



Revolution in the Arab World: Political and Financial Implications

A SABAN CENTER AT BROOKINGS FORUM ■ NEW YORK CITY ■ MARCH 25, 2011



at BROOKINGS



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A Letter from the Conveners

The Middle East and North Africa region is going through a season of profound transformation. What seemed implausible mere months ago—sustained protests, sweeping political change, and ubiquitous demands for democracy—has become the new reality. Not since the political revolutions that raced through Eastern Europe two decades ago, has a region of such importance to the United States changed so fundamentally in such a short amount of time.

Within the current climate of uncertainty, America's policymakers and private-sector leaders do not have the luxury of waiting for time to clarify what is unfolding. The challenges before us demand immediate, but informed, attention. We face the difficult and urgent tasks of assisting transformations, guiding revolutions, restructuring partnerships, protecting interests, and preventing adversaries from capitalizing on upheaval, all while the final chapters of this new era are still to be written.

For this reason, on March 25, 2011, the Brookings Institution convened an unparalleled group of experts for a one-day forum in New York City. The aim of the forum—*Revolution in the Arab World: Political and Financial Implications*—was to offer analysis of and insight into the complex series of events that are taking place in the Middle East and North Africa. We looked at the repercussion of revolution on U.S. economic and security interests in the region and options for the United States in this new, unsettled landscape.

Along with scholars from the Saban Center for Middle East Policy, the Brookings Doha Center, and the Foreign Policy Program at Brookings, we were honored to have Brookings Trustee Dan Yergin, and Egyptian opposition leaders Esraa Abdel Fattah and Naguib Sawiris participate. The panelists offered perceptive insights that were only heightened by our exceptional moderator, *Meet the Press's* David Gregory, who led four outstanding discussion sessions.

What follows are the Proceedings of the conference, including the agenda, summaries of the sessions, and an analysis piece inspired by the discussions that took place. Please note that the conference was held under the Chatham House Rule, meaning that the content of the dialogue can be made public but not attributed to any person.

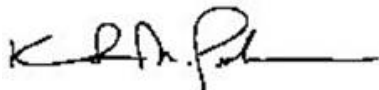
We hope these Proceedings help clarify the events of a region that is in flux, but that remains firmly in the vital interests of the United States.



Martin Indyk
Vice President & Director of Foreign Policy
The Brookings Institution



David Rubenstein
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BROOKINGS

Revolution in the Arab World: Political and Financial Implications

Friday, March 25, 2011

The Pierre Hotel
2 East 61st Street
New York, New York

8:00 AM	Registration & Continental Breakfast GARDEN FOYER	10:45 AM	Break
8:30 AM	Welcoming Remarks GRAND BALLROOM Strobe Talbott , <i>President, The Brookings Institution</i> David Rubenstein , <i>Trustee, The Brookings Institution; Founder, The Carlyle Group</i> Session 1: Egypt Shadi Hamid , <i>Director of Research, Brookings Doha Center; Fellow, Saban Center at Brookings</i> Esraa Abdel Fattah Rashid , <i>Media Coordinator, Egyptian Democratic Academy</i> Naguib Sawiris , <i>Chairman and CEO, Orascom Telecom (Egypt)</i>	11:00 AM	Session 3: The Gulf Suzanne Maloney , <i>Senior Fellow, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings</i> Kenneth M. Pollack , <i>Director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings</i> Ibrahim Sharqieh , <i>Deputy Director, Brookings Doha Center; Fellow, Saban Center at Brookings</i> Daniel Yergin , <i>Chairman, IHS Cambridge Energy Research Associates</i>
9:30 AM	Session 2: North Africa Daniel L. Byman , <i>Director of Research, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings</i> Martin S. Indyk , <i>Vice President and Director of Foreign Policy at Brookings</i> Salman Shaikh , <i>Director, Brookings Doha Center; Fellow, Saban Center at Brookings</i>	12:30 PM	Luncheon Session: Global Implications COTILLION ROOM Robert Kagan , <i>Senior Fellow, Center on the United States and Europe at Brookings</i> Kenneth Lieberthal , <i>Director, John L. Thornton China Center at Brookings</i> David Rubenstein , <i>Trustee, The Brookings Institution; Founder, The Carlyle Group</i>
		2:00 PM	Forum Concludes

*All sessions are off-the-record and closed to the general media unless otherwise indicated.

