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EMBRACING REFORM:  
A MESSAGE FROM KING MOHAMMED VI OF MOROCCO

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## PROCEEDINGS

MR. INDYK: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Brookings. I'm Martin Indyk, the director of the Foreign Policy Program at Brookings and on behalf of that program and especially the Saban Center, director Ken Pollack is here in the front row this morning, we're delighted to bring you another statesmen's forum, this time to host the Minister of Foreign Affairs in cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco, Taieb Fassi Fihri.

It's a special pleasure for me. The Minister has been a good friend personally and a good friend of the United States for many years and I've long wanted to have the opportunity to host him here and am delighted that he's agreed to do so.

The Minister has a distinguished career in diplomacy, but it didn't start out that way. He was a professor of microeconomics at the University of Paris, then became a research fellow at the French Institute of International Relations, IFRI, before he joined the planning directorate in the Ministry of Planning of the Kingdom of Morocco.

From 1986 to 1989 he served as the head of division in charge of relations with the European community at the Foreign Ministry and then was nominate das Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation in 1993 by the late King Hassan II. He served in successive

governments and then His Majesty King Mohammed VI appointed him to the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

As some of you may know, King Hassan [ed: Mohammed] made a king's speech a couple of weeks ago. It did not get a lot of attention here. But King Mohammed announced sweeping reforms -- political reforms. As Ken Pollack was pointing out last night, we have in North Africa today an amazing set of phenomena. One the one side, a leader -- Muammar Qaddafi who is using brutal force to suppress the political aspirations of the Libyan people, on the other side we have Tunisia where a revolution has taken place and long-time leader, President Ben Ali has been overthrown in three days and left the country and a process of transition to democracy is now underway. And then we have what Ken was calling the third way, the way that King Mohammed II [ed: VI] has announced for Morocco and it's that way that I've asked the Foreign Minister to explain to us this morning.

So, ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Taieb Fassi Fihri to the Statesman's Forum.

[Applause.]

MINISTER FIHRI: Ladies and gentlemen, Madame Ambassador, thank you. Thank you very much, Martin, for this introduction but maybe you have to add that my English is still today, after

this long career, still approximate, but I will try. I will try to say some -- express some observations about what happened in our area and we can first have some preliminary conclusion and I think that the first conclusion is that there is no Arab exceptions for the universal principles for democracy and hopefully the Arab citizens, like others, wants better life and wants to live in the context of freedom and privilege democratic, multi parties. Then no one can progress including in our area without working on the two legs, economic development and political progress.

The second lesson is that given there is a growth, economic growth, this economic growth has to be shared by all people in a country, shared in different area of the country but also shared by all people, and I think that the Egyptians and Tunisians cases offer to us this lesson.

The third observation is that what's happened in some countries in terms of revolution, when we look to the Tunisian and the Egyptian case, we see that the regime maybe was -- I don't know if we say that in English -- sclerotic.

MR. INDYK: Sclerotic.

MINISTER FIHRI: Sclerotic. It's more erotic than in French.

MR. INDYK: Obviously.

MINISTER FIHRI: And remember that when the President Ben Ali was reelected in November 2009, some weeks after, there was a

mobilization from many people to encourage a new candidate in 2014 and imagine these people, young people, opened their eyes under the Ben Ali regime and we said to them that we have to live under the same system with the same values with the same injustice until 2019. And I think that is also the case for the Egypt of Hosni Mubarak. Then we can say that there are many of hopes in these countries and that's the Arab group is not a monolithic group, and the regime in Bahrain is totally different than in Mauritania and Algeria and Jordan or Emirates and Tunisia or Morocco and Yemen. Monarchies here, liberal monarchies here, more or less liberal monarchies there, Unique party, military power, and the specific power in Libya. It means that the change will happen hopefully because we are faced an hour earlier with the same challenges, same challenges in terms of employment, same challenges in terms of investing in people, because more than 50 percent of our societies are less than 25 years old and how to respond to the ambitions, natural ambitions and legitimate ambitions of our youth facing the same challenges, probably going forward in terms of evolution, but there will be no domino impact in this region because each country has its own specific itinerary because each country has its own political system.

But between revolution and evolution, the specter [phonetic] is large and I hope that each country can progress and respond to this

legitimate aspiration of people and, namely, of youth people in this area.

