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SHIFTING SANDS:
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PARTICIPANTS:

Introduction and Moderator:

KENNETH M. POLLACK
Director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy
The Brookings Institution

Panelists:

DALIA MOGAHED
Senior Analyst and Executive Director
Gallup Center for Muslim Studies

IBRAHIM SHARQIEH
Deputy Director, Brookings Doha Center

SHIBLEY TELHAMI
Nonresident Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy
Saban Center for Middle East Policy
The Brookings Institution

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

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. POLLACK: Well, good morning. And welcome to the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. It's wonderful to see you all again. We've had some interesting news, as always, and we're certainly going to turn to that.

But the purpose of today's panel was actually to try to look a little bit beyond the immediate headlines. We will deal with the immediate headlines, I promise you that. There's a lot of interesting things going on. And I do intend to come back to that with our panel.

But, really, what we hope to do with this group is to look a little bit beyond it, to provide some context. Obviously, what happened in Egypt didn't suddenly spontaneously combust. There has been kindling laid at the feet of the Mubarak regime for years, if not decades. And what's going on elsewhere in the region is symptomatic of wider problems for many Arabs who span the area from Morocco all the way to Iraq.

What we wanted to do today was to provide a little bit of background, a little bit of understanding, as to why the events in Egypt and elsewhere in the region played out the way that they did -- why these things happened, why now, what is it that people want? And also in hopes of providing enough context so that as events continue to unfold, as they inevitably will in Egypt and elsewhere in the region, there's a wider understanding of why things are happening the way that they are -- the internal dynamics that are driving these situations, as a way of helping you and the wider public to understand where things may go. What the range of a possible is. Why it is that the various protagonists are seeking to drive things in the directions that they are.

This, after all, is one of the missions of Brookings, to provide that context, that degree of understanding, beyond the immediate headlines of the day.

We once again are joined by a terrific panel.

Sitting immediately to my left is Professor Shibley Telhami. I think Shibley is well known to this audience. He is, of course, the Anwar Sadat Professor of Peace and Development at the University of Maryland. But, more importantly, he is also a Senior Fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy here at Bookings.

Shibley, of course, has been writing wonderful, thoughtful, interesting pieces on the Middle East for decades. I know many of you read his recent book, *The Stakes*. And I think all of you also know that one of the most important things that Shibley has been doing over the years has been tracking public opinion in the Arab and the Muslim world, trying to help us all to understand what it is that the Arabs and the Muslim world wants, what it is that they like, what it is that they don't like, and why. And obviously, that has particularly relevance in today's circumstances, where what the Egyptian people want is desperately important to everything that's transpiring.

On my right, I'm joined our friend and colleague Dalia Mogahed. Dalia is with the Gallup organization. She is a Senior Fellow and the Executive Director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies.

Dalia is also a constant commentator and writer on these issues. She's done from incredibly insightful work. And for those of you who have not seen it, I could not more highly recommend a book that she co-authored with John Esposito which is called *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think* -- which was based on an absolutely enormous set of data that Dalia and John and their team collected over the years, and really dug deeply into questions about the role of Islam and politics, about what is it that so many people in the Muslim world are thinking about, what is it -- as the title says -- that they want. It is extraordinarily revealing, on a whole range of questions

that are critically important to current development in Egypt and Tunisia and Yemen and Jordan and elsewhere, but also to the larger question of America's relationship with the Muslim world, and the Muslim world's relationship with the United States. And we're absolutely thrilled to have Dalia join us today.

And, finally, on our video screen -- live from Doha, Qatar, we have Ibrahim Sharqieh who is, I think you all know, a fellow with the Saban Center, and our Deputy Director of the Brookings Doha Center.

Ibrahim is a fairly recent pick-up for us, a wonderful pick-up. We got him in trade for seven or eight draft picks, but he was well worth it (laughter). And he came to us having most recently spent quite a bit of time with the Academy for Educational Development.

And we're going to ask Ibrahim to look not only at Egypt, but also to help us think a little bit about regional developments, what else is going on in the region. Because we do want to keep in mind the fact that what's happening Egypt is in some ways specific to Egypt, but in other ways indicative of these broader trends in the Arab world, and the larger problems afflicting the Arab world. And the fact that we have these sympathetic revolutions, these copy-cat protests is no coincidence. It is born of a larger set of issues that are afflicting all of these societies, and have been generating problems, most recently, in the last few weeks, but in truth, for decades. And, in fact, many of the problems that the United States has had to wrestle with over the decades in the Middle East have been born of the unhappiness, the anger and the frustration of the Arab peoples with these circumstances which have been building for so long.

With those words of introduction, I'd like to start by asking Shibley to take us a little bit through Egyptian public opinion, and to help us understand the context.

I think one of the things that's striking when I get to speak to Americans is that it's in some ways easy for Americans to understand why a group of people would want to revolt against a government that has been oppressive of them, and has been absolutely stagnant for decades. But by the same token, Americans don't seem to quite get the terms, the meanings, the specific grievances that Egyptians seem to voice which, I think, strike many Americans as not quite the rationale as to why they might revolt if they were in the same circumstances.

So, Shibley -- please.

MR. TELHAMI: Well, thank you very much. Always a pleasure to be here.

I'm going to start by telling you sort of what we knew already about Egyptian public opinion -- and, really, broadly in the Arab world -- and what we sort of expected. And why the timing of these uprisings were not predicted by most analysts.

I'm going to start really by kind of referring to this remarkable young man, Wael Ghonim of Google, who was released from prison yesterday. And I hope most of you were able to see the interview with him on Egyptian TV. If you haven't, you should watch it, because it's extremely revealing.

And one of the things that's really extraordinary about it is that he basically said that he and the group of people who initiate the internet effort to get people on the street were not motivated by food or jobs. This was not about food and jobs. This was about dignity. And you really have to think about that a lot.

And I want to tell you what we knew about that in the data. I don't want to underestimate the importance of food and jobs -- don't get me wrong. I think it's a factor. We see that it's always a factor in revolting, and also in how people feel. But it's

bigger than just food and jobs, is the point. These are mostly people who had good jobs -- like he had a terrific job as a Google executive, with a comfortable living that he could have just gone on and benefitted from the privilege that society provided him.