The Forest and the (Burning) Trees

Kenneth M. Pollack

Director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy

The one-day symposium held by the Brookings Institution on March 25, 2011 examined the crisis shaking the Middle East. It portrayed a region in which virtually every state is threatened by a common set of problems, but one that has also badly exacerbated each country's unique fissures. Indeed, one of the most important features of the unrest sweeping across the region is the simultaneous similarities among all of the revolts, as well as their differences. In some ways, every revolt is the same, and in some ways every revolt is different.

The similarities are a function of the shared set of underlying problems afflicting virtually all of the states of the Muslim Middle East. With the exception of Kuwait, the UAE, and Qatar, every Muslim Middle Eastern state is afflicted by the stagnant economic, political, and social systems endemic to the old order, and the anger and frustration that this lethal mixture has produced among their peoples. Everywhere, Arabs and Iranians, Berbers and Kurds, Circassians and Turkmen are fed up with their underperforming economies, inappropriate educational systems, corrupt legal structures, antiquated social systems, sclerotic bureaucracies, and unrepresentative political leaderships. In every country, the form of these problems is slightly different, but the similarities vastly outweigh the differ-



ences, and all of them share a common output: rage.

Nevertheless, even while these countries experience the same set of fundamental, underlying problems, each of them has its own unique problems. Each has its own idiosyncratic fissures—between sects, between ethnicities, between regions, between tribes, between classes, between cities, even between families. Thus, in Egypt we see rifts growing between Copt and Muslim, between upper and lower Egypt, and between urban and rural communities. In Libya, the angry divisions between regions (Cyrenaica and Tripolitania) and between tribes overlaid the general anger at Qadhafi's misrule and its various economic, social, and political manifestations. In the same way, Bahrain's particular Sunni-Shi'i divide became enmeshed in the general demand for change sweeping the region. And in Iraq, the same demands for change common to the region as a whole have gotten caught up in both Sunni-Shi'i and Arab-Kurd rivalries—exacerbating them and being exacerbated by them.

This paradoxical combination of similarities and differences has been an important element stoking the flames of the region's conflagration. The commonality of the underlying problems across the countries has made it easy for unrest to spread. Citi-

zens of one country inevitably share many of the grievances of their neighbors, so that when they see their neighbors revolt—and either topple a tyrant or merely secure important concessions—it emboldens them to do the same. However, the differences among the countries have meant that both the rulers themselves and concerned spectators, like the United States, have found it exceedingly difficult to frame a common response. Nick-of-time concessions have worked (so far) in Morocco and Oman, but not in Egypt and Tunisia; mass violence has worked (so far) in Iran and Syria, but not in Libya.

The usual responses of regimes to problems arising from the specific, pre-existing tensions within each country have proven ineffective this time around because of the underlying grievances related to the common economic, social, and political stagnation of the region. Thus, the Yemeni regime has found it impossible to use its traditional methods of coping with its long-standing religious, tribal, and geographic frictions because of the new element of popular outrage directed at the regime itself by urban, secular Yemenis. The old solutions no longer work because new groups of people have been driven to revolt by very different sets of grievances from those that typically motivated the regime's opponents in the past.

