

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN A NEW EGYPT

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**PARTICIPANTS:**

**Moderator:**

JOHN PAGE  
Senior Fellow  
The Brookings Institution

**Panelists:**

HISHAM FAHMY  
CEO  
American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt

SHADI HAMID  
Director of Research, Brookings Doha Center  
Brookings Doha Center

JACKIE KAMEEL  
Managing Director  
Nahdet El Mahrousa

AMIRA MAATY  
Program Officer for Middle East and North Africa  
National Endowment for Democracy

AWAIS SUFI  
Vice President  
International Youth Foundation

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ANDERSON COURT REPORTING  
706 Duke Street, Suite 100  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. PAGE: All right. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the Brookings Institution. My name is John Page. I'm a senior fellow in the Global Economy and Development Program for the Brookings Institution. It's my privilege to be the moderator of this panel this afternoon. The topic is the Role of Civil Society in a New Egypt, which is a topic I think which is both timely and important.

I was in Oxford over the weekend and speaking with a friend and he said to me, you know, I think the Jasmine Revolution and the changes in Egypt really boil down to two things, jobs and justice. And I thought, well, one, of course, it's Oxford. It's a clever alliteration. But two, it's also quite a penetrating thought. And I think today as we discuss amongst ourselves and with you the issues of civil society in Egypt --we have representatives from the business community, from civil society organizations, from the youth movements in Egypt -- we need to keep in mind the issues of jobs and justice. And I hope the panelists will speak a bit to the role of civil society in trying to deliver both.

Without further adieu, let me then introduce the panelists. Their biographies are in your handout so I won't try to summarize their academic or professional histories. But they are a very distinguished group. And I will begin at my far right with Shadi Hamid, who is the director of research for the Brookings Doha Center in Qatar. He's visiting us from Qatar and we're very lucky to have him here.

Sitting to my immediate right is an old friend, Nabil Fahmy --

MR. FAHMY: Hisham Fahmy.

MR. PAGE: Hisham Fahmy. I was thinking of the distinguished Egyptian diplomat actually who has had a long career with the American-Egyptian Chamber of Commerce which is the leading -- one of the leading business associations in the country.

To my immediate left is Jackie Kameel, who is managing director of the Nahdet El Mahrousa Foundation, one of the cosponsors of this event and the leading civil society organization in Egypt.

To her left is Awais Sufi, who is vice president of the International Youth Foundation, another of the cosponsors of this event.

And finally, at the far end of the table, is Awais Sufi, who is vice -- sorry, is Amira Maaty, who is a program officer for the Middle East and North Africa in the National Endowment for Democracy. So quite a range of expertise and interests on the panel.

We'll begin with asking each of the panelists to make about five minutes of remarks according to their own interests and themes. And let me begin then with Jackie Kameel to my immediate left.

MS. KAMEEL: Hi, everyone. I'll speak about the expectations of the civil society and the needs that would actually help us do a better job in the new Egypt.

So basically the role of the civil society for me is identifying gaps and issues in the systems and trying to come up with solutions to help close these gaps or solve them. So, for example, in the area of job creation and employment, at Nahdet El Mahrousa we would do two things. One is creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem to support the creation of new jobs and also it will help filling the available jobs in the market. And filling the available jobs in the market are two types. Whether you help link

like student graduates to those jobs or for the blue collars or the vocational track students or those who dropped out of education, we actually, because there is this culture of people not wanting to have these jobs, we work actually with employers to try to secure a good quality and better terms for the labor.

To do such a job we basically need some key areas of support. With regards to government, we basically need a regulatory environment, and with this we mean one regulation for transparency rather than for control. We've been talking in the morning about the Ministry of Social Solidarity and how much it has been -- the role of it has been hindering the progress of the work of the civil society. We want them to, yes, oversee what we're doing but in a way that they're just making sure that we're transparent rather than just checking each and every step that we make.

Two, is the law versus the implementation or putting this law in application and enforcement. The law might not be as strict as how it's being implemented, so the Ministry of Social Solidarity actually imposes more restrictions on the law that is available. So, for example, there are some rights for the NGOs that they can't actually get because the Ministry of Social Solidarity is enforcing more strict rules on the NGOs.

We also care to have a space to operate, an openness to partnership between government and public institutions and the civil society. We want to be perceived as a partner rather than a competitor or a challenge to the government or that we are pinpointing their mistakes or issues. We're actually trying to help this government do a better job so we want to be perceived as a partner.

There has been these issues in the Mubarak era that whenever an NGO was doing a good job and it's becoming larger in size so it can actually impact a large

number of people, government wanted to take the credit of the work that's being done. And we've seen many of the civil society organizations being eaten up by the government institutions.

From the donor side we want to see more support to a bottom-up approach to development. We want to see donors supporting locally created and designed programs to solve the issues that we know the definition of these issues were the best people to create solutions for them because it will take so many things into consideration that probably the donors or those who are designing solutions in closed rooms will not take these things into consideration.

Also, with regards to supporting scaling up and sustainability, as we were mentioning in the morning we want to see support going to the creation of institutions rather than only programs that will go do a five-year intervention on whatsoever and then after those five years are over and the funding is gone then everything will not even go back to how it was. It will actually go back to worse than how it was because you actually created an imbalance that you can't continue supporting the service and policy. The people are not as misbalanced as they were before.

And effectiveness of the donor dollars. We see a huge number of grants with a lot of huge amount of money. It's being, I mean, at each level, especially with the international organization involvement, 10 to 30 percent of this actual grant will go to the real beneficiaries so we need to work on new mechanisms to make sure that we actually maximize the benefits of the real beneficiaries rather than having all these layers.

Specifically for the youth-led NGOs, I think we need to start seeing a change in the patronizing culture that has been prevailing in Egypt over the past many years. The civil society used to be dominated by elder people, by a certain profile of

people and we want to see this changing and we want to see more space given to youth so that they can actually do the change that we want to do.

Talking about the coordination and parts, we actually, at NM we've been, since the revolution have been trying to do two things. One is score point internally in Egypt and externally with the Egyptians and the diaspora. For example, last week we had this event, the Egyptian-American Community Event Forum, where we're trying to engage Egyptians who are living here in the States to actually have a responsibility and a role in shaping the new Egypt. In Egypt we're having -- one of the leaders, Ehaab Abdou, one of the leaders in creating the Egyptian Youth -- sorry, the Federation of Egyptian Youth-Led NGOs. It's basically trying to create a coalition of youth-led NGOs and making sure that their role is -- they actually talk to each other, understand what they're doing, and the impact of the work is maximized.

I hope I'm not over my five minutes.

MR. PAGE: Very good, actually.

Now to Hisham Fahmy, who will talk to us a bit from a business perspective.

MR. FAHMY: Well, good afternoon. I guess this is a new Egypt and getting an Egyptian to talk for five minutes is quite a challenge. We say (speaking in Arabic).

I was asked to talk about business associations and what they're doing now and how they should be looking at Egypt in the long run. I represent AMCHAM Egypt, which is now since 1982. We have 1,800 members and we serve our members in the business community.