We knew a lot in the past decade. You know, we'd been polling for a decade, systemically, in the Arab world, particularly in Egypt, every single year. And every year, we've been revealing a widening gap between publics and governments on a host of issues. And it had become more intense in the past couple of years. And we have written about it, you know, published about it. I've certainly called it -- in Egypt, particularly, I called not just the public attitudes, but even the elite attitudes and position as -- quote -- "untenable" just two years ago in a major article.

So we knew there was that gap. And that gap was reflecting itself in a variety of ways.

One is, when you asked them who their heroes are, their heroes are typically the people who oppose the governments -- you know, ranging from Hassan Nasrallah of Hezbollah to Hugo Chavez of Venezuela -- people who are identified as among the most admired in the world.

When you ask them to take positions on the conflict between Hamas Israel, or between Hezbollah and Israel, their position was very much the opposite of what their government was taking.

We also knew that there was a shift in what I call "identity" -- how people identify themselves. Egyptians are at once Egyptian and Arab and Muslim or Christian. And we've had this question that is ongoing for the past decade, starting with 2002, asking, "Okay, I know you're all these things, but what are you most? What's the most important identity to you?" A decade ago, it was by far "Egyptian" first. In 2010, only about a third say "Egyptian" first, and another third say "Muslim" first, another third "Arab" first.

That's an extraordinary evolution. And even a strong evolution has been one question we asked which is, "Do you believe that your government should serve the interests of its citizens, or the interests of Arabs or the interests of Muslims broadly beyond Egypt?" A decade ago the overwhelming majority -- more than people who identified themselves as "Egyptians" -- said, "Obviously, governments must serve the interests of its citizens first." In 2010, it shifted, where only about one-third say the government should serve the interests of its citizens first.

And my interpretation of that has been twofold. One is that most people in Egypt and the Arab world do not much differentiate between "state" and "government." "*Adowla*" is the state, the state is the government. And so, the more you move away, the more angry with the government you are, the more detached you are from the state.

And in some ways, you know, when you see what has been happening with the empowerment now, of most people saying, "I'm proud to be an Egyptian today" -- this young man, Wael Ghonim says in the interview that January 25th made him proud to be Egyptian again. And, in essence, that identity, in the context of Egypt's sense of self, the public being completely detached in their own identity of how they see themselves, how they define their position vis-a-vis government, very different from the way the

government defined itself and took positions in global affairs, that it made them uncomfortable as Egyptians when they visited Syria, or they visited Jordan, or worked in Saudi Arabia or Morocco. And this is an assertion, obviously, that makes every one of them identify with this -- in part because they didn't differentiate much between state and government. And that was part of the problem.

The second element of that is something that we knew was taking place. In fact, when I undertook this study initially, this was a study from the outset, from the late 1990s, about understanding how the information revolution is going to change politics, and how it's going to affect people's identities. And we've been doing a lot of research.

We knew that that had two dimensions. One dimension was the satellite TV stations, that meant that governments no longer had monopoly on information. The other side was the interactive part, which is the internet, and the social media that came with it.

The satellite TV we have a lot of data on. A decade ago, when you asked people, "What is your most important source of news?" Egyptian TV, by far, was the number one answer. In 2009, 68 percent said their first source of news was *Al Jazeera* Television. In 2010, 84 percent said *Al Jazeera* is either their first choice or second choice.

So there's obviously a shifting appeal. The government lost that control and relationship with the public by losing an extremely important instrument -- the media -- in Egypt, which was an instrument available to it that was basically dismissed by the public at some point. They didn't go to it anymore. It wasn't credible.

And it's stunning -- one of the stunning impacts of what happened in the past couple weeks is that the most important Egyptian newspaper, *Al Ahram*, which is

semi-official, which typically speaks for the government, on a day like today -- today, this morning -- has a headline which says, “The Fourth Million-Man March in Cairo,” indicates how solid the revolution of January 25th is. It’s an extraordinary change that has taken place, obviously, because, you know, the media has become totally out of the picture, and now it’s being inserted.

What we didn’t understand was how important the internet is. And there are two reasons for it.

One reason for it is you can’t imagine how new it is. I mean, in my polling in the Arab world aggregately, and Egypt in particularly, five years, just five years ago -- and I have a sample of 4,000 in the Arab world -- five years ago -- I like to do some statistical analysis, correlate demographics with issues. I didn’t have a statistically sample of internet users to be able to run statistical analyses that would be credible.

The internet expanded in a big way, really in the past three to five years. And the last couple years we suddenly see it. In Egypt, we got, you know, 25 percent who say, you know, they almost use it daily, or several times a week.

So the internet expanded rapidly in a way -- you know, it was faster than we can even understand. And we had a notion in some ways -- and I say “we,” political scientists, governments, even activists -- had a notion that it’s not enough to have anger, obviously, to revolt. You need people to be mobilized in large groups, to be able to get out there to have an impact. And that makes sense.

So people knew there was anger. I don’t think that comes as a surprise, frankly. You didn’t even need polling. I mean, we did the polling to just, in essence, to maybe measure it, see if it’s changing, validate. But, frankly, there are a lot of people

who knew it. It's not like it -- it didn't require a brilliant analyst to tell the people that. You know, it just makes it more scientific that we do.

We knew there was anger. But what we didn't know is that people can mobilize without relying on political parties or social groupings. And governments, by and large -- everybody assumed -- when they made an assessment what is the chance that you're going to have a revolt or revolution -- remember how rare revolutions are in history, anyway. How even more rare they've been in the Middle East. There's only been one real popular revolution, that's in Iran. And that was through a very much organized mechanism of mobilization.

So people assumed that unless you have a vehicle, it's not going to happen. And governments clearly targeted potential vehicles -- social movements like the Muslim Brotherhood, or political groups that -- they monitored them, they could arrest their leaders, they could preempt them. They could prevent them from mobilizing.

So the extraordinary thing that find, both in Tunisia and Egypt is that there is a public empowerment and ability to mobilize on a large scale that is outside of what we know. And that's why I think we have to be extremely modest in predicting how this will unfold, and also in making inferences that this couldn't happen here or there. Because people didn't think it could happen in Tunis. It happened. And the Foreign Minister of Egypt, right after, said, "Oh, Egypt is not Tunis. It couldn't happen in Egypt." Well, it's happening in Egypt.

