

The Arab Spring and the Future of U.S. Interests and Cooperative Security in the Arab World

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Summary

The Arab Spring is an ongoing and deeply significant process occurring in the contemporary Middle East that will have important implications for the United States government. In general, the spread of less corrupt and more democratic governments in the Middle East will be of tremendous benefit to the United States, since such governments are more often immune to



radicalism and are more moderate, stable, and inclusive. Nevertheless, each country involved in the Arab Spring needs to be examined individually, and it must be understood that democracy is not an inevitable outcome for any of the countries involved in the current unrest. Many revolutions start out well and end badly. Consequently, caution is needed in assessing U.S. interests in this whirlpool of events.¹

The Arab Spring has sometimes brought to mind some aspects of the Iranian revolution, but there are many more differences than similarities. In 1979 the Iranian revolution was partially ignited, nourished, and strengthened at crucial points by opposition to the United States and particularly the activities of the United States military. So far, most of the Arab Spring mass movements have been motivated almost

entirely by domestic issues and the role of the United States in this region has not emerged as a central or even important part of the disagreement between revolutionaries and members of the government. Rather, the major concerns are poverty, corruption, unemployment, and the lack of democratic institutions. Additionally, in 1979-80, Revolutionary Iran, as a significant oil producer, could afford to break relations with the United States while providing massive subsidies to pacify the urban poor that had played a crucial role in overthrowing the Shah. By contrast, post-revolutionary Arab Spring governments that fail to act with sufficient pragmatism may find it difficult to attract international aid and investment, which is especially vital to the economy of states that produce little or no oil. Put bluntly, newly emerging political leaderships will not have the political clout or repressive capability to demand more sacrifice from their populations in order to challenge the West. People cannot eat rhetoric and will rise again if post-revolutionary governments fail to meet their basic human and material needs.

Turning to individual cases, the United States is currently maintaining good relations with the new revolutionary governments in Egypt and Tunisia. In both cases, but especially with Egypt, there are strong reasons for both sides to continue cooperating on economic and defense matters. Cairo may act more independently and assertively in the future, but its interests lie in maintaining strong ties to the West. Tunisia's interests also lie in cooperation with Western countries if it is to avoid economic collapse and cope with the potential danger of domestic terrorism. Both states will find most of their efforts focused on dealing with the huge economic problems that they have inherited from earlier governments and not on a foreign policy that may antagonize foreign aid donors, frighten capital investors, or undermine the tourist trade that is vital to both countries.

In Libya, the possible ousting of the Qadhafi regime will probably be a highly positive development that benefits the United States, Europe, and most Arab countries, but attention to the aftermath will be required by a number of parties to prevent post-revolutionary failure. If, as expected, the Qadhafi regime is eventually ousted, any successor government will probably find it easy and economically wise to maintain good relations with the West and the Gulf Arab monarchies. A remaining danger however is the possibly large number of violent extremists who have escaped from Qadhafi's crumbling prison network or emerged from underground lives at the beginning of the uprising. More generally, the Libyans have little experience with democracy, and Qadhafi's departure may not necessarily lead to the creation of a democratic government. Under such circumstances, the United States should support the expected UN, European, and Arab role in rebuilding Libya but not appear too heavy-handed in attempting to define the Libyan future. U.S. leaders should also carefully consider any post-Qadhafi Libyan requests for counterterrorism support since the new leaders may require help in dealing with this problem.

The United States faces a particularly delicate set of problems in Bahrain which has been an important ally but has not done a good job of managing Sunni-Shi'ite intercommunal relations. The strong U.S. Naval presence in Bahrain makes it difficult for the United States to avoid taking a stand on the crisis, and the U.S. leadership is

clearly worried about the deeply polarized relations between Sunnis and Shi'ites in that country. A tolerant attitude toward Bahraini repression could therefore offend a variety of Shi'ites well beyond Bahraini shores. Such an approach could also help radicalize Bahraini Shi'ites and perhaps even cause many of them to view Iran as a potential savior. Conversely, breaking all U.S. relations with Bahrain, including military relations, would be a serious strategic setback for the United States and a major benefit for Iran. Perhaps the most reasonable approach in the aftermath of this tragedy is for the United States to continue efforts to move the process of reconciliation forward while attempting to curb government excesses. In general, the situation in Bahrain and particularly the violence there has harmed U.S. interests and improved the position of Iran, but this situation may be reparable if strong attention is paid to the needs of Bahraini Shi'ites.

The Syrian uprising has a strong sectarian dimension and will not end quickly or easily due to the mutually exclusive concerns of the ruling Alawites and the majority Sunni Muslims. Most Alawites appear unswervingly loyal to the regime, but this group is only 8-10 percent of the total population, while Sunni Muslims are more than 70 percent and deeply resent the current government. It is also uncertain if the country will remain unified or break up as part of the ongoing conflict. Alawites might well prefer to establish a separate state (presumably around Latakia) before surrendering to Sunni militants if such a state could remain economically viable. U.S. interests will probably not be harmed by the fall of the Syrian regime, and a Syrian democracy could emerge as an important partner in the Arab-Israeli peace process and the struggle against terrorism. It nevertheless remains deeply uncertain that the Assad regime will fall.

Yemen is currently engulfed in debilitating civil unrest that has sometimes been characterized as "the verge of civil war." Since February 2011, the Yemeni government has unsuccessfully sought to manipulate or crush the sweeping political challenge presented to the regime by huge numbers of protesters, but many political and military leaders continue to defect to the opposition. Additionally, Yemen is a country which emphatically needs help from its wealthier neighbors and the international community if it is to survive as a unified political entity and perhaps even avoid mass famine. With its massive foreign aid needs, no Yemeni government will seek to indulge radical impulses that will alienate potential aid donors. Rather, the most serious danger in Yemen is that the country will drift into anarchy, and fragment into a number of autonomous political entities some of which could be controlled or influenced by terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). This possibility represents a major threat to U.S. interests, which both the government and political opposition have promised to deal with, although neither is focused on that now because of the power struggle in Sana'a.

Algeria experienced major demonstrations in January 2011 in which demonstrators demanded reduced food prices (which have risen dramatically over the past year) and called for efforts to address the problem of unemployment. The government responded by ordering a reduction in the prices of basic foodstuffs including cooking oil, sugar, and flour. This response dampened opposition, although smaller demonstrations have

continued throughout 2011. The Algerian regime does not appear to be threatened at this time, and Algerian authorities are significantly more effective than those in Tunisia in suppressing, disrupting, and containing opposition efforts to organize large demonstrations. The Algerian population is also especially aware of the dangers of prolonged civil war. As a result of that experience, no one in Algeria can reasonably believe that regime change will be easy. Many of the root problems associated with the Tunisian uprising are present in Algeria, but so is the searing experience of a bloody civil war that lasted for over 10 years. U.S. interests do not appear to be threatened in Algeria by either the protesters or the government.

Jordan has sometimes been described as close to revolution, but these concerns are exaggerated. Large segments of the population are loyal to the Hashemite monarchy, while oppositionists do not have a viable alternative to offer. Jordan is one of the most resource-poor countries in the Arab World, although it has been able to establish an acceptable quality of life for most people partially by vigorously obtaining foreign aid from a variety of sources. Palestinians with Jordanian citizenship comprise at least half of the Jordanian population, and a democratic Jordan in which the Palestinian segment of the population was dominant would be under constant pressure to renounce the peace treaty with Israel and also to normalize relations with the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Group, Hamas. Such policies would probably halt U.S. aid and perhaps threaten European aid as well. While many Palestinian-Jordanians may like to see a democratic government they are aware that populist policies would destroy their country economically because of the foreign backlash. Additionally, Jordan is a valuable U.S. ally and has played an important role in the struggle against al-Qaeda. Any successor government that followed the Hashemites would probably not be as friendly and could be quite hostile despite the potentially severe economic consequences of such behavior to the Jordanian public. It would therefore be a strategic loss for the United States to see the Hashemites ousted. Moreover, Americans could enjoy little ideological satisfaction if a populist democracy was established in Jordan followed by that country's collapse into an ocean of poverty, political instability, and confrontation with Israel.

In Morocco, a new Constitution has been established that retains the King in power but devolves some of his power to the Prime Minister. King Mohammed may therefore have survived the current political crisis through shrewd political manipulation. Additionally, the opposition in Morocco is not dominated by Islamists and is not making Moroccan foreign policy an important part of their dissent. The United States has maintained a productive relationship with Morocco for decades and is likely to continue to do so for the foreseeable future by working with the King and the new government. At the present time, the United States does not seem to have much to fear from the opposition which appears moderate and secular. The best outcome will probably be for the King to continue moving forward with the reform process, to maintain the struggle against corruption, and to take steps for greater democracy. These efforts will head off future uprisings that could emerge if the population becomes disillusioned with the current process.

Oman has experienced problems with demonstrations during the Arab Spring, but

these difficulties have been containable and have not risen to be regime-threatening. Throughout the process of confronting the government, demonstrators have not called for the resignation of Sultan Qaboos, but some have sought a strong legislature to serve as a counterweight to monarchical power. Their main demands nevertheless remain economic. Sultan Qaboos responded quickly to the unrest in February by firing 12 ministers, increasing the minimum wage, and promising to create 50,000 new jobs. These and other efforts appear to have stabilized the situation. Currently, it does not appear that the Omani government is in danger of being overthrown or that the protesters are concerned about Omani ties with the United States. No U.S. interests are threatened at this time.

