Stability and Prosperity in the Region: Mutual Equities and Enduring Relationships

OCTOBER 17-18, 2011

DOHA, QATAR

A SABAN CENTER AT BROOKINGS-UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND CONFERENCE

BROOKINGS

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A LETTER FROM KENNETH M. POLLACK

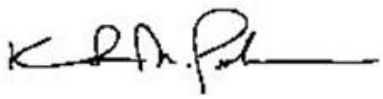
On October 17–18, 2011, the Saban Center at Brookings and United States Central Command partnered to bring together nearly one hundred experts and policymakers from the United States and the Middle East to discuss the implications of the Arab Spring. The conference, *Stability and Prosperity in the Region: Mutual Equities and Enduring Relationships*, examined the political, economic, and security challenges that have developed in countries undergoing change, and the way in which these challenges will affect the region as a whole. We were honored to have the U.S. Ambassador to Qatar, Susan Ziadeh, and Qatar's Assistant Foreign Minister for Follow Up Affairs, H.E. Mohammed Bin Abdullah Bin Mutib Al Rumaihi, each deliver keynote remarks. CENTCOM Deputy Commander Vice Admiral Robert S. Harward participated in the conference and delivered opening remarks.

The Middle East has become a vibrant hotbed of political activity, so it is fitting that we held our Saban Center-CENTCOM conference in the region for the first time. Dozens of scholars, policymakers, members of the military, and activists who witnessed—and, in some cases, participated in—the transformations in their home countries were able to join us and provide unique insights.

Our discussions looked at the formation of new governments in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya, ongoing unrest in Yemen and Syria, and the U.S. departure from Iraq, and asked what the ramifications of these would be for U.S. interests in the region. While we examined events in each country experiencing change, much of our discussion focused on the big picture, analyzing the shifts in the regional balance of power. One speaker noted that Turkey, which abandoned its support of the Asad regime in Syria, endorsed the NATO-led campaign in Libya, and has championed the Palestinian cause, has been the biggest "winner," strengthening its regional position. Similarly, Qatar—by housing Al Jazeera, a key influencer during the Arab Spring, and by acting as a pragmatic mediator of regional conflicts—has emerged as an important player. Several participants argued that Iran has emerged weaker from this year's events—not only is its ally, the Asad regime, on the ropes, its narrative of violent, religious-based revolution has fallen on deaf ears. Others felt that Iran had benefitted from the Arab Spring and the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq, at least in the short term, but potentially over the longer term as well, given the unpredictability of the political changes sweeping the region. In examining these issues, we sought to offer insight into how the United States can best safeguard its own long-term interests, while playing a constructive role in advancing the political freedoms of people in the Middle East.

What follows are the Proceedings of the conference, including summaries of the sessions and a pair of analysis pieces based on 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. The keynote addresses were delivered off the record.

I would like to express my sincerest thanks to the staff of the Saban Center, in particular members of the Brookings Doha Center, as well as our partners at CENTCOM for putting together the conference and the Proceedings. Among our many invaluable partners at CENTCOM, Colonel Michael Greer and Lieutenant Colonel Robert Earl worked tirelessly to make this conference a reality. Special thanks are due to Vice Admiral Harward for his insights and contributions throughout the conference.



Kenneth M. Pollack
Director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Day One: October 17, 2011

Opening Dinner Remarks
Susan Ziadeh, United States Ambassador to Qatar

Day Two: October 18, 2011

Opening Remarks and Introduction
Vice Admiral Robert Harward, Deputy Commander, U.S. Central Command

Keynote Address
H.E. Mohammed Bin Abdullah Bin Mutib Al Rumaihi, Assistant Foreign Minister for Follow Up Affairs, State of Qatar

Panel One: The Arab Spring: Impacts on Civil-Military Relations in the Levant and GCC
Moderator: Kenneth Pollack, Director, Saban Center at Brookings

Panel Two: Dealing with Terrorism in the Region: Al-Qa'ida and Hizballah
Moderator: Salman Shaikh, Director, Brookings Doha Center

Panel Three: Regional Actors and Gulf Security: Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran
Moderator: Suzanne Maloney, Senior Fellow, Saban Center at Brookings

Closing Remarks and Conference Wrap-Up
Kenneth Pollack, Director, Saban Center at Brookings

THE ARAB AWAKENING FROM THE OUTSIDE IN

KENNETH M. POLLACK

When the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt first shook the political foundations of the Middle East, they set off a cascade of dominoes across the region that has not stopped falling yet. Ben Ali is gone. Mubarak is gone. Qadhafi is gone. Saleh and Asad are teetering on the brink. Who knows who else may follow.

Although inspired by the wave that has swept across the region, the Arab Awakening has been characterized by revolutions from within. In every case, the winds blowing from without served as nothing more than the catalyst—the spark, the start, the drop of Ice-9 that began the chain reaction. But the upheavals themselves were wholly homegrown.

Given how internal political developments have transformed the face of the Middle East, it is both understandable and entirely appropriate that the entire world has been fixated on the internal politics of every country in the region. Indeed, such a focus was long overdue in a part of the world where internal politics (and economics and social development) were routinely ignored by their own elites and by everyone else in the world.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the internal changes transforming the face of the region will inevitably transform its geopolitics as well. As new political and economic systems emerge in these countries, they will seek new destinations, find new friends, set new goals, and define new codes of conduct. They may also enjoy new strengths and suffer from new liabilities compared to the governments they supplanted. The whole will inevitably be greater than the sum of its parts, redefining the balance of power across the Middle East.

It was this set of issues that the third annual Brookings Institution-U.S. Central Command conference attempted to address. At this point in time, so close to the initial events, and with some of them still unfolding, we were only able to begin exploring this topic, but it was a very constructive and rewarding set of first steps, one that made clear how important it will be for the United States and its allies to continue to pay attention to how the internal changes in the Arab world are reshaping its external relations as well.

Reflecting on the many views presented at the conference, at least four broad trends seemed to present themselves as worth considering.