And now we have people saying, well, it couldn't happen in this or that other place. Let's be modest. We have a dynamic right now of public empowerment that is in large part a function of this information revolution that's finally catching up. The genie is out of the box. It cannot be put back in the box.

And I think we should be modest about predicting how it's going to unfold.

MR. POLLACK: Thank you, Shibley. That's a terrific way to start us.

Obviously Shibley, Dalia, you guys have been working on these issues for so long, you have so many useful things to say, we can't possibly capture all of it in just this session.

But, Dalia, help us to build on the foundation that Shibley has laid for us.

And, by the way, I should point out to everyone that Dalia is actually a Cairene by birth -- and will always be, I think, a Cairene in her heart.

But, Dalia, help us to think a little bit more about what Egyptians are thinking about, what has driven them to this. And then, just more broadly, what are some of the things that we ought to understand about what's going on in Egypt and the rest of the Muslim world.

MS. MOGAHED: Thank you. Thank you very much. And thank you all for being here.

I want to start by maybe creating a framework. I think that Barrington Moore's book *Injustice, the Social Basis of Obedience and Revolt* is very useful in understanding Egypt.

So, his theory is basically that suffering, alone, is not enough for people to move to action, to move to revolt. That they have to realize that the suffering is both not inevitable -- that it doesn't have to be that way -- and, two, that its distribution is not just. And I think if we take that as our framework, Egypt becomes much more -- much easier to understand.

So, if we look at the past decade, and what has changed, we do see a declining sense of well-being in a number of different ways -- both economic, in perceptions of the state, as well as in terms of democratic aspirations. And so that creates almost the fuel, the foundation, the "suffering," if you will.

What created the sense of the discovery -- so he says in his book that discovering social injustice, discovering moral outrage, is actually a process. It's something that a society has to grow into.

And I think that that's exactly what has happened over the past 10 years. The ground was laid through this sense of suffering -- but anyone who's familiar with Egypt knows that, I think, Egyptians can go on forever and suffer and basically not react to it. But that there was something more. There was also a sense that -- that there was a growing sense of dignity. I completely agree with you, Shibley, on that. And that was giving oxygen to this fuel. And then the match, I believe, was Tunisia.

So in discussing what was the fuel, what were the patterns that created this -- that laid the ground for this revolution -- first, if you look at economics, Egypt's been growing. It's GDP has been growing steadily over at least the past five years, in an impressive way. And they've been bragging about this growth.

But at the same time that the GDP was going up, we were measuring life satisfaction and optimism actually trending down. And what's interesting about that is that life satisfaction and optimism, globally, tracks almost -- I mean, there's a correlation of .8 with GDP. As GDP increases, life satisfaction and optimism goes up, just in looking globally. But Egypt had the exact opposite trend, where they weren't tracking. One was going down as one was going up.

And the most interesting thing we noticed is that the group where life satisfaction and optimism was declining the fastest was among people 25 years and younger. There was almost a plane crash, in terms of their well-being.

When we analyzed it further, we found that the single most predictive variable to this overall measure of how things are going was whether or not someone felt that they had freedom to do what they wished in their life. So it wasn't demographic, it wasn't economics, it wasn't even employment status. But the most meaningful variable of predicting this thing we call "thriving," which is a combination of life-sat and optimism, was if they were satisfied with the freedom that they had in their life.

Egypt's overall thriving number is on par -- and now this is really, I think, very, to me, shocking -- was actually on par with people in the Palestinian Territories. So you have a country, a sovereign country, not occupied by anybody, not living under the conditions of the Palestinians, at the same level as people living in the conditions of the Palestinian Territories, in terms of life satisfaction and optimism. I think that alone should make us take pause. It's also the same life-sat and optimism, overall number, as Yemen, with half of Egypt's GDP. So, economic growth didn't translate into prosperity for people.

The other thing we found that was going down as GDP was going up is people's sense of access to this growth. So people were less and less likely to believe that they could start a business, less and less likely to believe that government was facilitating things -- just simple things like license and paperwork to start a business. They were less and less likely to believe that government was doing enough to create quality jobs. So it's not all about jobs, but this was one of the trends. So economics played a part.

Now, second, the functioning of the state -- so, social services, things that you depend on the state to provide -- also was going down as GDP was going up. People's satisfaction with just simple things like the educational system, access to public transportation.

One number that went down dramatically was access to affordable housing. And the reason that one's actually very important is because when housing, it can't be afforded, people can't move from being dependent on their parents to being independent. So this period that some scholars call "waithood" is extended when there isn't access to affordable housing. That extension of waithood can also become hugely problematic.

Satisfaction with dealing with the poor, satisfaction with even preserving the environment -- all going down as GDP is going up. So you have access to the economic growth not there, even satisfaction with the functions of the state not there. So you have a state that isn't providing the basics of social services, or access for people to grow in prosperity.

But I think the most important thing is -- you know, there are many states that don't have democratic systems, but they take care of their people. There are also states that are more democratic, but they don't take care of their people. But when you have both missing, you start to completely disengage from the state.

So the final thing is Egyptians' unrealized democratic aspirations.

As I think Shibley will agree, Egypt is among the most likely country in the region to say that democracy is something that they aspire to. So, they were the most likely in our database to say, "Moving toward greater democracy will help Muslims

progress." Over 80 percent said that. And there are other polls that show similar numbers.

More than 90 percent of Egyptians say that if they were to write a new constitution for a new country -- of course, we asked this question before we knew that they very well might -- 90 percent of them, or more than 90 -- I think it was more like 97 percent -- said that they would include free speech as a basic guarantee.

But yet at the same time that they have these very high democratic aspirations, Egyptians are the least likely of our entire database of 150 countries to say, to report, that they have expressed an opinion to an elected official. And, remember, we're polling in a lot of places that aren't especially democratic, including in the region. And Egyptians were the least like to say that they actually had expressed their opinions to an elected official.

So if you think about -- it's the differential that's really striking. On one hand very high democratic aspirations -- when we ask Egyptians what they admire most about the West, overall in our database the number one answer is "technology" and then "democratic values." That's what Muslims around the world say. In Egypt, "democratic values" comes first. That's what they admire most about the West.

So we have this group with a very developed sense of democratic ideals, and yet the last likely to actually have -- practice those ideals in their own country.

