past, after all.

And there has been so much change that we really don't know whether or not we can extrapolate from the past. Let me – so what do we know? What we know is that in the past – and here I want to focus particularly on Egypt because the Islamist – another in Tunisia was outlawed such a long time ago that we really don't have any recent evidence about their performance.

But what we know about the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt is that they did quite well in the 2005 elections. They did not do very well since because they were not allowed to do well essentially. And they got – we know that in 2005 they got 20 percent of the vote. Now, what strikes me about that is that 20 percent of the vote, which is significant of course.

It's not a landslide victory but it's quite significant – was one with a participation of only about 25 percent of the electorate. In other words, they got 20 percent of the 25 percent that voted. And what does that mean to me is that the Muslim Brothers did not convince the population that the fact that they were running was sufficient reason to go out and vote for them. In other words, they did not succeed in mobilizing large numbers of people.

Now, does that mean that they cannot get more than 20 percent of the vote? And here things become rather murky. I don't think we know. They themselves – the Muslim Brothers themselves – they always say, we are not going to get more than one-third. Well, you can argue of course they say that. They have an interest not to frighten people and so on. On the other hand, I'm not sure that – I really doubt that they would sweep the elections.

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But what we know – what is new – I mean, these are the old issues. What is new now is there are two things that are important. One is that the Islamist parties are fragmenting themselves. They're not fragmenting as badly as the secular parties. But they are definitely fragmenting. In Tunisia now there are at least four Islamist parties that were formed in 2011. There may be some more because the lists that you find come and go and so on. But there is clearly a process of fragmentation there.

In Egypt, we had the Wasat Party that was finally allowed to register. It's an old Islamist party, kind of a moderate Islamist group that tried for 15 years to win recognition as a political party. Finally it's registered. But we see other signs of division. For example, one of the old leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood – Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh

– is now talking about running as a presidential candidate and he is not endorsed by the Muslim Brotherhood. So there are trends even in Egypt that are developing.

The second trend which is very significant and I think this we are seeing very clearly in Egypt but to some extent also in Tunisia – that in addition to the old organization affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood essentially, we are also beginning to see political activity on the part of the Salafi groups. Salafi groups came out of nowhere. They came out of the woodwork all of a sudden when the political pressure was relented.

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And in turn, these last – the events that started taking place in Egypt and Tunisia, the only country that I know of where Salafis were running for election and participating in elections was Kuwait. By in large, the Salafis do not participate in elections. They reject the state as in the past they have rejected the state. We are not – they are now beginning to talk about election. They are beginning to organize and so is Gamaat Islamiya in Egypt.

So we see the radicals also beginning to participate in the election. So what there is I doubt – you know, I still believe that – (inaudible) – and the Muslim Brotherhood or the new party – the Justice and Reform Party – are going to do better than any of the others. But there is a process of fragmentation that is obviously taking place – taking place there.

Now, what is the final element there, the final unknown essentially is what the protestors are going to do because the protestors so far are not – you have these various movements – the youth movement, the January 25th youth coalition, various coalitions that have emerged from the protest movement. You have a committee in Tunisia essentially to guard the revolution and so on. They have not endorsed any political party specifically at this point.

What they are going to do when the election time comes, whether they are going to endorse any political – you know, certain candidates – how they are going to play their hand is the big – the big unknown factor. And finally, last words, we cannot count out the military and the other – in terms of what the outcome of the process is going to be.

So yes, there are a lot of new protagonists. It's going to be an extremely interesting political scene. I think it's going to keep Carnegie and other think tanks very busy for a very long time to come. But I will not try to predict, in fact, which way it's going to come. Thank you.

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MR. WALT: Thank you very much. I want to compliment Marina for being admirably humble and candid about how little we know about many of the things that are happening there. Revolutions are very humble events.

Every time you make a forecast, the likelihood of being wrong, as I have learned to my own sorrow, is pretty high. Fortunately, that problem never afflicts Tarek because he's always right – (laughter). And he'll now tell us what's really going to happen.

TAREK MASOUD: Oh, thanks, Steve. And actually, I'll just pick up where Marina left off which is to discuss the military. But first let me thank everybody for coming today and thank Carnegie for arranging this really exciting event.

So I was asked to talk about the transition in Egypt. I look at the sort of list of other papers and I thought – or, you know, presentations – and I thought, wow, this is really narrow. I guess I'm the narrow guy. But then as I tried to think about what I would say about the transition in Egypt, it seemed to me to be actually an almost impossibly broad topic.

And so what I basically want to ask is this, you know, question that I think Marina posed – and Marwan as well – what are the kind of prospects for democracy in this place. And it seems to me that there are short-term considerations and long-term considerations. And I'll spend most of the time now talking about the short-term considerations. But then I'll try to conclude thinking about some long-term ones.

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And I will also begin with a note of humility. I mean, there are lots of much smarter people in Egypt thinking about these questions. And so the idea that, you know, a bunch of Harvard professors can think about what the path for Egypt should be may be off-putting to some and so I apologize in advance.

So the way I look at it now, I think that Egypt is embroiled in a kind of season of very intense conflict between political factions on the one hand involving protestors and political parties and the military on the other hand, but then also intense conflict among these political parties and factions.

