

ARAB MONARCHIES CONFRONT THE ARAB SPRING

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PAUL SALEM: Let's get started. My name is Paul Salem. I'm the director of the Carnegie Center in Beirut, Lebanon, and I'm very pleased to be moderating this session today. This session is on Arab monarchies and how they confronted or dealt with events in the Arab Spring or the Arab awakening. We have a very distinguished panel with us. And this is part of a research project that is emerging as a Carnegie paper in a few weeks exactly on the topic of Arab monarchies and the Arab Spring.

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The authors of this paper are Dr. Marwan Muasher and Dr. Marina Ottaway. Let me go ahead and introduce them, as well as our commentator for today, Dr. Jon Alterman. Marwan Muasher is currently vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment in charge of Carnegie's Middle East work here and in Beirut. He's known to, I'm sure, all of you – previously vice president at the World Bank, deputy prime minister previously in Jordan and foreign minister, very active in the – heading the reform agenda in Jordan and also previously very much involved in the Arab Peace Initiative and the Arab-Israeli peace process.

And Marina Ottaway, to his left, is a senior associate at the Carnegie Middle East Program; has written widely on political reform, political change in Arab world, in Africa, the Balkans and elsewhere – author of many books and studies.

Our commentator for today is a good friend, Jon Alterman – correction – his name is not Jonathan Alterman. He warned me it is just Jon Alterman. It's not short for anything. Jon is also probably well-known to many of you. He's the director and senior fellow at the Middle East Program at CSIS here in D.C. He served as a member of the policy planning staff at the U.S. Department of State and he's a member currently of the Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel and was also an expert on the Iraq Study Group and writes widely on Middle East affairs.

The topic of today, I'm sure, is, on the minds of many of you, from when events in the Arab world just began, and most of the events seem to be in the Arab republics. But it's interesting that the Arab republics that got most into trouble were the republics in a sense, which were trying to turn into monarchies, with fathers trying to give power to their sons and so on. We'll start right away and give the floor to Dr. Muasher. Each, Dr. Muasher and Dr. Ottaway, will have about 15 minutes each, and then we'll have some comments from Jon, and then go to the audience for Q-and-A.

[00:03:01]

Dr. Muasher?

MARWAN MUASHER: Thank you, Paul.

The idea that Arab monarchies can introduce reform more easily than republican regimes is a very popular idea, particularly here in the West, and I think justifiably so. This is because Arab monarchies in general – and there are eight of them – do enjoy a degree of legitimacy that is not found in republican regimes. And the notion is that Arab monarchies can introduce reform from above and not risk, you know, leaving power at the end of the reform process but manage it from above.

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I like to characterize maybe in a simplistic way Arab governments or countries into two categories other than monarchies and republics. And my categories are those who have time and those whose time is up. And on those who have time, I think Arab monarchies for the most part fall within the categories of countries who do have some time. However, time also in my view is a double-edged sword because time can be used by regimes to argue that it can be exploited in a serious and sustained reform process that is managed from above, and in such a manner go through a smooth and orderly transition and not risk introducing great shocks to the system, or time can be used by regimes to argue that since they are not witnessing the kind of protests that are there in other Arab countries that they don't have to do anything. And that – this is – this is in my view the more worrying and concerning issue, which is that Arab governments that do have time, whether they are internalizing the notion that what is happening in the Arab world is profound, and that they need to use that time wisely if they do not want the street to get ahead of them in an uncontrolled way.

And so I think what the paper that will come out shortly will show is that the potential for reform in Arab monarchies is still very high. In fact, with the exception maybe of Bahrain, which does seem to be in real trouble and a reform from above is becoming, you know, more and more difficult by the day, if the political will exists among Arab monarchies and Arab monarchs to lead a reform process from above, they are capable to do so. But so far I think the paper will also conclude that while we have seen reforms in certain Arab monarchies that are meaningful, so far a sustained, comprehensive reform process that leads in the end to power sharing and a serious redistribution of power among the three branches of government so far is yet to be fulfilled.

And whereas you can look at countries from Morocco on one side, maybe to Bahrain on the other and other countries in between, there are serious – there are meaningful reforms that have been introduced or at least promised with varying degrees, but none of them so far amount to a comprehensive, sustained, inclusive process that will, as I said, in the end result in a serious redistribution of power in those countries.

With that, I would like to turn my attention to Jordan, the country that I'm most familiar with. And Marina will talk about Morocco and some of the other Gulf states.

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In Jordan, reform so far in particular as a response to the uprisings of this year has also been so far piecemeal and not comprehensive. The king did appoint two committees, a national dialogue committee, whose principal objective was to introduce a new electoral law – this is something that is very key to reform in Jordan, as I will indicate in a while – and a constitutional amendment committee that ended up amending 42 articles of the constitution, which have been now enacted into law after being approved by both houses of parliament.

The monarchy in Jordan is not under attack, as I have indicated also earlier. It is seen as a security blanket for all Jordanians of all ethnic origins, particularly of East Jordanian and Palestinian origin. But while I have – I mean, having said that, there are serious demands in the country for changes within the regime rather than demands for regime change, and these changes within the regime are demands that have so far reached, you know, the king himself and the powers of the king.

I need to also point out here – and that's not particular to Jordan also – that there are basically no demands in the country for a constitutional monarchy. And that applies, I think, to Morocco as well. In other words, no one talks about an end that will reach – that will result in the king being a constitutional monarch à la, you know, Britain. Because the king in Jordan – you can argue the king's powers are included in the constitution. So no one is talking

about a king that does not have powers, and in fact I think all this – all the groups in Jordan want the king to have powers, but they want some changes to the way the system governs.

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There is now an increasing complaint against the role of intelligence services in the country, a role that has become way too intrusive and a role that – where the intelligence services are seen to be the actual government in place and not the formal government.

There are multiple fault lines in Jordan. People live to divide the electorate into East Jordanians and Palestinians and point out that in fact most of the protests that have been going on now are from the East Jordanians, not of the Palestinians.

I personally think that there are multiple fault lines and that this is too simplistic a division. I think that just as you can talk about East Jordanians and Palestinians, you can also talk about the have and have-nots. You can talk about urban versus rural areas. And the demands have varied as well: from political demands calling for an end to corruption or addressing corruption, calling for rescinding the role of the intelligence services, elected governments through parliament and other such – a redistribution of power – but there are also economic demands that have ranged from a more equitable distribution of resources to increased salaries to increased subsidies, et cetera.