First, the alliances and coalitions—both formal and informal—that once defined the region may well be resorted partially or entirely. In the past, the region was dominated by a status quo alliance of the United States, Egypt, the GCC, Jordan, Morocco, Turkey, and Israel (tacitly), with support from Europe and America's East Asian allies. This alliance was opposed by a small but troublesome coalition of rejectionist states/groups led by Iran and including Syria, Libya before 2004, Hizballah, Hamas, and other terrorist groups. In the future, the dividing line may change and we could instead see democratic states opposing more traditional autocracies, haves demanding more assistance from have-nots, Islamist-dominated states against more secular countries, or some other, currently unimaginable, alignment. The very different kinds of governments currently taking power will undoubtedly embrace very different goals and foreign policies than

their predecessors and that could result in very different regional divisions than what we have seen in the past.

Second, the militaries of the Arab world are sailing into uncharted waters. Their roles are changing fundamentally, and generally in ways they did not expect or desire. The regional militaries never sought to play the role of custodians of political change and they do not really know how to do it, but neither do they relish cracking down on popular dissent, especially since most recognize the validity of the peoples' grievances. Thus, those forced to play this role find themselves in a very uncomfortable position, one they would like to escape as quickly as possible. However, the history of these kinds of political transitions is that they take decades, if not generations, so the need for a guiding hand will remain. The inexperience of the militaries being forced into this role is also showing, with tremendous friction developing in Egypt and Libya, and splits within the military itself in Yemen and Syria. Moreover, while the U.S.-Egyptian military-to-military relationship played an important positive role during the revolution, something that should make Americans eager to deepen ties with other regional militaries, it is not clear that we will be able to do so. Not only are the administration and Congress increasingly turning inward in ways that will make military aid harder to come by, the existing monarchies and autocracies are well aware of the role the American military played, and may in the future seek to quarantine their militaries from too much exposure to Americans, lest they experience the same surprise as Hosni Mubarak did on the morning of February 11, 2011.

The regional militaries never sought to play the role of custodians of political change and they do not really know how to do it, but neither do they relish cracking down on popular dissent.

Third, outside powers are taking a greater interest in the region than before, and that could be positive or negative based on a range of considerations. For a very long time, the rest of the world has been content to allow the United States to be the dominant power in the Middle East, allowing Washington to order the region as it saw fit largely because it was American power that guaranteed the free flow of Middle Eastern oil. For its part, the United States believed (wrongly and disastrously) that the best way to ensure the latter requirement was to do as little on the first matter as possible: leave the region, and particularly, the region's governments, alone and they will keep the oil flowing. That was never a smart long-term strategy, and the Arab Awakening (if not the Iranian Revolution and 9/11 before it) has revealed the flaw in that thinking. To its credit, the Obama administration recognized (albeit belatedly) that change was coming to the region whether the United States or the regional governments wanted it or not, and has taken up the cause of change, at least rhetorically, and in the critical cases of Egypt and Libya in deed as well. This has, for the first time, put America's Middle East policy squarely at odds with that of China, Russia, India, Brazil, and other developing states all of whom are now trying to check American power and actions in the Middle East in ways they never have before. The more these other nations demonstrate a willingness to act on Middle Eastern issues, the more that Middle Eastern states may look to them for assistance when the United States can't or won't provide it—something that will greatly complicate the future Middle Eastern chess board.

Fourth, in the short term, there are opportunities for all manner of mischief-makers to cause great havoc. But over the longer term, constructive change across the region would likely be the most effective method of obliterating the plague of violent extremists that has torn the region for too long. There is always opportunity in chaos, and

that is especially true for Iran, al-Qa'ida, and other regional troublemakers. The region has been thrown into an uproar. Civil war has swamped Libya and Yemen, and is threatening Syria and perhaps Bahrain. There has been significant unrest in Morocco, Oman, Jordan, and elsewhere. Even Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Algeria have seen new protests. Any popular unrest, any internal conflict, creates opportunity for Iran, al-Qa'ida, and other groups to stoke popular passions and incite violence—which they see as advancing their interests regardless of the ostensible aims of those doing the protesting. These actors see opportunities to bring their own allies to power, and to weaken and distract those countries or groups allied with their enemies (including the United States). Thus, the region may get worse before it gets better. But over the long term, if the Arab Awakening produces governments and economies that are both stable and better able to provide their people with the freedoms, dignity, opportunities, and control over their own lives that they seek, it will have a profound impact on the underlying grievances of the Arab people that have been the underlying malady afflicting the Middle East for the past forty years. Such changes will take decades, but if they are the ultimate legacy of the Arab Awakening, nothing could be more powerful in eliminating the anger and frustration that drive Arabs to violence, and on which Tehran and the terrorists have preyed.

Thus, as always with epochal events like the Arab Awakening, the changes will be profound, but whether they will be hopeful or hurtful, positive or negative, constructive or destructive, still remains to be seen. Indeed, we may not see them at all. But if our children and grandchildren are to live in a better world than the one we have nurtured for the past fifty years, coping with the tremendous geopolitical changes of the Arab Awakening, guiding them toward sure channels and helping them around dangerous routes will be one of the most important tasks of the twenty-first century.

SUMMARIES OF CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS

PANEL ONE: THE ARAB SPRING: IMPACTS ON CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE LEVANT AND GCC

Prepared by Irena L. Sargsyan

In the opening session of the Saban Center at Brookings-U.S. Central Command conference, the panelists discussed the impact of the Arab Spring on civil-military relations in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the broader Middle East. The moderator began by saying that the events of the Arab Spring not only shook the political, military, and social foundations of separate countries, they transformed the region as a whole. A new Middle East is emerging. New balances of power are being shaped. And these new realities require novel ways of ordering and maintaining regional security.

The moderator stressed that indigenous militaries played a critical role in the Arab Spring: while the Tunisian and Egyptian armies facilitated the transformation of their respective states, the Syrian and Libyan militaries resisted any political change triggered by the popular uprisings.

The first panelist argued that the Arab world has experienced a paradigmatic and generational shift—the implications of which cannot be measured within a year or two. The panelist said that at least a decade will need to pass before the ramifications of all the ups and downs, advances and retreats, and triumphs and frustrations of the Arab Spring will be revealed.