Kuwait is currently suffering political turmoil within its parliament which was aggravated by the Saudi-led invasion of Bahrain as well as the examples of other populations rising against their governments because of corruption issues. Kuwait as a wealthy country does not have the same types of problems of poverty that fed the early revolts in Tunisia and Egypt, and Kuwaitis are not engaging in mass uprisings. The lack of economic incentives for revolt among most Kuwaiti citizens means that they maintain an important stake in the political system which provides a number of economic benefits as well as some measure of economic expression. The biggest internal problem Kuwait now seems to be facing is rising Sunni/ Shi'ite sectarianism, although corruption is also a major source of discontent. These problems appear manageable at this point. Additionally, while Kuwait is not economically dependent on the West, it still maintains some exceptionally good reasons for valuing ties to the United States and its allies. Most Kuwaitis including those least sympathetic to the government continue to fear Iraq even after the ouster and execution of Saddam Hussein. Likewise, many Kuwaitis are exceptionally concerned about Iranian policies toward their country. The discovery of an Iranian spy ring in Kuwait has provoked alarm in Kuwait, and some Kuwaitis also express concerns about Iranian " sleeper cells " there that Tehran may activate in a crisis.

Lebanon is currently in political turmoil and a second civil war is not impossible, although these developments are the result of domestic political differences and perennial Syria meddling in Lebanon rather than a reaction to the Arab Spring. The establishment of a Hezbollah-dominated government in Lebanon has led for immediate calls within the U.S. Congress for ending all military aid to that country. This sentiment is easy to understand, and the pressure to implement such a policy may be irresistible as part of U.S. disapproval of Hezbollah terrorism. Since the Lebanese government is so unstable, it is possible that the United States will continue to engage in some level of contact with the Lebanese military, but in general U.S. involvement with Lebanon will probably remain minimal.

Although Mauritania seldom comes to the attention of the global press, this country has also been affected by the Arab Spring. An opposition group which now calls itself the "February 25 Movement" drew inspiration from Tunisia and Egypt and attempted to organize demonstrations such as those that challenged the political systems in Egypt and Tunisia. The movement has arranged sit-ins and protests since January 2011 demanding political and social reform and especially rights for poor people. In

Mauritania, as in various other countries, the authorities have responded with a combination of promises for reform and repression. The prime minister promised a variety of reforms, but the national police have also been reported to have used clubs and tear gas to break up demonstrations. No clear foreign policy orientation has emerged from the Mauritanian opposition, but any new government of any kind would need to seek outside support to develop its economic infrastructure and exploit available natural resources. The United States would probably do well in working with a government focused on reform and also favor such a government to help undercut significant activity by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Nevertheless, it is doubtful that such a government will emerge.

At this time, Saudi oppositionists appear to be too weak and disorganized to challenge the monarchy in a serious way. Moreover, the Saudi leadership has dedicated huge sums of money to boosting benefits for their citizens in the apparent hope of providing them with economic reasons for supporting the government, but it has not given an inch on political concessions. Should Saudi oppositionists gain a foothold in their efforts to either reform Saudi Arabia or replace the Saudi Royal Family with a different kind of government, they could very well blame the United States for helping to prop up the ruling monarchy for a number of years. Such charges would be true, although the opposition seems oriented toward Western style reform and may continue to support good relations with the United States. Any turmoil in Saudi Arabia is of exceptional interest to the United States. Moreover, if true radicals seize control of Saudi Arabia in a scenario where Arab Spring demonstrators are re-energized, but then pushed aside, this would be a major problem for the United States. These individuals could easily defy the United States without worrying about the economic consequences of such actions.

Whatever policies the United States adopts toward the Arab Spring countries some risk will have to be assumed because of their uncertain future. This situation requires that a number of these countries (including Egypt, Tunisia, and possibly Yemen and Libya under new governments) be treated as partners while they are in the process of transformation so long as they have a reasonable chance of building a reformed government. Such ties will also be taken by local leaders as a statement of confidence in their aspirations to achieve democracy. Under these conditions, programs such as the U.S. Army Staff Talks Program, for the bilateral discussion of strategic level problems with local partner nations should continue unless some major change in relations occurs indicating that these nations are no longer viable partners. Senior leader participation in regional conferences remains a valid concept that is mostly subject to the same concerns that existed prior to the Arab Spring. There are however a few subtle nuances that must be considered. U.S. Army leaders would have to be careful about attending multilateral conferences where rebel movements that the United States has not recognized are represented.

Senior U.S. Army leaders should also continue to interact with attaches from Tunisia and Egypt, as well as other allied countries including Bahrain. Contacts with Syria will have to be minimized, which is not a difficult policy to implement since the Syrian government has sponsored a mob to attack the U.S. Embassy. With the U.S. decision to

recognize the TNC and the anticipated fall of the Qadhafi regime, it would be useful for U.S. Army leaders to engage in ongoing talks with the new Libyan government on strategic issues. The United States has maintained very little contact with Libya over the past 41 years and any efforts to understand the concerns of a new government will be valuable and may even be appreciated by the new Libyan military leaders.

In this environment, it would be vital for the United States to maintain the IMET program for Egypt and Tunisia and to continue other forms of military aid. The IMET approach should not be considered optimal for rebel movements until after the United States formally recognizes the newly established rebel governments (which still may be waging internal war). If the U.S. leadership is willing to go so far as to extend recognition to such alternative governments as planned with Libya, there is no reason to prevent them from participating in the IMET program because of ongoing conflict. It is also possible for the United States to supply weapons to rebels in Libya after the formal recognition of the TNC, although it may not be necessary. France and Qatar are currently supplying weapons and trainers to the Libyan rebels, whom they recognize as the legitimate government, and a U.S. role in such efforts does not appear essential; it would certainly not be popular domestically. Weapons or training supplied to Syrian rebels at this time would be a serious mistake and give the Damascus government every excuse to remove all restraints in slaughtering civilians without seriously tipping the military balance in favor of the demonstrator. The United States should also continue to engage in a variety of multilateral exercises that include Egypt and Tunisia as well as other U.S. partners in the region.

Jordan may deserve special consideration as a useful partner that can contribute to the U.S. Army response to the Arab Spring. Military support to Jordan should be maintained so long as the government does not commit serious human rights abuse against demonstrators. Jordan is one of the most important U.S. regional allies, and its stability is vital to U.S. interests in the Middle East. To cancel exercises or training as a way of showing disapproval for the pace of reform would be a disastrous mistake. In the case of Jordan, it strongly makes sense to expand military cooperation, so that Jordanian facilities can be used to help train some of the militaries serving new governments in military professionalism and counterterrorism. Expanding U.S.-Jordanian coordination on national security planning, contingency planning, and doctrinal development is an extremely useful way to move forward. The King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center (KASOTC) is especially important in this regard. This state of the art Jordanian center built with U.S. funds can provide important training to elements of a post-Qadhafi Libyan military. It may also be of considerable value in helping the Yemeni military after the current trauma in that country has ended. In this regard, Yemen's military may need considerable rehabilitation to re-engage the terrorism threat. U.S. funding to increase the activities at KASOTC would be money well spent. Mobile training teams sent to KASOTC to work with trainers there would also be a valuable step forward.

There are also special problems regarding terrorism. As noted, the civil strife in Yemen is creating a number of opportunities for terrorist organizations and especially AQAP. The United States has received assurances that both Yemen's current

government and the Arab Spring opposition are willing to work with Washington to oppose terrorism, but no one in Yemen is making this their first priority. Any U.S. military intervention in Yemen with ground troops would be catastrophic, since the Yemeni population is virulently hostile to the concept of a U.S. military presence, and virtually every Yemeni able to do so would fight against the U.S. presence, regardless of our explanations for being there. The U.S. can however obtain at least tacit permission from both the government and the opposition to continue air strikes, including predator drone strikes against AQAP. The Yemeni opposition needs to be told that future relations with the United States are dependent on their cooperation in the struggle against terrorism. Likewise, both the Saudis and the Jordanians can play an important military role in supporting the struggle against terrorism, even if they have to coordinate with local commanders and tribal leaders to do so. Amman and Riyadh hate al-Qaeda and its offshoots as much, if not more, than most Americans. Their efforts will be indispensable.

Introduction



In 1979 the Iranian revolution was partially ignited, nourished, and dramatically strengthened at crucial points by opposition to the United States and particularly the activities of the United States military. At this time, the Iranian Shah was overthrown in revolutionary turmoil which was motivated by a variety of factors including the autocrat's relationship with the

United States. Iranian revolutionaries led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini were so virulently anti-American that their revolution was in part defined by hostility to the United States. Khomeini had been exiled from Iran in the mid-1960s for his opposition activities and particularly for his fervent preaching against a U.S.-Iranian Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) which was the immediate cause of his expulsion from Iran. ² Significant elements of the Iranian public viewed the SOFA as oppressive and insulting for exempting both U.S. servicemen and their families from prosecution under Iranian law, despite the widespread use of SOFAs for virtually all U.S. overseas basing agreements at this time. Khomeini and many other Iranians detested the idea of large numbers of U.S. military trainers entering Iran particularly under such an agreement. Some members of Iran's normally placid parliament even objected to the

agreement, and it was passed only after Prime Minister Hassan Ali Mansur lied to the legislators about the agreement's contents. ³ The large-scale presence of U.S. servicemen, massive military purchases from the United States, and the Shah's pro-U.S. policies continued to aggravate these concerns until Khomeini took power and the Shah fled Iran. Iranian revolutionaries also objected to Western culture and sometimes complained of “Westoxification” under the Shah. All significant cooperation with the United States ended for a while with the triumph of the revolution, and relations still have not recovered.