For the United States, what all of this means is both simple to say, but exceptionally complicated to execute. In constructing a policy response, the United States needs to view the region as afflicted by a single overarching set of problems that affects each country differently. Washington will therefore have to develop a common approach to the region, one

that emphasizes the need for change, transformation, and reform to address the ubiquitous economic, political, and social stagnation. It will mean pressing for reform everywhere and all the time, and pressing for reform as a way of heading off revolution. But everywhere, Washington will also have to help the states of the region tailor their transformation to their unique history, culture, traditions, aspirations, and divisions. In some ways, reform and change in Egypt should broadly look like reform and change in Morocco or Oman, but in other ways, it must be very different. The difficulty is that Egypt's problems are as different as they are alike to those of Oman and Morocco.

Devoting this level of attention and creative energy to the Middle East is a tall order, especially at a time when the American people are so inwardly focused. But it is a responsibility that Washington dare not shirk because the stakes are so high. Still, as our conversations on March 25 highlighted, while the United States has a role to play, much of the work must be accomplished by the people of the region themselves. It is neither desirable, nor feasible for the United States to impose change. Reform only succeeds when it is indigenous. Yet neither is it the case that the states of the region will be fine if simply left to their own devices; they have failed too often in the past for anyone to believe that. Thus, part of the complexity of the challenge is for the United States to find ways to help the countries of the region without dictating to them; and help them devise ways of meeting both their common problems and their unique circumstances. "Audacity" does not begin to describe it.

Summaries of Forum Discussions

Session 1: Egypt

The first session of the forum focused on events in Egypt, with panelists giving an update of the current state of affairs and offering insight into the challenges the country faces as it transitions to a post-Mubarak government. The panelists acknowledged and praised the swift progress of the protest movement in removing the longtime president from office, but voiced concern that several factors could impede the country's evolution toward an open, democratic, and stable system of government. In particular, the panel warned that the military's hesitation to relinquish power, the short timeframe for parliamentary elections, and ongoing strains on the economy could all upend any progress made so far.

The panelists began by saying that it is important to note that both Egyptians themselves and the international community had assumed the Mubarak regime was internally cohesive and strong. Therefore, it was astonishing that a popular movement was able to topple the government in only eighteen days with little more than sustained, peaceful protests. One panelist said that discontent had been building in Egypt for years, but the only outlet was to back Islamist groups, something unappealing to large portions of the population. As a result, the panelist was not surprised that a secular, grassroots movement gained such large-scale popular support. Yet, the same



speaker was stunned by how effective the movement was in challenging the regime and how quickly the Mubarak government crumbled. Another panelist pointed to factors that had been in place in Egypt that were conducive to the growth of the protests, specifically the Kefaya reform movement, labor strikes, and ongoing calls by opposition organizations for greater political freedoms. Still, that speaker said, a crucial catalyst of the revolution was the overthrow of President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia, which set an example for Egypt. Further, although Egyptian state television largely ignored the uprisings in Tunisia and Tahrir Square, satellite television coverage gave the protesters confidence to maintain their momentum.

Despite the unprecedented change that has taken place in Egypt in a short amount of time, several panelists noted some factors that may give pause to those hoping for full-scale reform. Specifically, the military's assumption of power once Mubarak departed was sobering to those who had hoped seismic political change was imminent. One participant said that the military has taken actions that seem to directly contravene the demands of the protesters, including announcing a ban on strikes and protests (the military has argued that this is necessary to maintain stability). The same speaker noted that there have been allegations that the military has been torturing people in its custody. Despite what

many panelists saw as questionable behavior by the military, one said the military is unlikely to try to hold power after elections. Instead it will likely relinquish control, but seek to retain its strong economic and institutional influence in the country.

Another area of concern was the Egyptian economy. Given the central role poverty and unemployment played in sparking the protests, continued economic stagnation has the potential to keep discontent simmering even with Mubarak gone. One of the speakers was critical of the elite's desire to focus on combating extremism in advance of the upcoming elections, saying this has pushed the issue of job creation and economic growth to the back burner. This situation is dangerous since the state's coffers have depleted quickly, meaning that soon the government could be unable to pay the salaries of public sector employees. To avert an economic crisis, two participants called for the development of a "Marshall Plan for Egypt." This financial package should be administered by European authorities with financial contributions from the Persian Gulf states. Such a setup would widen the coalition of stakeholders, while avoiding the perception of American dominance, and could bridge Cairo's financial gap until the economy is restarted, something that would probably take months, not years.