What about Morocco? I can say that first Morocco refused the Unique Party since the beginning and it was not easy, that in a monarchy expressed clearly that we want a multi party, and people work and political parties works together and hopefully we have the system and the multi parties was consecrated in the first constitution in 1962. And when I read some days ago the proposal -- the new constitution in Egypt, I think that we have to be proud as Moroccans that in 1962 we had this constitution.

And this constitution was amended four times and then it's expressed that Morocco evaluate progress and progress looking to the evolution of our society but also of our environment regionally and internationally.

We have also integrated the principle of [inaudible]. In 1998, for the first time, the opposition -- socialist opposition, came to the power. We also tried, since this time, with the King Mohammed VI, to continue thanks to some efforts to progress on our two legs on the economic field, human development, fighting against poverty, and the other leg, is the fighting against corruption, reforming, justice, creating best business environment possible, and in this context we negotiate and conclude an FTA with USA.

But beyond the trades or business or investments aspect, what we reach at this time is to take a strong commitment for a better environment for business and when we talk about environment for business, we talk about the necessity to have transparency, the necessity to have a clear IPR [phonetic] rules and necessity to have a transparent rules of game in Morocco. And we did the same with European Union.

Probably you know that Morocco, since many years, asked for specific status with European Union and European Union -- I don't say "offer" to us, because they are interesting for that, proposed to Morocco an advanced status and this advanced status for us is a testimony that Morocco walk on these two legs and he will continue to walk on these two legs, and we are very happy and satisfied to note that the same status just given to Jordan recently.

What's happened in the Arab world, then, taking account the evolution in Morocco, I want to insist on, as Martin said, this audacious new step taken by Morocco and people of Morocco. And when the King proposed an advanced regionalization in November 2009, then before the Arab spring [phonetic], before the Arab spring [phonetic], saying that it's time for Morocco to have this, not only decentralization, but more of that because the democracy start first at the local level.

When we present that and all political parties, all NGOs,

participate to the debate about the regionalization, and the report presented to the King during the last two months, then the King said, okay, for this important step but maybe we have to take this opportunity to go forward deeply and to not go to constitutional reform only for regionalization. Let us take this momentum, let us take this possibility and opportunity. Listen to what happened in our own society, but also looking at to what happened around us, not only in the Arab world, but also in Europe and in other countries, and what it was now is an inclusive debate for the best Constitution we can have during this year.

The King asked to have the proposal of reform before the end of June. Before the end of June. And the process, as I said, starts. Inclusive one, with all political parties, with all NGOs, with all trade unions, including youth organizations. And the goal is to have total independence of powers and powers' body. Executive, Parliamentary, and Justice.

In Morocco, Justice is still today an administration. It will be, before the end of the year, an independent, totally independent, body.

I am member of Cabinet -- elected Cabinet, with a large coalition of political parties. But we will jump, have a jump here during the next month. Elected government, yes. But with the Prime Minister issued from -- who will have the best score in the elections.

Human rights. We just reformed our mechanism of human



rights. And I can say to you, not as a diplomat, not as member of the Cabinet, that this system is maybe the best system for the supervision and the guarantees of human rights in our area, with the best international standards. With a new National Council for Human Rights. With a new and reinvigorated institution of mediator. And a new and energetic executive coordination among the Government in connection with the international institutions and also international NGOs.

Then at the same moment some protests continue.

Peaceful protest. And here, too, we are happy that it's happened like this. I talk about inclusive debate. We have also to note that the process in the street continues because there is the freedom for protest when it's peaceful. And I am sure that in some months, Morocco will continue.

I don't appreciate the term "exception" or the term "leaders of reform in the region," but because we do that for us first. Not only to come to Washington and say my country is the best in the region. No. Because we want to see our people progress and our people taking all possibilities and opportunities for their own benefits.