According to the speaker, one of the most important lessons of the Arab Spring is that it was a mistake to believe that the Arab world was immune to democratization. Arab states have proven that democracy can take root, but the issue of legitimacy remains: Where does the legitimacy that solidifies democracy flow from? Who is the source of legitimacy in the Arab world: a monarch, the military, a coup d'état, a president for life, or the people? In answering this, the speaker said that the Arab people, representing different countries, united to pursue a common goal: to take ownership of their states. Arab people have shown that they want their governments to represent them. People, therefore, are the new source of legitimacy in the Arab world.

Still, institutions matter. In Egypt, the army has been a powerful institution that has historically been politicized. The military can, therefore, effect political change as well as prevent change from occurring. The speaker said that in the wake of the Arab Spring, the military continues to play a role in Egyptian society by overseeing the political competition. In particular, it has prevented a single group from taking over the political process. As a result, no particular group or ideology dominates post-revolution Egypt, and the political space remains wide open. At the same time, the speaker argued that the Arab Spring has set in motion the Egyptian army's retreat from political life. Although that process will take time—especially because the military is committed to safeguarding its interests—eventually the Egyptian military will focus on security-related matters. How that transition occurs will largely depend on who assumes the presidency in Egypt and how the parliament approaches the issue of civil-military relations.

In analyzing the role of the Syrian military, the speaker said that the Syrian army has wielded less power than the Egyptian military, and its legitimacy is questionable. The speaker argued that because the Syrian army is weak, and because Syrian soldiers have opened fire on demonstrators (unlike their

Egyptian counterparts), the army will likely be purged and replaced should the protests succeed. Stressing the issue of sectarianism, the speaker said that many Sunni soldiers have left the army, despite threats that they will be punished for desertion.

The Syrian government has relied on the state's extensive security apparatus—a complex body that has multiple forces, a myriad of intelligence services, and several chains of command—to neutralize opponents of the regime and defend the ruling elite against potential threats emanating from within the army. The speaker said that because members of the Alawite sect (to which the ruling Asad dynasty belongs) dominate the state's security apparatus, security forces are highly sectarian. The pluralistic composition of the Syrian opposition is a sign of hope, though, and if a vigorous civil society and genuine civilian government take hold, the country may be able to move past this division.

Egypt has become a "laboratory" for civil-military relations. So far, the Egyptian experience has produced mixed results, with both tragic outcomes and high hopes.

The second panelist focused on Egypt's Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). The speaker said that the Egyptian military played a pivotal role during the uprisings that ousted President Mubarak when it refused to fire on the peaceful protesters. As an interim ruling government, the army has become involved in daily politics and has overseen the country's transition to democracy. As a result, many Westerners and Egyptians perceive the Supreme Council as the leading actor in Egypt. However, the speaker disagreed with this conventional wisdom, arguing that the military is the second most important player. Instead, it is the people, who continue to influence the course of events in post-revolutionary Egypt, who are the most influential actors.

In the speaker's view, Egypt has become a "laboratory" for civil-military relations. So far, the Egyptian experience has produced mixed results, with both tragic outcomes and high hopes. The speaker said that the October 2011 killing of unarmed Coptic Christian protesters by the Egyptian security forces tarnished the army's reputation and legitimacy. Conversely, the appearance of Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, Egypt's minister of defense and chairman of the SCAF, in a civilian suit in Tahrir Square was a sign of hope.

The speaker said that historically the Egyptian military has played a significant role in both regional affairs and domestic matters. For instance, it participated in security campaigns in Yemen, Sudan, Bosnia, and Somalia. More recently, it took part in brokering a deal that facilitated the exchange of Palestinian prisoners for an Israeli soldier held captive in Gaza. The military is concerned not only about its future role in Egypt, but also about its status in the region. In order to maintain the respect of the international community, it has made clear that it will abide by all international laws and treaties.

On the domestic front, the Egyptian army intends to meet people's expectations by facilitating the country's peaceful transition to democracy; enabling free and fair parliamentary elections (to be held in November 2011) and presidential elections (to be held in the spring of 2012); continuing to provide internal security and defending the country against external enemies; and helping to strengthen Egypt's paralyzed economy.

The third panelist presented a statistical risk analysis of the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The speaker analyzed issues that influence the political and economic risk of the given countries, as

a result of these issues favorable or unfavorable effects on financial investment, business environment, credit, exchange rates, and macroeconomic stability. The speaker also discussed governance risk, which takes into account regime stability, corruption, and the effectiveness of the security forces and judicial system.

Based on a comparative statistical analysis, the speaker evaluated Qatar and the United Arab Emirates as low-risk states, but pointed to Iran, Yemen, and Syria as high-risk. The speaker noted that a country may have low political and economic risks but a high governance risk, or vice versa. For example, Jordan's political and economic risks are higher than its governance risk. The speaker explained that while terrorist attacks on Jordanian soil have negatively affected the country's political and economic risk indicators, the speaker felt that Jordanians have not challenged the legitimacy of the Hashemite monarchy, despite the existence of governance problems. The reason for this is because the speaker believed that King Abdullah II has been responsive to his people's grievances. According to the speaker, the king has supported political and economic reforms and anticorruption measures, and to that end dismissed his government twice in 2011.

Within the risk assessment framework, the speaker discussed a few other countries. The speaker said that compared to GCC states, Iran is a high-risk country. By contrast, countries like Sweden, Singapore, New Zealand, and Switzerland are low-risk countries. But compared to the latter group of countries, GCC states have higher levels of political, economic, and governance risks. Therefore, members of the GCC should strive to reach the risk levels of Switzerland or Singapore.

The speaker said that a combination of factors affects a country's risk levels. For example, terrorist attacks and the pursuit of the weapons of mass destruction, as well as prices of oil, energy, and food can interact to have a negative effect on a country's risk score. The speaker concluded by saying there is a positive trend in the region—in the past five years, violence has plummeted (most of that violence occurred in and spilled over from Iraq). The speaker interpreted the trend as an indication that more countries in the region favor peaceful change to violent conflict.