The Middle East is once again facing an outbreak of revolutionary fervor, although this time it is far more comprehensive and politically significant than even the Iranian revolution. The Arab Spring in which a series of entrenched autocratic governments have been challenged by angry and aggrieved demonstrators and some cases by armed rebel movements is perhaps the most significant event in the Middle East since the fall of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. These upheavals are not clearly anti-American at this point, but this evolving situation raises the question of whether Arab Spring governments and revolutionaries may eventually follow the Iranian example (even to a very limited extent) and define their defense and foreign policy outlook in opposition to the United States. Such a possibility becomes more likely if they view the past interactions of their own countries with the United States with a large dose of grievance, due to either a U.S. presence in their country or disapproval of the wider U.S. regional role.

As noted, the links that various Arab governments maintain with the United States (including military links) have not emerged as a major motivation for Arab Spring related unrest. Rather, obscene levels of corruption and excess among the elite that occurred while the masses suffered grinding poverty and large-scale unemployment have been the main drivers of revolution in both U.S. partner nations and non-partners.⁴ This set of grievances sometimes expands to include Western countries and institutions at some limited level, but the main objects of mass anger will probably remain the old elite. Thus, while many of the protesters in Arab countries are currently angrier with the leaders they have deposed or seek to depose, Western politicians and bankers are sometimes looked upon with suspicion as well.⁵ In Egypt the severely strapped post-Mubarak government has found it necessary to withdraw a request for an International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan due to severe public distrust for that organization.⁶ The other side of this equation is that most Arab countries would have an extremely difficult economic time without Western aid, trade, and in some cases tourism. Revolutionary Iran, as a significant oil producer, could afford to break relations with the United States while continuing to provide massive subsidies to pacify the urban poor that had played a crucial role in overthrowing the Shah.⁷ If Revolutionary Iran had been unable to feed its population because of anti-Western policies, either the policies or the government would have quickly changed.

Arab countries have been affected in different ways by the Arab Spring and various governments have responded differently to demonstrations and demands for change. Nor are the goals of all demonstrators the same. Some demonstrators seek to oust their rulers while others (at least initially) appear to be agitating for fundamental economic

reform, creation of jobs, higher salaries for the public sector, welfare benefits, reduced food prices, and other forms of financial support. In Mauritania there was at least one rural demonstration that included demands for clean drinking water. In some countries the demands for democracy are superimposed on deep and serious sectarian divides. This phenomenon is particularly clear in Bahrain and Syria where minority Islamic sects rule over a resentful majority. A few Arab countries, most notably Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, which are both U.S. allies, have almost entirely avoided any Arab Spring-type protests, although the UAE now seems to be considering limited preemptive reform. [8](#) It also goes almost without saying that many of the most fervent revolutionary activity will not necessarily produce a change in regime. Some autocrats may be able to stay in power by guile and bloodshed, while others may promise enough reform to get by. The decision to place former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and some other senior officials on trial for their lives is no doubt of concern to leaders in other countries experiencing upheavals. [9](#)

It should also be noted that the governments that have been ousted all experienced problems with massive corruption, economic stagnation, and especially youth unemployment. These problems have not gone away. New governments are consequently facing what is known in evolutionary biology as the “Red Queen effect” based on the comment that, “here you have to run as fast as you can to stay in place.” Successor governments in each of these countries must make addressing these grievances their top set of priorities if they expect to remain in power for very long. Moreover, they will have to apply every resource at their disposal effectively to even remain in place economically as their populations continue to expand. Improving the standard of living in these countries will be an even more arduous task. Governments that fail to act with sufficient pragmatism may find it difficult to attract international aid and investment, which is especially vital to the economy of states that produce little or no oil. Even post-revolutionary governments seeking authoritarian power will not be able to consolidate control over the means of repression in an environment where basic human demands are not met. Put bluntly, newly emerging political leaderships will not have the political clout or repressive capability to demand more sacrifice from their populations in order to challenge the West. People cannot eat rhetoric and will rise again if post-revolutionary governments fail to meet their basic needs. Under these circumstances, it is useful to consider the situation of each of the Arab countries involved with the recent upheavals.

Tunisia

Tunisia was the first Arab Spring country where the population successfully ousted a pro-Western dictatorial government. The unrest was set off when Mohammed Bouazizi, a 26 year old male college graduate selling fruit illegally, was harassed and allegedly had his cart overturned by a female police officer. [10](#)



Mr. Bouazizi, who felt utter despair over his prospects for a meaningful life, psychologically snapped and burned himself to death in protest. In President



Zine al Abidine Ben Ali's Tunisia, the public viewed this decision as the understandable choice of someone utterly crushed by the system and not as the act of an unbalanced person. The Bin Ali regime represented a level of corruption that was staggering by any standard, and was especially maddening for impoverished but well educated young people without connections and seeking a better future. A highly personalistic network of mass and petty corruption, which at the top was centered on the president and his wife Leila Trabelsi's large extended family, permeated the society. This economic system often made personal economic advancement difficult without at least distant connections to the president's family and cronies. The corruption was consistently painful and widely viewed to be increasing. Youth unemployment, while always an explosive problem, was especially serious since it was combined with a high level of education among young people. The revolution that ultimately destroyed the regime did not assume a clear anti-American or anti-Western theme during this phase of the revolution, and seems to have remained motivated almost entirely by domestic issues. Nevertheless, the extensive use of social media and the relatively spontaneous way in which the movement grew has caused some observers to call it a leaderless revolution. ¹¹ The question then becomes, if the revolution was leaderless, who will eventually lead the country and how stable will that country remain?

Tunisia under the old regime was unswervingly secular and outlawed all Islamist political activity. This situation has nevertheless changed and the leader of *Ennahda*, Tunisia's leading Islamist party, has returned from exile and is attempting to seek a share of political power. This situation should not cause excessive concern but does bear watching. It seems highly doubtful that Tunisia's highly secularized population would seek an Islamic system. Conversely, it is also probable that Tunisia would seek to retain strong Western ties for economic reasons that may become even more troubling during a time of transition. Western and especially French culture are important to significant segments of Tunisian society and charges of Westoxification are not likely to become mainstream views.

The Tunisian government also has good reasons to continue cooperating with the United States and other Western countries in the fight against terrorism. Some fairly dramatic terrorist attacks have occurred in Tunisia in the past, threatening the vital mass tourism sector of the economy. Consequently, the United States, including the U.S. military, should seek to continue strong relations with the Tunisian revolutionaries. President Obama's rapid embrace of the Tunisian Revolution in his 2011 State of the Union Address has provided a valuable foundation upon which this relationship can be based and continued. ¹² The Tunisian Revolution is consequently not a threat to U.S. interests, and it is not likely to become such a threat.

Egypt



The chief reasons for ousting President Hosni Mubarak in 2011 centered on economics and domestic politics as in Tunisia, although Mubarak's Egypt had been a much more important partner for the United States than Tunisia. The relationship between the Mubarak regime and the United States has been both significant and high profile. Under

Mubarak, Egypt publicly opposed the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan and especially the 2003 invasion of Iraq, but allowed the United States to use the Suez Canal and Egyptian airspace to support operations in these theaters. Cairo also accepted that cruise missiles would be fired from the Red Sea. ¹³ Egypt has also been involved in intelligence cooperation and other forms of cooperation to support the struggle against international terrorism. This close relationship with the United States over terrorism has often been reinforced by Egyptian concerns about its own violent radical Islamists.

Despite the overwhelming importance of domestic issues to the Egyptian revolution, it is noteworthy there was also a small but potentially expanding foreign policy dimension to the uprising, since many of the protesters seek an enhanced Egyptian role in regional politics. Such priorities do not necessarily conflict with U.S. interests, although skilled U.S. diplomacy and considerable sensitivity may be required in addressing such issues. Egyptians widely viewed Mubarak as having surrendered Egypt's rightful place as a leading Arab power and playing a much more limited and passive role in regional affairs. According to this critique, the Egyptian president was content to work with the United States and Saudi Arabia while generating unnecessary hostile policies toward Iran and the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, which the United States considers a terrorist organization. This critique continues by noting that under the republican president, Gamal Abdul Nasser, Egypt was a regional powerhouse which also maintained important global standing. Friendly views toward Iran by some Egyptians will nevertheless be very difficult to translate into policy due to a rise in tensions between Iran and the wealthy Gulf Arab oil producers that occurred over the intervention in Bahrain. Such states provide billions in aid to Egypt, while Iran does not have the resources to support Egypt in the same way even if it wished to do so.

If Egypt does seek an enhanced and independent regional role it is reasonable to expect

that U.S.-Egyptian military cooperation could become more difficult. Nevertheless, Egypt would have a crushingly difficult time surviving without Western investment, economic aid, and tourism, especially in an environment where restive masses expect the quality of their lives to rise. Additionally, the Egyptian military would seek to retain strong U.S. ties since the capabilities of their forces would rapidly deteriorate in quality and effectiveness without U.S. military aid. Pragmatism would therefore suggest that Cairo would maintain strong economic and military ties to the West. Even if the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood rose to an important position of power following Egyptian elections, it would probably not remain in power without making substantial efforts to maintain good relations with the West. It is also unclear that the Muslim Brotherhood can function effectively as a legal governing party. Without the pressure of Mubarak's repressive apparatus to encourage unity against the foe, the Muslim Brotherhood is already experiencing disunity and splintering. [14](#)

Throughout the post World War II era, a series of Egyptian governments have displayed concern about any Western military presence on Egyptian soil except under crisis conditions or for joint training exercises. In 1981, for example, negotiations were conducted to allow the United States to use the Egyptian port of Ras Banas if an Arab state was threatened. [15](#) Ultimately, these negotiations failed because the Egyptians viewed the United States as demanding too large a role in managing the facility, which was regarded as a matter of extreme nationalist sensitivity. Nevertheless, around the same time, the United States and Egypt began their collaboration on regional security through the large and important “Bright Star” military exercises. These exercises were first conducted in the early 1980s and have continued to be held periodically (usually once every two years) ever since that time. [16](#) The United States and international contributions to this exercise have continued to be more limited than usual due to continuing commitments in Iraq and elsewhere. In the future, such cooperation can be expected to continue. While political Islam may now become more mainstream in Egypt, no Egyptian government will allow violent Islamists to operate freely in their country thereby undermining government authority. U.S.-Egyptian counterterrorism cooperation will continue to be valuable for both parties. Under these circumstances, Egypt can be expected to remain a reliable although somewhat independent defense partner for the United States.