And there I think one characteristic of Jordan is that there is still an ongoing debate of who is a Jordanian in the country. Sixty some years after independence, the country has not yet defined who is a Jordanian, and there is no rational debate going on. Any time this debate is talked about, people become extremely emotional, extremely irrational about it. East Jordanians feel that their East Jordanian identity will be further diluted by giving Palestinians, you know, or Jordanians of Palestinian origin more representation in parliament. Jordanians of Palestinian origin feel that they are not fairly represented.

And as such, any talk about reform in the country, which must start, in my view, with a new electoral law, faces this big problem of an honest, you know, discussion and definition of who is a Jordanian. In any other country, those who have Jordanian – the nationality of the country are nationals. In Jordan, that's not necessarily so. I mean, legally it is the case, but in – the minds of people and in the electoral laws and in all the legal environment does not suggest that people are treated in the same way just because they hold Jordanian nationality.

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There have been important introductions made with the new political – I mean, constitutional amendments. We do now have a new or will have a new constitutional court to interpret the constitution. The amendments now call for an independent electoral commission, something which the Tunisians have proved to be an extremely effective way of carrying out elections instead of, of course, entrusting them with the Ministry of Interior. The government now is – has limits as to issuing temporary laws, as to dissolution of parliament. And civil liberties have all been – not all, but civil liberties have been enhanced in the country.

But of course, having said that, other than some very limited reforms regarding the king's powers, the king's, basically, powers in the country have not been touched for the most part with the new amendments.

And on economic reform, there has been, in my view, almost no reform done since the uprisings. The budget deficit in the country has reached an unsustainable level, more than 11 percent before grants. And even with grants and with substantial grants from Saudi Arabia and from the West, the government deficit is still over 6 percent.

Very high unemployment – the official figure is 13 percent. The unofficial figure might be much higher – very large public debt that has exceeded the legal limit of 60 percent of GDP. So the country has some serious economic problems. And of course with the uprisings and the tendency to sort of succumb to populist demands of increased salaries and subsidies and things that the country just cannot sustain, the country is going to face, you know, a serious economic problem dealing with these uprisings.

And there comes the issue of the GCC membership, the promise by the GCC countries to include Jordan in the GCC, in the Gulf Cooperation Council. And there of course the promise is going to be more jobs for Jordanians, and therefore rising remittances from Jordanians coming back from the Gulf, lower unemployment and of course the promise of more grants and foreign aid coming from the GCC countries. But the question today in Jordan, whereas this – you know, this membership would not have been contested at all, let's say, 10 or 15 years ago, today the public is questioning this membership and asking, at what price is it coming? Is this sort of a bribe to slow down the pace of reform in the country? Or what is it for, and why did it come now?

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In general, I think, as I said, the country still needs a long-term strategy for reform, that the constitutional amendments are of – an important first step, but they cannot be the end of the road. And as such, a long-term strategy needs to be developed and has – and has not been developed yet by the – by the government. Clearly, I think Jordanians want the king to lead the reform process, clearly. There are no demands for the king to step aside or the monarchy to step aside. They do want the king to lead the process but they also want serious measures in order to do that, and they remain mixed about whether the amendments so far have gone far enough in introducing these reforms.

The old habit in Jordan of changing – frequent changes to the government no longer works. Today people are starting to criticize the king directly rather than criticize just the government, and of course the king has indicated that in two or three years he would like to see a government elected from parliament. That is, you know, yet to be seen because so far the electoral law, even with the amendments made to it, is not going to result in a political party-based parliament and will not do so before some time in the country.

If that is the case, then the king, even if he wants to, is going to find it very difficult to choose a prime minister and a cabinet from parliament if it is not political party-based. And as such I think the onus is going to be increasingly on him to bridge the credibility gap, which today is increasing between the regime and the public, rather than entrust a government with doing so. Until such a time when Jordan will have a political party-based culture and government and the – sort of the onus or the responsibility and accountability can fall on this government, I think much of that – much of that challenge is going to rest on the king's shoulders in the foreseeable future.

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Let me stop with that.

MR. SALEM: OK, thank you very much, Marwan, for sharing with us some thoughts about monarchies and their context in general and lot of depth in analysis on the changes taking place and yet to take place in Jordan. Thank you very much.

I turn to Marina.

MARINA OTTAWAY: Thank you. Let me start with some remarks on this issue of reform from the top before I look more closely at the case of Morocco and, to some extent, Bahrain.

Reform from the top – a process of reform from the top in a sense would be the most desirable for any country. Upheavals are disruptive. We are seeing what’s happening in Egypt. We are seeing what’s happening in Libya. We are seeing what’s happening in Syria. They can leave a country devastated. It can lead to a long period of conflict before the country settles down.

So that if it was possible, in fact, for the government, or in this case, since we’re talking about the monarchies, for the monarchs to start introducing reforms before the demand becomes so overwhelming that they cannot manage the process, it would appear to be a win-win situation for everybody. The problem that we are seeing is – that we seem to be witnessing with the Arab monarchies at this point is that unless there is a lot of pressure from below, they don’t see the incentive or at least they don’t feel the time pressure, as Marwan was saying, to try and introduce those changes now.

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After all, if you have, you know, pretty close to absolute power or the – you know, you have a vast amount of power and so on, why making (sic) your life more complicated by giving away some of this, by having to start contending with a parliament and with organized political parties and so on, so that what we seem to – what we’re seeing is that in many cases – and this is not just in the Arab world – monarchies really don’t or any other government does not try to introduce reform from the top when it’s almost too late. In other words, they start moving when the demand has been such that they cannot manage the process.

There is a cautionary tale here, if you look at the Arab monarchies now, in the case of Bahrain, where because of the initial response to the – to the protests in Bahrain, the situation has come now where it seems clear to me that nothing short of a real transition to a constitutional monarchy is going to satisfy the protest. In other words, the monarchy has boxed itself in a corner. It is becoming a question of really losing much of its power, much of its prerogative, if not losing – the royal family losing its position completely.

So if you want an analogy essentially, it’s a bit of the situation that we see in the – whenever there is a threat of famine somewhere, that you have early warning systems; the rumblings of, you know, the crops failed and so on are there. People know essentially – people who follow these things know that something – that before long there are going to be starving people, and yet nothing ever is done, unless – until the people are actually starving in the streets. And in the same way, there is a parallel here where the monarchies really don’t move until something is happening.