Even if the events in Tunisia had not occurred, change would have happened in Egypt someday because a revolution had been brewing for several years.

The moderator asked the speakers if cooperation between the U.S. military and the Egyptian army was necessary to ensure a peaceful transition to democracy in Egypt, and how the concept of potential cooperation between the American and GCC militaries was perceived in the Middle East. One panelist said that in Egypt, the military took the right step in helping oust President Mubarak. In a different scenario—for example, if the military did not side with the people—the armed forces could have fragmented. The fact that Egypt is a relatively unified, less tribal, and more institutionalized state has facilitated the transition. The speaker added that even if the events in Tunisia had not occurred, change would have happened in Egypt someday because a revolution had been brewing for several years. The pressure was building from the bottom, from youth and other grassroots levels. People's discontent with the political repression and socioeconomic conditions was simmering, and as a result, Egypt was ripe for revolution.

With regard to cooperation between the U.S. and GCC militaries, the speaker said that it was unclear how such cooperation was perceived in the region, particularly because many viewed relationships between

the American and GCC militaries through the prism of Iraq and Afghanistan (both campaigns are generally seen as unsuccessful). More broadly, security ties with the United States are not part of the debates about the Arab Spring. Rather, political, economic, and social reforms are the center of attention in the region. Regarding their militaries, people want their armies to serve them rather than dominate them.

The moderator posed another question to the panelists, asking if it was possible for the emerging schisms between the Egyptian military and the general population to deepen, with the military choosing one political direction and the people choosing another. One of the speakers said that such a development was not inconceivable; the Egyptian military's use of force in response to the Coptic protest showed how relations between the military and the population could deteriorate. In addition, the speaker said that even though senior Egyptian officers have made reassurances that they will not nominate a presidential candidate from their own ranks, the context in which the army presently operates is entirely new. There have not been precedents, therefore, it is difficult to predict how the military will behave.

One participant asked the panelists if, in the context of civil-military relations, it made a difference whether an Arab army was influenced by Western or Eastern military doctrines. The participant noted that while many Tunisian and Egyptian officers were educated in the United States and were thus exposed to U.S. military training and procedures, the Syrian and Libyan militaries lacked similar experience. Consequently, within the Syrian and Libyan militaries the rules of engagement are not clearly defined and it is easy for Syrian and Libyan officers to open fire on civilians. One of the speakers responded that in practice the exposure to Western military doctrine did not make a difference. The speaker disagreed with the other panelists' arguments that the Egyptian military played a positive role during the revolution and that it is now facilitating a peaceful transition to democracy. Commenting on the same issue, another speaker said that a Western model of civil-military relations has been alien in the Middle East.

Another participant outlined two issues that he thought were peculiar to the Arab Spring. He pointed out the lack of consensus among the military on any social contract or program. Similarly, he noted the uncomfortable silence on the issue of the separation of religion and politics: no mosque, sheikh, or *marja* (a senior cleric who is a source of emulation) has emerged to confer legitimacy on democracy. One of the speakers said that the Arab Spring revolutions have not been Islamist revolutions. Rather, they have been civilian, social revolutions in which Islamists have played some role but by no means a central role. Therefore, it should not be surprising that in the current context, the separation of religion and politics has not been a dominant issue. The speaker said that the issue will arise at some point and it will be critical to find a pragmatic balance between religion and politics and between respect for Islam and respect for the principles of democracy, liberty, and human rights.

PANEL TWO: DEALING WITH TERRORISM IN THE REGION: AL-QA'IDA AND HIZBALLAH

Prepared by Irena L. Sargsyan

The second panel of the conference examined terrorism as a persistent feature of Middle Eastern politics and discussed strategies for countering that deadly phenomenon. In particular, this panel addressed the economic, political, and social grievances that lie at the root of both terrorism and the upheavals of the Arab Spring to ascertain whether this wave of unrest will be a catalyst for or a suppressant of further terrorism.

The first panelist focused on Iraq, saying that in the context of the Arab Spring, the country differs in many ways from its neighboring states. On the positive side, there is a political process in post-Saddam Iraq. The development of participatory democracy has given people hope that they can enact change through the ballot box. Therefore, Iraq has largely remained immune to the upheavals that swept through the Middle East, despite the localized protests that erupted in some Iraqi provinces in 2010. On the negative side, identity politics dominates the country. The speaker said that Iraq's current political system—together with struggles for power and resources by various factions and elites—encourages polarization along sectarian and ethnic fault lines. As a result, Iraq remains a divided nation.

The speaker said that the Iraqi people have legitimate social and economic grievances. But the sectarian and ethnic divisions—which deepened in the aftermath of the violent civil conflict that broke out in February 2006—preclude Iraqi citizens from uniting and pursuing a common objective. In that sense, Iraq's internal dynamics generally resemble Lebanon's social and political structure rather than Tunisia's.

Iraqi people have legitimate social and economic grievances. But the sectarian and ethnic divisions preclude Iraqi citizens from uniting and pursuing a common objective.

The speaker argued that the United States' continuous involvement in Iraq was critical to facilitating a meaningful compromise among the various ethnic and sectarian communities and political factions. But, Iraq has not yet achieved a sustainable social contract, nor has the Iraqi government put forth a pragmatic solution to the issue of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). At the same time, the grievances of the Sunni minority continue to build. In light of this, the Sunni community is contemplating the creation of a separate Sunni region. The speaker cautioned that such a development could prove risky and could reignite violence across the country, particularly because the Samarra mosque, a major Shi'i shrine, is located in the province of Salahaddin, which is populated predominantly by Sunni Arabs.

The speaker said that the fact that many Shi'i political parties maintain armed militias adds to sectarian and ethnic tensions. Making matters worse, the current Shi'i-dominated government allows these militias to act with impunity. This threatens the Sunni community which, in turn, maintains ties to some Sunni armed groups. In the context of insecurity and lingering fears, the mobilization of one group will necessarily provoke a counter-mobilization by the other. The speaker said that a conflict between Sunni and Shi'i Arabs or Arabs and Kurds will give al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) operational freedom to conduct large-scale terrorist attacks. Of greater consequence, a renewed ethnic or sectarian violence will erode the legitimacy of the incumbent government.