In conclusion, the Arab spring is here. We are not sure that the summer -- Arab summer will succeed to the current Arab springs. And maybe -- and we can talk -- maybe we will go directly here or there to a dark winter, like it happened in our area in Iran in 1979. Like when we see

that the counter-revolutions are still dynamic in Tunisia or in Egypt, and when we see the al-Qaeda will probably take this opportunity to pollute the atmosphere, because al-Qaeda needs large space, more than only the Sahel-Sahara region. But they are very active now in all West Africa, and maybe they will take this -- even they are surprised like us by the evolution in these countries -- then we have to be very careful, very prudent, and we have all -- U.S.A., European Union, Arab countries -- have to work together to protect this positive evolution, to accompany these transitions and to be sure that the legitimate aspiration of people were not kept by others and to come back to autocratic systems.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

MR. INDYK: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. We're going to have a bit of a conversation here first and then the Minister will take your questions.

I wonder if I can start with the political reform process, and just get you to elaborate on a couple of things. Your presentation was very clear, but I expect not everybody has had the chance to read the King's speech. And so there are a couple of things I wanted to just have you elaborate on.

The first is the Parliament. You said you've had political

parties. You've had rotation -- opposition leader and party has become the Government in the past. The difference now as I understand it is that the King will not appoint the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister will be the leader of the largest party in the Parliament. Is that correct?

MINISTER FIHRI: Exactly, and it's important. It's new. It's happened. The current Prime Minister is the leader of the party who has the best results. But naturally it needs a coalition, but His Majesty, like in other countries -- democratic countries -- will ask and invite the best results party to lead the Government. And it will be in the Constitution.

MR. INDYK: I don't know whether you can answer this question, because there's a Constitutional process that you've described, but what do you imagine will be the reserve powers of the King under this arrangement? What powers will he retain?

MINISTER FIHRI: First, the Monarch in Morocco is one of the oldest monarchies in the world. Second, the Monarch plays a key role in terms of cement and guarantee of the unity. Because Morocco naturally is an Arab country, but we are not only Arab. We are Arabs, we are Muslim, we are Jews, we are Andaluse, we are sub-Saharan African country. And it's this mix -- needs -- of these difference sources of our identity are expressed by this Monarchical system.

The King is also Commander of the Faithful. And in

Morocco the political area and the religious area are totally independent. But they join only in one point: at the level of the Monarch. Then it's an important, more than symbolic, role. And everyone in Morocco prefers to live under this umbrella.

But now in terms of executive decisions, the role of the Government will be enlarged significantly, and His Majesty is open now to delegate many of its current powers to the Government. And this Government will take its responsibility vis-à-vis the Parliament. When I say that here for you, it's totally normal. But let us come back to what happened in our area to take note that it's a very important and significant step.

MR. INDYK: Foreign policy and defense will remain in the hands of the King?

MINISTER FIHRI: Like in all democratic countries, defense - - because it is the guarantee of the unity. Foreign affairs -- it's a shared power. But the head of the state will continue to lead the foreign policy with an instrument, the Government.

MR. INDYK: So as Foreign Minister, you will be a member of the Executive branch of the Government?

MINISTER FIHRI: I have only a visibility for some months.

MR. INDYK: Not you personally.

MINISTER FIHRI: After the referendum, many things will change, naturally, with the implementation of the next Constitution.

MR. INDYK: I didn't mean to make it personal. "The Foreign Minister" is a member of the Executive branch of the Government? Or....

MINISTER FIHRI: I note that in many countries the Foreign Minister is not necessarily M.P. It's open. Totally open. I hope for Morocco that it will be the best possible Foreign Minister.

MR. INDYK: The King also announced, and you mentioned it, this new regionalization arrangement. What will be the powers of the regional governments?

MINISTER FIHRI: It's an important point, because it will be a real revolution. The revolution we appreciate in Morocco, because today, at the level of the region, we have people appointed by the Government, by the national Government. But today, we will have an elected council of the region with a President, with all the budget for the local development. And then the elected people will have the power to manage the region.

It's not easy. This transition is not easy, because the elected people means that the political party can have a program and have the capacity to manage that, but we will take the experience of some

countries, like Mexico or Indonesia, to have success in this important step. Important because we have many regions in Morocco. In each region we have some disparities -- socially, economically -- and we will create a specific foundation of solidarity between the regions, but also inside each region the best possibility in housing, in education, in health, in roads -- will be between the end of the local government.

MR. INDYK: The independence of the Judiciary is also a new development here. And that, presumably, that will be guaranteed under the Constitution?

MINISTER FIHRI: Yes.

MR. INDYK: And so the Judiciary will function independently of the King as well as the Parliament?