So you are having conflict now between Islamists and secularists, conflict among secularists over the extent to which they are cooperating or not cooperating with the military. And I think this very deep season of conflict is not salutary. It's not a good thing for Egypt to have at the present time. And I would submit to you that it's a function of decisions made by the armed forces during this moment of transition. So I would lay the blame for many of the problems that we're seeing now in the transition at the feet of the armed forces.

And so I want to begin by trying to explain what I think their decision-making process is. And I think the armed forces are fundamentally wary of democracy on the one hand but also worried about ruling on the other hand. And their concerns about democracy are basically threefold. They are political, economic and geopolitical.

So their political concern is basically that democracy may end up subjecting the military to a kind of political oversight that they're not used to. So Michele Dunne, your colleague here at Carnegie, has actually written about how the army's budget is considered a state secret and how there's no parliamentary oversight over the military.

And I think that the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces – the SCAF's – enthusiasm for democracy is limited to the extent that they think that it will put an end to this particularly congenial arrangement.

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And I'll note that just a couple of days ago Mamdouh Shaheen who is the assistant secretary – or assistant minister of defense for constitution affairs – I think the only person who has that title in the world – (laughter) – has basically said that the new constitution in Egypt should preserve the military's autonomy from the whims of an elected president and that the military's – issues relating to the military should not be brought up in parliament at all. And he said, this is exactly how it is in the United States. (Laughter.)

MR. WALT: Some would say that's true. (Laughter.)

MR. MASOUD: So there's really this fear on the part of the military that it will be subject to civilian control. I think an additional fear that's related but somewhat distinct from this is their fear of this – these demands for justice. So we see now in Egypt an intense demand for members of the old regime to be brought to justice.

And the military, which I think actually had made a kind of deal with Mubarak on that February 11th where Mubarak finally left – I think part of the deal must have been that Mubarak would have some kind of immunity from prosecution. And that deal fell apart when confronted with the weight of protestors in Tahrir.

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And so the SCAF and certainly I think the generals must be looking and thinking, well, when we eventually do give up power, what is to prevent the civilian politicians from giving into the same pressures that we gave in to except this time instead of Mubarak it will be us. And so I think that's clearly something that they must be concerned about. So those are the political dimensions of their concerns about democracy.

The economic dimension – everybody here has read these estimates of the military's control of the Egyptian economy, somewhere between 5 and 40 percent of the Egyptian economy. We are told they own factories and all kinds of other interests and Bob Springboard has done a lot of work on this.

So one of the things I tried to do is try to count and see exactly what is their – how extensive are their economic activities. And basically the only thing I was able to do is look at the ministry of military production which is this ministry that basically controls all of the armed forces factories that, you know, make everything from, like, pipes to laptops to, you know, fertilizers.

And in 2010, their total output was 4.3 Egyptian pounds – about \$750 million or a little more than a tenth of 1 percent of Egypt's GDP. So this is a really tiny figure if we think about it. But of course you have to add to this other things that wouldn't come under the purview of the ministry of military production such as land holdings, et cetera.

So it may be that the military's economic enterprises aren't as extensive as we're told. But nonetheless, that they are an important source of revenue for the military and the military might fear that a democratically elected government could be tempted to meet popular demands for redistribution by somehow dipping into these coffers.

[00:42:09]

So there is this economic concern as well. But I do think it may be less than we thought it was. And then the third is the geopolitical concern and I think this is about the relationship with the United States and Israel. These are two things that most of the political forces that produced Egypt's revolution are far less committed to than the military is.

And you know, I don't need to go through the list of all of the leading political figures from across the Egyptian political spectrum who have called for a revision of the Egyptian – Israel and Egyptian-American relationship, even people like the very liberal pro-American Ayman Nour who is writing, you know, love letters to Condoleezza Rice whenever she'd go to Egypt – please free me from jail.

Even he has said that this – the continuation of the treaty with Israel should be put to a popular vote. And almost as if to prove all of these politicians right, we saw on May 15th a very large protest outside the Israeli embassy that compelled the military and the riot police to come out in force and arrest hundreds of people.

And so I think the military is very concerned again that democratically elected politicians may go in direction that put Egypt's geopolitical security at risk. And the military may be willing to make some limited concession to popular opinion such as opening the crossing with Gaza. But they don't want to be pushed further and they don't want to see democratically elected government go much further.

So given these three powerful drivers – the political, the economic and the geopolitical – you might think well, the military really has a lot of reasons to want to stay in power. And on February 11th somebody asked me, would you trust the military when they said they want to leave. And I said, absolutely not.

[00:44:02]

And yet, at the same time there's powerful countervailing force that compels the military to want to at least get out of the day-to-day business of governing. And this is basically the fact that every extra day that the military is responsible for day-to-day affairs in Egypt is another day in which it can clash with these protestors or with political parties or with average Egyptians and find its fund of legitimacy in Egypt be eroded.

And already we're seeing some of these clashes, right? So the military is almost engaged in the kind of low-level war now with some elements of the media. And we saw – you probably read the reports in the last couple of days of various television presenters – the blogger Hossam el-Hamalawy, who's a Revolutionary Socialist – editor of an online newspaper – all of these people being hauled in front of a military prosecutor for questioning about things that they have said about the role of the junta in Egyptian politics.