In the short term, obviously as an association personalization is the dominant way forward in Egypt and anywhere. But there are so many challenges at the moment in Egypt on the economic front and on the business front that there are common issues to all of them. And we have identified that we really need to support our members in the different sectors.

We've been talking today about civil society and the role and so on, but there are issues now at the present time in Egypt that have a tremendous effect on whether this revolution succeeds or not. And it's very critical that we do everything that makes it succeed. For instance, I just want to give some examples of what we are doing. There obviously was a huge problem in the financial sector. The banks were closed for a long time. The stock market opened only yesterday. Our members had issues of opening LCs because western banks or other banks were looking at Egypt as a risk so they were not confirming letters of credit. There were transfer issues. The Central Bank was making sure that there were no huge transfers out of Egypt, especially for those who earned investigations. So it was very hard to transfer any funds out of the country, even for business issues. Foreign exchange, it's crept out the first couple of days that the banks opened. About two to three billion dollars left the country and then there were speculators on the foreign exchange and the Central Bank stepped in. So we're from 5.8 pounds to the dollar. We're now to 5.95. I think all expectations are we'll go over to six-pound something.

We've been helping our members. We're talking to our members, especially in the tourism sector. Tourism, as you know, suffered tremendously. And that has an effect on so many people. The people that work in the tourism sector, especially in the hotels and so on, their salaries are very low and they get all their income from a 12

percent service charge that tourists pay. So you have thousands and thousands of people who are suddenly without income. Also, the indirect effect of restaurants and so on and so forth.

So we're working with our tourism sector. We've been working with the government on how tourism companies can be relieved of some of the burdens and so on. There are issues on logistics. The ports had huge problems. Just trucking, there was a curfew for a long time. There is still actually a curfew from midnight to six a.m. and that sort of puts a spanner in the works when you're trying to ship stuff from Alexandria to Cairo or to the south and so on. So we've been working with the higher council of the military to get special permissions for trucks to go through during the night and so on.

Awareness. We've been working very strongly with just making it known. We don't get involved in the politics but we get involved in the awareness. Huge discussions on the constitution and the referendums, which way to go. Yes, no. What happens after yes or what happens after no, etcetera. Parliamentary first or presidential first and so on and we invite a lot of people and so on.

There are obviously many, many strikes by workers. You know, this was a revolution of people wanting better pay, better justice, better treatment, and we have to -- we've been working with our members to look at the human rights of the employees really. I mean, there were disgraceful -- companies are paying very, very low wages to people and that should -- we've been working with them on how to increase that or how to treat the employees properly but also remain competitive in the workplace.

In the long term, there's a huge schools gap between what the companies want and what the education system is spewing out. And I think business associations, we ourselves have a huge education program and we embed a lot of the

new associations' curriculum in some of our educations and so on.

Business matchmaking. Trying to get matchmaking between U.S. companies and Egyptian companies. All this for employment. You need business. You need the private sector to be back at work to get people employed. We've been promoting work ethics and culture, engaging the young in decision making and so on.

Capacity building of business association is something that is so, so essential. There are so many business associations that are volunteer-run and with maybe a charismatic leader. When that leader leaves, the association collapses. So you really need a capacity building of professional staff who can do the research, who can do the PR, can do the events, can do the membership and so on.

Getting business associations to know how to fund-raise, how to do membership development advocacy and coalition building. All this has to be done by the business associations and it can be. It just needs the encouragement of the private sector, the members, and the whole world quite honestly.

We had a huge party in Tahrir Square and the bigger the party, the bigger the hangover. We're now suffering the hangover but hopefully we'll come out of it quickly. Thank you.

MR. PAGE: Thank you, Hisham.

Next is Awais Sufi, who from his perspective as an NGO in the U.S. will talk to us a bit about what the external NGO community may be looking for and trying to do in the coming months and years.

MR. SUFI: Thank you very much, John. And thank you to the Brookings Institution for hosting us today. The International Youth Foundation is a global NGO. We work in over 70 countries around the world and we have been very pleased to have been

working in Egypt for the last six or seven years alongside of our partner, Nahdet El Mahrousa, but a whole host of other global NGOs, multinational companies, local companies, local civil society organizations, and of course, to the extent possible, government. As we have watched what has unfolded in Egypt over the last few months, we have been like everyone else very excited about the possibilities. We have seen a youth-led revolution. Our own approach is an asset-based approach to youth development, meaning how can you use youth as assets to confront, address, and solve societal challenges? And obviously, the youth of Egypt have been instrumental in, you know, changing the game in Egypt. And now I think the real key will be how can international organizations such as ourselves and the many others that are represented here in Washington and globally support youth, as well as all of Egyptian society in terms of moving forward?

In that respect I wanted to kind of talk about two or three, maybe four things that are particularly relevant from our perspective at the International Youth Foundation in terms of, as John had mentioned, what the international community can do. The first I'd like to mention is bringing in new consensus-based approaches, public-private partnership building approaches to push forward Egyptian development. As you have seen from the last few months, there is an enormous number of voices through institutions, through individuals, that are out there that are really -- have been silenced for a long time. Or if they have been speaking, they haven't been speaking fully clearly or as loudly as they would like. The key now will be, however, to create a framework for that type of dialogue to go forward.

I think there are some internationally tested models and approaches that many of the civil society organizations around the world have adopted that we should

really be looking at to integrate into the Egyptian context so that we can have a systematic, consensus-based discussion around what is it that people are doing currently, where is it they continue to perceive gaps, and how is it that they can ultimately work together to address those gaps. These kinds of dialogues will be challenging. There's a lot of voices as I mentioned, but they also need to be opportunistic. How is it that we can build some momentum around some concrete avenues for change and for stimulus of an economy of civil society, particularly now that the aftermath, the hangover, as Hisham mentioned, is in effect. Let's see what aspirin or whatever medication we can put in for immediate relief.

Second of all, I would say another place that we really need to be focusing quite heavily on is capacity building for civil society. The Mubarak regime had systematically, comprehensively decimated the NGO sector. It was part of the way of ensuring adherence to the old order. And at this point now we have an opening, but however, those organizations are going to need just the core institutional capacity building support that rich civil societies, you know, are able to benefit from. Things that are very simple, very practical. Budgeting, financial management, human resources, operational strategy, the basics about how you build and grow and sustain an organization so you can create a long-term, enabling environment for the development of the country.

Alongside of the institutions I think we need to also be focusing on specific technical and programmatic areas that those institutions should be focusing on. Certainly, they're all interested in employment and entrepreneurship. Those are hugely important areas. There is business interest in stimulus. There is international donor relations or interest in stimulus. How can we equip the civil society organizations with the

capacities to help support those things along the way?