Based on Iraq's experience with democratization, the speaker analyzed a few possible outcomes for the countries experiencing transition as a result of the Arab Spring. It is plausible that, like Iraq, these countries will attain a limited degree of pluralism and democracy but will remain socially conservative, with restricted women's rights, human rights, and minority freedoms. The speaker said that a potential Islamist awakening could gain ground at the expense of nationalist movements.

In Iraq, the sense of nationalism has proven weaker than originally thought. This pattern may repeat in other states, with ethnic and sectarian cleavages, as well as tribal loyalties, affecting political developments in Libya, Yemen, and Syria. The speaker closed by

identifying potential "winners" and "losers" as a result of the Arab Spring: Turkey has been on the winning side, whereas Israel and Iran have been on the losing side. Global al-Qa'ida may gain some operational advantage in the short run, but it will lose if democratization takes root in the region.

The second panelist discussed Hizballah in the context of a changing Middle East. The speaker said that Arab pro-democracy uprisings provided a new model of revolution, one that runs counter to Hizballah's message. This model espouses democracy not religion, supports moderate as opposed to radical voices, focuses on internal reform instead of an external agenda, and favors peaceful change over violent upheaval. Most important, indigenous movements caused these revolutions, not foreign intervention. The speaker said that collectively these factors have weakened Iran in the sense that Iran has lost its ideological appeal and soft power. While Hizballah lost some of its relevance and popularity, on balance, the Arab Spring has not produced any major impact on that organization. But any dramatic change in Syria could potentially break Hizballah's strategic backbone.

Revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt emboldened ordinary Syrians, and the persistent protest spreading across Syria is a testament to this.

In discussing Syria, the speaker said that if popular uprisings in the country persist, change in Syria is more likely to follow Libya's pattern than Tunisia's or Egypt's, because Bashar al-Asad's excessive use of force against the population resembles Muammar Qadhafi's reaction to the unrest in Libya. Like in Libya, the Syrian regime's brutal onslaught has caused larger crowds to pour into the streets. The speaker noted that in Syria, the epicenter of popular uprisings has not been in big cities like Damascus or Aleppo, but rather in small towns and rural areas. The confrontation has increasingly become sectarian in nature: the Sunni majority opposes the ruling Alawite sect. Other sectarian and ethnic groups (Christians, Druze, and Kurds) remain thus far on the sidelines.

The speaker said that revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt emboldened ordinary Syrians, and the persistent protest spreading across Syria is a testament to this. The confrontation in Syria has been mutating into an armed insurgency, as the opposition acquires weapons to fight the regime; prospects for a negotiated outcome are rapidly diminishing, as the intelligence-party-business complex ferociously resists change. Although some within the Syrian regime are concerned that in the case of a full-blown civil war the Alawite minority is likely to lose, the speaker said that it was unlikely that the regime would reverse the course it had chosen and allow for a peaceful transition to occur.

The speaker put forth four scenarios for Syria: the regime survives and remains in control, it strikes a deal with the opposition, it collapses and becomes a failed state, it is replaced by a Sunni government. The speaker discussed the implications of each scenario for Hizballah.

- If the regime succeeds in suppressing the uprising, the incumbent government would stabilize and the status quo would solidify. Under this scenario, Hizballah would regain its confidence and continue to receive support from the government, as well as from Iran.

- If the regime negotiates a deal with the opposition, then it would most likely be replaced by a national unity government. In this context, the new government may ask Hizballah

to keep a low profile in Lebanon, but this would not entail any major strategic changes on the part of Hizballah.

— If the incumbent regime collapses and Syria becomes a failed state divided along the Alawite, Kurdish, and Sunni fault lines, then Hizballah and Iran may try to build "regions of influence" in the country. At the same time, Hizballah may have to consider strengthening its political standing in Lebanon.

— Finally, if a Sunni-dominated government replaces the current regime, Hizballah may find itself in a deep distress, because the new regime would likely undertake action against the group and expel it from the country.

The current conflict in Syria is the largest strategic threat to Hizballah since the 2006 Israel-Hizballah war.

The speaker concluded by stating that the current conflict in Syria is the largest strategic threat to Hizballah since the 2006 Israel-Hizballah war. The collapse of the Asad regime—something that is highly likely—would be a major blow to Hizballah, by weakening the organization. A weak Hizballah would create either the conditions for another Israeli war against the group or an opening for reviving Israel-Syria peace talks.

The third panelist analyzed violent extremist organizations from both political and military perspectives. The speaker challenged the view that terrorist groups and violent movements are purely military organizations, arguing that that these organizations possess in their arsenal not only coercive tools, but also persuasive ones. For example, Hizballah, Hamas, and the Taliban have all built and maintained military, political, and social wings. These groups gained widespread popular support among domestic constituencies not only because of their effectiveness in conducting terrorist operations and deploying coordinated violence, but also because of their ability to provide social services and financial aid to Lebanese, Palestinians, and Afghans when the respective governments failed to do so. By contrast, al-Qa'ida in Iraq, which used excessive violence and brutal tactics against the indigenous population and neglected to attend to its supporters' socio-economic grievances, quickly lost the support of Iraq's Sunni population.

The speaker argued that the ability to control defection is what differentiates effective violent organizations from ineffective ones. Historically, resilient terrorist organizations have developed mechanisms to cultivate loyalty of their operatives. The provision of social services, mutual assistance, and charitable activities that benefit operatives and their families have proven to be the most effectual mechanisms for constraining defection. The speaker contended that it is significantly more difficult for an individual to defect from a group if that individual and his or her family receive healthcare and financial aid in return for loyal service. From a counterterrorism or counterinsurgency point of view, it is more difficult to co-opt operatives who receive social and economic assistance from the organization with which they are affiliated.