Only 25 percent of them told us that they had confidence in the honesty of elections. Now, I think that number is striking because, A, it is quite low but, B, it's probably even lower than 25 percent, because of the political sensitivity of the question.

But perhaps most significantly -- and this goes back to what I was first talking about in terms of life-sat, freedom to do what one wants -- the freedom to do what

one wants with one's life dropped from 80 percent in 2005, to only 36 percent in 2010. That kind of a nosedive on the one variable that is most predictive of life-sat I think was the fuel, was what set the groundwork for what happened in January. And that number, 2010, actually comes from a poll that we finished doing in Egypt in November.

So, if this is the, you know, the arithmetic of revolution, what may have added to that, to turn this groundwork into revolution? Into movement? And I agree: the internet and the ability to socially mobilize was quite significant.

But I think what's so interesting is this same group -- they call themselves, I think, the "April 6th Youth," had been trying to mobilize before, had been trying to mobilize through the internet before, and they would only bring about, you know, about 5,000 protesters, if that. And they were mostly asking for labor rights. They were asking for hire wages, or protesting because they hadn't gotten a bonus. For them to actually mobilize tens of thousands at first, and then millions, to ask for Mubarak himself to step down -- that kind of a bold statement -- something else happened.

And I'll tell you a story to illustrate what I think is going on in Egypt. I was in Cairo in December, just about a month-and-a-half ago. And I witnessed this incident in a coffee shop that I think really was almost prophetic to what was about to happen -- although, obviously, I didn't know it at the time.

There was a very irate customer screaming at the waiter that was waiting on him in this coffee shop, and accusing him of having disrespected him. So the young man, the young waiter, looked back at him and sort of firmly but politely said, "I didn't do anything wrong. You yelled at me." The man slammed back, "Do you know who I am?" and then proceeded to demand from the manager that this young man be reprimanded, publicly, in front of him by, in his words, "Dragging the dog's dignity in the dirt." Those

were his words. This was obviously a protected upper-class person who was used to getting his way, and used to -- not used to being talked back to by a member of the working class.

Now, anyone familiar with Cairo has probably seen a similar scene, you know, before. It's not unusual that a member of the protected upper class would behave this way. But what came next really was very surprising. Instead of cowering into an apology, which is what you normally would expect -- because you don't want to lose your job and, you know, you need to be able to keep working -- the young man looked his accuser right in the eye and said, "You're not God, and I'm not your subordinate. I'm a person, just like you."

That kind of a response is just not one that I think you would have seen 10 years ago. Something has changed in the Egyptian people. And that wasn't the only incident that I saw that was similar to that. There was another one in a beauty salon, where the woman was just telling a story about how a Saudi walked in, and he wanted x, y, z, and she told him, you know, "I'm not going to do that because it's against my principles." I mean, it wasn't anything illegal, but she just didn't feel like she wanted to. You know, he was a good tipper, he was rich -- whatever.

But people have moved beyond -- even though these are poor, working-class people, their material needs have been somehow superseded by this sense of dignity, by a discovery of their self-worth. I think part of that is a growing religiosity. I think over the past 10 years, people have moved from a completely material existence to having a greater sense of their worth -- possibly through discovering this through a spiritual path. So I do believe that Egyptians' greater sense of dignity -- possibly, for

some people, a discovery through spirituality -- contributed to the groundwork that was necessary for this to happen.

And then, finally, the fact that it wasn't inevitable was what was created by Tunisia. I think that that really inspired people to see that even a government like Tunisia which they felt was possibly worse than Egypt could be toppled by popular revolution.

MR. POLLACK: Thank you, Dalia.

Ibrahim, I'd like to turn to you, and I'd like you to help us to broaden the aperture a little bit. Because as both Shibley and Dalia have alluded to, and as I suggested in my opening remarks, obviously what's going on here is remarkable in Egypt. But what's also remarkable is that it's not just about Egypt, that there are issues and -- relevant issues across the region.

And in particular, what I'd love to ask you is to help us to understand a little bit why we are seeing protest movements in Yemen, in Jordan, in some other places, and we're also not seeing it in certain places. We saw a little one in Saudi Arabia, but the kingdom seems mostly quiet. There was effort to mobilize one in Syria. That doesn't seem to have come to much.

You know, why is it happening in some places and not in others.

And then I think the related question of why are the governments in some places willing to make concessions, and others not?

So help us understand what's going on in the region.

MR. SHARQIEH: Thank you, Ken. Thank you, everyone in Washington.

Actually, I just came from *Al Jazeera* where I spent three hours today providing comments on the developments, so I have the latest coming from *Al Jazeera* studios.

So let me just go over, you know, some updates about what's happening in the region, and we can comment also on your questions.

First of all, let me start with Algeria. With Algeria, there is a planned protest for February 12th. The authorities have already declared that they're banning the protest to be on February 12th -- although the President promised to lift the emergency law that's in effect for the past 19 years. So this is something to watch. It's a hot-spot now in Algeria, and what is going to happen on February 12th.

In Morocco, we have a planned protest for February 20th. So we still have time. But there has been some talk on the protest, the planning for it on the 20th.

Syria -- exactly as you said, even the protest was not very successful, Ken -- although, in terms of the numbers of people who showed up for the protest. However, it made, it produced some results where the Syrian government actually has lifted the ban on Facebook that's in effect for the past five years, as well.

Probably one of the countries that has the biggest developments is in Jordan, as we know, where the government has been replaced and we have a new Prime Minister. However, the Prime Minister, the new Prime Minister, Marouf al-Bakhit, is not very accepted publicly in Jordan. And it's an old face; it's not a new face. So it really did not help the government that much, because the government seemed to be doing business as usual, changing faces of the government and the Prime Minister. So that did not really help the King at all with this one, specially, again, that Marouf al-Bakhit is an old face.

So, as a result, we had seen for the first time actually in Jordan, where there is a tribal movement. We have a tribe -- 36 tribal figures that they called for reforms in Egypt. This is very unusual in Jordan, where we have the tribes usually supporting the King. And we noticed, in particular, that especially in the south cities, in the southern cities, for Jordan, in Karak and Amman, that the tribal leaders are also supporting this movement. So this is something, again, new in Jordan.