In the same token, kind of the other side of the coin I would say, we really need to be looking at creating an enabling environment for the creation of programs particularly around employment and entrepreneurship. So how is it that the international community can work in very close partnership with local organizations, help build them, help them build their capacity, and ultimately their leadership capabilities to take forward very concrete ways of ensuring quality outcomes in terms of employment. So how you conduct concrete and effective labor market assessments? How it is that you develop and design curricula modules that will be suitable to the business community? How is it that you integrate job placement strategies that ensure long-term success in the marketplace for a young person that's entering into a new job?

And then on the other side in terms of entrepreneurship, similarly, how is it that you create access to financing alongside of strong business development support services where a young person, or anybody for that matter, can receive good candid advice and quality advice around how they can build and grow an enterprise to create the kinds of jobs that are going to be needed for a country of 85 million people that is in dire need of economic activity? So these are the types of things that are out there that need to be kind of pushed forward.

The last thing I'll mention is just that I think one real opportunity now, and this will take some creative thinking hopefully from the international community but certainly with strong partnership and really leadership from local civil society in Egypt, is this idea of leveraging the enormous energy and excitement around the rebuilding of Egypt. Egypt is a country I've worked with many years and it's just amazing. This is a place that is amongst the oldest civilizations in human history, maybe the oldest, and they

have such enormous cultural and historical foundation to be built upon.

I was amazed in Cairo just a few weeks ago to see how clean the streets were for the first time. I mean, the fact that individuals took up the responsibility in the absence of other formal authority to keep up their communities, to protect their communities. This is an energy that can be built upon and it's something that we need to look at models of what we would call service learning. How is it that we can use this type of framework where people are excited and interested in building their communities and then using that as a means of building skills, as a means of developing opportunities for employment, for entrepreneurship, for bigger and broader development of maybe the tourism sector or other just local redevelopment initiatives? It's an energy that needs to be harnessed and I think the international community thereto can help push it in the right direction.

So hopefully that will start us out but look forward to any comments from you as well.

MR. PAGE: Thanks, Awais.

One of the deeply held values of Egyptian and in the Arabic culture is hospitality. And Hisham is worried that there are people standing in the back of the room who could actually be sitting up here. So if any of you would like to come forward and have a seat, we are going to go on for about another hour. And while your back will be on C-SPAN for just a minute, he would feel better, I would feel better, and probably any other of the members of the panel would feel more comfortable if you were actually seated.

Now, turning to Amira Maaty, who is with the National Endowment for Democracy, who have had a long history of involvement in the region and in Egypt and is

going to offer some thought on where we go from here in terms of building democracy.

MS. MAATY: Thank you. I'm going to focus my comments on civil society organizations that have worked on democratization, political reform, and human rights. And some of the comments will echo what Jackie had mentioned about the development organizations and also what other panelists talked about in terms of capacity building.

In the pre-January revolution environment in Egypt, civil society was restricted by the regulatory climate and security climate that affected their ability to move and operate. They were also affected by a population that was largely seen as apathetic. This has changed, of course, in the post-revolution environment and now there's a huge opportunity for civil society organizations to serve as the link between state and society at large.

A couple of key opportunities exist now for civil society organizations in Egypt. The first I would say is setting the agenda during the transition process, and that includes activities like consensus building, policy analysis and recommendations, targeted and effective advocacy. A second point is keeping the momentum for change going and monitoring the transition process. And that includes such activities as monitoring and disseminating information on the transition process -- grass roots campaigns, community education and mobilization efforts essentially to keep the pressure going for effective democratic reform.

Another area I would say is pushing open spaces in sectors that have previously been closed or restricted by the state, including -- that would include a wide range of legislative reforms concerning opening up the regulatory environment that restrictions NGOs, political parties, professional associations, labor unions, and other

institutions in Egypt. And also engaging with sectors that have largely been closed off to civil society, including universities, student clubs, and of course, the media. And especially broadcast media which has been very much restricted.

And another point I would add is ensuring greater transparency and accountability on the part of decision makers, especially at the local levels where there are still elements from the former regime. And I would add to the accountability and transparency that there's a need to go beyond monitoring policy and practice but also to look at fiscal policy and expenditures, which is an area that needs to be developed with an interest in civil society.

Finally, I would add that there's one sector that's been largely absent from the larger political reform discussions, and that's the small and medium enterprises which will play a very important role in linking kind of the economic realities with political reforms. And there have been some inklings of associations that have developed within that sector but they need to play a more active role in the policy setting.

In terms of the challenges that are facing these groups that need to be addressed in this period, as Jackie mentioned, there were three categories of priorities that we had identified for supporting civil society efforts. One is supporting coordination efforts; the second is scaling up successful models; and the third is measures for sustainability.

In terms of supporting coordination efforts, it's very important to know that there are already some coalitions that are forming within Egyptian civil society. There have been some very good examples such as, you know, the front to defend protestors that was established actually a year ago to provide legal assistance, medical assistance, and, you know, follow up and report detentions of political activists and

protestors.

There is another coalition of about 200 development and civic organizations that has been forming to basically promote active and informed engagement in civic education. There's also a coalition of 16 human rights organizations that within two days of Mubarak's resignation issued a roadmap with concrete recommendations sector by sector on the reforms that need to take place during the transition process and have subsequently created an action plan to correspond with the roadmap.

There's also a coordination committee that unites between the different coalitions. So there are some local organic coalitions that are forming. There is still some division within civil society but these are initiatives that need to be supported. And I would caution against supporting them financially. I mean, they've been working on a voluntary basis. The greater need is to support them through technical assistance.

In terms of strengthening linkages between different civil society actors, this is another important point for coordination efforts. Over recent years there has been a blurring of lines between the different forms of civic institutions. There's been a blurring of the lines between NGOs, political parties, union associations, media. There needs to be a better definition of each of these entities and an understanding of how they each work together as part of a puzzle to reach a collective objective. And I think now hopefully with the regulatory environment, hopefully there being opportunities to open that up, there may be a morphing of these different organizations and groups who found it ineffective to work as political parties or civic unions. Instead of registering as unofficial NGOs they could potentially open and register as different institutions.

In terms of scaling up, there's definitely, most of the civic and political

organizations have been consolidated in the Cairo and greater Cairo region. There are some groups who have emerged over recent years, especially groups that link between local governance and constituent needs. So there's going to be a need to expand beyond the capital area and to support civic and political initiatives in the governments. Here, I would also caution against scaling up by overfunding organizations as was mentioned before. Many of the institutions in Egypt are quite weak so we have to be very cognizant of the ability of these organizations to absorb additional funding.

Finally, in terms of policy impact, you know, instead of working in silos, it's important for the impact of these groups to be felt on a larger basis. Much money has been spent on civic education programs in Egypt, but they've been limited to a certain group of beneficiaries because there hasn't been the ability to institutionalize them, for them to be adopted within policy and implemented on a larger scale. So, you know, NGOs have to push on that level as well.

In terms of sustainability, my colleagues here have touched upon the need for capacity building. There are incredible groups of activists and great innovation and creativity among civil society leaders in Egypt, but there's weak institutions. So there's a huge need for building democratic sustainable institutions. And part of that will include the legislative performance that we've talked about, about opening up the space and the restrictions that have restrained these types of institutions from operating in the past.