Libya

The U.S. relationship with Libya under the dictator Muammar Qadhafi has historically been poor and included harsh rhetoric on the part of both sides; a 1981 U.S. bombing raid on Tripoli, and tough



U.S. and UN economic sanctions directed at Libya in response to involvement with terrorism. This bleak relationship



experienced a significant thaw in 2003 as a result of Colonel Qadhafi's decision to end his quest for nuclear weapons in a verifiable way and to pay reparations for Libya's involvement in the destruction of a civilian aircraft in 1988. ¹⁷ U.S. and UN sanctions were removed in 2004, while U.S.-Libyan diplomatic relations were established in 2006. The ban on U.S. military exports to Libya officially ended on June 30, 2006, but the possibility of military exports to Libya remained a controversial subject for many policymakers in the United States, and little was done to establish significant military ties. Rather, in the time frame before the 2011 uprising, the Obama Administration only requested \$250,000 in Foreign Military Financing and \$350,000 for IMET for Libya in FY2011. This approach indicated that only the most tentative and limited military cooperation was moving forward, and all cooperation was discontinued following the anti-Qadhafi uprising and the imposition of a UN-sponsored “No-Fly Zone” (NFZ) over Libya. It is doubtful that the Libyan rebels of the Transitional National Council (TNC) will resent previous U.S. ties to the Qadhafi regime since they were so shallow and occurred for only a brief period of time.

The TNC has nevertheless complained that the United States is not doing enough to help them, and that NATO support, while valuable, has not been decisive.¹⁸ Such concern is not surprising since the TNC is involved in an ongoing conflict, but the United States has already done a great deal to support the Libyan revolutionaries. In March 2011, U.S. airpower prevented the fall of the TNC stronghold of Benghazi, and Washington has continued to play a vital support role for NATO and other allied aircraft flying combat missions. More recently, Washington has attempted to limit its involvement with the current conflict and has encouraged states with more direct interests in Libya to play a leading role. In April 2011, the United States agreed to provide \$25 million in nonlethal aid to the Libyan rebels. Such aid included vehicles, fuel trucks, ambulances, medical equipment and smaller items such as binoculars and protective vests.¹⁹

If, as expected, the Qadhafi regime is eventually ousted, the TNC will have no reason to feel slighted by the United States, and any successor government will probably find it easy and economically wise to maintain good relations with the West and the Gulf Arab monarchies. A remaining problem is the possibly large number of violent extremists who have escaped from Qadhafi's crumbling prison network or emerged from underground lives at the beginning of the uprising. The motivations of these individuals are uncertain and many may be patriots who are willing to join any anti-Qadhafi organization available. Others may be hard-core radicals and are therefore a problem for the West and for any Libyans seeking to build an actual democracy. The Libyans have little experience with democracy, and Qadhafi's departure may not necessarily lead to the creation of a democratic government. Under

such circumstances, the United States should support the expected UN, European, and Arab role in rebuilding Libya but should not appear too heavy handed in attempting to define the Libyan future. U.S. leaders should also carefully consider any post-Qadhafi Libyan requests for counterterrorism support since the new leaders may require help in dealing with this problem. Thus, the ousting of the Qadhafi regime will probably be a highly positive development that benefits the United States, Europe, and most Arab countries, but attention to the aftermath will be required by a number of parties to prevent post-revolutionary failure.

Bahrain



The conflict in Bahrain remains serious even after the March 2011 Saudi-led military intervention into that country, which was conducted at the government's request. Moreover, responding to events in Bahrain will be a serious challenge for U.S. foreign and defense policy for some time to come. The brutality unleashed against Bahrain's mostly Shi'ite demonstrators has the potential to anger the large Shi'ite minorities in a variety of Arab countries including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Lebanon, and others. It is also of concern to the Shi'ite majority in Iraq. A tolerant U.S. attitude

toward Bahraini repression could therefore offend a variety of Shi'ites well beyond Bahraini shores. Such an approach could also help radicalize Bahraini Shi'ites and perhaps even cause many of them to view Iran as a potential savior. Currently, most Shi'ites do not view Iran in such a light despite government claims that Tehran is behind the current problems. The inability of Shi'ite Bahrainis to obtain legal redress for significant grievances regarding discrimination and a lack of political representation is an invitation for anti-regime activity by illegal means.

Conversely, breaking all U.S. relations with Bahrain including military relations would be a serious strategic setback for the United States and a major benefit for Iran. The U.S. Naval presence in Bahrain has existed continuously since 1949 and thus pre-dates Bahraini independence. ²⁰ On October 27, 1991, the U.S.-Bahraini relationship was strengthened and given greater depth with the signing of a new military cooperation agreement providing for port facilities and joint military exercises. ²¹ Bahrain is the headquarters for the U.S. Fifth Fleet (also known as the Naval Support Activity, Bahrain) and NAVCENT, the naval component of the U.S. Central Command. Bahrain provided major basing and support facilities on a number of occasions including the “tanker war” with Iran in the late 1980s, the 1991 Gulf War, and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. ²² Bahrain also sent a small, symbolic force to participate in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm in 1990-91. ²³ On March 25, 2002, President Bush designated Bahrain as a “major non-NATO U.S. ally.” ²⁴

Perhaps the most reasonable approach in the aftermath of this tragedy is for the United States to continue efforts to move the process of reconciliation forward while attempting to curb government excesses. It now seems likely that Bahrain's already deep sectarian divide will become more serious and intense in the aftermath of punitive measures taken against Shi'ites following the suppression of anti-government protesters. Most of the reforms called for by the protestors, including a Constitutional monarchy, were moderate by Western standards, and a deadlocked process can only leave the Shi'ites with a smoldering sense of injustice. Nevertheless, Bahrain's government can still take some important steps to limit the permanent damage to intercommunal relations. One step which is already being implemented and needs to be continued is for the wealthier Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states to provide significant economic aid that will be directed at Bahrain's Shi'ite community including better housing, infrastructure, and especially job creation. ²⁵ Bahrain is a small country with approximately 1,000,000 citizens, so programs to raise the Shi'ites out of poverty can be of considerable value in maintaining social stability. Bahrain's grating economic problems and a lack of economic opportunity should be correctable. Additionally, the Bahraini government has promised a serious national dialogue with the opposition. This effort may be valuable, but only if it involves a meaningful approach to important issues. If the government appears to be using such activities as a way to delay reform or imply progress when none exists, serious problems will emerge. The United States needs to support such dialogue so long as it appears to be sincere. In general, the situation in Bahrain and particularly the violence there has harmed U.S. interests and improved the position of Iran, but this situation may be reparable if strong attention is paid to the needs of Bahraini Shi'ites.

The United States also remains concerned about the continuing presence of Saudi and other GCC troops and police forces in Bahrain. Although these forces do not routinely come into contact with Bahraini civilians, they are nevertheless viewed by many Shi'ites as a sign of oppression. While the United States should encourage their departure, it should probably make the material advancement of Bahraini Shi'ites and decent treatment of the Shi'ite opposition higher priorities. Riyadh intervened in Bahrain because the Saudi leadership viewed the monarchy's survival as part of its core interests. Pressuring the Saudis on this issue would probably not have a decisive result unless the United States is prepared to provoke a full-scale crisis with Saudi Arabia. This possibility is particularly unattractive as Saudi Arabia is currently emerging as something of a counterweight to Iran and may play a particularly important role in containing Iranian influence in Iraq as U.S. troops downsize their presence and prepare to leave. Such a departure is currently scheduled for December 2011, although many U.S. officials feel that is too early to withdraw all remaining troops. This departure may nevertheless go forward on schedule as the Iraqi government may not have the political will to make such a request, which would divide the country and especially Iraq's Shi'ite community. Such a request could also lead to the collapse of the Maliki government.

Syria

At the present time, the Syrian government of Bashar Assad is attempting to crush anti-regime demonstrators through the use of brutal repression inflicted mostly by elite military units, the intelligence services, and the pro-regime *shabiha* militias. Bashar's government is dominated by his Alawite sect of Islam, and the units he is using



for violence against the civilian population are heavily composed of Alawites. These include the Republican Guard and the 4th Armored Division. Shabiha militias are also heavily composed of Alawites, and demonstrators maintain that many of the militia members have criminal backgrounds. Most Alawites appear unwaveringly loyal to the regime, but this group is only 8-10 percent of the total population, while Sunni Muslims are more than 70 percent. Most if not almost all majority Sunnis deeply resent Alawite rule.

The sectarian nature of the confrontation in Syria suggests that a variety of outcomes are possible to the current fighting in Syria. It is also uncertain if the country will remain unified or break up as part of the ongoing conflict. Alawites might well prefer to establish a separate state (presumably around Latakia) before surrendering to Sunni militants, if such a state could remain economically viable. Some sources suggest that there may be a debilitating split in the ranks of the Alawite leaders over how to respond to the crisis. This point of view is vaguely possible but not likely. Regardless of how they feel about the Assad regime, many Alawites must fear the possibility of revenge after over 40 years of repression under Hafez and Bashar Assad. Under these conditions, fighting for Bashar may appear the same as fighting for their families and community.