In Yemen, we are probably going to wait for a little bit, because there were some developments in the past two weeks. And the Day of Rage of last Thursday did not go as expected -- although there was some quality improvements, in terms of the numbers of the protesters that attended to that Day of Rage on Thursday. However, the protesters were unable to keep momentum. It was expected, or some analysts were hoping that on Friday, the following day, after the Friday prayers, that would have some continuation of the protest. But that did not happen.

So it was some sort -- although, again, that the protesters were able to gather 20,000, which was the highest number. But it failed in keeping momentum. An the other thing, also, which is also viewed as a setback to the protests in Yemen were that President Saleh was able to send equal number of supporters to the streets in Sana, and that led to even -- to have the street evenly divided between the government and between the protester.

So, in terms, again, of numbers, they were higher. But it failed to proceed further.

So this is -- we should expect to see quiet in Yemen in the coming couple of days. And also something new noticed where the government started actually to go on the offense, sort of, where the government were talking about today that that's it,

Yemen has proved it's not showing, it's not having an Egypt-style demonstrations. So they're distancing themselves more from the protests in Egypt, as well.

For Kuwait, there was a planned protest for February 8th and it got delayed after the resignation of the Interior -- the Minister of Interior in Kuwait. So we should -- we will wait to see what is going to happen next.

In Bahrain there were some new developments, where we have a planned protest for February 14th. We heard, also, of some informal talks that are happening between the government and the oppositions. The King in Bahrain has reinstated some welfare support for the poor, and maintained also supports, subsidies of basic commodities in Bahrain.

The King will speak on February 12th, so we should -- we're expecting that probably (inaudible) will be also delivered from the King of Bahrain.

These are mainly that the most, you know, the most -- you know, the latest updates about the past couple of days and what's going to happen next.

And one thing we have noticed, Ken, is that the governments are really responding, taking really notes of what's happening in Egypt. And they're trying to -- they are responding and they are preempting of any expected demonstrations that might happen in the government. So they are active members of this struggle between the government and the protests. So they are taking steps to prevent any future escalations.

We have notices that there are new strategies that are being used by, again, the government, where trying to give some level of freedom or some level of freedom of expression for the people in their countries in order to let them vent, so they can hopefully stop it there. And it is working somehow in some places, but in other cases where it's still not working, and the government is expected to do more.

One thing also that we have noticed across the board, that governments across the board are not really giving up on making serious concessions. And most of the concessions that have been made are seen to be cosmetic reforms, but not serious concessions. So where serious, rigorous reforms, we haven't seen. And there are no indicators to show that, you know, these places or these governments that are really doing much. So that's one other thing we have noticed.

In Egypt, in particular, there's a big example of what we called this morning -- you know, in *Al Jazeera* -- the government's stubbornness about making changes, or serious changes, or giving up. Because in the prime example has been the Egyptian government, Omar Suleiman, where it's given like a number, a huge number, we're having a huge number of small concessions to make. And they are using them slowly, so they can continue to use the strategy of draining, you know, the resources of the protesters. Because for the government, they are sitting in a comfortable position, where they have to make, you know, these small concessions, while the protesters are expected to maintain what's being called the "Million Man March," or demonstrations in the streets.

So it really requires the protestors' high mobility and a lot of efforts. And at the same time we have seen President Mubarak is meeting with the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates on TV, trying to show that it's really business as usual, and the government and President Mubarak is comfortable in his place.

So the developments continue, and we are having new developments on a daily basis, of course -- and on an hourly basis, sometimes.

So, the changes -- there are a lot of changes, there are a lot of impacts that we have seen, but we can get into that probably in the questions and answers. Or, if you want, I can talk about that, as well.

MR. POLLACK: Thank you, Ibrahim.

Before I let you go, though -- you know, it strikes me that the places where they've been most successful in suppressing the dissent recently is Syria. But then if you look back a few years, I think you could actually bring Iran into the same mix, where what we saw in 2009 was largely an Iranian expression of the same sorts of anger and unhappiness that you see across the Arab world today.

And so one of the questions I wanted to put to you is, is it as simple as if you're an American ally you're in a tough spot, but if you're not an American ally, you can use all the force you want and you're fine?

MR. SHARQIEH: Thank you, Ken.

Before I answer this question, I want, actually, to emphasize what my colleagues said previously about the economic conditions in Egypt and in Tunisia. Because this is very relevant to your question -- and to support my colleagues in Washington.

We have seen really that the economic -- we have seen, as Shibley said, the economic conditions are important, however they are not sufficient to produce a revolution. Because in Egypt and in Tunisia, the common thing is that we have high unemployment of 10 percent and 14 percent while we have in Yemen 35 percent. So economic indicators, we should have seen the revolution and uprising happening in Yemen in the first place. So this is not happening even until now.

At the same time, we have also what the media has focused a lot on, which is the access to the media, the access to the internet, Facebook and Twitter, where we have in Egypt and Tunisia high access of over 35 percent access to the social media in these two countries, while in a country like Yemen it's only about 9 percent. So, this is associated with the education factor, and here to support what Dalia said previously, is that it's really what the people, how the people are making sense.

And here, I'm touching on your question, Ken -- it's really how the people are making sense of this that matters. Because I am linking these here to education, where we have in Egypt and in Tunisia very high level of education. In Egypt we have 71 percent literacy, and in Tunisia we have 74 percent. So the high level of education in these two countries, and how -- and what Dalia said previously of how the people are making sense of what's happening around them that is supporting the uprising. While in Yemen, for example, it's only 50 percent -- the literacy in Yemen.

So the education and how the people are making sense of these things, that's a very important factor that we have seen. And that exactly addresses your question, Ken, where we have -- how the people are making sense of what's going around them is the decisive, the crucial factor here, where unfortunately, yes, it's exactly as you said it -- where if you are, are you a supporter, or a U.S. ally, then you should be careful. You should watch more carefully.

And I even heard this morning, even jokes like, you know, things like Saddam now is very proud that he was chased by the Americans, while the Arab, the other leaders now, they're chased by their people.

So things are, people are really trying to make sense and to reflect on what's happening. And the U.S. is in very difficult situation, unfortunately.