Thank you.

MR. PAGE: Thank you very much.

And last but certainly not least, Shadi Hamid has been observing and commenting on political movements in Egypt for some time and will give us some

thoughts on civil society and the political evolution.

MR. HAMID: Okay. So here's the thing. I mean, even in the best of circumstances, democratic transitions are notoriously messy, uncertain, and unpredictable. So I think we have to be aware of that from the get go. But looking at past transitions, as we might expect, the role of civil society is extremely important in ensuring the transition process moves forward and that the demands of the transition or the revolution are actually fulfilled, not just in a short term but over a longer period of time.

And this is where civil society organizations face a major challenge because they've been oriented around opposition. They've never had a stake in policymaking and that's very different than say the role of civil society here in the U.S. where civil society is a partner with the government sometimes in terms of helping pass legislation, meeting with Congress, policymakers, and so on. So we're talking about a shift in the model.

And we're really talking about, you know, 60 years in opposition and all of a sudden we're asking groups to decide how they're going to transition to a very new scenario. So this is unprecedented and a lot of these groups are learning on the go. So there is going to be a learning curve there.

You know, maybe a word about youth coalitions. They were obviously at the forefront of these revolutions and a lot of people are watching what they're going to be up to in the coming phase. And this is where, you know, we're going to see some major challenges for them. For example, if we look at the Eastern European colored revolutions, so the major youth movement in Serbia was Otpor. And after Slobodan Milošević was overthrown, Otpor had to think about what are we going to do in the new

Serbia. And there was a lot of internal division about whether they should stay -- whether they should stay outside of the system and play the role of government watchdog or to actually take part in the political process and maybe even in government. Eventually they formed a political party but they only won 1.6 percent of the vote in the subsequent elections.

And now that youth coalitions and groups in Egypt are thinking about that and there's a discussion about whether or not they should take part in political parties, that's an important lesson to remember. And if these groups want to become effective political forces, they're going to have to talk about not only what they're against but provide a positive constructive vision for Egypt's future and get into details and vision. And maybe that's one area we've been lacking. Of course, it's very early on. It's just been slightly over a month since the revolution happened.

As Amira said, civil society can play a very important role in setting the agenda. And this is -- and up until now I think one problem we've seen is that these civil society organizations have gotten sucked into this debate about the referendum. And that was the number one focus. And because of that they haven't looked at some of the more medium- and long-term issues that in my view might be more crucial. And now that the referendum actually passed, they're put in a difficult position. We're going to have parliamentary elections and presidential within six months. So the timeframe has become shorter.

But, for example, civil society can play a major role in talking about electoral design. And this is one thing that I've been harping on a lot about. What electoral system is Egypt going to have? And there hasn't really been a robust discussion about that as of yet. Currently, Egypt has a winner takes all majoritarian

system similar to what we have in the U.S. This is not a good system for small parties. It almost makes it impossible for small parties to win. And it actually benefits larger, well organized parties, like the Muslim Brotherhood or say the remnants of the old National Democratic Party.

So if we're talking about how to have an inclusive political transition, we want the smaller political parties and to make sure that they have a stake in the political system. How do you do that? You have a proportional representation system. So even if they get 10 percent of the vote, they're not going to be locked out. They'll have 10 percent of the representation. And the fact that we haven't had this conversation is troubling but that's precisely the thing that civil society can take the lead on. But again, this is not easy because Egypt hasn't had to have that discussion for 60 years. Civil -- okay.

(Interruption)

MR. HAMID: We talk about civil society a lot here in Washington and NGOs and all of that, but there's always an elephant in the room because what's the biggest NGO in Egypt? The biggest NGO in Egypt is the Muslim Brotherhood. And I think that the conversation has become so focused around secular and liberal NGOs that we're losing sight that many NGOs in Egypt, if not most, are faith-based, similar actually to the U.S. -- the role that churches play in terms of providing social services, charity, and other things of benefit to the community.

So I think we also have to have a discussion about how do secular NGOs engage with their Islamic counterparts, and also from a U.S. standpoint, how does the U.S. government engage with Islamic-oriented NGOs in terms of perhaps providing assistance. Maybe funding is a little bit unrealistic but there has to be some interface

there and up until now we haven't really had that discussion either. So I'll just close there. Thank you.

MR. PAGE: Thanks, Shadi. And thank you for handling the microphone drama so well.

One of the fun things about being asked to moderate a panel here at Brookings is that I get to ask the first couple of questions. And I will, but let me assure you that we will then move to the audience to further ask questions. But I'm going to assert my right as chair. Just ask two, or maybe one depending on how long the panelists take.

As one watched the coverage unfold of the events in Tunisia and Egypt, one couldn't escape a sense that part of the issue of justice was very much linked to the question of the economic model in both countries. Both countries had gone through a process of economic reform, liberalization, and an opening to the private sector. And as Hisham as pointed out, unless one gets the economy going again, the issue of jobs, which was very much at the center of this, will simply not be solved. But for a longtime sympathetic viewer of the region, I think there has always been a lingering sense in many parts of these societies that the kind of economic system that came out of the liberalization effort wasn't an open system. It wasn't a fair system. It wasn't a just system. And I think at this moment there is a real risk that there could be a backlash against the very engine that will create jobs, which is the private sector.

And I was wondering if the panelists had some views on how civil society in a way could help balance the need for a vibrant, active, job creating private sector with what I still think is a very deep seated sense that there has to be a certain degree of society justice in the system as well. And so I think let me just turn to whichever of the

panelists would like to try to respond. I hope all five of them from their various perspectives will, but this balance between we really desperately need jobs and we need business and we need business people. But we need an open system in which the aspirations of people to become businessmen and the way in which businessmen operate themselves create a sense of justice and fairness for all.

MR. SUFI: Let me try, John. This is a great question and it's a very tough one. And I kind of wish you wouldn't have taken the moderator's prerogative to go first. But in any event, let me at least start the dialogue because I don't think there's an easy answer to your question.

You know, it is clear that the liberalization that has gone forward in the last many years has resulted in substantial disparity in terms of the economic classes that benefitted substantially and the vast majority of Egyptians that did not. And you know, that could be looked upon as a fundamental deficiency in the system of economic liberalization, or from my perspective, and candidly I'm not an economist by trade so I'm sure there are good educated opinions out there that either can validate this or perhaps be the contrary. But in many respects it seems that liberalization was yet just another tool used by the government to essentially extract wealth and take from the common person. That's not to say that liberalization wouldn't have potentially had challenging implications in terms of disparity. Certainly here in the United States and other places around the world we're seeing increasing divides socioeconomically. But nonetheless, when you have a system that enables monopolists to force privatization of major government functions and benefit greatly from a wealth perspective it's going to cause substantial disparities. And also a great deal of antagonism towards the private sector which is I think kind of the source of your question.