MINISTER FIHRI: No. The Justice will evaluate independently of the Parliament and the Executive. But the Justice will have its own law. And totally independent with any power. The King -- the Justice will be expressed on behalf of the King, but symbolically.

MR. INDYK: Right. He will appoint the judges?

MINISTER FIHRI: No, we will have an independent body, because don't forget naturally, Martin, you think in terms of Anglo-Saxon formula or American formula...

MR. INDYK: Sorry about that.

MINISTER FIHRI: But in Morocco it's -- no, no, not sorry -- but in Morocco, first we have our own justice principles, but we have the legacy of the Latin law and the Napoleonic Code. And we will have what is important.

First, is its total independence. It's not the reality today. And because some calls from time to time, from the Justice Department to some judge. But now we want to assure this total independence.

MINISTER FIHRI: Can I ask you just before we go to the audience, a couple of questions about foreign policy. Your region, the Maghreb in North Africa is now in considerable turmoil.

Do you feel it in Morocco? Is it -- is the Libya -- is the troubles in Libya going to affect life internally in Morocco in any way?

MINISTER FIHRI: Internally, not, but in terms of ambition, yes, because we have the Treaty, the Maghreb Union. This treaty is freezed because of the difficulties we have with our brothers, Algeria. But we have this ambition to build this important integration among the five member state, Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. And what's happened in Libya demonstrated that we have to wait more; that what is sure is that when we talk about North Africa evolutions, more from

Egypt to Tunisia, the Libyan case is maybe very complicate, and I think that no one can today said clearly what will be happened.

There is maybe from the first time a strong expression of for real consensus on the Arab League because Africa clearly we have to note that the Arab League didn't succeed in terms of economic integration, or in terms of sharing the same values, or in terms of crisis management. And I hope that taking the opportunity of this Arab's League we can progress and we can give to our common house. But the Arab League is bizarre common house with many windows, many some time to time some national position are stronger than the common -- common decisions.

But we note that the Arab League claim the first for the no fly zone in Libya with some reservation hailed as Syria and Algeria and Mauritania. And I noted that my colleague from Mauritania changed this morning, maybe due to that, I don't know. But --

MR. INDYK: He changed against or in support?

MINISTER FIHRI: No, did change, a new foreign minister --

MR. INDYK: Oh, I'm sorry, he was -- sorry.

MINISTER FIHRI: -- a new foreign minister this morning.

But this acting coming from the region was listening by the international



community, and to date we have a Resolution of Security Council which binding us, or to us all international community and all countries. We are in the Chapter 7, and this Resolution, it's not the Resolution of USA or France or Europe, it's our common Resolution.

Now each country can say I'm interesting by this, or I reading this wording or interpret this wording like that. But this Resolution is common, and this Resolution talk about four things:

First, cease fire.

Second, to protect civilians taking all necessary measures.

Third, humanitarian actions.

And four, politicking process.

Some country decide that to protect the civilians they had to intervene against the army which killed the civilians. And then I cannot say that it's illegal. I note that there is a large coalition of countries saying that it's the best way. I have to respect this point of view. But Morocco said at the same time the Resolution is wider, and some countries have to prepare themselves for a contribution for humanitarian actions or the debate for the real, deep, frank, inclusive dialogue between people in Libya, between people. Then --

MR. INDYK: Does "inclusive" include Colonel Gaddafi?

MINISTER FIHRI: All expression of something. It showed that there are many groups saying many things asking for a change. These people who works on TV would agree they express also something, that we have some experience in the past.

MR. INDYK: So Morocco is proud of the coalition --

MINISTER FIHRI: Morocco participate --

MR. INDYK: -- but it's not participating in the no fly zone recent force.

MINISTER FIHRI: Morocco participate -- Morocco participate to the Paris Summit because we already invite, and as I mentioned is because the Resolution inviting up to us together, I participated the Summit.

MR. INDYK: Right.

MINISTER FIHRI: And with my colleague with Jordan, with my colleague of Emirates, with my colleague of Qatar, and with my colleague of Iraq. And with (inaudible) and Iraq because it's the current president of the Arab League Council. And we discussed, and I said what I just said now, then we cannot said that Morocco is member of military

coalition but Morocco is member of a coalition trying to the best implementation of the Security Council Resolution.