The speaker said that the narrative and spirit of the Arab Spring were different from the narrative and motivation of violent extremist organizations. The uprisings in Tahrir Square made no mention of Osama bin Laden. Yet, if the Arab Spring produces failed states instead of prosperous democracies, it is plausible that violent extremist organizations will capitalize on the failure and rapid-

ly fill the void created by unsuccessful transitions.

The moderator asked the panelists to discuss Hizballah's attitude toward the Arab Spring and analyze the psychological impact on Hizballah if the Asad regime collapses. One speaker said that it was difficult to guess Hizballah's innermost thoughts about the Arab Spring, but by extrapolating from Hizballah leaders' public statements, it becomes clear that the organization believes that the crisis in Syria has reached a plateau and the uprisings will gradually taper off. In addition, Hizballah has tried to hedge its bets by stating that while it supports the incumbent Syrian government and condemns the foreign machinations that caused the uprisings, it also sympathizes with some of the popular grievances and demands for reform. The speaker said that at the same time that Hizballah has tried to maintain good relationship with the Asad regime, it has also made attempts to gain the opposition's goodwill.

One participant asked the panelists under what conditions Hizballah would continue to thrive. One of the speakers said that Hizballah will continue to be an influential political party in Lebanon because the peculiar causes it pursues still resonate with the Lebanese public: the organization's anti-Israel posture and its commitment to protecting the interests and welfare of Lebanon's Shi'i population. Another participant commented on the issue saying that Hizballah is a resilient and flexible organization that has a tested ability to overcome setbacks.

A participant asked what would happen if the Arab Spring failed and people's expectations in Egypt, Tunisia, and elsewhere were unmet. One speaker said that success and failure are context-specific concepts. In Tunisia, for example, the expectation is to cultivate an accountable and responsive government. In Libya, the objective is state-building and avoidance of a full-fledged civil war that could lead to a failed state. The danger in Egypt is the return of dictatorship. Therefore, in formulating recommendations, it is important to understand and account for the specific needs of each country.

PANEL THREE: REGIONAL ACTORS AND GULF SECURITY: SAUDI ARABIA, IRAQ, IRAN

Prepared by Mehrun Etebari

The third panel of the conference addressed the role of three countries which, while they have not experienced the most intense elements of the Arab Spring firsthand, are deeply affected by the regional upheaval and poised to play important roles in the futures of the countries undergoing change. The speakers discussed Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, each of which has held an important place in the strategic thinking of the United States, and each of which will be crucial to the security of the region.

One speaker began by giving an overview of Iran's historical influence on political movements throughout the Middle East. Iran's Islamic Revolution of 1979 introduced political Islam to the region, and began a tumultuous period that included the siege in Mecca and the assassination of Anwar Sadat. This era, the speaker argued, was brought to an end by the events of the Arab Spring, which have shown a decline in the appeal of traditional political Islam as a regional force. Another speaker said that the initial appeal of the Iranian model of Islamic resistance to perceived Western domination slowly waned in the region following the Iran-Iraq War of 1980–88 because Iran came to be seen as an authoritarian state cloaked in religious rhetoric. The Arab Spring further harmed Iran's standing; despite the fact that Tehran has tried to frame the events of the Arab Spring as an outpouring of Islamist expression inspired by

the Iranian Revolution, it has been unable to capitalize on the revolutions.

One panelist argued that decisions taken by Tehran in the late 1970s and early 1980s have left it wallowing in an economic and political quagmire. While many developing powers like China, India, and Turkey were beginning to foster their rise by opening up to the world during this period, the revolutionaries in Iran turned inward, committed to the idea that indigenization on all levels was critical to national security. Aided by establishment interpretations of political Islam, this process has been remarkably continuous over the history of the Islamic Republic, and has spurred the entrenchment of a military-industrial complex that controls the financial and industrial bases of the economy, the intelligence services, and, increasingly, the domestic political establishment. With the rise of this centralized power structure, there has been a dampening effect on the political debates that marked the era of former president Mohammad Khatami. The speaker asserted that this has reached the level of a near eradication of collective civil society, particularly after the protests of June 2009. Fearing punishment for dissent in an inward-looking nation, many Iranians have turned inward themselves, resulting in what the speaker characterized as an atomized society.

Decisions taken by Tehran in the late 1970s and early 1980s have left it wallowing in an economic and political quagmire.

Still, Iran remains an ideological power, and because of this, it will be a central concern to the United States as it decides how to address the future of its military presence in Iraq and the region as a whole. Another speaker added that while Iran could become less relevant as a regional actor should the Asad regime fall in Damascus, its geographical and political ties in Iraq and Afghanistan will give Tehran a platform to influence the region for many years to come. Ultimately, though, its influence may come to depend on whether the promises of the Arab Spring are fulfilled in the countries experiencing change.

One speaker described the international sanctions regime against Tehran as largely ineffective against the Iranian political elite. The primary effect of the sanctions has been inflation, which has harmed the middle and lower-middle classes. In addition, while targeted financial measures have made international trade far more costly for Iran—an estimated $15 to $18 billion in commissions and bribes are being paid annually to secure imports, more than triple the annual total prior to 2005—these costs have been manageable, thanks to Iran's hydrocarbon income. Thus, many of the speakers dismissed the likelihood that sanctions would significantly alter Tehran's foreign policy posture.

One speaker argued that the majority of Iran's economic woes are due to government mismanagement, rather than international isolation. Iran has fallen behind its neighbors, such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia, due to declines in the quality of education, environmental indicators, and measures of economic welfare. This is particularly noticeable in the oil industry, where the speaker said Iran's exports are currently declining by 3 percent annually, due to a lack of investment—a trend that could see Baghdad eclipse Tehran in OPEC's power within a decade. The poor state of Iran's oil infrastructure has partly been caused by the way in which the country squandered profit it made during the recent oil boom. Sixty-two percent of Iran's total historical oil income—dating back to 1908—has come during Ahmadinejad's tenure. The speaker argued that money has been used primarily to "buy" political loyalty via handouts to the regime's political base and families of the

security apparatus rather than to build infrastructure, or even improve education.