In terms of where civil society can help, I'm not sure there is again a perfect answer here but I would say that we really need to be focusing on encouraging open transparent approaches to leveling the playing field. So as we look at the creation of new systems of promoting economic growth, of trade liberalization, we need to be looking at industries and rules of the road that are applied fairly to all. And we need to do that as we do in all societies in a way that is consensus based and open and transparent but at the same time do it fairly quickly which is the big challenge we have here because we can't be twiddling our thumbs, noodling over new regulatory regimes for years and years here. Things have got to get moving. And so somehow I think we've got to create a framework in which, you know, the rules of the road are made clear, they are open to all, and they are creating, as I said before, enabling the environment for the type of industries that want to move forward to actually create jobs.

And the last thing I would say in that, one of the things that certainly we have observed in terms of our own work in Egypt is that so much of the economic growth was really within the real estate sector and within kind of non-job creating sectors. And it is a big challenge in the respect that you're having, you know, large, you know, large investments being made and they inflate growth from some perspective. But, you know, how can you encourage, for example, tourism or other types of industries that are perhaps more labor intensive and can get some people to work and make it feel comfortable that there is a vibrant public sector around.

MR. PAGE: Thanks, Awais. And thanks for being the first to volunteer.

I heard a little grumbling from Hisham, so I'm going to turn to him and ask him if he wants to respond. I would remind people that he had a number of very good suggestions in his opening remarks that speak precisely to the question that I just

asked.

MR. FAHMY: I always grumble.

(Laughter)

MR. FAHMY: Let's look at 2010. Egypt for the third year, best performing emerging market. Best finance minister in the world. How much FDI? Thirteen before the economic crisis. Thirteen billion. One of the best countries to hold up during the economic crisis. Very stable exchange rate. What went wrong?

I've been thinking a lot about that. Not just me but a lot of people. And Dr. Youssef Boutros-Ghali, who was the finance minister, kept saying we need three years for the economic growth of seven to eight percent to trickle down. Obviously it didn't trickle down fast enough. And I go back to what Sufi was saying. It's a level playing field. It wasn't level because of the huge, huge bureaucracy that is in the Egyptian system. How many people in business here need to know a cabinet minister to get his stuff done? You don't. In Egypt, to get through the bureaucracy, if you knew somebody who knew somebody who knew the minister you could get your paper signed and that's how you moved along.

So it wasn't a level playing field and we have to get rid of the bureaucracy. It can't take three years for an entrepreneur to open a restaurant. It just doesn't work that way. And I think this is some of the stuff that should be done very, very quickly for anybody to, any entrepreneur who wants to do a project can do it very quickly without having to know anybody, without getting visits from 10 different regulatory authorities to, you know, you're doing this wrong, you're doing this right until you give a bribe or something.

So it needs to be done quickly and I'm not sure how you break 7,000

years of bureaucracy very quickly. But I agree there was -- and I think the private sector has a huge stake in this and they have a huge stake in making it work for their employees and for sticking to Egypt in the present time. A lot of Egyptian companies, a lot of American companies and others have made a lot of money in Egypt. And this is the time maybe to sacrifice a little and to hold on until we get through this time.

You mentioned tourism. I hope the U.S. removes the ban on travel to Egypt. It's about one of the countries that still have that ban. And it affects not just the tourists. It affects the expatriates working with companies in Egypt and so on and so forth. So there are many things that can be done.

I won't take any longer. Thank you.

MS. KAMEEL: I will talk specifically about what we do at Nahdet El Mahrousa to help in the area of job creation. And we basically have like I would say a formula of different things. One is trying to improve the quality of education that the graduates will have. So we're trying to help build entrepreneurs, particularly social entrepreneurs, for in general entrepreneurs. Research and development is another very important thing that we try to support this, foster a culture of research and development. We don't have to keep doing what we're doing and having the exact same industries that we have but we want to create like new sectors and support young people to start their own businesses.

The culture of entrepreneurship in general, we have offices inside the public universities and we try to work with students on understanding that you don't have to graduate and look for a job immediately. You can actually start your own business, so instead of you getting a job you can actually create a couple more jobs and you can have your own business once you graduate.

Support for those entrepreneurs to actually survive the first few years, two to three years, and the need for incubators is a huge need in Egypt. Nahdet El Mahrousa itself is an incubator for social enterprises but we definitely need to see more incubators for business enterprises and the mobilization of resources. Whether that's knowledge, financial resources, technical support, mentors, role models, all these things are things that will create an ecosystem to support entrepreneurship to help actually the creation of more jobs in Egypt, especially among youth.

MR. PAGE: Thanks.

MS. KAMEEL: Thanks.

MR. PAGE: Does anyone else want to expand on this one? Okay.

Well, now it's your turn. What we're going to do, yes, it's going to be a lively group. I think what we'll try to do is take three or four questions. If you can keep them shorter we can take more of them. Can I ask you to identify yourself, wait until one of our people comes with a microphone so that you can also be heard outside the room, and then we'll let the panel respond to questions as appropriate.

Let me start with Professor Oweiss who wanted to start before my questions.

MR. OWEISS: Ibrahim Oweiss from Georgetown University. Way back. I'm emeritus now.

The title for this very important session ought to have focused on something else other than the role. The reason for this is that NGOs in Egypt had been established a long time ago, but they have been weakened because of the application of a term that we know in economics that during the gold standard was observed that the coins with less content of gold circulate and the coins with more gold contents were

melted and sold in the market. So therefore there was a very important law that came and said that the bad currency drives good currency out of circulation. I may modify this in Egypt and I said bad people drove good people out of circulation.

So there are many organizations that know exactly what they are doing. They were established for a specific role but they had been handcuffed by the system. Saad Eddin Ibrahim, for example, started Ibn Khaldun. Now, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, a prominent sociologist, a professor, was thrown into jail together with 20 other advocates simply because they monitored the election and they challenged what Mrs. Mubarak had said one time, her statement about the transparency of the election. They showed without any doubt that the elections were not clear, were not transparent, and therefore, he was thrown into jail.

So Ibn Khaldun Center can do a good job in Egypt. Furthermore, I did not hear anything about the role of the very prominent institutions in Egypt, such as Naqabat Rommel, Naqabat Hamin. These are the syndicates that had played a very important role. Also, clubs that were very important, such as Nadaquadal, the Judges' Club that started the revolution way back in 1952, when I hoped it did not happen. But this is beside the point.

So the (speaking in Arabic) institution used to come up with an extremely important periodical (speaking in Arabic). In 1929, very important papers that had been published by Bertshani Tirone, in which he was able to show for the first time ever the elasticity of demand for Egyptian cotton. So there are -- I had the honor myself of addressing that great institution in Egypt several times but they have been weakened because of the politicization of the system and the impact of the National Democratic Party of imposing (speaking in Arabic), the syndicate of journalists in Egypt. All of those

had been weakened because of the corrupt regime that imposed its own people and therefore they elect the bad people driving good people out of circulation. This is only a comment.

MR. PAGE: Back to Awais, I believe, which is can you go back to the future? And I think it would be useful for the panel to try to answer that. You know, to what extent can these institutions be revitalized and part of the transition process.