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What is striking at this point is – it is unwillingness or – either unwillingness to move, which characterizes the Gulf monarchies, or it – this extreme caution in the reform process, which Marwan has outlined in the case of Jordan and I’m going to talk about in a moment in the case of Morocco. All these monarchies know that they’re in danger; in other words, that there is no country, no monarchy but no other country, no other government in the Arab world that is saying, “This is not going to – the kind of upheavals that have shaken other countries cannot take place in my country.” In fact, the signs are quite clear that they’re all – that all the monarchies are very worried about what’s going on in other countries. They may pretend that everything is fine, but in fact they are extremely worried.

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For example, in Saudi Arabia, where the king praised the population essentially for not – for not rising up, for not going out in the streets and protesting, at the same time, the king is taking no chances and distributing incredibly high amounts of money in various guises to the population, which certainly shows that they are extremely worried about what might happen there.

The other very paradoxical situation that we see is that while none of the monarchies, particularly the Gulf monarchies, have introduced significant reforms in their countries, more and more they are reacting to unrest in other countries, saying that they should introduce major reforms. All the Arab – all the Arab monarchies voted in favor of the Arab League expelling Syria, for example. They have all come out telling Syria that they have to make changes. In other words, there seems to be sort of an underlying theme here that reform is necessary but not – but not yet at home or not quite at home. So it's a very – it's a very paradoxical reaction, in many ways, what we are seeing.

Let me talk about two countries in greater detail, and first of all, talking about Morocco because Morocco in many ways is a very interesting example – because at least outwardly, in Morocco, the king has really tried to stay way ahead of the protests. Within two weeks – a little more than two weeks, two and a half weeks of the starting of the protests on February 20th, the king went on television and announced that a new constitution would be drafted, that he was setting up a committee to study the new constitution.

And he did so. I mean, the constitution came out right on time. He gave this committee a few months to prepare the constitution. The constitution was presented to the king on time, which was probably easy given the fact that it was written not by a representative body but by a small committee of experts. And the constitution was overwhelmingly approved in a referendum by the population. I think the Moroccan government may have gotten a bit carried away when they announced that the yes vote was 98.5 percent – kind of raises alarm bells. Because I don't think anybody will say anything by 98.5 percent. But there was no doubt that the support for the new constitution was very large. Because people still supported the king, and the king presented the new constitution, and therefore people voted for the new constitution.

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The problem – so essentially the king really moved very boldly. The problem is that the constitution that was enacted is a – it's a very ambiguous constitution. It's a constitution that could very much lead to a real crumbling of the power of the king; could lead not to a constitutional monarchy or a parliamentary monarchy, as the Moroccans call it, but could lead to a monarchy where the parliament has substantial power. This is based – but it could also lead – very much leave the status quo largely untouched.

There are loopholes in the constitution that allow the king to essentially maintain all power – most of the power in his hands. And on the other – and whether or not the king is going to use these loopholes is going to depend on how the – whether the political parties, whether the parliament allows him to do so. And there are good reasons to believe at this point that the parliament probably will allow the king to maintain all the power.

What are – the loopholes the king is keeping for himself is the areas where he is in charge of the decision: three areas. One is religion, which is not strange. The king in Morocco is the commander of the faithful, et cetera. Second is security. But the third is decisions of strategic interest, and that is one that you – you know, that's the loophole you can drive a truck through. Because strategic interest is – strategic importance is very much in the eyes of the beholder. I would argue that the king – you know, education is not an area of strategic importance, but there

should be a proposal for a complete revamping of the curriculum, for example, and the approach to education in the country. The king could very well declare that that's a strategic decision and he's going to maintain control of it, so that essentially what it means is that the king can maintain control on anything he wants by declaring it something of strategic importance.

The question is the political parties. Are they going to allow him to do so, or are they going to really push back if he tries to – if he tries to exercise – to keep on exercising as much power as he has done in the past? The elections have not taken place. The elections are now scheduled for Friday, I guess – for the 25th of November. So we really don't know the elections – the results. But there are two indications that suggest to me that probably there is not going to be a very – a very – what do you say – active parliament. There are two main contenders for – in the elections.

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One is a coalition of parties that is organized around the Party for Authenticity and Modernity, which is the party that was set up by a childhood friend of the king. It's somebody who is very close to the king. If that party and its coalition win the elections, get the largest number of votes in the election, then under the new constitution, the king is forced to choose – to choose an individual from the winning coalition and make that person prime minister. Well, what would happen in this case is that the king's friends becomes (sic) the prime minister, and that is not a particularly encouraging way to lead to – you know, to see the power of the prime minister increase, the power of the government increase vis-à-vis that of the government – same for the parliament, if that dominates.

There is also a possibility that the party that will get the plurality of the vote is going to be the PJD, the parties – the Party for Justice and Development, which is the – which is the Islamist parties. It's a very moderate party, and above all it's a party that tells you today very clearly that their main goal in this election is to complete the legitimization, essentially, of the PJD, to complete the integration of the Islamists in the political system.

Well, a party that is – that has as its major goal to complete its integration in the political system, it's probably not going to upset the apple cart too much. It's not going to take – to push too hard against the king.

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So that what – the risk in Morocco is that in the end, after all this – the king taking the bold initiative of a new constitution and so on – we'll find a situation which is very much like the one that existed before.

Why is this a risk? You can say, what's wrong with that? It's a risk because there is – (inaudible) – in the – you know, in Morocco, you have another Islamist political organization, al-Adl wal Ihsane, that has so far stayed on the – on the – kind of the sidelines of the political system. It's very much opposed to – not only to the constitution that the king has presented, the new constitution, but it's – at least from time to time, it's beginning to question the legitimacy of the monarchy as a whole.

Now, nobody knows exactly how much support this organization has, because it has never competed in election, because it refuses to recognize the legitimacy of the Moroccan state. But all analysts believe that this is by far the largest political organization in the country.

In other words, if, by moving so cautiously, therefore the king may end up – it may be a Pyrrhic victory. He has certainly won the first round – the first round, if you want. He has maintained much of his power. He has maintained the flexibility. But he may find himself against a very different type of opposition. It's – the test – a lot

of analysts in Morocco argue that the real test of how successful the king has been will come when we see the voters' turnout. Moroccans, for several election cycles now, have expressed their dissatisfaction by just not going out and voting. The last election, about 37 percent of eligible voters cast a vote. And over one-third of the ballots that they cast were deliberately spoiled; they were protest votes, in other words.