Overall, the speaker argued, this strategy of rewarding loyalists and building a security apparatus has had countervailing effects. On the one hand, dissent has been effectively quashed by the expansive network of pro-regime agents, with reformists and the Green Movement being described by one speaker as in disarray. On the other hand, the speaker said, the growing economic and political frustration felt by the majority of Iranians—largely the result of the diversion of the nation's oil windfall to pro-regime elements and the military—means that the right circumstances could unleash political change, particularly in the event that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei dies or otherwise leaves the political scene. Another speaker agreed, noting that the Arab Spring had shown that people have the need for economic well-being and dignity, and when they are left wanting, the population itself is the greatest threat to a nation's stability.

The growing economic and political frustration felt by the majority of Iranians means that the right circumstances could unleash political change.

A speaker argued that the West's standoff with Iran over the latter's nuclear program was a bargaining chip for Tehran, particularly in the view of the clerical establishment. In addition, when the nuclear issue leads to debate with Washington, it allows the political elite to emphasize the urgency of its commitment to national security, which it can use to bolster the regime's legitimacy. Another speaker added that Iran does not pose a major military threat to the United States, and surmised that the national security elite in Tehran has no plans to go beyond a threshold nuclear capability. Rather, the speaker argued that Iran would use a nuclear weapons capacity as a "diplomatic force multiplier" in an attempt to have other countries recognize its interests. Another speaker responded to this comment by noting that regardless of Iran's true intentions with regards to its nuclear program, other nations' perceptions matter greatly: an Israeli perception that Iranian nuclear development needs to be stopped by force could lead to military action and a regional conflagration.

On Saudi Arabia—the nation seen as Iran's ideological and strategic rival in the changing political landscape of the Middle East—several speakers concurred that regional events have benefited the conservative elements of the kingdom's power structure. As Riyadh opposed many of the uprisings in the region, the regime's right wing used the chaos to argue that outside sectarian threats necessitated a strong response, including a clampdown on political and social liberalization. In addition to the uprising in Bahrain, which Riyadh claimed was inspired by Iran, Saudi conservatives have pointed to the alleged Iranian plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the United States as evidence that Riyadh faces a nefarious threat from Tehran. As one speaker said, the latter case has provided a great tool for the House of Saud to deflect national attention away from the domestic political struggles that have been rising in importance.

However, while portraying an aura of stability, the Saudi regime has not been immune to domestic dissent. Although smaller in number than those that occurred in other countries, the protests that have occurred in Saudi Arabia have been notable. The protests have ranged from expressions of anger over the response to floods in Jeddah, to demonstrations by the Shi'ah of the Eastern Province, and to feminist and labor protests. Some demonstrations have targeted the security establishment of the state, as was the case when protestors amassed outside the Interior Ministry in anger at the

arrests of their family members. Still, like in other countries, economic challenges may prove to be the most potent fuel for protest. As the number of college graduates rises in the kingdom—one speaker noted estimates of 250,000 Saudis earning their diploma each year—a lack of job prospects has prompted some popular discontent over unemployment. With increasing economic challenges, more than one speaker suggested that the social contract that has existed in the kingdom through disbursement of oil revenue would need serious repair in the near future.

Another speaker addressed the domestic situation in Iraq and its implications for the country's foreign policy. The speaker described the political climate in Baghdad as dysfunctional, and said the main political actors are more concerned with their internal power struggles than with developing a plan for the future of the state. The speaker said that there is persistent discontent among Iraqis with their standard of living. Because the average Iraqi still only has access to electricity for five hours per day, and less than 3 percent of the population has access to the Internet, Iraqis see themselves as worse off than those in neighboring countries. The economic and development problems in Iraq, coupled with a divisive sectarian situation in the region, such as the crackdown on Bahraini Shi'ah, have spurred a political standoff between the various factions in the Iraqi parliament with little prospect for resolution in sight. While this implies that Iraq—once thought of by Washington as a potential beacon of democracy in the Middle East—has become a prism for the sectarian divide in the region, the speaker emphasized that Iraq contains the oil and gas resources to become a major power if it "gets its own house in order."

Iran has largely failed to take economic advantage of its influence, as Turkish companies have been far more active in Iraq.

This speaker said that many in the Gulf and the West have been frustrated by the lack of a constructive relationship between Iraq and its Arab neighbors to the south, particularly Saudi Arabia. Like many of the political problems facing the Baghdad government, this one has its roots in personal relationships and rivalries—the speaker argued that King Abdullah does not like or trust Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. This antipathy is only exacerbated by the fact that rival Iraqi politicians have travelled to Riyadh to tell the king that Maliki is a sectarian, an Islamist, an Iranian puppet, and a man with dictatorial designs. Occupied by fear over the treatment of his Sunni coreligionists in Iraq, the king is likely to continue to withhold true support for the government of his northern neighbor as long as the bitter power struggle exists there.

The role that Iran continues to play in the Iraqi political dynamic remains a source of frustration for the West. One speaker, though, asserted that Iran is not widely popular in Iraq, and the memories of the eight-year war the two nations fought in the 1980s remain fresh in the minds of the Arab population. Still, many of Iraq's political elites have close ties to their Iranian counterparts, and many of their political parties were set up with the active support of Tehran or currently receive Iranian funding. Iran, seeking to maximize its benefit from the removal of its archenemy, Saddam Hussein, was described as conspiring to keep Iraq weak to prevent it from becoming a threat again. This, the speaker argued, is what lies behind Iranian efforts to maintain a sectarian divide in Iraq, efforts that include pushing to get the Sadrist faction to join Maliki's coalition. However, the speaker noted that Iran has largely failed to take economic advantage of its influence, as Turkish companies have been far more active in Iraq. That said, the speaker noted

that one of America's failures in non-military relationship-building with Iraq is in the economic sphere. The relatively sparse presence of American companies in Iraq deprives Washington of a soft-power lever with which it could take advantage of Iran's lack of trade prowess.