Let's move to the lady in green who has had her hand up and waited patiently.

MS. SIOME: My name is Nora Siome and I work for Institute for Inclusive Security and I have two questions. The first one, in the last couple of weeks there was talk about the referendum, yes and no, and it has shown the gap between the intellectual, the young people and the ordinary Egyptian. So what do you think the role of civil society to fill the gap between the intellectual, the young people and the ordinary Egyptians?

And the second question is related to the relation between the civil society and the military council because I was watching the news and there is a couple of unfortunate incidents. Like there is right now a law coming from the cabinet to criminalize the demonstration, if it affects the job or the private sector. And I think there's a lot of question marks related to that. And also about women's rights because all of us heard about the women's march and what happened to women over there. So what are the roles of civil society to advocate for women's rights and make sure they are part of the process?

Thank you.

MR. PAGE: Thank you. Let's take one more question. A bit towards the

back there's a woman in blue with her hand.

MR. LIEBERMAN: Hi, my name is Robyn Lieberman. I'm with Human Rights First.

The Internet and telecommunications had catalyzing effects, of course, and this sector sits at the intersection of freedom of expression and association and business and entrepreneurship. So I'll just plug an event that we're having on April 6<sup>th</sup> with Israa Fattah -- Abdel Fattah and Facebook, where they'll be talking about the shutdown during the revolution.

But in the context of civil society, maybe Jackie and Amira and others, if you can talk about if and how you use social networking sites, and what needs to happen to ensure that they can operate freely and to maximum benefit for civil society. And also given that many of these are U.S.-based companies, is there a role for U.S. policy to promote the freedom to connect?

MR. PAGE: Let's take one more from this side of the room. Way in the back.

MR. WHITMAN: Thank you. My name is John Whitman. I teach at Babson College. Thank you all for your really excellent presentations.

Jackie, I was extremely interested in your comment about more bottom-up development. And I was wondering if you could operationalize that maybe with some examples. And also to ask whether the model of cooperatives, in particular worker cooperatives, can play a constructive role here.

Thank you.

MR. PAGE: Okay. Let's come back to the panel. Let them respond to this set of questions and then I think we'll probably have time for at least one more round

in addition to that one.

I think perhaps the most efficient way to do this is just simply to start at the right and work our way across and let people select questions that they would choose to answer. If any remain unanswered at the end you'll have to catch them at coffee after the meeting is over.

MR. SUFI: Okay. I'll start with Dr. Oweiss comment but maybe take it from a little bit of a different angle. Civil society is not all good and actually, a lot of what we called civil society wasn't really civil society. I mean, NGOs weren't always NGOs. They were GONGOs or government organized NGOs. So they were effectively part of existing power structure and actually contributed to the perpetuation of autocracy. And they served the purpose of letting off steam and giving the illusion of some change without the substance of it.

And this was actually a big portion of civil society. And many of those organizations are still around. We'll see how they make the transition to revolutionary Egypt. But I think that was one of the mistakes with this whole civil society oriented approach of the U.S. and European donors. They were funding organizations that weren't necessarily interested in real structural substantive change.

On the issue of the gap between intellectuals and ordinary Egyptians, we really saw that with the referendum. I mean, much of secular civil society voted no and they were in the minority. And it turns out that, you know, it's the same complaint that we've had for a long time; they're kind of out of touch and this is concerning. Now, I don't exactly know what the solution is to that but developing stronger links with people on the ground and kind of going beyond this NGO bubble where a lot of people have the same opinions and sometimes believe that the majority is with them but then they

become surprised when the referendum results come out and they lose by a landslide. And again, that's where we get to this issue of elite NGOs.

The military. I think that was also part of your question. The military is a problem and I think a lot of us got maybe a little bit too excited about their role and thought that they were really going to be the savior of the people and all of that. We heard all that kind of rhetoric but it turns out, I mean, the military was always the backbone of the regime so why people thought that was always somewhat of a mystery to me. But the military is showing its true colors in terms of torturing protestors; really shocking stories that are coming out now are very, very depressing. And now that they're criminalizing demonstrations, I mean, how much more counterrevolutionary can you be?

The problem with civil society trying to interface with the military is that the military is a black hole. There's no clear channels of communication. So if there's something that's bothering you, who exactly do you talk to in the military and who is that person going to relay the message to? And how are they going to implement that change? No one quite knows in part because no one knows a lot about the Egyptian military. It's a somewhat opaque organization.

So in that sense I think it's pretty good that they're going to be out within six months and that's one of the positive results of the yes referendum result, that they're out in six months. Then we can really start with civilian rule and having a more responsive government in Egypt.

MR. PAGE: Hisham.

Mr. HISHAM: Dr. Oweiss, again. I think maybe the positive thing that's come out recently is private unions now can be formed and they don't need the approval of the government. That's something that is positive. And I think there is space now for

all these good institutions, whether to come back or others to come back to replace them with good people and good institutions. So I think there is hope there. I'm not pessimistic on the institutions -- new institutions to come up and to fill the void. And there are a lot of good young people who are very intellectual, very thoughtful, and I think that's something that's going to happen.

Maybe I take issue with the people who said no are out of touch. Just because you lose a referendum or you say no and the majority say yes does not mean you're out of touch. I think it was -- I certainly expected that it was going to be a yes vote. Obviously, the Muslim Brotherhood, they're much, much more organized than any other institution. So, and for the yes, they also had the remnants of the NDP pushing people to say yes.

So whether it's yes or no, I think it was an incredibly good event. We had incredibly huge number of turnout. There were people standing there in cue for, you know, three, four, five kilometers. It was quite a scene and everybody was coming out with their finger, you know, fluorescent. I mean, I took a picture of mine. So I take issue about that.

What happened in Egypt, and a friend of mine who is head of CIB Bank explained it. He said it was like you had a bottle of champagne and you kept doing this to it over the years and then near these last elections, the parliamentary election, you start smashing this thing and two things could have happened. Either it breaks and the glass hurts everybody and you get people killed and so on, or the cork comes out and you get a mess. And we're lucky. I think we got the cork out and that is a mess. I think Libya is another story.

So I think the military, honestly it's doing -- it has tried to do its best. I

think they're out of their debts now. They're really -- they're listening to everybody and everybody is telling them what to do. I'm also a little worried about this new law, but I think because they're listening to people saying, listen, we're not getting the work done, everybody is demonstrating outside their factory trying to get rid their bosses and, you know, they want triple salary and so on. I think that's where it's coming from. I wasn't there when that came out so maybe I'll give him the benefit of the doubt since he's going the other way.

MS. KAMEEL: I'll do three things. The bottom-up approaches, the usage of social media, and a couple of things about how to close the gap between like intellectuals in Egypt and maybe like the less advantage people.