And I would like to emphasize here is that the confusion, what is being, the way it's being perceived here in the region, the confusion among the U.S. Administration about what is going on and how to take a position on the developments is really not helping the U.S., and is putting U.S. allies in even more difficult positions, because so far we have seen some sort of fluctuation. And here, the way it is perceived in the U.S. position where have in the beginning seen that Secretary Clinton describing the regime as a "stable regime," and then there is "orderly transition," and then there is the President, "Mubarak should be on the top of this orderly transition."

So unfortunately, the mixed messages that the region here is receiving from the U.S. Administration is really not helping. Because, A, the people here were counting on a very clear support from the U.S. Administration to help the protestors and to help, you know, to adhere to its democratic principles and values. While, in my view, there has been commitment to democratic values, but that is not the way it is being seen and perceived by the people. And the dialogue, the rhetoric that you hear is about -- here in the region, is about the double standards and the mixed messages, and the alliance with a dictatorship, and all this kind of discourse that now we hear in the region about describing the U.S. position.

So, again, the U.S. Administration will have really as soon as possible is to take a clear position about what's happening, to save the credibility and to try to make the position. Because the current -- again, the way it's perceived -- confusion is not helping at all.

Thank you.

MR. POLLACK: As my grandmother would say, from your mouth to God's ears. (Laughter.)

Shibley, you've done a tremendous amount of work. One of the issues you've been following over the years is this question that Ibrahim was getting at, at the end there, which is popular perceptions of the United States.

And how is the U.S. being seen regionally? How are we likely to fare as a result of everything going on?

MR. TELHAMI: Well, let me answer that by going back to this question that you asked Ibrahim, about are America's allies in tougher positions because, you know, the international on them mounts, and states like Syria and Iran are more comfortable in crushing their opposition.

That's one interpretation. It's a good -- you know, it's a good point of argument.

But I would provide another one. And that is that --

MR. POLLACK: I was hoping you would..

MR. TELHAMI: I'd look at it from two points of view. One is you can argue, actually, that part of the anger in the region -- and we have to understand that -- is not just that we're supportive of repressive regimes. That is part of the anger. People don't like that. Everybody wants freedom -- you know, whether it's, you know, in friendly countries or non-friendly countries. Everybody wants liberty.

The problem is that they're angry with America over foreign policy issues way beyond the relationship with their own governments. They're angry with America over the Iraq war. They're angry with America over the stationing of major forces in the Gulf. They're angry with America over the Israel-Palestine issue. And those are the issues that are highly ranked.

And more than that, they think that the U.S. -- even when it's genuine in trying to advocate democracy -- is trapped, because it is consistently going to these governments and saying, "Please go against your government -- your public's will and support us on -- " -- this or that. As happened with the Iraq war. Ninety percent of the people are passionately opposed to the Iraq war. We make a decision, the first priority for a President or Congress is to the American people to protect American troops and to win a war, and you want every ally to be on your side. And they tell you, "But the public will revolt." And we say, "Well, find a way. And we need you on our side."

So you go in, and you get their support, and they become more nervous, and they start repressing more. And for that reason, every single year we've tested since the Iraq war, the public in the region says the Middle East has become more repressive than the before. That's been their interpretation.

So, first, there's anger with America. And that anger is, you know, in part one reason why when the Bush Administration advocated democracy in the Middle East, and made it a priority issue, people loved that. I mean, people would have wanted Obama to do it. That's not a problem -- except they didn't believe him, because of all of the things that he was doing on issues they didn't agree with, and because he was implicated in something that they opposed.

And so, for that reason, even the genuine democracy advocates in the region were put on the defensive, because they were implicated with an administration the public simply didn't like.

And in my own judgment, by the way -- and historical perspective -- I think the two Gulf wards, the 1991 Gulf war and 2003 Gulf war delayed what would have been a natural emergence of reform in the Arab world. That these have -- that our

policies, including the policies following the Iraq war, actually slowed down the natural urge, internally, that we've, in a way help put a cap on it, and that's something to add.

And part of it is that when people want democracy but they also don't want the imperialism. And one of the things that you don't want is someone to say, "You see, this is about America." And when they say it's about America, then they're -- you know, they scare people. And even people who want reform, they don't want to be helping the imperial idea.

That's why government's generally say, "This is foreign." You know, "This is an Iranian thing in Egypt." Or "This is an American thing." Or "This is a Mossad thing." Why do they do that? They do that because they know that there's a public fear of outside power, and therefore they create those tradeoffs.

And you want to take that away from them. You don't want the governments to say, you know, "This is about America," or this is about -- you know, somebody else.

And that's one reason, by the way, I think we should not turn the Egyptian upheaval about Washington. The more this becomes about America, the worse it becomes. And for one thing, the U.S. has not had a very good track record in engineering an outcome. Regardless, we should take the principled position of supporting freedom and democracy -- particularly when it's peaceful, like this. If we can't support it when it's peaceful, we're going to get stuck with it when it becomes militant.

We've got to take that position very clear. But, beyond that, we're not in a position to engineer an outcome.

I'll go one more, on the Iran issue -- because you gave the Iran example. And I'm not sure I fully support that, but I throw it out there as an idea.

You can make an argument that one reason why Egypt and Tunisia and other Arab states, you know, people are able to mobilize, they've become far more integrated into the global economy and the information revolution. And the more you isolate people, the more you squeeze them, number one, it gives the government the ability to point to the outsiders who want to weaken you. Number two, it limits their instruments of mobilizing -- being integrated into the information revolution. And, number three, it limits the empowerment that comes from outside links that you would have.

So you can make an argument that maybe sanctions slow down -- maybe the Iranians, the Iranian people may have revolted more quickly if they had -- the government was not pointing out to the West, or if they had been allowed to integrate into the global economy in the same way that happened with Eastern Europe earlier.

So I throw that as an intellectual discussion that we should be having. We're not having it. We're limiting ourselves to very simplistic analysis -- should we support the military, and should we not?

Now, in the immediate choices the U.S. has in Egypt, obviously the military is going to be critical. The public is the most critical -- this is the empowered public and we've got to support it. This is aspirations that are at the heart of American values. And as long as it remains peaceful, we've got to make it clear that we will not accept the employment of violence against peaceful demonstrators under any circumstances. And this is something that the United States simply will not accept and should not accept.