The panelists expressed concern about the repercussions of the March 19 referendum that approved constitutional reforms and set a six-month period for campaigning until elections. Two panelists felt that this truncated campaign period is a disadvantage to the youth groups and secular activists who had been active in the revolution; they will have a short window to organize, develop parties, introduce themselves to the nation, and campaign. One expert said that those who will benefit

most will be the National Democratic Party, the military, and the Muslim Brotherhood—groups that have an organizational advantage but were either the target or not part of the group that brought about the fall of the Mubarak regime.

The session concluded with disagreement over the depth of support for the Muslim Brotherhood within Egyptian society and the likelihood that the Brotherhood would pursue an extremist agenda if elected into the government. One panelist argued that the military has become too closely linked to the Brotherhood—something that could harm the country's relations with members of the international community. But another said that while the military cannot afford the political cost of going against the Brotherhood, it has certain red lines it would not cross, such as abandoning the peace treaty with Israel or breaking ties with the United States.

Session 2: North Africa

The second session of the forum addressed the recent turmoil in North Africa, paying particular attention to events in Libya. Panelists agreed that the United States has primarily a humanitarian, rather than vital, interest in Libya, but one panelist felt that because the attention of the Middle East—a region at the heart of several U.S. national security interests—is now on Libya, what the United States does and does not do there can have profound, long-term consequences for U.S. vital interests.

One panelist began the discussion by examining the military intervention in Libya, arguing that the United States has only a humanitarian interest in what is occurring in the country. The allied campaign has

thus far prevented Qadhafi loyalists and mercenaries from advancing toward Benghazi, where many in the international community had feared a humanitarian crisis would occur. However, beyond preventing this large-scale killing, and articulating the principle that the international community will not stand idle while a dictator attempts to massacre his people, the United States should be careful about intervening in the conflict. Instead, the United States should stay focused on Egypt—the largest and most influential country in the Arab world—which is vital to U.S. interests in the Middle East.

Another of the experts agreed that the U.S. mission in Libya is primarily humanitarian, and said that the Obama administration felt compelled to act, despite its misgivings, because the spotlight of the world was on what seemed to be an impending humanitarian crisis (the lack of attention on places like Sudan is the reason the international community has remained comparatively on the sidelines there). This speaker argued that while the U.S. interest in Libya is humanitarian, U.S. rhetoric has gone beyond this, calling for Qadhafi to step down. The panelist warned that though the United States may want Qadhafi to go, the administration should be careful about voicing preferences that it will not back with action or resources.

While agreeing that the international intervention in Libya was based primarily on humanitarian concerns, a third panelist disagreed that it is not in the United States' vital interests to be involved. The participant argued that the United States

has long been on the “wrong side of history” in the Arab world, and Arab eyes are watching events in Libya to see what the United States does. The Middle East is undergoing a transformation, and while Washington should let the people in the region take the lead, it should seize the opportunity to redraw its relationship with the people there.

That panelist said that Washington should be concerned about Qadhafi's survival. If Qadhafi holds on to power, there are others, like President Assad in Syria, who will gain confidence in their own strength and ability to act with impunity against their people. Therefore, while the momentum of uprisings comes from the street, the United States and international community can influence the way dictators choose to respond.