Bottom-up approach is the development. A couple of examples. Basically, at NM we incubate social enterprises. We are -- those are social enterprises that are basically at the start up phases. So just an idea from a group of people who fill a need in their community. One of the examples is the Career Entrepreneurship Development Offices, for example, that were started by a group in public universities. Those were the first ever career development offices in public universities in Egypt. And it was a need that two graduates from the faculty of engineering had felt after graduation, and assuming that because I graduated from the faculty of engineering, I used to get good scores, that I would have all those employers waiting for me. And that, of course, was not the case.

So and it was very clear that the counterparts graduating from private universities had a system to support them, actually complement their education with the skills they need with being ready for the job market and so on. And this very group got incubated at Nahdet El Mahrousa. We worked with the International Youth Foundation to

actually support them with the resources they need, linked them with the universities, had an advisory board to open the doors at universities, and we were able to actually create the first ever career development office in a public universities. Those offices are being rolled out now to all public universities in Egypt and it's a very locally grown initiative to solve an issue in our education.

Comparing this to other programs that work on reforming education or trying to improve the quality of education before -- the amount of money that was spent on this model versus the amount of money that was spent on all the other initiatives that I personally worked on to reform education and the results of this versus the results of that is, I mean, there is no point of comparison even. So that's one example.

Another example is basically people who live in areas where waste is basically a huge problem there. And this group of young people came together and decided to instead of just having this issue prevailing in their communities they will just do recycling for agriculture and waste. They studied the landfills very well and understood that it's full of very good stuff for making animal feed, for example, paper, biogas. I mean, they changed the problem, a very huge one, into something that was very successful. And they're now building the social enterprise to start actually recycling of this agricultural waste.

So those are the examples that we're talking about, that people feel the needs in the community and come up with a solution that they know it will work. And they take into consideration all the things that need to be taken into consideration. They understand the restrictions. They understand the culture and it's better to support those locally planned initiatives rather than just assuming development can come top-down.

With the role of social networking and media, last year we had a

partnership with Yahoo for FGF Foundation and of course with all the social media that Yahoo is working with, I mean, we were a little bit pushed how to use social media and it proved very well to connect people and to get them engaged, know about the program, raise awareness about the whole idea of social entrepreneurship, for example. I mean, before that program and after this program the role of social media had impacted so much the awareness of what is social entrepreneurship, for example, in Egypt. With Google, we're having this program to use the platform for YouTube, for example, to educate people about different things, maybe have some things for the younger ones but also showing role models their success stories and so on.

So basically, raising awareness, educating people, and so on. And this is, I think, the role of the civil society in bridging the gap between the intellectuals and those who are a little bit disadvantage. Is that you use the tools available and the knowledge that you have, to simplify it in a way that you can actually communicate the message in ways that others will understand as well.

Thank you.

MR. SUFI: Thank you. And just building on what Jackie has said because I think it's very similar to the approach I will take but maybe from the international NGO perspective, and to the points that Dr. Oweiss had made about how you enable the competent, capable, extraordinary people that are already in Egypt, the bottom-up development discussion and also this issue of how you bridge the divide between those perhaps intellectuals and those, you know, the reality on the ground.

From our perspective, the real way to do that is you create -- and something that I had mentioned before but maybe getting a little bit more detail on it -- is you create platforms for those that are best equipped, that are best knowledgeable,

locally respected, well regarded individuals and institutions to play a role in a very constructive and also tangible role in the redevelopment of Egypt. And, you know, that's a broad statement but, you know, it can be sort of broken out into concrete elements that can actually be executed upon. Very simply, you know, a quick but thorough consultation process, consultative process where you talk to individuals from different sectors -- public sector, private sector, civil society. Find out who is that's respected. I mean, right now you're seeing that happening in Egypt where, you know, you have a bit of a witch hunt happening, of course, but you're also seeing those individuals that did have the respect of the people that maybe had been turned away by the regime initially or left the regime because they were upset about what was going on. And people knew it. And so you go around, you look for them, you think about it, and you consult with locals that know what they're doing. And you find those individuals.

And then I would say two other things. One is you create a platform for them to execute on projects and activities that actually have concrete results. And part of that will be, you know, we talk a lot in the international development community about massive sums of money. You know, \$165 million that is now being put forward by U.S. Agency for International Development for the redevelopment of Egypt. Well, that's great, but at the end of the day with low capacity organizations as we talked about, you know, we need to be splitting that up into \$100,000 increments and you need to be coupling it with significant capacity building support, technical support to individuals on the ground who are respected that can actually execute and do something if given the right platform and capabilities to do it.

And then third and finally, stick with it. So once they have actually been able to show some success, give them more. All right? Show that they have actually

accomplished something and say, wow, it has come forward. You know, the career development model that Jackie had mentioned. I mean, we're not talking about small potatoes here but it took quite an effort. They took two to three years to get firmly established in the university environment and we're talking about a university of 200,000 people that didn't have a single job placement center on that placement formally. It's kind of shocking to those of us in the United States that went to higher education that this kind of service didn't exist. Well, once that office was established, don't walk away. Give it a little bit more funds. Be able to show the platform that you had developed has that greater impact so that those individuals that you supported are able to accomplish great things.

And I should mention at this point they have over 10,000 students going through this just one university office plus, you know, the outreach services that they're using through social media and otherwise every year. So there is concrete impacts that can be shown but you've got to actually really be, you know, executing in a way that allows that to happen.

MS. MAATY: Thank you. We could probably spend a day on each of these questions but I'll take a few of them.

First, in terms of the role of syndicates and judges' clubs, I mean, gradually over the past several years we saw slowly the state closing in on the space for those institutions, though in the past judges' clubs, for example, were led by independent judges who were leading the independent judiciary movement. More and more of those clubs fell under the leadership of the NDP and were essentially coauthored by the state. And we saw that with other syndicates as well. And they also, you know, their regulatory environment made them no longer relevant. So these compulsory memberships for

certain syndicates that excluded actually a large number of the new professionals, for example, journalists and teachers for the most part now are being hired under temporary contracts, so they're not even part of the established syndicates.

So what happened is a lot of the independent activities within these institutions ended up forming independent, again, civic organizations because there was still that loophole where NGOs could register as civic companies or law companies and fall under the radar of the state. So I imagine now with the regulatory environment opening up a little bit more we'll probably see more developments. There already were a couple of independent unions that have been established over the past couple of years and I imagine we'll see more of those.

In terms of the question on women's rights and supporting women's rights, I mean, women have been an essential part of the reform movement in Egypt, even before the January 25<sup>th</sup> revolution. But everybody saw them on the Square and even before that there have been very active women's organizations. And even a lot of the new generation organizations have been very keen on gender mainstreaming across their programs within their staff and also in terms of how they respond to their programs in including women.

I think that there's two key things when we talk about women's rights in Egypt. One, it's very important not to accept cosmetic reforms. We've seen a lot of cosmetic reforms dealing with women's rights. There are, you know, for example, the quota for women. There has been some criticism of that from women's rights organizations in the sense that it created a separate ballot. So you're not educating. You're not instilling the mentality among political parties to nominate women as part of their core of candidates. I think one women's rights activist that I spoke to called it a

separate car for women. So that's something that needs to be very, you know, looked at closely and responded to.