MR. INDYK: You know, we have a saying here -- I don't know how well it translates into French or Arabic -- but we say that what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.

MINISTER FIHRI: All right.

MR. INDYK: Are you familiar with it?

MINISTER FIHRI: (Laughing)

MR. INDYK: And so the question is as follows: Does what happens in Libya stay in Libya? Or does it have a ripple effect through the region? We can see what happens in Egypt clearly has a powerful impact on the rest of the region, but is -- just explain, is Libya different to that?

MINISTER FIHRI: No. Libya, geographically, the localization is also important, the heart of the Malta-Africa, the heart of Mediterranean/South Mediterranean, but also in connection with many countries from this Isle. And --

MR. INDYK: African countries?

MINISTER FIHRI: African countries. And it showed that it can have a real impact. And when I said some many weeks ago that Al

Qaeda can explode the situation because Al Qaeda is present in Dar Maghreb, in the south of Algeria, in Mauritania, in Mali, in Niger, in Chad, and we want to avoid a link between Al Qaeda from the Maghreb Islamic and the activities of in the East of Africa, Somalia and others.

And when the Gaddafi said it will be -- it will have an impact, subversional impact, we have to take account of this.

MR. INDYK: So he's exaggerating. Is he exaggerating what's Al Qaeda's role at the moment, but you're saying that this, the tales can provide a --

MINISTER FIHRI: Incitedly, they are probably because -- I cannot, and I don't know if we can say that all people in Libya and Benghazi are from Al Qaeda. Probably not, but what -- but what's it show is that Al Qaeda will move, will try, will test, will intervene taking the opportunity of these question marks.

Al Qaeda loved the space where there is no strong and democratic national power.

MR. INDYK: Why don't we go to the audience now for questions. Before I do, I didn't recognize at the beginning that we have some distinguished guests in the audience, the ambassador of Jordan and

the ambassador of Norway, and, of course, your excellent ambassador, Ambassador Mekouar, So welcome to all of you.

Let's take some questions. Please wait for the microphone, identify yourself to the foreign minister, and please make sure there's a question mark at the end of your question.

Yes, here?

MR. OMANSURI; Good morning, Mr. Fassi Fihri. My name Siraf Omansuri, and I'm a senior at Georgetown. My question for you is basically what role for us, what role for the youth of Morocco in the future? And I'd like to believe in this, and I'd like to believe that it's possible for us to be a model for the region, but what role for us? Thank you.

MINISTER FIHRI: The answer is simple. Test. Express what you want to express and do what you want to do, and it's contribute to the debate. It's open. I cannot say to you say that the --

MR. INDYK: He's got to finish his studies first.

MINISTER FIHRI: (Laughing) And, but Morocco needs all its potentialities. All potentialities.

MR. INDYK: How would he participate in the debate?

MINISTER FIHRI: He can participate

through --

MR. INDYK: Are there mechanisms for the debate that --

MINISTER FIHRI: Yes, there is a mechanism. I talk about this inclusive mechanism. You can send your contribution to Internet articles. We have more in Morocco, more "Internot"?

MR. INDYK: Internet.

MINISTER FIHRI: Than vultures. (Laughter) No, this is true. It's true. The last elections, that's why the new disposal of new constitution offered this fresh, renewed, because the last elections less than 40 percent of citizen participated in the elections. And these elections were free, totally free. But some people said why are we go to vote? But now your voice is important.

MR. INDYK: There's one right up at the back there.

MR. PROKNELL: Hello. I'm Evan Prokneil. I'm a graduate student at Georgetown University, and when he spoke about multiparty system, will that include the heretofore banded Islamist parties?

MINISTER FIHRI: Me? The Islamist parties that have been banded in the past years, first, it's difficult to say that others party are not,

not Muslims, or -- when you said Islamist, it's mean that this radical sphere or environment.

We have an Islamist -- we have definition of the new Islamist party in the parliament, and they accept the rules of the game, and they said okay for constitutional monarchy since many years. We have some (inaudible) not represented, represented in the Parliament, but if they want to be party, welcome. If they, this movement continue to say, no, I will not participate, I'm waiting for I don't know which events, but everyone is associated to this, is invite to participate to this debate and dialogue and conscription of a new constitution.

MR. INDYK: Ken?