The U.S. sees the military as an important ally. It is. What happens in Egypt in the next few years is likely to -- whatever happens, the military is likely to be part of the game. They've been an important institution in Egypt. They're respected --

although they're losing some of that in the last few days because people don't know where they are.

And that's the only place where the U.S. has a lever. Because the relationship with the U.S. is close, in terms of equipment and funding and coordination. You don't have control over the rest of the politics.

But you can imagine a situation, if you want to be optimistic about the future of Egypt, of Egypt being what Turkey was 10, 20 years ago, where you have a strong military, but far more liberty. And in that case, I think, the U.S. certainly should keep its relationship with the military.

But clearly, it has to be more credibly on the side of the public will. And we shouldn't make this about America.

I don't like the idea that we need to make a statement every single day, and make it appear as if we're trying to engineer a particular outcome -- which we can't do, in any case.

MR. POLLACK: Thank you, Shibley.

Dalia, before we open it up to the audience, there's one other issue out there. It's a really important one. And it's an issue that's you've worked on a tremendous amount, and given us all a lot of insight on.

And that is the relationship between religion and politics, Islam and Islamism, people's views on that. Obviously, the Muslim Brotherhood looms very large in a lot of people's thinking -- here, in Cairo, all around the world.

Help us understand a little bit about the role of the Brotherhood, of people's thinking about Islamists and Islamism, and what we might expect from this, moving forward.

MS. MOGAHED: Well, I think that it's important to draw an important distinction between religiosity and support for the Brotherhood. They're not the same thing in any way, shape or form.

So, Egyptians are possibly the most religious public in the world -- according to our research. We ask a simple question, "Is religion an important part of your daily life?" And we ask it in more than 100 countries. And the Egyptian public actually comes up top -- the top public, where almost 100 percent say yes. We can discuss what that really means, but it is a question we ask across the world. It's a simple yes and no.

We do think, we do believe that Egyptians tend to be very, very religious. They also, as I said, tend to be among the highest in the region in terms of democratic aspirations. So there isn't any conflict between high religiosity and high democratic aspirations.

From everything I've seen -- as well as my personal experience and sources in Egypt -- the popularity of the Brotherhood has always been among only a minority of people, and it's actually decreasing. So, estimates are around 20 percent, perhaps, support the Brotherhood. I tend to believe that that has actually been coming down since they've been involved in politics.

So if you look at the trend around the world, whether in Jordan or Indonesia or Malaysia, when Islamist parties are allowed to compete in democratic elections, they actually tend to lose their popularity, lose their support in the public. And I think that that's exactly what has happened in Egypt.

So if there were a truly representative parliamentary election, a free and fair election that anyone could participate in, I do not expect the Brotherhood to take anything other than a minority participation in that.

We do have to, though, I think, embrace the nuance in Egypt of a revolution that may have been animated by religious values for some people, and the distinction between that and an Islamic revolution. Egyptians, when we ask them about the role of religious leaders or clerics, most don't want them to have any role at all. And even those who do support a role for religious leaders, only want them to have an advisory role.

So, while Egyptians might be motivated or inspired by religious values, they are not advocating for an Islamic state. They are not advocating for the rule of the clerics. What they want is the rule of law.

MR. POLLACK: Thank you, Dalia.

Okay, I'd like to open it up to questions. I'd like to ask everyone to remember to please wait for a microphone to come to you. And please do state your name and ask a question. I'd like you to make it concise, and please do ask a question rather than simply making a statement.

Why don't we start right here on the aisle? This gentleman.

MR. WEINTRAUB: Thank you; I'm Leon Weintraub, University of Wisconsin.

I'd like to ask any of the panel if you could address the influence, or lack of influence, of the U.N.-sponsored Arab Human Development Report about six to eight years ago. As far as I know, this was done by respected Arab scholars about the region. It portrayed a region in stagnation.

Was this not seen as some type of a wake-up call? Not to say that all governments always recognize wake-up calls, but did it fall into a void? Was it ignored? What was the effect, if any?

MR. TELHAMI: Well, it had more impact in the West than it did in the Middle East. I mean, obviously it was debated among Arab intellectuals.

But, really, Arabs in the region didn't need that report to tell them where they are. They knew. It was actually more important, in some ways, here and among elites.

There's no indication that that, in and of itself, you know, was a motivating factor behind, you know, what we've seen in Egypt and Tunisia. And, as I said, I think most of that, you know, really is about the economic conditions, but it's also about the political conditions, because there were measures about freedom that were there.

Most of it -- you know, the term "dignity," I think, is powerful. And it's interesting, because when you look at that term and what it means in terms of their dignity -- you know, Dalia gave an example from a coffee shop. You know, in terms of in society, and vis-a-vis governments, vis-a-vis the outside world, the marginalization, the not-counting, the not having a voice, the not seeing a future, the not being able to control your destiny -- the humiliation.

And what's interesting is that, you know, Henry Kissinger, when he was explaining in his memoirs about why he didn't take the prospect of the '73 war seriously, why he was surprised, he basically said he didn't understand the importance of restoring dignity as a factor. I happen to not fully agree with that, in the sense of why Egypt wanted to go to war. It wanted to restore its territory.

But it was extremely important, by the way, for the military. Because the military establishment -- if you look at it -- came back in 1952, they played a central role as an honorable institution in Egypt. And then the '67 war humiliated them as an institution. The one time when the military was the butt of jokes in Egypt was between '67 and '73. The military institution -- the '73 war was, in part, a restoration of dignity for the military institution itself, by the way.

So I think the motivation here is far bigger, you know, than we're -- than pointing out to specific issues. And I think the report had more impact on the West than it did in the Arab world itself.

MR. POLLACK: Let's go down here. And while the microphone is moving, I will make the introduction for Khaled Elgindy, who is a Visiting Fellow at the Saban Center. And it just gives me great pride, the depth of our bench. Because we could easily have had Khaled up here on the stage with us.

Khaled?

MR. ELGINDY: Thanks, Ken.

My question is sort of to go back to this point on the U.S. And I agree with Shibley that this isn't and shouldn't be about the United States. But in some ways it sort of has anyway. And I don't think that's terribly surprising.

In my talks with people in Cairo -- whether friends or family or civil society people and journalists and others -- I think most of them are just sort of kind of scratching their heads, wondering "Where's the United States going to be today when we wake up?" I think they're sort of confused about where they stand.