Yet, another participant said that it is questionable whether it will be more dangerous for the region to have Qadhafi stay in power or be removed. A power vacuum in Libya would enable al-Qa'ida to take advantage of the lawlessness, and because there is little information on the sentiments or outlook of the rebels, it is unclear whether they would be sympathetic to U.S. interests. The panelist felt that as long as Qadhafi is boxed into a corner with limited power, it is not vital that he be removed altogether. However, another expert argued that if Qadhafi manages to hold on to power, there will be divisions within NATO, the Arab world, and Europe about what to do. Some may argue for more aggressive measures, like ground troops, whereas others would be hesitant to commit further. Maintaining unity,

then, may be the greatest challenge moving forward.

The discussion turned to Europe, with one speaker observing that the division in Europe over Libya may be entering a crisis phase. Germany has deep reservations about intervention whereas France has been determined to lead the cause. This disagreement among European capitals comes as the continent has already argued over currency and debt, and this latest difference of opinion may exacerbate already-weakened European unity. The irony in this is that Libya—a relatively minor country—may divide Europe.

In examining the international community's role in the intervention, one panelist said that President Obama had waited to address the nation about the U.S. intervention in Libya because he did not want to exhibit "ownership" over the conflict. Rather, he prefers having other countries take responsibility and is looking to shape a new international order, one in which the United States has influence and leadership but where others take responsibilities seriously. It is still to be seen if this is possible, considering that key countries, such as Russia, which are critical to a new order have stayed out of this fight. However, another panelist argued that despite this situation, the international community still owns the Libya conflict. The UN passed two far-reaching resolutions, putting responsibility on all the parties. Even those countries that abstained from voting for the intervention have a responsibility to contribute because they did not vote against the measure. However, one expert warned against assuming that the international community or NATO will be in charge of the intervention because in truth, the United States, by virtue of its status as the world's sole superpower, will ultimately remain heavily involved, if not at the helm of the coalition.

Moving forward, one speaker argued that the United States should focus on assisting in the democratic transition of countries in North Africa by devoting resources to non-governmental organizations, such as the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Republican National Institute (RNI), that specialize in building and strengthening good governance. Another panelist agreed, saying that the region does not need a dynamic political leader to guide the countries through the transition (in fact, the Middle East has a history of being plagued by charismatic leaders), but rather, it needs strong institutions that the people trust and are proud of.

Session 3: The Gulf

The third panel examined the effects of the uprisings on countries in the Persian Gulf region and on U.S. strategic and economic interests there. The panelists discussed the unrest in Bahrain and Yemen, the state of Saudi Arabia and its relations with Washington, and the impact of all of this on Iran's quest for regional influence. The panelists agreed that the Gulf is viewed as fundamentally different from the rest of the Middle East, given its importance to global energy markets. This factor guided American policy before the political turmoil, and has informed the U.S. response as the protests have continued.

One panelist noted that contrary to fears, the turmoil in the Middle East has had little impact on America's energy supply. This panelist pointed out that the United States' largest source of oil is Canada, and that Libyan production represents only 1.5 percent of the world market. In addition, the expert said that Saudi Arabia likely has

sufficient excess production capacity to keep global prices in check, if necessary. With this in mind, the panelist argued that current increases in oil prices are due mainly to speculation rooted in fear of potential future upheaval. Yet, several participants expressed concern that if Saudi Arabia fell victim to internal strife, there could be dramatic ramifications for the global oil supply.

The panelists agreed that there are major problems brewing in Bahrain and Yemen, where protests have been growing. Two panelists were critical of Saudi Arabia's and the UAE's decision to send troops into Bahrain to help suppress Shi'i protesters there. These panelists felt that doing so conjured fears of a sectarian war by an alliance of Sunni dictatorships against their Shi'i populations. By intervening, not only did the Saudis and Emiratis interfere in a legitimate domestic movement, but they gave fuel to Iran's claim that Washington and its allies in the region are looking to suppress the Shi'i populace. One panelist called Saudi Arabia's decision to intervene in Bahrain a "slap in the face" to Washington because of how it reflected on America throughout the region. Another panelist said this was evidence of a growing Washington-Riyadh divide, sparked by Riyadh's distrust of Washington after the Obama administration backtracked on its support for another longtime ally, Hosni Mubarak, and ended up calling for his ouster.