So I think that the military is wary of this kind of thing. It would prefer not to have to be in the public eye. And so what it wants is some kind of deal that allows it to kind of reign without ruling, to maintain its economic prerogatives, its freedom from civilian oversight and allowed to control or at least set the parameters of Egyptian foreign policy and defense policy and then let these civilians kind of run the show otherwise.

You want to make the women wear the hijab, you want to make them take off the hijab. You guys can deal with that. So you know, and we may think this is a kind of version of the Turkish model, you know, but of course it could easily devolve into the kind of Pakistani model as well in which you have this kind of unstable, ineffectual civilian government that every now and then get a kind of corrective coup from the military.

So I think the military's got these – as I said, these two competing impulses – the desire to protect itself from the downsides of rule and to protect itself from the downsides of democracy, okay? And as a result, it's led them to make some kind of poor decisions. And I think the most important of its poor decisions have been the decisions about Egypt's political institutions going forward, and particularly here I'm talking about the constitution.

[00:46:26]

I actually think when the history of whatever it is that's going on in Egypt is written, that the military's handling of this particular constitutional issue will not get good reviews. So you know, when you read interviews with SCAF members, one of the things that they always say is one of the first things that they wanted to do was to prove it was not going to be a replay of 1952, that the military wasn't coming in in order to rule as the free officers had.

But at the same time, all right, it couldn't keep the existing political institutions. It couldn't keep the existing constitution in place because those institutions contained no provisions for a military rule, okay? If the 1971 constitution had been kept in place, then Egypt would have been run by Fathi Sorour, the speaker of the



parliament, until the middle of April and then there would have been a presidential election. The parliament would have remained in place.

The popular desire for change would not have been met. So they couldn't do – they couldn't keep the existing political institutions or at least they thought they couldn't. So what did they do? They dissolved the parliament. They suspended the constitution. But in order to alleviate the fear that they were not suspending the constitution indefinitely, they said they were going to amend it.

And they appointed, as you know, this committee of eight jurists and they put together a package of amendments that basically opened up political competition for the presidency, limited the presidential terms, made people like me ineligible for the presidency – if you're married to a non-Egyptian – eliminated some egregious presidential powers.

[00:47:59]

And then the most important amendment was an amendment to article 189, the new amendment stipulated that within six months of the new parliament's election, it would have – it would be invited to elect a 100-member constituent assembly that would then have another six months to draft a new constitution and put it to a popular vote.

And this package of amendments was put to the Egyptians. It passed with 77 percent of the vote. And then after it passed, the military realized, oh wait, we can't now, you know, reanimate the 1971 constitution with these amendments because it still doesn't contain a place for us running the country and so – you know, so it couldn't reanimate this without facing the kind of same legitimacy problem that caused them to dissolve it.

And so instead, they put up a constitutional declaration, 64 articles with the eight amendments in it and then, you know, 50-some odd other ones. And it said we're going to have parliamentary elections in September and presidential elections a few weeks afterwards. And now this is basically what people in Egypt are debating now. This is what all of the political forces in Egypt are at each other's throats about because the Islamists are very happy with what's happened, okay?

The Islamists have no problem with it. They believe it's a clear timetable, a clear way to get the military out of power and to get a constitution-writing process that reflects the will of the people because after all, it will be an elected parliament that selects the constituent assembly that will then write the Egyptian constitution.

But others obviously disagree and they range from those who want the military to abdicate today to a presidential council – who knows who this civilian presidential council will be chosen but they want that presidential council to manage the constitution-writing process, and they want all of that to happen before parliamentary elections.

[00:49:48]

And then there are others such as El-Sayyid el-Badawi, the leader of the civilian secular liberal left party who, you know, violate every one of those – except maybe secular – when he said, we'd like the military to stay for two more years. They're the only ones who are capable of running the country. And el-Badawi even had uttered something similar to this.

And then, you know, so all – and I think all of these people – they basically – the people who are pitted against the Islamists – I call them “constitution firsters,” okay? They basically – and Amr Hamzawy, your former colleague



here, is kind of a leading constitution first and these are people who basically say, wait a minute, the timetable that the SCAF has set is wrong. We need to write the constitution first and then move to elections.

If we have elections now, okay, then only the most organized people are going to win – the Islamists – and then we’re going to get a constitution that reflects their interests and not ours. And you know, in its most extreme form, what are these guys basically asking for? They’re basically asking for almost like a preemptive Algeria, okay?

So in Algeria, the Islamists won and then the military had to come in and abrogate the Islamists’ victory. Here these guys are saying, listen, the Islamists are going to win so don’t leave or, you know, stack the deck in our favor before you leave. And so I think, you know, the Islamists obviously respond to this by saying, look, all of what you’re proposing violates the will of the voters.

[00:51:14]

The voters went on March 19th and they ratified the timetable of the SCAF by voting for this package of constitutional amendments and anything that changes this is a violation of the voters’ will. And of course this would be completely, you know, watertight if the SCAF hadn’t already violated the voters’ will by tossing out the 1971 constitution that everybody thought they were amending and instead putting up this constitutional declaration about which the brothers said not a word. So their credibility in defending, you know, the will of the voters is quite limited. How much time do I have left?

MR. WALT: About two minutes.