So we may very well see a similar – if there is still a very low turnout, then we know that the monarchy has not moved fast enough, that Mohammed VI has not been as successful as he thought he was in staying ahead of the protests, in managing the process of reform from the top. And he may be, in fact, be forced, like many other Arab leaders, to manage protests, manage – try to deal with a very dissatisfied population rather than being able to introduce the reform he wants.

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Let me move on a bit for a moment to – I just talk about one more country, and it's Bahrain – because Bahrain, in a sense, is the cautionary tale. It's the opposite of what has been happening in other countries, because you can say the other monarchies still have their legitimacy. They have not moved the – you know, in a sense, I think that they are missing an opportunity to move more decisively. But they still have that opportunity. The opportunity is still not gone, essentially. Their legitimacy is very high, and that's clear in all studies that have been carried out.

In Bahrain, I think we have a very different situation. In other words, the monarchy has pretty much lost its legitimacy, at least in the eyes of the Shia population. You hear even the most moderate members of the Shia opposition are now calling for a full-fledged constitutional monarchy – that is, a monarchy where the king does not have any power, where the king rules but does not govern. And, of course, the radicals are beginning to ask for a republic, for the overthrow of the monarchy – of the monarchy completely.

Tomorrow, at 7:00 in the morning, Washington time, the Bassiouni Commission will present the results of its investigation on how the country handled the protest.

Very briefly, for those of you who have not followed Bahrain closely: First of all, Bahrain has a very long history of political convulsion, essentially, of strife where the Shia population, which is the majority but also does not have much power, push against the monarchy. There was a 10-year period of upheaval during the '90s. Finally, they reached some agreement, some modification of the political system, a partially elected parliament.

And then, in – at the beginning of the year, as protests broke out in other Arab country, the protests in Bahrain started again. And protests in Bahrain was put down pretty harshly. How harshly? We'll know more clearly when the – so far, we have – you know, the Shia say one thing and the monarchy says another thing. The report that comes out tomorrow is supposed to be the definitive study done by an independent commission from outside Bahrain that will tell how the – what actually happened.

And I think, judging on the way in which the Bahraini government at the embassy here and so on are becoming proactive in telling everybody that their goal is to learn from the mistakes they made in the past, I think there are reasons to believe that this report is going to be very critical of the government. We'll know more tomorrow, but there – clearly, the Bahrainis are very worried, although they keep on telling us that – nobody has seen the report yet; they have seen the report and I think that it's not – that it's not a good report.

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The point that – since I’m running out of time here, the point is that the fact that the – that the Bahraini monarchy reacted to the unrest not by moving towards a process of reform but by hardening its position, by calling in the Peninsula Shield Force, which means that the Saudi troops and the Emirati troops – few are from other countries – are now in the country helping to maintain order and so on – by doing all this, the monarchy has lost a lot of its legitimacy and has lost the capacity to introduce reforms from the top, because, I think, at this point, the kind of reform that would be required to pacify the Shia population would be reforms that the monarchy probably cannot accept, that would amount to the demise of the ruling family in Bahrain.

Let me stop here, and then we can open up.

MR. SALEM: Thank you, Marina, for giving a very good context to what monarchies can do with their time and the challenges of reform from above, and giving an example of a country like Morocco where the king seems to be leading with reform from above, and perhaps staying ahead of political change, and a country like Bahrain which has clearly missed the boat, as it were. Thank you for those also detailed analyses of Morocco and Bahrain. And I turn to our commentator, Jon.

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JON B. ALTERMAN: Thank you very much. It’s a pleasure to be here at Carnegie. Thank you very much for some very provocative remarks, and the draft paper I saw which helped structure them. I also want to commend Carnegie for looking at this. I think we got lazy, because the last you’ve had the fall of a monarchy in the Middle East was more than 30 years ago. The last time you had the fall of Arab monarchy was more than 40 years ago. And we all had the sense that this problem had been solved, right? The stability of monarchies had been solved. And I think what we’ve seen in the region in the last year has caused us to reinvestigate it, and I commend you for doing so.

It seems to me that there are sort of three pillars on which Arab monarchies, and perhaps other monarchies, rest. One is legitimacy. And legitimacy, for people not from monarchical systems, I always find sort of a hard – a hard concept to grasp, because it always feels to me like I never quite understand what people are talking about when they talk about the king, because the way people talk about the king, the way people are educated to talk about the king, the way people are educated not to talk about the king is deeply ingrained in societies ruled by kings.

And it just takes going to Morocco and going to Jordan and going to a number of the Arab states – the Gulf states – that you understand, it’s not just the language. There is clearly something else in there that is deeply part of the educational system; it’s deeply part of the religious structure, and there is a way that the kings in this region enjoy a serious comprehensive legitimacy which is very foreign to us coming from non-monarchical systems.

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I think part of being a king in this part of the world, part of the way that Arab monarchies work, is, the king is an arbiter, not a disputant. It’s really, really important. The king doesn’t fight. The king moderates fights between people under the king. And that keeps the king pure. If you want to think about it, the king is sort of like a crooked referee, right? The king sort of throws a call every once in a while toward the side he favors, but nobody doubts the authority of the king to be the judge of what’s in bounds and what’s out of bounds. And I think the kings that lose sight of that role, that become arbiters, as the Shah of Iran did, end up being former kings. Being a king is really presiding over a much more dynamic system than the kinds of systems that most authoritarian leaders preside over – that you want to have a ferment within the system.

Subsidiary to that, or related to that – all these three are related – is this sort of diffusion of power in monarchies, which I think is not the way – we think of kings as absolute rulers, right? The king can do whatever he wants. But that's not the way Arab monarchies work. In many cases, they try to diffuse power. They try to give power to relatives. My friend, Mike Herb, did a very interesting book call "All in the Family" about these dynastic monarchies where – you know, if you look at the GCC states, a senior member of the royal family is the defense minister, the interior minister and the foreign minister of every GCC state. Now, either that's a wacky coincidence, or there is something deep in the structure of how these places work that you want close relatives covering those things. Part of it is that they get patronage from that, right? And you can give the money from the monarchy out, you can distribute it – that if you are a senior member of the royal family, you have a stake.

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And there is often, I think, an advantage to having sort of an incoherence among senior members of the royal family, because that means an increasing number of people in society feel, I have a senior royal who is fighting for my interests. So you don't want – again, the shah is the example of a monarch who held it all too closely. The shah had too clear a plan for where he wanted to lead Iran. The shah did not have enough incoherence in his government, and partly as a consequence of that, it was too easy for people to say, I have no stake in this system, I have no interest in its continuance.