MR. POLLACK: Thank you, Mr. Foreign Minister. We're honored to have you here with us and to making this important presentation.

MINISTER FIHRI: Okay.

MR. POLLACK: I assume that it's not coincidental that you decided to come to the United States to kind of elaborate on the King's vision a bit more. I assume that there's a desire for some kind of an American role in this, but that's what I'd like to ask you about.

Obviously, Americans looking at the region, we understand that the changes there need to be made in the region, that the people want ownership of those changes; they don't want the "Made in the United States."

But by the same token what the Kind is proposing is exactly what so many Americans want to see more of in the region, and so what I'd like to ask you is, how can the United States help? We'd like to see the King's vision fulfilled because we want to see it succeed. What can the United States of America do to help that?

MINISTER FIHRI: I think that the question is maybe more larger, and when we compare what's happened, what is happening now in the Arab world, and what's happened in Central and Eastern Europe between 1989 and 1992, it showed that the evolution or revolution or the change from Poland to Hungary and Czechoslovakia, former Czechoslovakia, were impressed by AU, European Union, NATO, OSCE and reconstruction of European Bank and Development.

And it was easy for them to do that. It was important and U.S.A. contributed. Now I think that it's time, also, for European Union and the G8 members and namely, U.S.A. to think together and I hope to



act together in a coherent and complementary effort to help this transition, to respect the change and I said very clearly here, including imposition of conditionality.

You want to progress? Okay, I can help you, encourage you. Marshall Plan, okay. But don't forget that the Marshall Plan, there was some conditionality and I think that it's logical if U.S.A., Brussels and others said, "Okay, we are interested by your process." Europe is also interested in economy--economically by the stability of the region and by the progress of the region. And then, if there is this possibility, I am sure that we can win together.

It means that we need some new initiative. New speech of President Obama, maybe. Why not? Taking note of all these lessons. New ministerial meeting, what's it called? The Foreign For Future? The G8-BMENA effort. And it will be now, maybe, more successful because before the Egyptians, the Tunisians, others, were very nervous inside and I think that we can--there are many possibilities to create this conversion to effort to take note of this evolution, to (inaudible) the transitions and to create a new Arab world.

I note that everyone said in Brussels or in Washington, Paris, London, or (inaudible). We don't want to impose. We just want to accompany. I don't know what is the difference, but what is important is to

be to have an ownership in the definitions of the goal and implementations of the means.

MR. INDYK: Okay, there's a question.

MR. DRISEY: Thank you Minister. I first would like to quickly congratulate Morocco's progressive reform on human rights of the highest international standards.

MR. INDYK: Could you identify yourself, please?

MR. EL IDRISSE: William El Idrissi, George Washington University.

What effects do you theorize that the new independent justice system will have on King Mohammed's plan for reform?

MINISTER FIHRI: It's important because the justice is the best criteria, I think. The best criteria for a society in progress. And, the King said since now five years and asked the government to propose a real and deep reforms of the justice system. Some proposals, some project are ready and it will be adopted during the next weeks or month, but what is more important it's not only codes, penal codes or new texts, it's the spirit. And the spirit is that there is a law and we ask the judge to implement the law.

No more, but no less.

MR. INDYK: It just occurs to me as you're talking that the

word Palestine hasn't come up yet.

MINISTER FIHRI: Yeah.

MR. INDYK: And I think that's interesting in itself.

MINISTER FIHRI: Which Palestine do you prefer? Gaza or West Bank?

MR. INDYK: I'm asking the question.

(Laughter)

MR. INDYK: But I'm interested to know how you see what's happening in the Arab world. How is it likely to impact on the Palestinian issue and the prospects for resolving it?

MINISTER FIHRI: Many people talk about the capacity of the government of Fayed to create or to prepare a future independent state. And some people talk about, here too, about corruption, about justice, about--but I am sure that it will have an impact and we see it in the West Bank some protests expressed, a very strong desire to have a better life.

I note, also, that the Abu Mazen, now try to reach some new success. Not in the political negotiation process, because unfortunately it's freeze, but all around the world and this recognition of an independent Palestinian state for us is important. But I hope, globally, that quickly and the better--the quicker it will better to create once again, this negotiation

process. It has to start once again.