There are also questions about the possibility that large numbers of Sunni soldiers might change sides. If they did so, regime opponents would then have the numbers to fight against elite loyalist Syrian units composed of Alawites. Nevertheless, even under the most optimistic scenarios for the Syrian opposition, armed struggle against the regime will still be extremely tough since the elite units have much better training, weapons, and equipment than the non-elite units. Non-elite units also have Alawite officers filling most of the key command and staff positions even though the balance of the troop strength is made up of Sunni conscripts. If Sunnis in non-elite units did successfully mutiny they would still face a number of challenges. In the process of taking power, rebels would have to arrest or kill the majority of the unit's key officers.

If such a scenario plays out, the prospects for a long and bloody civil war appear increasingly serious since the regime will still be able to defend itself. The problem for the opposition is that the army has not started to unravel and thereby begin a process that can gather momentum and spread to a variety of other Syrian forces. Rather, it increasingly appears that relatively few Sunni troops are deserting the military, and those that do are doing so as individuals or in small groups.

The United States has no cooperative military ties with Syria and has applied a number of economic sanctions to the Assad government since 2004. All military trade with Syria by U.S. companies is prohibited and all civilian trade with Syria is prohibited except food and medicine.²⁶ Also, at the current time, the United States has wisely resisted any effort to arm the rebels through neighboring countries, although other Sunni Muslim Arab states may consider such actions at some point. Under these conditions, it would be difficult for Syrian revolutionaries to blame the United States for bolstering the Assad regime. Rather, it is more likely that Syrian revolutionaries would blame Iran for helping to bolster the Syrian dictatorship. Additionally, Syria is currently attempting to change the narrative of the conflict from Syrian brutality to what the Syria foreign minister has described as Western pursuit of “colonialist policies...under the slogan of human rights.”²⁷ It is not clear if regime stalwarts make such charges as cynical propaganda or if they actually believe them. Within the insular, conspiracy-oriented Syrian leadership it is at least as likely that they believe what they are saying. If the current Syrian regime remains in power, relations with the United States will clearly remain strained. A new regime may be friendlier, but it will not be established quickly or easily. This sort of new regime will probably come only after a prolonged civil war in which all the resources of the Syrian state will be applied to keeping the present regime in power. U.S. interests will probably not be harmed by the fall of the Syrian regime, and a Syrian democracy could emerge as an important partner in the Arab-Israeli peace process and in struggling against terrorism. It nevertheless remains deeply uncertain that the Assad regime will fall.

Yemen



Yemen is currently engulfed in debilitating civil unrest that has sometimes been characterized as “the verge of civil war.” Since February 2011, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh has sought to manipulate or crush the sweeping political challenge to his regime by huge numbers of protesters. This effort has not been effective, and the struggle against the Saleh regime has continued to grow with a number of key political



and military leaders withdrawing their support. The most important of these rebels is

General Ali Mohsen, who was until his defection generally regarded as the second most powerful leader in Yemen. Many of his officers and subordinate military units defected along with General Mohsen creating a powerful center of military power aligned with the forces opposed to Saleh. The situation was rendered more complex when President Saleh was wounded in a rocket attack against the palace and subsequently flown to Saudi Arabia for surgery on June 4. Since then it has become clear that wounds were serious and it is uncertain that Saleh will be able to return to Yemen to try to rebuild his shattered regime, now led by his sons and nephews under a figurehead vice president. [28](#)

Yemen is a country which emphatically needs help from its wealthier neighbors and the international community if it is to survive as a unified political entity and perhaps even avoid mass famine. There are a number of radical Islamist groups and political parties in Yemen, but any interest by a new Yemeni government in indulging in radicalism will rapidly meet the reality of being the poorest country in the Arab World. According to the pre-crisis statistics collected by the United Nations World Food Program, around 7.2 million Yemenis were suffering from chronic hunger in 2010, and the possibility of famine existed prior to the 2011 unrest.[29](#) Currently, Yemen is faced with diminishing oil resources, an exploding population, an escalating strain on water resources, and other growing economic problems. Unemployment is at a shocking 35 percent according to a 2010 interview with Yemeni Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Megwar.[30](#) Additionally, in a few years, Sana'a' is expected to be the World's first capital city to run out of water. With its massive foreign aid needs, no Yemeni government will seek to indulge radical impulses that will alienate potential aid donors. Rather, the most serious danger in Yemen is that the country will drift into anarchy, and fragment into a number of autonomous political entities some of which could be controlled or influenced by terrorist groups such as AQAP.

In this environment, there are a number of short-term opportunities that exist for AQAP. Although AQAP cannot establish a viable state, it now appears able to make significant territorial gains in southern Yemen. Along with other radicals from *Ansar al-Sharia*, AQAP has established and maintained a substantial presence in the towns of Zinjibar and Jaar in Abyan province. The Yemeni Army's 25th Infantry Brigade seems unable to cope with the situation and is not being given reinforcements at the time of this writing. Yemen's non-elite troops may perform adequately in prolonged fighting with Islamic militants, but this is uncertain. It is especially unlikely if they are not provided with adequate logistical support which journalistic sources suggest is a problem. This kind of situation can deteriorate quickly. If large numbers of poorly trained and inadequately supported government troops desert in the face of the enemy, this would be a major setback in the struggle against radical terrorist groups. If significant numbers of Yemeni army troops switch sides, then a setback becomes a catastrophe, which will probably lead to at least the loss of Abyan province. At worst, it could lead to an ongoing AQAP insurgency across southern Yemen that may take years to quash. AQAP has already attempted to conduct terrorist actions against the

United States in the past, and new victories can energize it for more intensive efforts against the West and Saudi Arabia.

The Yemeni opposition is aware of Western concerns that AQAP will have a chance to flourish in a post-Saleh environment. They have therefore made every effort to reassure the United States that they would also cooperate extensively with the West and Saudi Arabia to address the AQAP menace. ³¹ Additionally, the oppositionists claim that the Saleh regime has allowed recent AQAP advances in southern Yemen as a way of scaring the West with the prospect that Yemen will become a terrorist haven without him. There are nevertheless some problems with such a ploy. While the Saleh regime may use every opportunity to assert its commitment to counterterrorism, its current priority is to maintain itself in power, and it is therefore unwilling to use its best military units to offer significant opposition to AQAP. Saleh's elite counterterrorism units remain in Sana'a and are not being deployed to the south as part of this pattern. Moreover, the escape of up to 62 AQAP terrorists from a prison in the southern city of Mukalla on June 22 was yet a further indication that the Sana'a regime is too absorbed in its own problems to do much to contain AQAP. ³²

The United States has a significant aid program directed at Yemen, but Saudi Arabia is Yemen's most important foreign partner. Saudi Arabia and the other five Gulf Cooperation Council states have already recognized that President Saleh is a liability in the struggle against AQAP, and they have made a substantial effort to ease him out of power. The U.S. leadership seems comfortable with this approach and will probably continue to support GCC efforts to stabilize Yemen. Whatever new government leaders emerge will need to become rapidly involved in the struggle against AQAP. Saudi support of this effort can be taken as a given since AQAP has a long history of striking Saudi targets and often describes Yemen as a stepping stone to waging more effective war on Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, the threat of a fragmenting Yemen will be a problem for the struggle against terrorism and Saleh's refusal to relinquish power ensures that the chaos continues.

Algeria

Algeria experienced major demonstrations in January 2011 in which at least two protesters were killed, but the survival of the regime did not appear to be threatened. The demonstrators demanded reduced food prices (which have risen dramatically over the past year) and called for efforts to address the problem of unemployment. The government responded by ordering a reduction in the prices of basic foodstuffs including cooking oil, sugar, and flour.



Additionally, in February 2011 President Abdelaziz Bouteflika ordered the lifting of the 19-year-old state of emergency. Following these actions, protests stopped although they were followed by a wave of self-immolations in which at least five individuals were successful in committing suicide. All of these people appear to have had relatively hopeless lives to the point that they were ready to follow the example of Bouazizi. Some may have hoped to trigger a Tunisia-type response to the Algerian system that they viewed as crushing them. No such response to their actions has been forthcoming at this time, although smaller demonstrations have continued throughout 2011. Algerian authorities are significantly more effective than those in Tunisia in suppressing, disrupting, and containing the efforts to organize large demonstrations.



It is nevertheless uncertain if the conflict in Algeria is going to go beyond what has already occurred. If conflict does continue, it may well do so at the same approximate intensity and remain non-regime-threatening. The Algerians are especially aware of the dangers of prolonged civil war. From 1991 until 2002, Algeria fought an intense civil war in which between 150,000 and 200,000 Algerians were killed. As a result of that experience, no one in Algeria can reasonably believe that regime change will be easy. Additionally, Algerians are aware of the violence in Libya, which is next to them, and would like to avoid the outbreak of a second civil war in their country. Many of the root problems associated with the Tunisian uprising are present in Algeria, but so is the searing experience of a bloody civil war that lasted for over 10 years.

The United States is not close to Algeria and cooperation between the two countries is limited with a special interest on counterterrorism. Consequently, it would be difficult for any new government to complain too vigorously that the United States had propped up the various ruling regimes. Like so many of the other Arab Spring protesters, Algerian protester demands seem to be almost entirely based on domestic issues. They have not indicated any hostility toward the United States, nor have they shown any bias toward terrorist movements such as AQIM. At this time, they simply appear to be impoverished people seeking a decent life. Most seem focused on seeking economic gains rather than challenging the regime. U.S. interests are not seriously involved at this point.