Clearly, I think, in the successful monarchies, what we see is, the monarchs use the family, they use money to coopt important people, to coopt important tribes, to coopt important groups that a large number of people feel they have a stake. And again, the monarchy is the referee.

The third issue, related to the previous two, is money, and monarchs tend to have money that they put around here and there. It's not only employed within governments; it's employed between governments. As we saw, the Saudis looked at the neighborhood. And so they not only put \$130 billion – that's 30 percent of GDP – as a stimulus package into Saudi Arabia. They gave \$10 billion to the Omanis, \$10 billion to the Bahrainis. Who knows what the Jordanians will get – have gotten? And Moroccans, presumably, are going to benefit to some degree.

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There is an interest among all the monarchies in preserving other monarchies, and a sense that you can use money to help do this. Money lubricates the system, and if you can't find enough money, then you have to find other ways to lubricate the system.

It seems to me that, for all of this, where the public fits in, if you look at the polling numbers, there are generally not overwhelming polling numbers saying, we need democracy. You see some things talking about people want a greater voice, but it seems that really, what people want is people want better outcomes. And if you look at perceptions of democracy in the Arab world, you look at a country like Kuwait, which has had a parliament for decades, but the parliament is not really a great advertisement for – this is – this is the better results you get – with a monarchy you have – without one. A Kuwaiti friend told me that the last new government hospital built in Kuwait was built in 1976. There is a sense in Kuwait that it's not really moving, that parliament holds everything up – in a sense, if you look down the Gulf, to Qatar and the UAE, that you have largely authoritarian systems with wise but benevolent rulers who have presided over this incredible increase in wealth, in employment, in opportunity, in travel, in all the kinds of things that people want.

And my sense is that, for many people, what they really want is better outcomes. They want a sense of justice. They don't necessarily need to vote. They don't have any more faith in democratic systems than the 9 percent – or

the 81 percent – 91 percent of Americans who disapprove of the job that Congress is doing, right? People just want better outcomes. They don't – to my knowledge, to my understanding, they don't care as much about the mechanics of how you get there. We could argue the only way to get to better outcomes is more representative government, but I think that's an argument that is not totally solved in the Arab world.

What we've seen, I think, sort of paradoxically is, despite a relative level of satisfaction – we've seen the pre-emptive effort in Qatar, and we've already seen in the UAE, to expand the franchise, to give people or to announce the intention of giving people a right to vote. In the UAE, they had these federal national council elections, which initially – I love this system: They handpick the people who are allowed to vote for the government. The government picked the people who can vote for the government. But they expanded that considerably in the last round. Very low turnout, about 25 percent. But there is – there seems to be a commitment to give people more of an ability to vote, although people aren't demanding it. The Qataris have said that they're going to expand the vote as well. It's a pre-emptive move rather than something that is driven by demands.

[00:46:32]

And it seems to that, in many cases, that is something that poorer states have tried to do because they haven't had the easy salve of money to solve the problems. And I think that the example of the state which has most masterfully used the franchise and used the political process to sort of regulate the political space in the country is Morocco. The king of Morocco has done a masterful job for more than a decade, always being on the verge of fundamental reform. I mean, there's always a latest and greatest that's really going to change it – and I remember, from Mudawana in 2004, and there was a decentralization of power that was touted about five or six years ago – I'm not saying these things are nothing. They are real. They have effects. But the effects are always longer term, more subtle than they're initially announced to be.

And I think by doing this, and the way the king does this, the king decides what are the issues, how are the issues debated, who are the people who decide the issues. And the public – because the king has so much legitimacy, the public trusts the king to do this. And it's actually, I think, a very effective way of managing public demands.

Part of the reason the king was able to issue the constitution so quickly is because people have been talking about the constitution – not because people had been demanding a constitution; because the king decided, we should be serious about a constitution. He convenes people, and there were already an elite discussion that can help feed that debate down.

[00:48:12]

I think one of the other things the king has done very effectively – I'm not sure we a hundred-percent agree on the Adl wal Ihsane versus PJD – it seems to me that one of the things that king has done, by having a legal set of Islamists in politics and an illegal set of Islamists outside of politics, is, he splits the Islamist vote, right? So there are – there are people who say, I have nothing to do with the system. There are people who say, we're going to work within the system; we are going to try to get what we can get. And part of what that does is it means that Islamists never overwhelm the entire system. You could argue it's cynical. You could argue it's brilliant. You could argue that's not really what's going on. But it seems to me that part of the strategy here is regulating who can participate in debate and how they participate in debates as a way of maintaining control over how the system works.

To move on to Bahrain, it seems to me that Bahrain is a terrible warning for Jordan. And let me tell you why I think that's true. In Bahrain, you have 30 percent of the population that's Sunni that identifies with the monarchy

and clings to the monarchy. In Jordan, you have perhaps 40 percent of the population that's East Bank Jordanian, which feels that it belongs to the state and the state belongs to it.

[00:49:44]

And for those of you who haven't had conversations with Jordanians in government service and the military especially, there really is this sense that I've gotten that Palestinians are interlopers. They're busy making millions of dollars in the private sector while Jordanians – real Jordanians do the hard work of building the state. It strikes me as a sort of eerie echo of the sense that many Sunnis have in Bahrain, that they are the ones who are serving in the – in the police, into the army, and others are busy out doing their thing, but they're not really wholly Bahraini the way Palestinians aren't wholly Jordanians.

And it – one of the things that worries me is this sense that I increasingly get that the king, because he relies on the army and the army is an East Bank institution, the king identifies more with some of his subjects than others. He's not above the Palestinian/East Bank fray, but is part of it.

And I agree that there are lots of ways to divide the Jordanian polity, but it seems to me how two incredibly different elites – you have an East Bank elite, which is deeply tied to the government, and a West Bank elite, which is deeply tied to business. And the two of them see each other threatening one another and threatening the nature of the state, rather than see themselves as inherent parts of it. All of that, I think, suggests the need for politics to help weave it.

And it seems to me that the key issue of the Bassiouni report – from everything I've heard from people involved in writing it, the Bassiouni report will be a political document. It's intended to be a political document. It's not a criminal indictment. It's not – I mean, it's as much fact-finding as one can do sitting at the Ritz-Carlton with a lot of consultants who really weren't in Bahrain very much.