MR. MASOUD: Okay, good. So I will just – I will end by saying this. My feeling is that the precise timetable for the constitutional reform is far less worrisome to me than the fact that Egyptians have to write a new constitution at all. I think that’s the critical error that the SCAF made here.

You know, constitution-writing processes are inherently turbulent. They involve conflict over fundamental values – the nature of the economy, the extent of individual rights, legislative-executive relations.

All these things have to be settled and it’s not clear that the kind of very fragile Egyptian political fabric can withstand this, especially since in Egypt there’s an additional dimension to constitutional debate going back almost a hundred years which is that it always involves this highly sensitive issue about the relationship – of the relationship between religion and state.

And this is embedded in article two of the constitution that declares Islam the religion of the state and the principles of the sharia as the fundamental source of legislation. And you know, this is something to which the Islamists are quite wedded and would like to take further, right? So for the Islamists, they don’t want article two to just say the principles of the sharia are the fundamental source of legislation.

[00:53:12]

They’d like the Sharia to be the fundamental source of legislation, and maybe they’d even like to put some additional institutions into the constitution that, you know – that force legislation to be more faithful to what God’s law requires.

And then of course on the other side we have the secularists or the liberals or the civilians who would prefer there to be minimal mention of the sharia or no mention of the sharia or they say if you're going to mention the sharia, put in a clause that also allows Christians to be governed by their own holy law.

So this is a kind of deep fundamental conflict and with the old constitution, you could have fudged it. It was an article – article two was something that didn't really satisfy anybody, right? But they could have – you know, they could have fudged it.

Now, by forcing Egyptians to write a new constitution as opposed to just amending bits of the constitution. By forcing them to write a whole new constitution from scratch, you're causing them to have to refight those debates. And I think this is the big challenge now in Egypt. So my prediction is for more discord. (Laughter.)

[00:54:16]

MR. WALT: Thank you. There's a safe prediction. Did either of you want to add anything before we open this up to the audience?

MR. MUASHER: I'm fine.

MS. OTTAWAY: (Inaudible, off mic.)

MR. WALT: Terrific. We have a healthy half-hour for questions or comments. If this were Harvard, I would give the standard speech about inviting questions, which notoriously end with a question mark. I don't know what the mores are at Carnegie.

But whether you have a comment to make or a question, please make it brief and please identify yourselves. We have people with microphones. So I'm prepared to recognize the first hand I see. Right there?

Q: Thank you. My question to –

MR. WALT: And you are?

Q: My name is Said – (inaudible) – daily newspaper. And my question will be related to in this whole context the Palestinian-Israel conflict. Would that be an appropriate thing to ask? Beyond my question to all of you – you know, as we see things happening in the whole region – Egypt and so on – and beyond what we saw last week from the obsequious genuflecting of Congress.

Beyond that, what is the status of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and could we say that this – that the option of the two-state solution has been completed nailed or done – I mean, dead and should the Palestinians emulate what happened in Egypt and Tunisia and happening elsewhere by pursuing a peaceful protest and so on to pursue a one-state solution? Thank you.

[00:55:58]

MR. WALT: Thank you. I can guarantee that that issue will get addressed in the next panel. But if anyone here wants to take a swing at it now?

MR. MUASHER: Very quickly, I think it will be addressed in the next panel as well. A lot has been said about the fact that the uprisings so far have not touched on the Arab-Israeli conflict, which is true. That does not mean in my view that Arabs are not worried about the Arab-Israeli conflict. I mean, I was talking to someone the other day and I said, you know, when you're in a biology class, you don't ask the teacher a question about where you're taking your spring break vacation. That doesn't mean you're not thinking of it, okay? (Laughter.)

But it's not the context, okay? The context is different. The context is about governance. But there will be emerging regime. There will be a president of Egypt in September who will have to answer to what position he is going to take – hopefully she, or maybe also – about the Arab-Israeli conflict. So you know, I think it would be wrong for us to assume that this conflict is going to be forgotten.

[00:57:10]

But the other comment I want to make is there's a lot of debate in this town of course about whether the administration should take a proactive approach or not about the Arab- Israeli conflict. And I would guess that Obama's speech the other day settled that debate in terms of not taking a proactive position on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

My view is that this debate in Washington has totally ignored what is happening on the ground as far as the Arab uprisings are concerned. And my view also is that frankly people on the ground, particularly the Palestinians, don't care what the Arab – what the president is thinking about the conflict, whether he gives a proactive speech or not a proactive speech.

I think that there is a new feeling in the region that people are going to take, you know, matters into their own hands. They've waited a long time for the U.S. to do something. It is not doing anything. But I would find it very, very difficult to believe that the Palestinian street would wait two years until the, you know, U.S. presidential campaign is over before moving in one way or another on this conflict.

MR. WALT: Marina?

MS. OTTAWAY: Very quickly I wanted to just add one thing. I totally agree with Marwan. The Arab Spring is going to have an impact on the behavior of the Palestinians. I am not so sure that whatever happens in Palestine is going to have any impact on the outcome of what happens in other countries.

In other words, I'm not sure that there is any connection between at least in the short run between what might happen in Palestine and what's going to happen in Egypt or in Tunisia or in any of those countries.