And maybe including some new elements, some new elements. Independent state, okay. But which independent state? How to be sure that we go directly to this democratic Palestinian state. With the constitution --which one? But it's important also for Palestinians to listen to what's happened and to talk also with the brothers in Gaza. We heard about your reconciliations and know that your -- you know very well that's it's not easy mission. But the Dossier and the Israel and Arab conflict is still here. And if we forget it, unfortunately what's happened this morning in Jerusalem, here to talk to us together, to the Arabs and to others.

MR. INDYK: Yes --

SPEAKER: Thank you. Mr. Foreign Minister, we'd like to ask you for your views on how the new government will approach the existence of a national government and a monarchy and at the same time, the regions to which you referred. And in terms of how these regions will be structured, because they will contain some of the several communities that comprise the nation and as some of these communities will be distributed in different regions or maybe concentrated in one or two of several regions.

How will a balance be maintained in the new government to

represent all of the religious and ethnic populations?

Thank you.

MINISTER FIHRI: First, we have two houses. We have the senate. And the senate will change. The senate will--the participation to the senate will be the result of the elections at the original level. In terms of respect of minority, the problem in Morocco, we have not this problem because we are all Moroccans and each of us have its own sensitivity. We are all Moroccans first, and after that we are from the North, from the East, from the South.

It's important question also because we have a problem and the name is the Western Sahara. And we present autonomy proposal to resolve this region and dispute between us and Nigeria. And it was welcomed by the international community, by the Security Council resolution, and we start negotiate since now four years. The Security Council said that the effort made by Morocco are credible, serious, and we have to negotiate taking account this effort and realistic approach.

But naturally we cannot wait for the final solution of this problem. That's why we think and we strongly believe that we have to move forward and (inaudible) for the Sahara, is in the context of the advanced resolution. Then it will respect all inhabitants of each area. There will -- the national rules, the protection of freedom of religions, we

have no problem in Morocco because we have Jews, we have Muslim living together since many centuries. And, some Jews are more --maybe not more, but they are longer Moroccan than some Arabs because Arabs and Islam came to Morocco only 14 centuries ago, but before Morocco; Berbers a reality, Jews a reality. And this is the interesting mix of people and each sensitivity will be protected in the context of national law and automatically in the context of regional law.

MR. INDYK: Barry Schweid.

MR. SCHWEID: You said last night that this, you told the Associated Press last night that Arab spring can quickly end if the transitions in Egypt and Tunisia don't lead to real democracy.

How long do you think the people in the street will be comfortable waiting? Their expectations are high. They've forced out governments. They must feel a little bit puffed up. How long do you think they can sustain this enthusiasm without a real change in governance in those two countries? Do you think it will come quickly? You spoke there could be a dark winter.

You don't really expect this to happen in six months, do you?

MINISTER FIHRI: I think like many others that the transition is important and the time for this transition is also important. And like you, we listen and we heard that for the best and fair and fruitful elections in

Egypt or in Tunisia, general elections, we need time.

Sufficient time for the organization of the new parties to be implemented, but no--too much time, do not give to some Islamists and radicals the capacity to have more success. And I am sure that the elections have to be organized in Tunisia and Egypt. After September for Egypt and after November for Tunisia. I think that these two countries needs, I think if we ask for the common effort of European Union, of G8, of some Arab countries to help this transition. We need some appropriate time, because youth needs, youth and others, needs political change but at the same time, the society needs some concrete results in terms of employment, in terms of subsidies, and the transition have to combine between the political reforms and economic and social needs. It's not easy.

Two reasons. Impact -- The economy have to continue to produce and to distribute with incomes.

MR. INDYK: This lady here.

MR. HAZHUBRIL: Mr. Indyk, merci. My name is Samatal Hazhubril. I am the (inaudible) representative of Circle of Young Moroccan Democrats, and actually -- I'm sorry -- here's my question. What are the implication according to you of this new reality in the Arab world and the U.S. policy in the Middle East? Thank you.

MINISTER FIIHRI: Let's be very frank. The Bush Administration asked for an evolution in the Arab world, after 11 September. And they were large debate here to impose the change, to accompany the change, to help or to continue to talk with this country but let them (inaudible).

Now, with the current Administration, they continue this effort but with different approach, less imposition, but more ownership. The change happened now in Tunisia and Egypt. It's more clear. Bolivia would not know, really, how will be the outcome. In Yemen the change will quickly.