Jordan

Jordan has frequently been described as close to revolution, but these concerns are exaggerated. Large segments of the population are loyal to the Hashemite monarchy



while oppositionists do not have a viable alternative to the present system. Jordan is one of the most resource-poor countries in the Arab World, although it has been able to establish an



acceptable quality of life for most people. To survive and prosper, it must have dependable sources of foreign aid. The traditional source of such aid has generally been the United States, the United Kingdom, and Western Europe. In recent years, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states have also been an important source of foreign investment and aid for specific projects. Since the beginning of the Arab Spring, Riyadh has become more generous with its aid in partial reaction to fears that a collapse of the Jordanian monarchy would be viewed as a source of inspiration by Saudi oppositionists.³³ If the Jordanian monarchy is overthrown, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf monarchies are unlikely to offer foreign aid to a post-Hashemite government for a significant period of time. In general, Riyadh takes a virulently hostile view of revolutionaries overthrowing conservative monarchies.

Additional complications will also come into play in that any post-Hashemite democratic government will probably be dominated by Jordanians of Palestinian heritage. Palestinians with Jordanian citizenship comprise at least half of the Jordanian population and often view politics differently from the Transjordanian segment of the population.³⁴ A democratic Jordan in which the Palestinian segment of the population was dominant would have difficulty maintaining the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty. Rather, even a pragmatic Palestinian-dominated government would be under constant pressure to renounce the treaty and also to normalize relations with the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Group, Hamas. Such policies would probably end U.S. aid and perhaps threaten European aid as well. While many Palestinian-Jordanians may like to see a democratic government, they are aware that populist policies would destroy their country economically because of the foreign backlash.

At this point, Jordan is engaged in a slow but meaningful process of reform including the establishment of an increasingly independent Prime Minister's office. Accelerating the movement toward more Western-style democracy could nevertheless create severe problems for the Jordanian population as noted. Additionally, Jordan is a valuable U.S. ally and has played an important role in the struggle against al-Qaeda. Any successor government that follows the Hashemites would probably not be as friendly and could be quite hostile despite the potentially severe economic consequences of such behavior to the Jordanian public. It would therefore be a strategic loss for the United States to see the Hashemites ousted. Moreover, Americans could enjoy little ideological satisfaction if a Western style democracy was established in Jordan followed by that country's collapse into an ocean of poverty, political instability, and confrontation with Israel.

Morocco



The Moroccan leadership was initially horrified by the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, considering these countries to be geographically close and under attack for political and economic shortcomings, which may equally apply to the Moroccan regime. A key difference may be that both Bin Ali and Mubarak were generally detested by large segments of their own population.

Morocco's King Mohammed VI, by contrast, appears to be popular with his countrymen and particularly with conservatives and the working class. He has also proven to be better at planning an effective response to public dissent than the other North African leaders. When thousands of people turned out to protest the government on February 20, 2011, King Mohammed moved to get ahead of the problem. Rather than grudgingly propose cosmetic solutions, the King called for a new Constitution which would meet the concerns of the demonstrators before anti-government activity reached unmanageable levels. The Constitutional Committee was to come up with a draft that was then to be submitted to the voters as a referendum. The vote on the reform Constitution took place in early July, and the government reported that it had been approved by 98 percent of the voters with a 73 percent turnout. This number is extremely difficult to believe, but it may not have been embellished by a huge margin. Most neutral observers report that turnout was high and strongly dominated by the King's supporters. Moreover, the opposition to the Constitution called for a boycott rather than a no vote thus contributing to the lopsided outcome.

In the aftermath of the referendum vote, the number of demonstrators calling for additional reform declined although numbers could rise again. Government officials claim that this decline is a result of public satisfaction with the new Constitution while the opposition February 20 Movement claims it is the result of increased police repression. ³⁵ The chief demand of the February 20 Movement is for a new political system in which the King remains as a reigning monarch and symbol of national unity, but has no real power. This set of demands appears to exceed the preferences of most Moroccan citizens, and a wave of regime threatening protests does not appear likely. For now the Moroccan monarchy seems to have bought itself some time, although people will continue to expect tangible results from the new Constitutional structure, particularly in the realm of fighting corruption and improving daily life for citizens.

King Mohammed therefore appears to have survived the current political crisis through shrewd political manipulation. The opposition in Morocco is not dominated by Islamists and is not making Moroccan foreign policy an important part of their dissent. The United States has maintained a productive relationship with Morocco for decades and is likely to continue to do so for the foreseeable future. At the present time, the United States does not seem to have much to fear from the opposition, which appears to be moderate and secular. The best outcome will be for the King to continue moving forward with the reform process, to maintain the struggle against corruption, and to take steps for greater democracy. . This effort will head off future uprisings that could emerge if the population becomes disillusioned with the current process.

Oman

Oman has experienced problems with demonstrations during the Arab Spring, but these difficulties have been containable and have not risen to be regime-threatening. Some violence has occurred at these protests, and a few protesters have been killed in confrontations with army and police forces. The main center for the demonstrations



has been the industrial city of Sohar where protesters briefly seized the Globe Roundabout in late February. There have also been a number of demonstrations in the capital of Muscat involving hundreds of demonstrators. One Muscat demonstration in early March included 3,000 people.³⁶ These protestors have chanted against corruption, high food prices, and demanded to know how the proceeds from Oman's oil industry have been spent.³⁷ Some protesters have also called for, “the trial of all ministers” and “the abolition of all taxes.”³⁸ In some Arab states that are much wealthier than Oman, no taxes are paid, but Oman does not have enough wealth to emulate the richer states.

Throughout the process of confronting the government, demonstrators have not called for the resignation of Sultan Qaboos, but some have sought a strong legislature to serve as a counterweight to monarchical power. Their main demands nevertheless remain economic. Sultan Qaboos responded quickly to the unrest in February by firing 12 ministers, increasing the minimum wage, and promising to create 50,000 new jobs. He also created a new program under which job seekers would be paid a small but significant stipend while they are looking for work. These efforts appear to have

stabilized the situation. Additionally Oman, like Bahrain, will receive strong, new financial support from the wealthier GCC states that are concerned about preventing revolutionary activity in neighboring states.

Oman currently has an agreement with the United States which allows the U.S. military to base aircraft at three Omani air bases, Seeb, Masirah Island, and Thumrait. The United States has continued to maintain extensive prepositioning facilities on the Omani island of Masirah.³⁹ Oman also maintains defense cooperation agreements with Iran. Currently, it does not appear that the Omani government is in danger of being overthrown or that the protesters are concerned about Omani ties with the United States. No U.S. interests are threatened at this time.

Kuwait



Kuwait is currently suffering political turmoil within its parliament which was aggravated by the Saudi-led invasion of Bahrain as well as the examples of other populations rising against their governments because of corruption issues. Kuwait as a wealthy country does not have the same types of problems of poverty that fed the early revolts in Tunisia and Egypt, and Kuwaitis are not engaging in mass uprisings. The lack of economic incentives for revolt among most Kuwaiti citizens means that they maintain an important stake in the political system which provides a number of economic benefits as well as some measure of economic expression. The biggest internal problem Kuwait now seems to be facing is rising Sunni/ Shi'ite sectarianism, although corruption is also a major source of discontent. These problems appear to be manageable at this point.

While Kuwait is not economically dependent on the West, it still maintains some exceptionally good reasons for valuing ties to the United States and its allies. Most Kuwaitis continue to fear Iraq even after the ouster and execution of Saddam Hussein. Likewise, many Kuwaitis are exceptionally concerned about Iranian policies toward their country. The discovery of an Iranian spy ring in Kuwait has provoked alarm, and some Kuwaitis express concerns about Iranian “sleeper cells” that Tehran may activate in a crisis.⁴⁰ Additionally, various Iranian leaders are angry over the GCC intervention in Bahrain and have made hostile public statements heightening Kuwaiti interest in strong military allies. Iranian Armed Forces

Chief of Staff General Hassan Firouzabadi's denounced "Arab dictatorships" and claimed that the Gulf "belonged to Iran forever."⁴¹ Despite these problems, many Kuwaiti leaders seek to preserve normal relations with Iran due to lingering concerns about the future of Iraq and a need to maintain open communications with a potentially dangerous country.

At this time, the U.S. military presence is not a serious Kuwaiti domestic issue, and it is unlikely to become one in the foreseeable future. The U.S. military currently maintains troops scattered throughout various bases in Kuwait, the most important of which is Camp Arifjan. Previously, the centerpiece of the U.S. presence in Kuwait was Camp Doha, but this facility had almost been completely closed by early 2006 with the Camp Doha operations transferred to other bases in Kuwait that are farther away from civilian population centers.⁴² Camp Doha was never envisioned to be a permanent base and the movement to Camp Arifjan constitutes an effort to further lower the profile of U.S. troops in Kuwait. Some Kuwaitis have previously expressed concern that the U.S. military presence is exceptionally visible to the local citizenry unlike during the early 1960s when British troops in Kuwait appeared to be virtually invisible. Both the United States and the Kuwaiti government seek to limit the U.S. public profile in the country as a way of minimizing the political opposition to their presence. Nevertheless, Kuwait more than perhaps any of its neighbors is aware of what can happen to small rich states if they do not seek powerful allies and supporters. This situation suggests that Kuwait will continue to value its relationship with the United States under the current government or under almost any plausible alternative governments.

Lebanon

Lebanon is currently in a state of political turmoil and a second civil war is not impossible, although these developments are the result of domestic political differences and perennial Syria meddling in Lebanon rather than a reaction to the Arab Spring. On June 13, Prime Minister Najib Mikati announced the formation of a new coalition government after five months of disagreement among the negotiators. Mikati is considered pro-Hezbollah, and his cabinet is composed of one of the most pro-Syrian governments in the history of Lebanon. As such, it is viewed with considerable



suspicion by the pro-Western “March 14 Movement” from which previous Prime Minister Saad Hariri of the “Future Movement” maintains his power base.