[00:58:07]

Q: Good afternoon. My name is Ibrahim Hussein. I am with the Alliance of Egyptian Americans and I'm very impressed by the panel's knowledge about the dynamics in Cairo and the Middle East. I have a question. With the upcoming election in September, especially Tarek and the panel, how much – I heard about 50 parties are being formed now.

How much of coalition building is happening now? So the fragmented secular or progressive – whatever you call them – how much they are willing? We know the Muslim Brotherhood got their own organization. How much the other side is trying to get organized and build coalitions? I know this is almost anti-Egyptian but is it happening now? (Laughter.)

MR. MASOUD: Do you want to go first?

MS. OTTAWAY: Okay. Let me try and answer that. You have to ask first of all why is it that so many different parties are being formed. And I suspect – and it's again, unless you do a party-by-party analysis that we have not done and we are not going to do because we don't the resources to do it, very frankly.

[01:00:33]

But unless – very likely a lot of the people who are forming these political parties are people who have an independent base that know that they can get themselves elevated as the head of their own political party while they might not be able to be elected if they join in a broader coalition. And that of course – it's a greater disincentive to coalition building.

So I am somewhat pessimistic at this point about the capacity – the likelihood that these parties will come together in broader coalition which of course then is worrisome for other reasons because – (inaudible) – is not doing very well at all.

MR. MASOUD: So you know, I think a lot of this is going to be determined by what does the electoral rule look like eventually. What electoral system is settled on because that is what basically provides the incentives to politicians to behave in particular ways. And as it seems now, I think as marina mentioned, it's going to be two-thirds according to the candidate-centric system that exists in Egypt currently.

So you know, two-member districts, you can run as an independent. You pay 35 pounds to prove you're not a criminal and you can run. And then one-third will be according to party lists. And so if the majority of seats are being apportioned according to this candidate-centric system, then lots of local notables have no interest or no incentive rather to join parties or even form parties.

Why should I join a party? I can run on my own in Karf el-Sheikh or in, you know – (inaudible) – and I can win. So that actually disincentivizes party formation. What might incentive – but now there are of course intellectuals who are trying to form their own parties. These are people who are not – you know, whose base of support is not based on local ties. It's based on they've got ideas and, you know, every intellectual has got his own party.

Some intellectuals, you know, joined one party and then joined another, like Amr Hamzawy, right? So you may think this is problematic because the liberal – particularly for liberals. They have a real talent for fragmenting. It must be their commitment to individualism or something. (Laughter.) But one of the things that might cause them to have to coalesce again is that, you know, none of these parties has yet been licensed.

[01:03:02]

And it's actually not easy to get licensed according to the new law, okay? You have to have 5,000 members. You have to publish all the member – lists of your members in the national newspapers. It costs a lot of money. I was actually talking to a founder of a leftist party who's really complaining about this because he was saying this law advantages people like Naguib Sawiris – you know, the Egyptian billionaire who's founded his own party.

My feeling is that it may also give all of you liberals an incentive to get together under the banner of one party. So we still have to see. The problem is, you know, Muhammad – (inaudible) – says this when they ask him, you know, are you going to run for president. He said, yeah, but I don't know what the job description is.

And it's almost the same thing with the parliament. Yes, people want to run but they don't know what exactly they're running for or how they're going to run, what are the rules going to be. That all still needs to be made clear.

MR. WALT: The gentleman here?

[01:04:02]

Q: David Mack from the Middle East Institute. My question gets – and it's a question for Marwan and Tarek because I don't want to put Marina and Stephen Walt in the position of dealing in national stereotypes. (Laughter.) Why is it that –

MS. OTTAWAY: You're too kind. (Laughter.)

Q: Why is it that the Arab revolutionaries seem to have placed such a high importance in their formulating their agenda on retribution and justice against the old regime? Given the fact that they've got two fairly prominent examples from recent history – South Africa and Iraq – and they're opting for the Iraqi example which strikes me as very unhealthy. But I'll try end on a question. Why is this?

MR. MUASHER: Well, it's a – I mean, it's a good question. I guess part of the answer is that these revolutions are still leaderless. So if you're looking at what the street wants, the street is obviously frustrated with decades of being – you know, having been under very low governance system – low levels of governance.

And so the street wants revenge, you know, wants retribution. The street has been less clear about, you know, what models it wants to adopt moving forward precisely because there are no leaders yet. I mean, the same thing goes – the same thing applies to when we talk about economic models.

I mean, we've always said unlike Eastern Europe when the economic model was clear for these revolutions – they wanted a market economy – it is not clear what kind of economic model the street wants or the uprisings want, again, because it is leaderless so far. So I think it is a bit premature to see, you know, how the process will manifest itself.

[01:06:17]

There is obviously a lot of frustration that is being translated now into demands for retribution. Whether that is going to, you know, remain the case or not I think will partly depend on what happens, say, in Egypt, what happens after the elections take place in September and what kind of systems will start to emerge from there when such demands will be maybe better translated. I might be wrong.

MR. MASOUD: Yeah, I think – I think I would echo what Dr. Muasher is saying. So basically I don't think this is a function of some kind of national character – the Arabs must satisfy their passion through revenge. I don't think that's the case. I think basically it's a function of the fact that retribution is something that everybody can agree on.

Okay, there's not a whole lot else that they can agree on but you can get Islamists and Revolutionary Socialists and liberals to all agree that Hosni Mubarak was a really bad guy who stole a lot of money and him and his sons should be prosecuted.