And then USA have to live it lies that are offer, vis-à-vis of the region. But I insist. I know that maybe it would be difficult but in total accordance with others and total complimentary to the others, including European Union.

MR. INDYK: Over here. Back there. Sorry. Okay, go ahead.

We'll come back to you.

MS. FORRESTER: Okay, thank you. My name's Elena Forrester. I'm a photographer.

I was very encouraged at the beginning of your presentation when you made reference to the Arab world and you kept



making reference to it. There's a tendency here, which actually my father pointed out -- my father's Palestinian -- to divide the Arab world up to say, for example, North Africa, to not see us a unified group obviously with differences, but that Arab nationalism is still very much alive, at least for the people in the region. And I was just wondering, given that fact I think when bad things happen in the Arab world, here we have a tendency to demonize all Arabs, but when things are happening that are frightening to us maybe in a positive direction, we want it divided up somewhat. But given Morocco's position as a country that's seen pretty consistently as a positive country, not least of which Hollywood has I think done a good job, because people love to shoot film there, and that's always a positive thing, what has happened as much as you can talk about it, with the king speaking to some of these regional leaders behind the scenes? What kind of influence do you guys have in terms of, you know, not putting the screws -- that's obviously a very negative thing to say -- but to encourage them to be seen as a more positive force rather than bringing about all the negative stuff, which is I think is also encouraged, because people don't really respect a lot of the other Arab countries the way Morocco is perhaps so respected?

MR. INDYK: She's referring to across the region, the leaders across the region.

MINISTER FIHRI: No. Morocco have no lesson to give to anyone. And I insist that each country will reach its own solution, if I can talk about solution, that what is sure is that I remember myself that in 2002, 2003 the king made many speech and participate to many summit and insist on the necessity to not continue, only to talk about politics, politics, Palestinian, Israel conflict. It's important for the stability, but the Arab citizen needs to see this cooperation or the Arab League production have a concrete impact on its life, and efforts (inaudible) will not create a free-trade zone among us. Some investments are shared, but due to some private initiative rather than global Arab economic charter and also human development, because many Arabs country can help. And once again it cannot compare Qatar with Egypt in terms of needs, in terms of human development level.

I think that the most important thing we can share among us as Arabs is maybe to concentrate ourselves more on the concrete operational issues rather than to talk, talk, talk and reiterate some principles, which are from time to time in contradiction with our -- some national decision.

MR. INDYK: It's interesting to see, however, that Oman -- the Sultan of Oman -- one week after the King's speech came out with a very similar program and reform for Oman.

Yes, over there. I think this will have to be the last question.

MR. SCHOETTLE: I'm Peter Schoettle from Brookings, and thank you very much for speaking here at Brookings.

I think many people were quite surprised that the Arab League approved action against Libya, and my question to you is what's the significance of that? Does that portend greater readiness, willingness among the League and the member states to intervene domestically more than they have in the past, or just how significant is this step?

MINISTER FIHRI: In 2009 I think, during a tennis summit Tunisia, we adopt a new code for modernity, for progress, and it was at this time not imposed. But the dialogue we have with USC and with European Union -- our partners ask us to fix in resolution or in annex of our charter this modern concept. But nothing happened. Nothing happened concretely. How to modernize and how to progress and how to be more liberal.

Now, we have the text, but we have also the evens on the ground, and I think that the evens on the ground give to us as member of the Arab League an opportunity to create a new common house with the common vision but with, which is more important, the same and shared

rules of game. How to conduct some domestic issues in this country have to be the same than in other countries. And I hope that it's -- in French we said (foreign).

MR. INDYK: Springboard.

MINISTER FIHRI: Springboard. Springboard. Springboard for all common -- for Arab world. And I hope also that the next secretary general of the Arab League can work with this spirit. It would be a change.

MR. INDYK: Mr. Minister, I want to thank you, not only for your presentation today but for Morocco's friendship with the United States and for the leadership role that the King, Mohammed II Annual Country, is playing now in the Arab spring. We hope that flowers will bloom across the Arab world as a result of the role that you're playing. So, thank you very much.

MINISTER FIHRI: Thank you.

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

/s/Carleton J. Anderson, III

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