

ABSTRACTS

FABRICE BALANCHE, *Metropolization and Globalization: Factors of Political Instability in the Arab World.*

The processes of “metropolization” (uncontrolled urban sprawl) and globalization are among the most important factors that led to the Arab uprisings or revolutions. Authoritarian regimes in the Arab world were erected within the framework of traditionally closed economies that depended primarily on the rural population. By 2011, open economies with a strong urban component had developed. However, these changes failed to give rise to corresponding political transformations, inevitably creating obstacles and a breakdown of the existing social pact. The decline in oil income, indirectly caused by the financial crisis of 2007, undoubtedly acted as a catalyst in the emergence of opposition movements against those regimes that were incapable of adapting to the new situation or ensuring social peace.

Key words: **metropolis, globalization, urbanization, revolt, Arab authoritarianism.**

VINCENT GEISSER and MICHAËL BÉCHIR AYARI, *Tunisia: People’s Revolution or State Revolution?*

Specialists used to study Tunisia’s political system for its longevity and stability. It was an “almost perfect” authoritarian state: the Ben Ali regime simulated consensus among different sectors, accommodating them and making compromises, while maintaining a virtual police state. Few specialists foresaw the 2010-2011 revolution. The crisis did not suddenly occur; rather it was a product of a lengthy political cycle. “Cracks” in the system appeared, which provoked increasing scrutiny of the sources of the legitimacy of its power. Beyond conspiracy theories and romantic visions of revolution, this

paper examines the emergence of an opposition movement over a long period of time, and tries to avoid interpreting the overthrow of Ben Ali as solely the result of a series of events.

Key words: Tunisia, authoritarian regime, dictatorship and revolution, protests, social movements.

YASMINE FAROUK, *Egypt's "Revolution": Too Early for Conclusions, about Time for Exclusions.*

The political change that swept Egypt on January 25, 2011, calls into question the predominant analyses of the country. While it is difficult to assess and define a social phenomenon that began at the start of the year and continues to evolve, this paper refers to a number of theoretical tools and fieldwork to identify what did not happen and what is not happening in Egypt. This method demonstrates –by excluding certain scientific definitions and popular theories that do not concur with empirical data subsequent to January 25– how it is possible to define, in broad terms, what is happening in Egypt. It can also help predict the challenges that the country will face in the future.

Key words: Egypt, revolution, democratization, social movements, political Islam.

YAHIA H. ZOUBIR, *The Collapse of Qaddafi's Dictatorship: What Future for Libya?* Forty-two years of dictatorship in Libya ended in October 2011. It took the Western-backed armed uprising seven months of fighting against Qaddafi's loyal forces. The fall of his regime is a welcome event in the Middle East and northern Africa. But, unlike Tunisia or Egypt, Libya does not have a standing army or a reliable force that can bring the stability needed for a political transition. The tribal nature of Libya and the difficulty of disarming the rebels and other groups pose serious challenges to the new authorities in

Tripoli. Unless these difficulties are handled properly, Libya will face a long period of uncertainty.

Key words: Arab uprising, foreign intervention, armed Libyan opposition, political transition, Qaddafi regime, tribalism.

DJALLIL LOUNNAS, *Islam in Maghreb at the Dawn of the Arab Revolutions.*

The “Arab Spring” has raised great hopes of democratization in the Maghreb. During the 1980s, Islamic opposition saw a meteoric rise. Under the pretext of combating it, the regional authoritarian regimes remained in power until very recently. Of the three prevailing ideological currents in Maghreb, two of them (the preachers and the legalistic Islamists) regard the recent revolts as an opportunity to show that Islam and democracy can co-exist. For the third current, the Islamic revolutionaries, they represent a threat, since the people of Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria rose up to demand more rights and freedom, rather than support some Islamist revolutionary project.

Keywords: Arab spring, Islamic groups, Al-Queda, Maghreb, Islamic politics.

AHMED AGHROUT, *Algeria’s ‘Arab Spring’: Much Ado about Nothing?*

In Algeria, there have been sporadic and localized protest movements, often with a limited agenda and specific demands. However, unlike other Arab countries ravaged by massive popular rebellions, Algeria was immune to that kind of social upheaval until now. As a preventive tactic, the authorities launched political reform proposals to guide the country toward a democratic government. But a review of the proposals reveals that the process, as it now stands, is not intended to significantly alter the political *statu quo*. This paper suggests that neither the legislative package, in itself, nor

the manner in which it is being debated and adopted, will guarantee the reforms that many Algerians want.

Key words: Algeria, popular protest, political reforms, political parties, democracy.

ABDESLAM MAGHRAOUI, *Good Governance in Morocco: A Tool of Absolute Power or a Technique for Fighting Corruption?*

Morocco is an example of what is attainable by employing the standard package of technical measures recommended by international aid institutions to improve governance and reduce corruption in developing countries. These measures include monitoring, oversight, transparency and accountability, in order to improve the structures, processes and institutional capacities with a minimum degree of interference in the political system of the country. This paper questions whether this technical approach to supporting good governance in Morocco can succeed in reducing corruption, when this is symptomatic of more profound political problems. The main objective of this paper is to point out the existence of a perverse relationship between “good government” and the concept of technocratic power that reduces accountability and political representation.

Key words: corruption, good government, international aid, Morocco, political power, technocratic government.

MARTA TAWIL, *Syrian Foreign Policy in the Framework of Popular Revolt.*

This paper takes a look at the foreign policy of President Bashar al-Assad since the rebellion was launched in March 2011. In a potentially explosive social and economic context, the stability of the authoritarian regime is threatened by both external factors (regional power rivalries, the intervention of Western powers, processes of economic liberalization and regionalization) and internal problems. The economic weaknesses of the State and the fractures in national unity have blunted the relative autonomy that the

Ba'ath leadership boasted in foreign policy. They also increase the possible threat that Syria will once again become a country of regional and international conflicts.

Key words: Syria, Bashar al-Assad, uprising, foreign policy, economy.

SEAN FOLEY, *The Arab Gulf States and the 2011 Arab Spring*.

When political demonstrations began in Tunisia, in December 2010, few people imagined that they would reach the Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). Weeks later, monarchs from Kuwait to Oman faced their greatest challenge in decades. Gulf leaders used all kinds of national and international resources to stay in power – the most important being their historical legitimacy as rulers, a government tradition that dates back to the First World War. This legitimacy also explains why no other Arab monarch followed the steps of Hosni Mubarak, the former Arab leader, who resigned in early 2011.

Key words: Arab spring, Bahrain, Gulf Cooperation Council, Maher Zahin, Saudi Arabia.

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