Okay, you can get pretty much everybody to agree that the ministry of the interior and Mabahith Amn al-Dawla – the state security investigations – these were bad agencies and the people who were parts of this who engaged in the torture of Egyptian citizens should be punished. Everybody kind of agrees on this.

[01:07:36]

The problem that this poses or the challenge that this poses is that, look, one of the kind of things that we imbibe as political scientists is this idea that, you know, potential losers in democratic processes will abide by democracy if they feel they've got some chance of winning in the future.

And so now in Egypt, you know, obviously there are the losers from this revolution, the elements of the old regime and we're not just talking about the people at the top who are making very, you know, evil decisions. But we're talking, you know, trickling quite far down. These people may feel that they have no place in the new Egypt. And so that then gives them a huge incentive to subvert democracy.

And Yahya al-Gamal – the deputy prime minister – has actually said this. He said that, this is what's happening now. We have businessmen who are associated with the NDP coupled with, you know, the old manpower of the state security investigations and they're the ones who are responsible for this tremendous increase in crime and religious tension that we are seeing in Egypt today.

So there's this idea in the land that in fact this subversion is happening and it is these leftovers from the old regime and particularly from the security apparatus. And so you've got to ask yourself what are you going to do with these guys. Of course Habib el-Adly should be tried and punished, okay? But how far down do you go?

At some point, okay, the security apparatus of this country is going to need to do its job. It's going to have to – the apparatus that used to protect the old regime is now going to have to be allowed to take on the job of protecting the new democracy and restoring order. And so that's going to require you to give up on all of your claims for retribution for every single member of this apparatus.

And I'll also note this. So look at the problems – the security problems that Egypt is having, right? And Egypt is a place with thousands of years of uninterrupted sovereignty. It's a homogenous place.

[01:09:42]

It is not at all like, you know, the fictive states of the Middle East where, you know, Roger Owen has this great line in one of his books about you look at a map of the Middle East and you can almost see the colonial administrator with his pen and his ruler drawing these boundaries, you know, of these states that really make no sense, that are not cohesive.

Well, in those countries the security apparatus was even more important because it wasn't just responsible for, you know, maintaining public order and keeping its boot on the neck of the people.

It was also responsible in some way for kind of maintaining the cohesion of this – you know, this entity that is constantly buffeted by centrifugal forces. And so in those places where these security apparatuses are eventually toppled you can imagine much greater challenges – that, you know, fragmentation of the very polities themselves.

MS. OTTAWAY: Just very quickly, I think it's important to keep in mind how long it took to get to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. It's not that it was – you know, it was accepted immediately, the idea.



It came close to being a very different outcome. The big difference is that the apartheid regime was never overthrown.

[01:10:53]

They became smart enough at the end to figure out that they had to give in and to negotiate themselves out of power. And the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was part of that negotiating themselves out of power.

MR. WALT: I want to come over to this side of the room. The gentleman right in the – yes, you? Yes, yeah.

Q: (Inaudible.) I'm a student at New York University. You mentioned, Dr. Muasher, one of your – I think it was your final guideline on Middle Eastern reform as sort of a measurable reform metric. So I suppose my question to the panel is how, say, a government in Egypt would make sure those reforms are in fact measurable.

MR. MUASHER: I think – you know, I mean there are many ways of doing so. But when you talk about, let's say – I'll give you some examples. Let's talk about women empowerment, okay? It's not enough to say, you know, we're going to encourage women to be participants in society.

That's rhetoric. What you can say is in five years, for example, every single law in Egypt that discriminates against women will be amended so that we remove all legal discrimination against women in five years.

In three years, we're going to do this and in order to do it we're going to have, you know, a link to the budget so that we make sure that the needed funds to undergo such an initiative are there. These are sort of examples of measurable things. Otherwise, it's rhetoric, which frankly has been the case so far. I mean, how many times have you heard an Arab leader come to this town and tell you what great things they intend to do in their own country?

[01:12:46]

And then, you know – and the next year explain why that didn't happen and why they still intend to do it. (Chuckles.) This kind of rhetoric, you know, no longer – I wanted to say it's credible. It has never been credible – but no longer fools anyone. The street has made sure from now on that the demands have actually risen much higher than they used to and what, you know – what you could get away with five years ago you cannot get away with now.

But these are the kind of measurable efforts. We've done this, for example – we've done this in Jordan five years ago. I'll give you other examples. We said we're going to move from, you know, a budget deficit of 11 percent at the time to a budget surplus of 2 percent in 10 years. But in three years we're going to move that budget deficit to this much, in five years we're going to move it to this much, in 10 years we're going to move it to this much.

And to do this we're going to provide such and such funds. We're going to do such and such programs. These are – this is what I mean by measurable. So that you can, you know, every year or so evaluate the progress of the reform process and convince people that you are serious.

People are willing to be patient, I think, in the Arab world, so long as they know there is a serious process. If they're not – if they're not convinced it's a serious process, nothing you promise anymore will make any sense to them.

MR. WALT: The woman right here?

Q: Hi, I'm Eleanor Cliff (sp) from the University of St. Andrews. Do you think that the Arab Spring has a potential to unite the Arab countries and give way once more to the rise of pan-Arabism instead or alongside pan-Islamism?