It is intended – and this goes back to the first point – it's intended to enhance the power of the king within Bahrain because – when I was in Bahrain a little more than a month ago, the perception was, the king had become, like, the third- or fourth-most powerful person in the country, that the guys in charge of the military had more power, that the prime minister was extraordinarily powerful. The king and the crown prince, as, I think, Anthony Shadid's piece this morning pointed out, king is probably third or fourth in the power structure. And this is intended, as I understand it, to give the king a way to reassert his centrality – that, in some ways, the diffusion of power has gone too far. And this is intended, as, in a way, to help the king get back more of a central role.

[00:52:42]

But the king of Bahrain is not the dictator of Bahrain. The king of Bahrain is intended to be the arbiter. And because of really a breakdown in the politics, or breakdown in managing politically the schism between a Sunni population that feels increasingly estranged from the Shia population, that – it's that breakdown which marginalized the king, and the king's task is a fundamentally political task of reasserting his role as the arbiter of Bahraini politics – I think, as I said, a cautionary tale for how politics can get away from you in divided societies with minority rule, minority tie to the security services, which is what we're seeing in Jordan and other places in the region. Thank you.

MR. SALEM: Thank you very much, Jon, for that really rich set of comments and insights.

We have about a half-hour for Q&A. There's microphones on different parts of the – so please raise your hand and stand. Please, sir? Yes? Stand up so the microphone comes to you, and introduce yourself, if you would. Thank you.

[00:53:45]

Q: Thank you. I'm Rafi Danziger, adviser to AIPAC. And I have two questions to Marwan. First of all, follow up on what Jon said, it seems that in Jordan you have a very serious imbalance between, on the one hand, the minority of Palestinians who have most of the money – so a majority of Palestinians have most of the money – and a minority of East Jordanians who have most of the power. And the question is, how can the government really go about repairing this imbalance?

And the second question is not directly related to the topic, but I think could have an effect in the future. Could you comment on the current move by the monarchy to have some kind of an overture to Hamas? And related to that is a visit of the king to Ramallah.

MR. SALEM: Thank you. Let's take a few more question. Raised hands – one in the back?

Q: Lindsay Workman, from the National Democratic Institute – NDI.

My question – first of all, thank you very much. I've enjoyed the conversation about top-down reform and the prospects. But I want to ask you a question about the prospect for bottoms-up demand in these countries. We've talked about apathy in Morocco. We've talked about a very divided society in Jordan; the Saudi population being sort of bought off. What could potentially trigger the kind of magnetic pull of protest movement that we've seen in other places in the region?

MR. SALEM: One more question for this round? Sir in the front? Please.

Q: Yes, thank you. Jim Michael. I'm a consultant in development cooperation, with a principal focus on rule of law.

It seems to me that this top-down – and it's really related to the previous question, I think – has to interact with a civil society that has some values of things like equality of treatment, a belief that the institutions of governance and justice can make a positive difference for the society. And where you have the different groups contending and competing and an acceptance of the idea that, well, if you're East Bank, you get treated differently than if you're West Bank; if you're a woman, you get treated different than if you're a man – and these kinds of divisions within the society and the skepticism, which I found in my – talking to people in the region – the skepticism about whether these reforms are a modernization or whether they are really transformational changes in the society.

And I'd like to hear from the panelists about how you see engaging civil society. Some of these reforms, like the constitutional process, have not been very transparent or participatory. And how does – how does civil society and a civic culture that is going to encourage and further a reform process going to develop in this? Because if it doesn't, it doesn't seem to me this is going to be a sustainable process.

[00:56:48]

MR. SALEM: Thank you. Let's turn to our panel. Marwan, perhaps you're first.

MR. MUASHER: Sure. The question of imbalance in Jordanian society – I mean, Jordanian – I mean, the traditional relationship between the different sectors of society and the regime is changing. Today, it's a fact that most of the protesters on the street are East Jordanian. The Palestinian part of the population has consciously decided not to go to the street because they don't want to be, you know, end up being blamed for what is going on. They don't want to be rid of the rights they have. For many reasons, they have consciously not gone to the street.

And it seems to me that this traditional formula where, you know, you have a rentier system where you buy loyalty with favors, basically to the, you know, East Jordanian part of the population, is coming to an end. In other words, there is no – there isn't a degree of satisfaction that was there before from that part of society which now feels that the state is selling its assets and the state is moving away from a rentier system that has privileged some at the expense of others.

[00:58:14]

I firmly believe that if a reform process is to succeed in Jordan, it has to be led by the king because he alone today can credibly claim that he represents all the sectors of society, those that are East Jordanian and those that are of Palestinian origin. He can credibly claim that.

But he cannot alone introduce a reform process that is not inclusive. To go back to the – to go to your question, sir, about civil society, any reform process – and I think that applies not just to Jordan, but to the rest of the Arab world – that is written by the government and then handed over to people and said, this is it, guys, you implement it, is not a process that is going to work. If it is not developed by the different sectors of society themselves, it has no chance of succeeding. I mean, that's a necessary but not sufficient condition, if you want.

We had a successful experiment in Jordan of writing such a blueprint, such an inclusive blueprint, the National Agenda of 2005, when actually all sectors of society – most sectors of society – political, social, economic – did participate in the writing of the document. But then, of course, it was put on the shelf because the system thought it was too far-reaching.

Today, the National Agenda is outdated. Today, people are calling for way more than the National Agenda. When we did it six years ago, any talk about any constitutional amendment was taboo. Today already, we've had 42, and a lot of people think, you know, it's not enough; you need to do – you need to do more.

[01:00:12]

So a participatory process is indeed a must in the Arab world. And it is a sign of the seriousness of the regime. The constitutional amendment committee, although it did produce good work in Jordan, but one of the major criticisms, of course, is that it had no opposition members – none whatsoever. And that's – you know, that's not – that's not credible, in my view.

The question about the monarchy and Hamas, I mean, there is no question that the regime in Jordan is warming up to Hamas more than it used to. I happen to believe that, you know, political Islam, I think, needs to be included and needs to be talked to, and that without talking to political Islam in the region you are excluding a powerful sector of society. I believe in a political Islam movement that is peaceful. But I think that with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is – it is not – it is not useful, nor in fact credible, to exclude any party.

I mean, can we imagine a situation where you have a peace agreement with Israel without Hamas involvement? It's just not going to work, in my view. But a lot of people have interpreted that to mean that Hamas is going back to

Jordan, is going to open offices in Jordan. I have no way of telling whether this is true or not. The official position of the government is that this is not true and there are no plans to bring back Hamas to Jordan.