The panelists discussed the impact of the protests and their aftermath on the power struggle between Iran and Gulf states.



One participant said that the protest wave that had swept through Tunisia and Egypt probably would not threaten Iran, given the effectiveness of Iran's security forces in clamping down on protestors. While Iran continues to seek to profit from the regional upheaval, another speaker said the revolutions have harmed Iran's narrative of being a supporter of popular movements and the champion of the people. Many in the region now look to individuals like Google executive Wael Ghonim as heroes, not Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and see the virtue in peaceful protest, rather than violence. Still another expert worried that the events could have a hardening effect on Iran's calculus: having seen Libya, a nation that gave up its nuclear program for the promise of better ties with the West become the target of Western military attacks, Tehran might be loath to agree to a nuclear deal at this point.

While the panelists agreed that Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, and Kuwait appear to be stable for the foreseeable future, they noted fault lines in each country. Saudi Arabia, specifically, may be a potential source of future trouble. A participant said that while King Abdullah's reforms have been popular, his interior minister—and possible successor—Prince Nayif is a hardliner looking to crack down on possible threats, and could take action that would spark unrest. Short of this, Nayif would likely halt reforms if he succeeded the octogenarian Abdullah. As another panelist said, this would likely spark revolt by those who tasted greater educational and travel opportunities during Abdullah's reign.

One speaker pointed to Yemen as the country of utmost concern, saying that the future of the country remains extremely tenuous—while tribal leaders have begun turning on President Saleh, it remains unclear what would happen in his absence. Tribal conflict, in the context of a country with separatist movements and a strong al-Qa’ida presence, would be a distinct possibility.

Luncheon Session: Global Implications

The final session of the forum examined the implications of the protests and political transitions on the United States, China, and Europe. Panelists paid particular attention to the effects of these events on the U.S. economy, the economic recovery, and global oil markets. There was some disagreement about whether the U.S. intervention in Libya was politically and fiscally sustainable, but one participant argued that most of those raising the issue of expense were doing so out of short-term political considerations.

The session began with panelists examining how policymakers and private-sector leaders should think about the transitions in the Middle East and North Africa region. One panelist said that it is unclear what the outcomes will be in the coming months and years, but this uncertainty should not determine whether the United States should act. Events in the region are moving forward regardless of whether the United States wants them to, and therefore the key issue for American policy-

makers is how to steer the events in a favorable direction. In terms of what the Obama administration has done thus far, the panelist stated that the approach to the conflict in Libya is not much different from what past administrations would likely have done—the United States generally prefers multilateral action, but assumed the mantle of leadership. The panelist added that the intervention in Libya should not be surprising, since the United States intervenes in conflicts often—on average, every two-and-a-half years.

Another speaker observed that the unpredictable nature of the uprisings has made global investors anxious. Yet, American financial investment in the region is fairly small, and therefore the impact on the investment community may only be minor. Capital outflow will likely be affected more than energy investments; since 9/11, investors from the Middle East have shifted away from strictly investing in the United States and more toward investing in the Middle East and in Europe.

Recent turmoil will make those investors wary of keeping too much money in the region and will cause them to move capital elsewhere.

When asked about the Chinese reaction to the Arab uprisings, one panelist said that the events could serve as a warning to the Chinese government. While most analysts don’t question China’s stability, the protests have demonstrated the potential power of technology and social media, and challenged the notion that an authoritarian system cannot lose its grip on power. Further, the unfolding events in



the Middle East will likely highlight the extent to which China's economy is dependent on imported energy. Although China's economy is projected to grow at an annual rate of 10 percent over the next few years, the fact that that growth is fueled by imported energy puts long-term growth at risk. Furthermore, because China has demonstrated that it is unwilling to enact political or party reforms, and is solely focused on economic expansion, if that growth halts, its leaders could face an existential challenge.