MR. MUASHER: Who – who is it – (laughter).

[01:14:50]

MR. WALT: A big question.

MR. MUASHER: If the question – you know, if the kind of unity you are talking about is the sort of old pan-Arab idea of unity, then the answer is no. I think this is a thing of the past. I think in one way it has shown that Arabs have certain bonds that tie them together that we never even asked Arabs – know existed.

I mean, the fact that, you know, things happened in Tunisia and then Egypt and then spread to the rest of Arab countries means there's some form of at least bond that had people tried to duplicate what is happening in other Arab countries. But to extend that and say because of this the Arabs are now going to demand, you know, one Arab nation as they have done before – no, I don't think so.

MR. MASOUD: I would say – just kind of two things. So the first is that – and I think this point has been made by others – that in fact what we're seeing is a kind of, you know, bifurcation of the Arab world into the kind of revolutionary regimes like Egypt and Tunisia and then the old conservative, you know, monarchies of the Gulf which now includes, by the way, Morocco and Jordan in case you didn't realize, you know, the expansion of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

[01:16:18]

And so that's kind of a return to 1950s and '60s political cleavages there. I'll also say that it's possible to take this way too far. I had a conversation with a dear friend of mine who had been in Tahrir and I was talking about what was happening in Bahrain. And he said, oh those are Shias, you know – (laughter). So it's possible to take this too far.

MR. WALT: The gentleman right here and I'll go to the back in a second.

Q: Mohammad Musharraf (sp) from Egyptian daily al-Shorouk. Egypt is getting to know new realities. Next president will be weaker than the former president. Next army for our good luck will be a weaker army compared with the older army and the parliament will be fragmented enough between political forces will be a weaker parliament compared with the NDP-ruled one.

And this question – and we all know that Egypt won't turn into a Jeffersonian democracy over a year or a decade. What guarantees will be accepted by U.S. think tanks and academics to the army to take in order to leave the scene in Egypt? What – and realistic talking about?

MR. MASOUD: You want me to go first? You want me to take it? So what guarantees can the army provide that it will actually leave the scene?

Q: And will be accepted by U.S. think tanks and academics.

[01:17:31]

MR. MASOUD: Right, because the U.S. think tanks and academics are of course the critical player in this. (Laughter.)

MR. WALT: And always agree. (Laughter.)

MR. MASOUD: Exactly. The council will meet and we'll decide. No, I think actually it's an important – it's an important question. What would cause us to, you know, to actually believe the military when it says it's going to get out of power.

And as I've tried to say, I think the military isn't going to leave power, sort of – you know, here are the keys. We're going back to the border now. We'll have nothing to – it's clear, right, they're trying to stack the deck in favor of a particular set of institutions that would continue to give – could keep them at the top of the political pyramid.

But I also don't think anything else is possible in Egypt, right? So what we have to be worried about, though, is that precisely because as you said, you're going to have a weak president and a weak parliament, okay, and you have a strong society now. You have people who can go to – who realize their own power and they will go to Tahrir to demand – to demand things.

So any government now is going to be at the mercy of, you know, popular opinion and popular opinion can be very fickle. Lots of protests could happen and you could see kind of a turn of government. There's a big millaneia (sp) in Tahrir and so this government's fallen and now another one comes. And you can imagine that that produces of course all kinds of policy, you know, slippages and gridlock.

[01:19:03]

And you could imagine then the military coming and saying, you know what, this isn't working. We've had 12 governments in six years. We're going to come in and restore some stability and people saying, that's a good idea. We'd like that because the military is the only institution that's capable of running Egypt. By the way, that's a direct quote from El-Sayyid el-Badawi, the leader of the left party. So it's that – that idea is out there.

So that's what I'm actually worried about in the coming period is the question of how get the military to basically allow democratic politics to take its course, to become kind of like Italy where you have this constant churn of government but eventually you get Berlusconi. (Laughter.) That's another good point. How do you get the military –

MR. MUASHER: Marina must comment on this. (Laughter.)

MR. WALT: (Cross talk) – in the context of an Egyptian Berlusconi. But I'll go all the way to the back to the gentleman in the green shirt. Actually, sir, I called someone. You'll be next. I called someone just behind you.

Q: Okay. I'm Ricard Gonzalez from the newspaper El Mundo from Spain. I have a short comment and a question. The comment is that drawing from this experience of the Spanish transition, the coalition we're building is going to take place after the election, not before.

[01:20:22]

When you have the force of the different parties, that is when they can negotiate who's going to be number one in the least next time. My question is I would like you to evaluate the performance of the Obama administration during all this period of the Arab Spring. Thank you.

MR. WALT: Okay. It's going to preempt the next panel but –

MS. OTTAWAY: No, maybe we should leave it to the next panel.

MR. WALT: (Inaudible. Off mic.)

MR. MUASHER: Well, very briefly I think not just the Obama administration, I think all administrations in the U.S. have basically had three objectives in the region which have not changed.

Peace is one. Stability is another and dream for democracy is a third. But I think throughout the previous decades, they've adopted a policy of prioritizing stability over reform and democracy and treating peace as if it has either weak or no linkages with the first two. It's obvious that, you know, we ended up with no stability, no democracy and no peace.