And finally on the – on the – on the issue of bottom-up demand, I mean, this is the question that really Marina posed. This is the dilemma that Arab monarchies face. You know, so far the overwhelming majority of the political and bureaucratic layers around the regimes in Arab monarchies are telling these leaders, these monarchs, don't worry. You know, the number of protesters in the street in Jordan is no more than 5,000 at best. Therefore, you have nothing to worry.

[01:02:35]

And the – of course, the counter-argument is don't wait until the 5,000 become 30,000, because then it will be too late. And the best way, you know, to avoid such a situation where the street becomes the set – the pace setter is a reform process from above, which in my view is totally doable in Jordan. But then the monarch and the system will have to change or adjust the traditional rentier relationship between the regime and the public; rule of law has to apply; you know, everybody has to feel – whether they are East Jordanian or Palestinian – they have to feel that they are being treated equitably.

And I think if people feel that, and if people see – as credible reform process that might take, you know, five or 10 or 15 years, but if they see a credible one that is participatory and that is being implemented rather than just talked about and then put on the shelf – if they see one that is credible, I think people are patient. But what people have stopped to be patient about is reform rhetoric that does not – that is not followed up with implementation.

MR. SALEM: Thank you, Marwan. Marina and John, any comments about –

MS. OTTOWAY: Are you – sure. On this issue of the bottom-up demand, first of all, I would like to point out that I think there is no – if you judge on the action of the Arab monarchies, there is no Arab monarchy that does not believe that a large-scale protest is possible in their country and that they have to try and stay ahead of it. The problem is – and I would argue that bottom-up – a push from the bottom is absolutely necessary for reform from the top to be implemented.

In other words, nobody is going to sort of just out of the blue start implementing reforms if they don't feel that there is a demand for it – that there is a push for it. The problem is that Arab monarchies – many of the Arab monarchies, with the exception of – with the exception of Jordan and particularly Morocco, have tried to respond to the potential for unrest in the country by essentially trying to buy off the population rather than by introducing real changes.

[01:05:07]

I have a somewhat different view of the – what Qatar – you know, Qatar and UAE announcing elections, then – I think they are still baby steps. I don't think there is any real change there at all. But by and large, the position of the monarchs is that we can stay on top of this situation without giving in to – without having to deal with the real – with real pressure. But they know that it's – that the danger is there. And that's why they are acting the way they are acting.

Concerning the participation, yes, I think it's crucial. But it's not going to come unless you have more organizations. In other words, if it is that – take the case of Morocco. The king decided to make the writing – constitution-writing process a, quote, unquote, “participatory” process. So they set up – in addition to the

commission of experts – and they also set up this other mechanism, the – (inaudible) – which has a very interesting name. But it – that was supposed to be the one that provided – that allowed the civil society organization to make an input and so on.

[01:06:15]

They were never consulted. I mean, they were asked to make submissions. They make the submissions. And they never heard anything – you know, they were never consulted again. And I think the problem there is – I don't want to say it was their fault, but the fact is that they were not organized enough to really force the hand of the – of the commission of experts or the king, or whoever you might say, to really take into consideration what they wanted.

So if you wanted, the bottom line here is that reform from the top is only going to come if there is sufficient push from the bottom. The problem is that the push from the bottom can engulf – can engulf the reformers at the top if it becomes too much. And this is – perhaps is one of the reasons why monarchies are so cautious, that in the end that they are afraid that they'll lose control over the reform process.

MR. ALTERMAN: Two very quick points. I think what drives the demand for a different political system is the sense that a different political system will give better results, right? I mean, so to the extent that people do think that a more democratic system or representative system would give them better results in terms of justice, in terms of economics, in terms of some other thing, that drives people toward it; to the extent that they see democratic systems in Iraq and elsewhere leading to chaos, leading to social conflict, that is a disincentive to pursue them.

I think the other piece of this that's important to keep in mind is that liberal voices who push for more representative government are not the ones who always capture the government that becomes more representative afterwards. There's something – there's a sort of unfortunate passivity about many liberals. And that – you know, if you just look at how Egypt has played out, there's a whole core of activists in Cairo who have no links to the broader country. They don't have links outside of Cairo. And we've seen other parties, arguably less liberal parties, that have extensive national networks.

Part of opening up this system means you have to do politics in a serious way. And I think one of the things that monarchies have been extraordinarily successful at doing, and Saudi Arabia better than all, is they keep both the religious conservatives and the social liberals under their wings, protect them both, protect them against each other, and become the arbiter. And that, in many ways, protects the centrality of the monarchy and makes both sides fearful of what might happen if you really had a more democratic system. And it ends up continuing the system, rather than opening it up to political reform.

[01:09:03]

MR. SALEM: Thank you, Jon. Let's take another round of questions. Let me start there – ma'am.

Q: Thank you. Marguerita Ragsdale with the Department of State. I have been following the Middle East for many, many years in the State Department, starting out as a graduate student. And looking at the Arab Spring, I really was excited, but then I began to worry. And I'm wondering if these monarchies are damned if they do and damned if they don't, in that no government – and certainly the monarchies have not had a long experience of really working in a democratic fashion – but I'm wondering if any government in the Middle East now can manage the unrealistic expectation of instant prosperity as a result of change. So that much of what they are seeking – goes to what Mr. Alterman was talking about in the sense of a better life. And I'm wondering if they really can get that, even with the reforms that these governments will do. Thank you.

[01:10:07]

MR. SALEM: Thank you. I have question of my own I wanted to ask Dr. Muasher. You mentioned in your initial remarks, of course, the GCC, Jordanian situation. I just wonder if you could tell us a bit more about how you see that going, why the offer was made, what it might actually end up with – how it might affect Jordan and the GCC itself. If there are no other questions, let's go to our panel. Let's maybe go in reverse order. Jon, you want to start first?

MR. ALTERMAN: Yeah. My sense is that, you know, for – on the one hand, the oil-exporting states, right, are in a pretty good position because of where oil prices are. And that means that they don't have to do what many of them did in the '90s when oil prices were lower. They have to start thinking about different kinds of political deals. I think, you know, what happens in Iraq and what happens in Egypt and what happens in Libya – and we're still going to see, you know, what kinds of transitions we have when in both Syria and Yemen, although I think both are coming – how those play out will have a dramatic effect over the next five years on demands for opening up systems, because if, you know, unwrapping the package means that all the worms get out, then people are going to say, let's just leave the thing wrapped up.