The session concluded with one speaker saying that thanks to the Arab Spring, the three countries discussed in the panel interact with one another in a manner deeply different than before. In the past, a discussion of the three countries would likely have focused entirely on Iran's role as the leader of the so-called resistance axis, Saudi Arabia as the leader of the pro-American Arab governments, and the rivalry between the two over Iraq. Yet, the speaker noted, the upheaval of the Arab Spring has left Saudi Arabia scrambling to maintain its control at home and the protests in Syria (and the ensuing Turkish condemnation of Bashar al-Asad) have torn apart the burgeoning alliance between Tehran, Ankara, and Damascus that had buoyed Iran as a regional actor in recent years. While each nation continues to be central to American strategy in the region, the consensus was that Washington must adapt quickly to the rapidly changing faces of Baghdad, Riyadh, and Tehran in the aftermath of the Arab Spring.

REWRITING THE SOCIAL CONTRACT IN THE WAKE OF THE ARAB AWAKENING

SALMAN SHAIKH

Throughout the Brookings-CENTCOM conference, one question was consistently asked: Given the extraordinary change that has occurred in the region, do constituencies in the Middle East still agree with their current social contracts? This theme of rewriting the social contract, or the agreement between the ruler and the ruled, was raised in the three panel discussions. Certainly, the question of what services, privileges, and rights should be delivered to populations by those that govern them is one that the drivers of change in the region have both posed, and hope to answer. Indeed, the response to this question will shape the nature of political systems in the region for coming generations. It is in the immediate and long-term interests of the United States to follow closely these domestic developments, given both its declared intentions to help foster transitions to more responsive and accountable governments, and given the important implications of these internal struggles for broader regional security.

At a time when popular protests of various sizes and intensity are sweeping the region, the debate about what rights and services rulers owe their citizens is more relevant than ever before. The Arab Awakening—what one panelist dubbed a "second independence for Arab nations, from regimes rather than colonizers"—has been marked by popular demands for more representative and accountable governments, as well as calls to improve the economic plight of thousands suffering from joblessness, corruption, and inequality. In essence, the Middle East is facing a movement to fundamentally realign how rulers interact with their citizens.

While a variety of institutions and services will need to be built, strengthened, or relied upon in states transitioning to democracy (Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia), the military in particular will be an important player in the realignment of the social contract. Indeed, in its most basic form, the social contract involves only a promise of mutual defense; citizens pledge their loyalty to the state in exchange for military protection. In the past, Arab militaries played the role of a praetorian guard of the deep state, but in post-Mubarak Egypt, that role has altered to one of being an alleged guarantor of democratic change. In the wake of the Arab Spring, many people's expectations have been raised with regard to the once-feared military. Beyond having the traditional role of protecting the country from external military threats, in some instances, armies are being pressed to redefine their relationship with the people and the state.

Even in nations not facing transitions, the need for a redrawn social contract is becoming clearer. Popular unrest in the Gulf states in particular has demonstrated that these prosperous and seemingly placid countries are not immune to challenges. Protests have been seen as a persistent existential threat for monarchies that have long ruled from the top down, and therefore Gulf leaders have attempted to keep the Arab Awakening at arm's length. The age-old rentier system of monarchs sharing economic gains with their citizenry in exchange for loyalty and political inaction may have to be recast, or at least modernized. For now, Gulf states have largely reacted to the rise of popular unrest with the time-tried tactic of securing acquiescence, if not support, through financial handouts. The unsustainability of

such measures—which depend not only on the continued existence of oil but on its constantly fluctuating price—is clear. It remains to be seen, however, what the agreed-upon responsibilities of the state will be as the political systems of the region evolve in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. For example, in Kuwait, protesters have demanded accountability for government spending and increased transparency to stamp out corruption. In Qatar, the emir recently announced that parliamentary elections will take place in the second half of 2013, ten years after the constitution was amended with a provision for such elections.

As the citizen-state relationship is being redefined, the region is likely to experience a great deal more instability that will enable both sub-state and external actors to thrive. In places like Lebanon and Yemen, where violence threatens the very fabric of the nation, governments face the difficult decision of how to respond to non-state groups that provide many of the goods and services traditionally associated with national governance. One panel discussion touched on this difficulty, stressing that extremist organizations in failed or failing states like Yemen have the option of using both coercive and persuasive means to garner support, as they can carry out services that governments are failing to grant. In the long run, then, it will be the ability of the government to genuinely respond to its citizens' economic and political demands that will determine its fate.

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Significant changes are also taking place in the larger strategic geopolitical framework of the Middle East, as a result of domestic demands for more responsible, responsive governance. Indeed, the final panel of the conference addressed the geostrategic environment in which recent changes are taking place. In particular, the fact that we are seeing Egypt join Turkey and Qatar as one of a set of assertive regional foreign policymakers suggests that as countries democratize—or at least become more responsive to their publics—we will see a strand of more assertive nationalism, or even populism emerge.

In addition, though Iran continues to pose a threat to regional stability, both internal pressure and external developments (which have weakened the Syrian-led "resistance bloc" to which Iran is allied), suggest that it may be in decline. Indeed, the Arab Spring presented a different narrative to the one Iran has long championed. As popular protests continue, we are reminded of Iran's own equivalent to the Arab Spring in 2009, and of the contested nature of its own social contract—which many see as politically and economically corrupt. An atmosphere of domestic pressure has been mounting recently, with major opposition figures under continued house arrest, and ministers coming under renewed scrutiny for corruption. While Iran is sometimes perceived as the biggest "winner" in Iraq, internal struggles in the Islamic Republic suggest that it will be unable to formulate a coherent foreign policy. In the season of the Arab Awakening, there will likely be increasing pressures to respond to popular demands in foreign policy as well as in domestic politics. As such, Iran will likely play a losing hand. On the global level, although Iran is a threat, the fixation on the Islamic Republic aids counterrevolutionaries when the focus should truly be on creating a new social contract—for both Iran, and its Arab neighbors.

The Brookings-CENTCOM Conference threw into sharp relief the fundamental

need for substantial changes to the agreement between rulers and their citizenry to guarantee both domestic and regional security in the Middle East. By understanding this fact, the United States will be better equipped to aid both states in transition and those facing pressure to reform.

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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