So I think that the U.S. I think understands that its old objectives have not been realized by their old policies. The challenge now is what new policies to adopt that would still achieve these three objectives. I don't think the objectives have changed.

But you know, a policy that rhetorically emphasizes stability through reform rather than stability over reform is easier said than done. We've already seen examples of interventions, for example, that have been different in Libya than in Bahrain obviously because of interests.

So the interest part is still sort of – I don't want to say dominant but very important. And how do you – how do you adopt such a strategy is still not in my view very clearly articulated by the United States. The issue of peace is a totally, also, sort of separate issue.

[01:22:33]

So far, you know, what I have seen so far is old policies on the peace issue is trying to still stick to a policy of a peace process that has, you know, failed even before the present – the last uprisings. With the last uprisings, I mean, I don't see how the old policy has any chance of success. I've always said this in recent weeks.

If the United States is serious about a new policy with the region that will attempt to regain the credibility – its credibility with the Arab public and not just with governments and these governments are now going to be way more responsive to their public than the old Arab governments – it's going to be awfully difficult to convince Arabs that, you know, if you're Egyptians or Libyans yearning for freedom, we support you and if you're Palestinians yearning for freedom, it's complicated. That's not going to be a policy that will succeed.

MR. WALT: Okay, last question. Yes, right there. Yes?

Q: Thank you. I was appreciative of your talking about the women's movement for equality and I was wondering, you know, in this country we obviously didn't have equality when we started the Constitutional Convention. But there was language in the framework that allowed it to evolve.

[01:24:00]

And so I'm wondering is there anything in these principles that – you know, these constitutional principles that in the language themselves set forth some sort of equal protection or, you know, bill of rights-type thing that would allow because I'm imagining the Islamists have a sharia view that's quite different than the secularists on this and also that we've seen after the revolution there's been some retreading of human rights in the women's fronts.

You know, just today in the paper there's this big article on virginity testing which I'd never even heard of sort of. So is there anything in the language itself that allows this to move forward and is this something they all agree on there, you know, sort of like we hold these truths to be self-evident that the next president should be a woman sort of thing? (Chuckles.)

MR. MUASHER: Well, if you look at the Jordanian constitution, every Jordanian is equal, okay, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, you know, gender, et cetera. But of course when you come to practice you know, you have many laws in Jordan that are discriminatory against women.

In this country, you cannot enact laws that run against the constitution, right? You cannot. Which amendment is it? The Second Amendment or where you cannot – where you cannot enact laws that run against it. In the Arab world, that's not true.

So you know, having equality in the constitution in the Arab world is not enough. What needs to happen in my view – and I hope the Egyptians do it because they are now in the process of writing a new constitution – is to clearly state in the constitution not just that women are equal to men but that there will be no laws that are allowed to be enacted that violate this principle and that the existing laws need to be amended.

[01:25:47]

This is what we tried to do in Jordan. You know, we looked at the set of laws in the country and we found that they were hugely discriminatory towards women. And so what we said is we might not be able to affect the cultural process in the short-term but what we can certainly do is at least affect the legal environment and remove discriminatory clauses against women at least legally and even that, you know, we have not been able to do.

MS. OTTAWAY: This is sort of more of a final statement. Yeah, I wanted to come back a moment to the question that was asked by the gentleman from al-Shorouk concerning the issue is not what think tanks and the academics think. To me, the real question about the role of the Egyptian military is what U.S. policy is going to be.

And I mean, I realize this leads into the next panel. But it seems to me that the U.S. so far has shown a great deal of interest in maintaining a very strong and privileged relation with the Egyptian military because in a sense it's the guarantee of stability. I can understand it. I can accept it, the necessity for that.

But to me, in a sense, that can also become an obstacle and that is where I think we really need to – that's what we need to look out for, not for, you know, whatever, you know, the chattering people think about the issue.

MR. WALT: Tarek?

MR. MASOUD: Yeah, I'll just channel Don Rumsfeld and say you get democracy with the demos you have, right, with the people you have not with the people that you want.

And so, you know, when it comes to issues like women's rights, for example, you know in Egypt we have a case for this where in the parliament there was a debate in 2008 over amending some of the laws to bring Egyptian laws more in line with the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, and this is something that the Islamists opposed vehemently.

[01:27:59]

And you could expect them to continue to oppose things like this. The virginity tests you're talking about, by the way, are the military was testing women in Tahrir who had been arrested to make sure that they were virgins on the grounds that once these women were released they didn't want to be accused of assaulting them. It's military logic.

But one of the things that the military did which is even more egregious than the violations of these women in Tahrir was that in its draft electoral law it got rid of the women's quota. There had been a quota for women for election to parliament and it got rid of them. It got rid of that.

So I think that when we look at these kinds of issues we may see some backpedaling, okay, as policy starts to reflect more the society but that over the long-term there are going to be resources that people can use within the constitution to kind of push for more rights, for more equal treatment. But in the short-term I expect that you will see some backsliding.

MR. WALT: Yeah, we have only scratched the surface of these issues but one of the important principles of any conference is never get in the way of the audience and sources of caffeine. (Laughter.) I want you to please join me in thanking the panelists for giving us such a high standard. (Applause.) I believe there will be a 15-minute break and we'll start again in 15 minutes. Thanks.

[01:29:30]

(END)