It also – you know, where oil prices are for the next 10 years has a profound effect on how much demand there is for change because either people will feel greater prosperity or people feel less prosperity or people feel it's sort of growing at the right rate. And if I knew where oil prices were going over the next 10 years, I would be much wealthier than I am. But, you know, I think it's a non-trivial variable that we don't really think about. In general, the higher oil prices are, the more it constrains political demands and political change in oil-exporting states. And the lower they are, the more it forces change. And we – that's beyond my ability to project.

I think – you know, to your question – I think there is a sort of regional interest in what people see in the region. And Al Jazeera's played this incredible role not only as the narrator of this incredible period of change but also projecting images and framing the discourse of how this all works. I think that most of the GCC states have decided that they've seen enough of popular revolution demanding change. And my own judgment is that they are going to be looking for solutions in countries which do not involve negotiating with the street, and instead will involve forces coming in and establishing control and making deals with people from on high, rather than sort of opening up a very messy process of contestation and negotiation.

[01:13:22]

That's a gut sense, but I think if you look at how the countries are looking at Yemen and how they're looking at Syria, I think that's what I see. And I think one of the reasons they find Egypt so disturbing right now is because of a sense that they don't know where it's headed. Egypt is a center of gravity for the region. And a sense that Egypt is going to collapse into competing demands is very threatening to a lot of these countries – see their relations within the region and more broadly in the kind of demonstration effect that Egypt might have from Morocco all the way through to Iraq.

MR. SALEM: Thank you, John. Marina?

MS. OTTOWAY: Yeah. I am not so convinced that the problem for these countries is going to be the unrealistic expectations. I think people in the end know that there is not going to be instant prosperity. I was following very closely years ago the transition in South Africa. And everybody was saying, oh my God, the country is going to be bankrupted because the African population is going to expect to be paid at the same salaries that the whites were

receiving. And of course, that was simply not feasible because the way that the whites were paid such high salaries, is that the African population was paid very low salaries.

[01:14:45]

People knew that there was no way of balancing the two. I would argue that, yes, there are expectation – there are demands. You walk around Cairo nowadays and you bump into a little strike and demonstration no matter where you go. But by and large, the expectation of – it is the governments that have – that have essentially tried to solve the problem not by making – by introducing political reforms, but by making economic concessions. It's an attitude that has been very much encouraged by the government.

You go back, for example, in Egypt to the two, three years before Mubarak was ousted, where there was a lot of protest, there were a lot of small strikes and small protests all over the country. And as long as they were kept strictly economic, the government would give in and raise salaries. So I would argue that it's not so much an unrealistic expectation, but it is the – it is the governments that have paid money rather than facing the problem of reform.

That aside, there is no doubt that in the long run all these countries have huge problems of the – you know, tackling the unemployment issue. Not – even countries that are rich enough to pay off people still have to solve that problem – that they cannot keep, you know, a large number, particularly of young people, on the dole and not expect – not expect trouble.

MR. SALEM: Thank you, Marina. Marwan?

MR. MUASHER: I think whether you're excited or worried about the Arab Spring – I never liked to call it the Arab Spring from day one – is because this all depends on the time prism that you are looking at. If as this romantic notion that immediately developed after January of last year of autocratic regimes, you know, leaving the scene in almost instantaneously to democratic regimes that will come – and was, of course, unrealistic. And, in the absence of civil society and of political party culture, as you said, it was simply not going to happen.

So if people are looking at few months, you know, of course everybody is worried. If people are looking at this as a process that will indeed go through a lot of iterations, a lot of mistakes, before it, hopefully, arrives at stable and prosperous societies, then it's a different ball game. I mean, I'm not – I'm not surprised by what is happening in Egypt today with the army because the army – I mean, anybody who thought the army was a democratic institution, you know – (laughter) – let him argue with me. I mean – (chuckles) – the army, you know, was there by necessity at the beginning. But of course it's not going to protect democracy. I mean, anybody could have told you that.

[01:17:49]

So I think we need to be, one, realistic that these transitions are going to take time, that there are different conditions in different Arab countries. So some countries will do better than others. In Eastern Europe, Poland did much better than Russia until today. In the Arab world, I mean, you've asked the question of whether any government can manage transition – yes.

Look at Tunisia. I mean, yes, it's a small country, but the transition has been going very smoothly in Tunisia. And, you know, they've had very fair elections. They have the coalition government. The head of the – next head of the – of the country now is secular leftist, agreed to by the largest, you know, party that won the elections – the Islamists. The head of the constituent assembly is another secular – well-known secular in the country, et cetera.

[01:18:45]

The transition is going very well in Tunisia. That doesn't mean it will go as well in other Arab countries. But it does mean that it is possible. And that – I think there are lessons that can be learned. As we go through such transitions, people will learn lessons moving forward. One lesson that I think the Arab world has already learned is that nobody wants another Iranian model. Nobody wants another theocratic government. And that's already learned. That does not mean that religion will not play a role – and an important one – in Arab governments that will emerge. But I think that for the large part, they will be civilian governments and not theocratic ones.

On the question of the GCC, it's been six months since the GCC announced its intention to invite Jordan and Morocco to membership. Nothing much has been done until then. Different reasons, you know, I mean – I mean, it's clear that not all GCC countries are enthusiastic about this. The Saudis are, but then maybe it stops there. There are many questions that are being raised. Other questions have to do with, is this full membership or partial membership? These countries go through phases. You know, first they had the customs union, then they had free trade agreements between them, then they had – the last stage no one has reached, which is a monetary union – which no one has reached.

So is Jordan – for Jordan, of course, the lure is that it will have free movement of labor and capital, so that Jordanians can work in the Gulf at ease without having to get work permits, and that more investments from the Gulf will come to Jordan. That's the lure, of course. But as I said, it is very interesting to me that – and this is not a new demand. I was in government 15 years ago when we first asked for membership in the GCC.

It is very interesting to me today that when you ask Jordanians on the street, the answer is not an automatic yes. You know, it's what is – what's the catch here? (Laughter.) So I mean, there is, also – and I'm not saying – I'm not necessarily saying – (chuckles) – there is a sort of a catch against reform. All what I'm saying is that people understand today that their problems are not purely economic, and that there is a demand for better governments that will not go away just because their pockets become fuller – at least in Jordan.

[01:21:37]

MR. SALEM: Thank you very much. If there are no more questions I'd like to thank you all for coming this morning. And certainly would like to thank our excellent panel. The paper will be coming out in a few weeks. Please look for it. We look forward to reading it. And please join me in thanking our panel this morning. (Applause.)

(END)