In discussing U.S. policy toward Libya, one panelist said the United States is providing aerial support to alleviate a humanitarian crisis, and policymakers should not focus on whether the mission takes a few days or a few weeks. Another panelist questioned this premise, noting the cost of the intervention, particularly at a time when the United States is facing mounting budget deficits and growing debt. The first panelist responded by saying that if the government is serious about cutting its deficit, it would not focus on cutting military spending, which is a small portion of the budget; instead it would look to reform entitlement programs.

The moderator asked one of the experts about the differing viewpoints among American politicians regarding recent events, especially the intervention in Libya. The panelist replied that Republicans have had mixed messages about

Obama's strategy and the no-fly zone. Republicans, not unlike Democrats during the George W. Bush presidency, have used the events as an opportunity to win political points, which can be attributed to the fact that the campaign for the 2012 elections is starting. Yet, this panelist also criticized the Obama administration for not articulating its Libya policy or putting its various responses to events in the Middle East in a broader context. Another participant argued that this may be the case because the administration wants to keep a distance from what is unfolding and does not want to be held accountable for everything that happens in the region.

The session concluded with the panelists examining the impact of the uprisings on an issue that remains vitally important to the United States: the Arab-Israeli peace process. The uprisings in the region, one expert noted, demonstrate that issues other than the Arab-Israeli conflict are vitally important to the peoples in the region. When asked whether there will be a renewed push on the peace front, that speaker suggested that Israel is now under less pressure to act. Another panelist added that the Obama administration will most likely not push for an agreement before the 2012 U.S. presidential election, since what was already a complicated issue has acquired several more layers of complexity.

Design: CK Art and Design Studio
Photography: Hechler Photographers

THE SABAN CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY

The Saban Center for Middle East Policy was established on May 13, 2002 with an inaugural address by His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan. The creation of the Saban Center reflects the Brookings Institution's commitment to expand dramatically its research and analysis of Middle East policy issues at a time when the region has come to dominate the U.S. foreign policy agenda.

The Saban Center provides Washington policymakers with balanced, objective, in-depth and timely research and policy analysis from experienced and knowledgeable scholars who can bring fresh perspectives to bear on the critical problems of the Middle East. The center upholds the Brookings tradition of being open to a broad range of views. The Saban Center's central objective is to advance understanding of developments in the Middle East through policy-relevant scholarship and debate.

The center's foundation was made possible by a generous grant from Haim and Cheryl Saban of Los Angeles. Ambassador Martin S. Indyk, Vice President of Foreign Policy at Brookings, was the founding Director of the Saban Center. Kenneth M. Pollack is the center's Director. Daniel Byman is the center's Director of Research. Within the Saban Center is a core group of Middle East experts who conduct original research and develop innovative programs

to promote a better understanding of the policy choices facing American decision makers. They include Bruce Riedel, a specialist on counterterrorism, who served as a senior advisor to four presidents on the Middle East and South Asia at the National Security Council and during a twenty-nine year career in the CIA; Suzanne Maloney, a former senior State Department official who focuses on Iran and economic development; Stephen R. Grand, Fellow and Director of the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World; Salman Shaikh, Fellow and Director of the Brookings Doha Center; Ibrahim Sharqieh, Fellow and Deputy Director of the Brookings Doha Center; Shadi Hamid, Fellow and Director of Research of the Brookings Doha Center; and Shibley Telhami, who holds the Sadat Chair at the University of Maryland. The center is located in the Foreign Policy Studies Program at Brookings.

The Saban Center is undertaking path breaking research in five areas: the implications of regime change in Iraq, including post-war nation-building and Gulf security; the dynamics of Iranian domestic politics and the threat of nuclear proliferation; mechanisms and requirements for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; policy for the war against terrorism, including the continuing challenge of state sponsorship of terrorism; and political and economic change in the Arab world, and the methods required to promote democratization.

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