The establishment of a Hezbollah-dominated government in Lebanon has led for immediate calls within Congress to end all military aid to that country. This sentiment is easy to understand, and the pressure to implement such a policy may be irresistible as part of U.S. disapproval of Hezbollah terrorism. Since the Lebanese government is so unstable, it is possible that the United States will continue to engage in some level of contact with the Lebanese military, but in general U.S. involvement with Lebanon will probably remain minimal.

Mauritania



Mauritania is a deeply impoverished country with a culture that has almost nothing in common with that of the United States. The gap between the two nations might perhaps be best illustrated by the continuing existence of legal slavery in that country until 1981. At the time of abolition, there were approximately 100,000 outright slaves and 300,000 individuals bound to the land as serfs.⁴³ Illegal slavery continues in Mauritania, although the

current scope of this problem is difficult to assess.⁴⁴ The president is former General Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz who first seized power in an August 2008 coup and then entered office as a civilian after a July 2009 election, which included accusations of fraud against him.⁴⁵ The Mauritanian government seeks to maintain good relations with the United States.

Although Mauritania seldom comes to the attention of the global press, this country has also been affected by the Arab Spring. In January 2011, a man set himself on fire inside of his car in front of the Mauritanian Upper House of Parliament after apparently being inspired by events in Tunisia.⁴⁶ This action was probably designed to set off large-scale uprisings in Mauritania but failed to do so. A youth group which now calls itself the “February 25 Movement” also drew inspiration from Tunisia and Egypt and attempted to organize demonstrations such as those that challenged the political systems in Egypt and Tunisia. The movement has arranged sit-ins and protests since January 2011 demanding political and social reform and especially rights for

poor people. In Mauritania, as in various other countries, the authorities have responded with a combination of promises for reform and repression. The Prime Minister promised a variety of reforms, but the national police have also been reported to have used clubs and tear gas to break up demonstrations.

There is extensive activity by AQIM in Mauritania, and the United States therefore remains concerned about the danger of political chaos developing in that country. U.S. Special Forces have been sent to Mauritania to help train troops there with a special emphasis on counterterrorism training.⁴⁷ The Mauritanian government has also taken a hard line in dealing with AQIM and does not negotiate with terrorists who have taken hostages. Some of the battles fought between AQIM and the Mauritanian Army seem to involve significant numbers of combatants on both sides, although reports are sketchy and sometimes contradictory.⁴⁸ Clearly, overwhelming poverty and the lack of social justice feeds terrorist activity. Correspondingly, pressure on the government to expand representation and help the poorer elements of the community, which may be beneficial to Mauritanian society in ways that support Western interests. The Mauritanian leadership would correspondingly do well to reform the system and minimize corruption before it faces violent overthrow. The problem is that the government has few resources to do so. Moreover, blinding poverty makes a system of corruption virtually inevitable. On a slightly more hopeful note, Mauritania seeks to rise above its status as one of the World's poorest countries by exploiting offshore reserves of oil and natural gas.

No clear foreign policy orientation has emerged from the Mauritanian opposition but any new government of any kind would need to seek outside support to develop its economic infrastructure and exploit available natural resources. The United States would probably do well by working with a government focused on reform and also by favoring such a government to help undercut AQIM. Nevertheless, the reform movement appears weak, and it is doubtful that such a government will emerge.

Saudi Arabia



Saudi Arabia treats most forms of dissent as illegal including non-violent demonstrations. In this uncertain legal environment, Saudi Arabia has been known to treat reform activists harshly charging them with such crimes as attempting to seize power, incitement against the King,

sedition, and attempting to set up political parties in the kingdom (which are illegal).⁴⁹ In addition to repression against demonstrators, the Saudi leadership has dedicated huge sums of money to boosting financial benefits for Saudi citizens in the apparent hope of providing citizens with economic reasons for supporting the government. This process began on February 23, 2011, with a \$37 billion government benefits package which has expanded to include additional extravagant programs since that time. These programs include large public sector pay raises, a heightened minimum wage, increased grants for university students, a monthly stipend for unemployed citizens seeking work, and the construction of 500,000 new housing units for low income families. The government has also set up a new commission with the announced goal of fighting corruption, and the King ordered the creation of 60,000 new jobs.

While Saudi Arabia has been generous in the application of economic largess to contain the danger of unrest, it has not given an inch on the issue of political reform. Dissenters are quickly and effectively taken into custody.⁵⁰ A Saudi “Day of Rage” was called for March 11, but the organizers were unable to get any traction due to the climate of intimidation. Saudi Arabia has also continued its traditional policy of discouraging other monarchies from implementing reform.⁵¹ The Saudis strongly opposed the creation of a Kuwaiti parliament following independence in 1961, but had to acquiesce to its restoration after the 1991 U.S.-led campaign to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. In general, however, Saudi Arabia is so closed to the concept of political reform that it views other monarchies as causing problems by moving forward with such efforts. Unlike a variety of Middle Eastern states, Saudi Arabia has not bothered to create even a rubber stamp legislature, and its leadership has given no indication that they are interested in moving away from the concept of an absolute monarch.

Saudi Arabia has close military ties with the United States and has agreed to purchase up to \$60 billion in new military equipment with the possibility of an additional \$20 billion in naval and missile defense upgrades.⁵² The U.S. military presence in that country is however extremely limited. One of the most immediate results of the 2003 Iraq war has been the evacuation of almost all U.S. military forces from Saudi Arabia. The decision to withdraw U.S. combat forces was announced in April 2003 with the apparent hope of obtaining an immediate foreign policy benefit from Saddam's ouster.⁵³ As a result of this policy, the United States removed approximately 200 military aircraft from Prince Sultan Air Base, along with their supporting troops. Less than 500 U.S. military personnel remain in the Kingdom with most of these associated with military training missions for the Saudi armed forces.⁵⁴ This move came after a long series of military policy problems taking place between the U.S. Armed Forces and their Saudi hosts including concerns that Saudi Arabia was being asked to fund too many of the costs associated with the U.S. presence. These defense specific concerns aggravated the more political problems involving disagreements over issues of Iraq, Afghanistan, and terrorism.⁵⁵ The removal of U.S. forces from Saudi Arabia was also seen as depriving Osama bin Laden and other radicals of a critical issue upon which to base his propaganda campaign against the House of Saud.

Should Saudi oppositionists gain a foothold in their efforts to either reform Saudi Arabia or replace the Saudi Royal Family with a different kind of government, they could very well blame the United States for helping to prop up the ruling monarchy for a number of years. This is not an unfair charge. Osama bin Laden was certainly known for making this case, and such an argument may appeal to many Saudis who have nothing in common with the terrorist leader. Nevertheless, it is useful to consider that many of the protesters in Saudi Arabia appear to be the most Westernized elements of the society and the rights that they are demanding are almost pathetically limited when compared to Western standards. Some of these people may therefore have an open mind about continuing good relations with the West if they were to take power. At this time, in any event, they appear to be too weak and disorganized to seriously challenge the monarchy. It is also possible that the Royal Family will continue to maintain the support of the very conservative population and can continue to do so despite a monarchical system in which many basic human freedoms are completely absent.

If true radicals seize control of Saudi Arabia in a scenario where Arab Spring demonstrators are re-energized but then pushed aside, this would be a major problem for the United States. These individuals could easily defy the United States without worrying about the economic consequences of such actions. It is also possible that they would seek nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction in order to help deter a U.S. military intervention. Currently, Saudi Arabia is considering the acquisition of nuclear weapons to deter the dangers of an expected nuclear-armed Iran. A radical salafi government in Riyadh would remain confrontational toward Iran, but it would also have to worry about the danger of Western military intervention as part of an escalating crisis. If a radical Saudi government was able to acquire nuclear weapons, it might also be able to turn a partial blind eye to the actions of terrorists that did not strike at domestic targets. Such a strategy is always risky however, and even Saudi radicals would have to carefully consider potential U.S. responses as well as the survivability of their nuclear deterrent.

Conclusion

Most Americans and other Westerners have great hopes for the Arab Spring. These hopes are based on support for democracy and because numerous policymakers seek to reduce U.S. involvement in the region after the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. It would be exceptionally convenient if the United States could withdraw its military forces from the Middle East at the same time that democracy was spreading like wildfire throughout the region. Unfortunately, the real world is seldom so tidy. The Arab Spring may lead to a series of democratic or quasi-democratic governments in the Middle East, but this is still best case analysis. Additionally, governments that are more democratic may be less willing to cooperate with the United States on defense related matters, since the United States is not always popular with Arab publics. Opposition to the United States should however remain within acceptable parameters because of the economic needs of many of the countries most involved in the Arab Spring, such as Egypt and Tunisia. U.S. officials need to understand that rhetoric and

policy in these countries might be quite different.

As noted by a variety of observers, the Arab Spring can be expected to continue, mutate, and evolve for a number of years. This is a tricky problem for understanding the movement since “Arab Spring” has come to represent a variety of different regional processes and activities. In some cases, it involves straightforward efforts to oust undemocratic governments. In other cases there are sectarian dimensions.

Additionally, many of the countries involved are at very different levels of political and economic development. Egypt and Yemen, for example, have very different histories and levels of political and economic development, which suggests that a functioning democracy may be much more likely in Cairo than Sana'a. Nevertheless, even with all of this turbulence, it is reasonable to conclude that the United States will be able to maintain good relations with post-revolutionary governments if these governments do not radically change their political orientation and priorities. In many cases, the need for good relations with the West will probably supersede any interest for holding a grudge over U.S. support of past governments. Nothing is assured however in such an unstable environment.