Another thing is, unlike, for example, in Morocco where you saw a strong women's movement, you know, the reform of family law, there's not really, you know, a contemporary women's rights movement in Egypt. There's many women's rights organizations. They're somewhat divisive. Sometimes there's attempts to coordinate but usually the coordination is around specific issues and not as a larger kind of, you know, like what is the roadmap? What is the vision? What is needed to empower women effectively in Egypt?

Finally, with regards to the Internet and telecommunications and how, you know, how we use social networking sites, basically, you know, at the NED one of our key priorities over the past couple of years has been to support this innovative use of new technology and digital media. And you know, this whole question and debate over the social -- the Facebook revolution or the Twitter revolution I think simplifies the reality of, you know, the fact that this was a very, very long term process in Egypt. It wasn't just, you know, a big bang and a Facebook group that led to a revolution but many different key players that led up to that critical moment.

In terms of the types of programs that we supported, for example, since 2005 there's been an emergence of youth-led organizations that have really pioneered the use of film social networking sites, you know, using YouTube, Bamboozler, SMS for community mobilization, disseminating information. And just, you know, essentially marinating society for the events that happened on January 25<sup>th</sup>. There was a lot of, all of those who were on Facebook saw tons of activity related to civic and democratic ideas.

But I would also add that I think there was a *Washington Post* article that

was published recently that said that there were roughly 35,000 or 42,000 Facebook groups or pages established in Egypt in January alone. So there's a plethora of these different groups. It's not just about creating -- creating a Facebook group isn't going to start a revolution. The fact that this was so successful in Egypt is that the digital activists had a pulse on the society. So they created the products that could connect with what everybody else was thinking. You know, the society that had been so afraid of political participation for such a long time, you know, clicked on these links that talked about, you know, freedom and democracy and human rights because they can connect to it.

So I think that sums up my comments.

MR. PAGE: Thanks, Shadi (sic). I am afraid, folks, that we have five panelists and five minutes. And I do want to give each of them an opportunity to leave you with one key message that I think coming out of the discussion they feel you should walk away with. So unfortunately, we won't have time for further questions. I do take it from all of the hands that are in the air that it's a topic where we might sponsor another discussion at a later time as the revolution as I've heard people call it -- I'm always very careful having spent many years in the World Bank to avoid words like revolution -- continues to evolve in Egypt. I think what I'll try to do is go in the reverse order of the way in which people gave their presentations, which unfortunately puts a burden on Shadi since she just spoke last answering questions to be the first to give us your one-minute takeaway.

MS. MAATY: My one minute takeaway is I would say that the most critical element and, you know, incredible element of Egyptian civil society is the activists there. There are really incredible and creative perseverant young activists in Egypt who have been able to accomplish things that have fascinated the world and I think that all of

our support and attention needs to be paid to that group. And how to institutionalize what they've created. Again, great activists; very weak institutions. So we have to build on what we have and transform this individual talent into institutional talent that could be sustained over the longer term.

I think that's it.

MR. HAMID: You know, I think -- I think that from my perspective if you look at the events of the last few months, I mean, it's really quite shocking that one of the largest Arab, Islamic, or majority Muslim countries in the world carried the legacy forward of Gandhi. I mean, that you would see a huge, peaceful revolution in large part enabling a whole new playing field to be created. And it is something that is both, you know, I mean, extraordinary from so many different angles but also gives us huge hope. But candidly, also gives us a lot of pause in terms of how we create, you know, a framework that this society can really build itself for the long term. And I think that is a real tension point where you have so much hope and aspiration that has come out of this, but yet, you know, so many challenges that now are going to have to be confronted. I mean, as I think folks have said, the ability of everyone to sort of pinpoint one issue which was freedom, you know, getting rid of an oppressive regime, the dictator, well, that was, as we all know, the easy part. The rebuilding of a society is going to take years and years and years.

And I guess my sort of final takeaway in all of this, and you know, hopefully we can work together very closely with local NGOs as well as the international groups that are out there to help, is finding some concrete paths forward. I think that's really the key. If we can really focus on what sorts of initiatives, efforts that can show some real impact, do it quickly, build some momentum and show people that there is a

future because, you know, the countervailing trend of not having any progress being made and a feeling of just constant challenge is not one we want to be addressing. And that's probably where I'd leave it.

MS. KAMEEL: I would say actually that I want to leave you with this. Egyptians are very capable people. They are very special. They are very creative, sarcastic. I mean, they are very special in their own way. And they have their solutions and I think what we need currently is just to support things to happen in this very Egyptian way.

The need for strong institutions is, I mean, it's something that we need now more than ever to have institutions to be able to support those Egyptians, build the Egypt that they have been dreaming of.

And last but not least is again bottom-up approaches to development. So just listen to, I mean, those who are donors here or organizations wanting to support Egypt, just listen to Egyptians and just trust the advice that they will give you.

MR. HISHAM: Thank you. I think I would like to emphasize the short-term. I think we really need to get Egypt back to work producing, hiring, and employing. The fundamentals of the Egyptian economy is good and there are things that you cannot take away from Egypt, like the genius of the location, like the Suez Canal. It's the trade hub and I really encourage you and U.S. companies and the U.S. government to support the Egyptian economy at this very critical time. It's time -- there are opportunities in Egypt and even more now. Schumacher, the Formula 1 guy said when asked, "How do you always win?" He said, "When I see an accident everybody is taking their foot off the accelerator; I put it down." So this is an opportunity for companies, for everybody to really support Egypt and the Egyptian economy. And I really, I really stress that this is

the time because if we don't get through this short term it's going to be very difficult.

Thank you.

MR. SUFI: So, I mean, as important as some of the other countries in the region are, whether Libya, Bahrain, and so on, it really comes down to Egypt. The whole region is watching how this transition will go. Egypt is the most populous country for the region. So there's a lot at stake here and we have to get it right. And this is what I think the U.S. and the international community have a major role to play. As Jackie said, yes, Egyptians are capable and that's certainly the case and that's important for there to be indigenous ownership over this process. At the same time, rarely do democratic transitions succeed without some kind of western engagement. And that's been the case in Eastern Europe and Latin America where the U.S. and Europe have played at times, somewhat surprisingly, a positive role. So perhaps it's possible in the case of the Middle East and particularly Egypt as well. And we've seen how the post-revolutionary phase or the revolutionary phase has become somewhat uneven and we've seen more and more challenges, and that's why it's very important for the U.S. to engage creatively and to make sure that Egypt is still very high, if not the highest country on the priority list in the Middle East.

MR. PAGE: Well, now the most pleasant duty of being the moderation falls to me, which is to begin by thanking all of you for coming, for sharing your afternoon, and for being such a warm and participatory audience. To thank all the speakers for their remarks and to invite you to stay tuned because I'm sure this won't be the last conversation we have on this subject.

(Applause.)

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ANDERSON COURT REPORTING  
706 Duke Street, Suite 100  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

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