Whatever policies the United States adopts toward the Arab Spring countries some risk will have to be assumed because of their uncertain futures. This situation requires that a number of these countries (including Egypt, Tunisia, and possibly Yemen and Libya under new governments) be treated as partners while they are in the process of transformation so long as they have a reasonable chance of building a reformed government. Such ties will also be taken by local leaders as a statement of confidence in their aspirations to achieve democracy. Under these conditions, programs such as the U.S. Army Staff Talks program, for the bilateral discussion of strategic level problems with local partner nations should continue unless some major change in relations occurs indicating that these nations are no longer viable partners. Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) counterpart visits will remain important for the same reasons. Moreover, considerable caution should be exercised in making a judgment to reduce ties at a critical time, because such a decision will be viewed as an unfriendly act by the nations involved. It may also give local radicals an opportunity to accuse the United States of being hostile to democratic change. Nevertheless, in the event of a major negative systemic change within a nation, the U.S. leadership will have to re-evaluate its ties on a case-by-case basis, and in some scenarios the United States will have to end military ties with countries that emerge as new enemies. U.S. military leaders should however not react impulsively to setbacks that may be temporary. If, for example, the Muslim Brotherhood won an election in Egypt, U.S. leaders may still wish to maintain some ties to the Egyptian Army which is a conservative institution and could well prevent the Brotherhood from acting in illegal ways (such as setting up a police state).

Senior leader participation in regional conferences remains a valid concept that is mostly subject to the same concerns that existed prior to the Arab Spring. There are however a few subtle nuances that must be considered. U.S. Army leaders would have to be careful about attending multilateral conferences where rebel movements that the United States has not recognized are represented. Such movements may be composed

of decent people seeking reasonable goals, but the U.S. Army leadership would not wish to appear that it is getting too far ahead of U.S. policy or infringe on the prerogatives of other institutions of government charged with such responsibilities. Additionally, a dictatorial country may be facing challenges from multiple rebel groups and the U.S. Army leaders do not wish to be placed in a situation where attendance at such a conference leads others to believe that U.S. Army is endorsing one group over another. This principle applies at an even more micro-level where individual oppositionist leaders may attempt to meet with senior Army officers during such a conference and then argue that they are the U.S. favorite.

Senior U.S. Army leaders should also continue to interact with attaches from Tunisia and Egypt, as well as other allied countries including Bahrain. Contacts with Syria will have to be minimized, which is not a difficult policy to implement since the Syrian government has sponsored a mob to attack the U.S. Embassy. With the U.S. decision to recognize the TNC and the anticipated fall of the Qadhafi regime, it would be useful of U.S. Army leaders to engage in ongoing talks with the new Libyan government on strategic issues. The United States has maintained very little contact with Libya over the past 41 years, and any efforts to understand the concerns of a new government will be valuable and may even be appreciated by the new Libyan military leaders.

In managing the risk presented by possible complications of the Arab Spring, the United States will have to seek as much information as possible in order to make informed decisions on important Arab Spring developments and how to relate to emerging governments such as those in Egypt, Tunisia, and probably Libya and Yemen. The United States will also have to avoid substituting ideology for strategy and avoid any tendency to assume that all opposition movements have the goal of furthering democracy. All opposition movements will have to be studied and considered carefully in the full knowledge that the revolutions they lead could still go wrong. The U.S. must therefore balance the dangers of embracing a new government that is going in the wrong direction with the danger of remaining too aloof from a new government seeking to define itself and that still has a good chance of establishing a viable democracy.

In this environment, it would be vital for the United States to maintain the IMET program for Egypt and Tunisia and to continue other forms of military aid. The IMET approach should not be considered optimal for rebel movements until after the United States formally recognizes the newly established rebel governments (which still may be waging internal war). If the U.S. leadership is willing to go so far as to extend recognition to such alternative governments as planned with Libya, there is no reason to prevent them from participating in the IMET program because of ongoing conflict. It is also possible for the United States to supply weapons to rebels in Libya after the formal recognition of the TNC, although it may not be necessary. France and Qatar are currently supplying weapons and trainers to the Libyan rebels, whom they recognize as the legitimate government, and a U.S. role in such efforts does not appear essential; it would certainly not be popular domestically. Weapons or training supplied to Syrian rebels at this time would be a serious mistake and give the Damascus government every excuse to remove all restraints in slaughtering civilians without seriously tipping

the military balance in favor of the demonstrator.

The United States should also continue to engage in a variety of multilateral exercises that include the both Egypt and Tunisia as well as other U.S. partners in the region. These nations have good reasons to remain U.S. partners and are likely to remain so despite a period of post-revolutionary turmoil. As noted earlier, the United States should also continue to maintain military links to Bahrain in order to help influence that country to improve its treatment of the Shi'ites. If violence again escalates in Bahrain, the United States may have to re-evaluate these ties. In general, Washington does not wish to appear that it is expanding its interaction with regional militaries while their governments are in the middle of a confrontation with their publics. Such actions would imply supporting the acts of repression. Conversely, to withdraw military support from Egypt or Tunisia would imply a lack of faith in their efforts to make a democratic transition. Such cutbacks should not be implemented in any obvious way unless the United States actually seeks to send that message. If U.S. leaders are distrustful of some of the new governments but do not wish to send that message to the country in question or its neighbors, they might wish to engage in various high profile forms of military cooperation that are not directly aimed at enhancing that nation's military capabilities such as increased search and rescue operation exercises or coordination on humanitarian assistance missions. In general, joint participation in such missions does not have many political drawbacks, although they can strain U.S. resources. U.S. exchange officers should continue to be sent to regional schools unless there are serious concerns for their safety. Moreover, programs to train regional officers in counterterrorism may be usefully expanded especially in cases like Yemen and post-Qadhafi Libya. This approach should include technical and operational training as well as expanding comprehensive Counterterrorism Fellowships and other such programs offered by various PME institutions. Yemeni and Libyan participation in programs that deal with Low Intensity Conflict and Special Operations, such as those provided at the Joint Special Operations University, may also be valuable once the situation in those countries has stabilized under an acceptable government.

Jordan may deserve special consideration as a useful partner that can contribute the U.S. Army response to the Arab Spring. Military support to Jordan should be maintained so long as the government does not commit serious human rights abuse against demonstrators. Jordan is one of the most important U.S. regional allies, and its stability is vital to U.S. interests in the Middle East. To cancel exercises or training as a way of showing disapproval for the pace of reform would be a disastrous mistake. In the case of Jordan, it strongly makes sense to expand military cooperation, so that Jordanian facilities can be used to help train some of the militaries serving new governments in military professionalism and counterterrorism. Expanding U.S.-Jordanian coordination on national security planning, contingency planning, and doctrinal development is an extremely useful way to move forward. The King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center (KASOTC) is especially important in this regard. This state of the art Jordanian center built with U.S. funds can provide important training to elements of a post-Qadhafi Libyan military. It may also be of considerable value in helping the Yemeni military after the current trauma in that

country has ended. In this regard, Yemen's military may need considerable rehabilitation to re-engage the terrorism threat. U.S. funding to increase the activities at KASOTC would be money well spent. Military Training Teams sent to KASOTC to work with trainers there would also be a valuable step forward.

There are also special problems regarding terrorism. As noted, the civil strife in Yemen is creating a number of opportunities for terrorist organizations and especially AQAP. The United States has received assurances that both Yemen's current government and the Arab Spring opposition are willing to work with Washington to oppose terrorism, but no one in Yemen is making this their first priority. Any U.S. military intervention in Yemen with ground troops would be catastrophic since the Yemeni population is virulently hostile to the concept of a U.S. military presence, and virtually every Yemeni able to do so would fight against the U.S. presence, regardless of our explanations for being there. The U.S. can however obtain at least tacit permissions from both the government and the opposition to continue air strikes, including predator drone strikes, against AQAP. The Yemeni opposition needs to be told that future relations with the United States are dependent on their cooperation in the struggle against terrorism. Likewise, both the Saudis and the Jordanians can play an important military role in supporting the struggle against terrorism even if they have to coordinate with local commanders and tribal leaders to do so. Amman and Riyadh hate al-Qaeda and its offshoots as much, if not more, than most Americans. Their efforts will be indispensable.

Additionally, it should be noted that these are not U.S.-sponsored revolutions, although the United States may approve of them in many instances. To the extent possible, the United States should encourage friendly regional players who may seek to play a positive role in helping revolutionaries who actually do seem committed to a better form of government. In this regard, the Libyan example is instructive. While the United States has played an indispensable role in supporting the Libyan revolutionaries, it has also stepped back to allow other responsible nations to play important roles. At the time of this writing, a great deal of funding for the Libyan rebels is provided by Kuwait, the UAE, and especially Qatar. Allowing smaller nations to play a significant role is important for burden-sharing and of course no country has ever been concerned about being politically dominated by Qatar. The leveraging of involved allies and partners should remain a fundamental of U.S. policy toward the Arab Spring. It will also become more essential as the United States public remains focused on domestic and economic issues and the United States reduces its presence in the region.

A real dilemma would occur if any of the ongoing transitions in countries such as Tunisia and Egypt developed into sustained internal conflict or if the military intervened in a counterrevolution designed to install a new form of authoritarian government. This is perhaps possible to a greater extent in countries such as Egypt with strong ground forces, but it could also occur in Tunisia under some scenarios. In these circumstances, the United States would have to make important judgments on a case-by-case basis. The seizure of power by local militaries in general is an atrocious option, except to prevent anarchy. Nevertheless, the United States cannot turn against

transitional governments that are actually moving forward and seriously striving for democracy because hotheads on the street want instant results. The United States will hopefully use an array of soft power tools to help legitimate governments deal with unreasonable populist demands. Equally, the United States should not hesitate to criticize transitional governments that appear to be stifling democracy or attempting to entrench themselves permanently in power.

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