My sense is that there's -- the United States has sort of inserted itself into this. And I think you're right, and I agree with others who say that maybe there is a

little too much verbalizing of the thinking that was going on. It was almost as if they were thinking out loud on national television all the time.

But, you know, if the Administration began by saying, “This is up to the Egyptians to decide,” and gradually the -- I think there is a very clear American position now, which seems to have parked very decisively behind the person of Omar Suleiman. And I think that is the position of the United States, is that he’s the one who can oversee this -- whether or not Mubarak himself is in the picture.

My concern is -- and I think the concern that people in Egypt have, especially the ones who are out in the street -- is that it’s highly unlikely that Omar Suleiman, who is the overseer of the intelligence, who’s been an integral part of the regime, he’s not about to dismantle this 50-year-old regime that he’s been a part of sustaining and almost perfecting, in a way. I mean, this is the prototype of the Arab police state in the region.

And how is it, sort of -- to the question -- how do you see the American position evolving? Do you see it changing over the, sort of with events on an hourly or daily basis? Or at some point are they going to stake out a broader, sort of more strategic view, in light of the point that you made, and the point that Dalia made, about, you know, dignity, and that this is about the people?

And sort of the backdrop of that is, if the United States is looking at its position in the future, here you have a population in Egypt, I think it’s about 60 percent is under the age of 30. This is the future of American foreign policy here. This is, you know, are you going to stay with the old men and the old guard, who essentially have failed and have been rejected? Or are you going to make an investment -- a long-term investment -- in the future?

So where do you see -- I guess, to any of you, and to you as well, Ken -- where do you see the United States moving? Even though I understand that you don't want to make this about the United States?

MR. POLLACK: Do you want to start?

MR. TELHAMI: Yes, I mean let's start with the last part, which is about the need for real, full reassessment of American foreign policy. I think, no question about it in my mind, for actually a whole policy review of how the United States defines its interest in the region. That you're going to need to do it. And I would be surprised if there's no initiation already of something that's going to take some time. Because that's not going to be resolved in the immediate crisis. So that is required, no doubt.

But that doesn't happen instantly. And so, in the meanwhile, you have your interests defined as they are. And you have constituents and allies.

Now, if you're thinking about who's weighing in with the White House, who's weighing in on a daily basis with the State Department, on a daily basis, it's going to be the King of Jordan, the King of Saudi Arabia, the Kind of Morocco, the Prime Minister of Israel. There are lobbyists in town that have relations with the government.

Our bureaucracies that have interests -- the CIA has operational relationships that are underway every single hour with many of these countries that they have to protect. The military establishment, which has to worry about the safety of American troops and their transit and every issue, and the only connections they have are these people.

So all of the pressure that weighs in on the Administration is a pressure that is really trying to protect the status quo up to a point. And there is no constituency

whatsoever that is going to be lobbying on behalf of that major change, or being on the public side -- other than public opinion, or the questions that might come out.

So, bureaucratically, you know, in a way you're kind of confined in this process. You know, your hands are tied.

Now, with the military in Egypt, when you say "Can they change," "Could Omar Suleiman do it?" -- I don't know. Maybe not. And certainly, the public seems not.

But I don't think the Egyptian public equates the military with the policy state. Maybe they are. You're absolutely right in saying they're part of the regime. I mean, it's not the regime versus the military. The military is the anchor of the regime.

But in the public eye of Egyptians, there's a differentiation between the security services, that are seen to be repressive, that they despise, and the military institution, for which they have some respect. Maybe not the individuals, maybe not the upper echelons, but they have respect.

And so for the military institution, they're going to have to make a bet, you know. Because the choice will be either they're going to deploy force to reverse the public tide -- in which case they will lose the public, and then maybe they'll lose the international community in the process. Or they try to carve out something for themselves in a societal bargain, where they play the role like a Turkey military 20 years ago, where they're protecting certain strategic interests and foreign policy interests, and still play a role in society, but allow far more freedom and get their hands off of the running of the state on a daily basis. That is a possible choice.

Can they do it? Can they do it with the upper echelons that they now have? I don't know.

But it's not up to me to decide. It's not up to the United States to decide. It's up to the Egyptians to decide.

MR. POLLACK: I'll just say, Khaled, you know, from my part -- since you're asking me, as well -- for 10 years I have been making the case that these problems exist, that change is coming whether we like it or not. And the question mark is whether we are going to get in front of it and lead a comprehensive effort at gradual reform, or whether we try to impede it and wind up with unpredictable explosions.

Most recently, in 2008, I wrote a book called *Path Out of the Desert*. This was the centerpiece of that strategy. Dalia knows that well, because her work was incredibly important in the framing of that whole book.

So, yes, I hope that we finally see -- and we've had multiple wake-up calls since the Iranian revolution. I hope this is the one that actually kicks us out of bed.

Okay, I'd like to take three or four questions, and we'll put them all to the different group.

So let's start in the very back.

MR. LAWRENCE: Bill Lawrence, State Department. We're listening.

I've worked most of my career on youth issues. My question for Dalia is about class stratification. You got a little bit into the economic data and the correlation, the .8 you talked about.

But anyone who's lived in the region knows that Egypt is more class-stratified. So I was wondering if, both within your data and within your qualitative assessments, whether the economic growth in Egypt has sort of affected just a certain upper cohort, and if that was reflected in your data?

For Shibley -- and for everybody, but more for Shibley -- you know, I don't disagree at all with anything, really, you've said, or about the importance of the technology revolution that's going on.

But just to sort of play devil's advocate, to some degree, I'm thinking about Cairo '77, Algeria '88 and the other 50 conflagrations you could think of that weren't influenced by these new technologies. And the op ed that was in the *New York Times* earlier this week about how much this isn't about the internet. Isn't what we're watching here more a qualitative change in the demands that are being made, rather than just the technologies of mobilization being changed?

And I'm reading that both in what Dalia said and what you said. Isn't what's going on here is that new types of demands being framed in qualitatively importantly different new types of ways, and it's really not about Twitter or Facebook?

MR. POLLACK: Okay. Let's go to -- over here, there's a lady over -- right -- thank you.

MS. CESARE: Hi. My name is Justine Cesare, from Harvard University. It's to Dalia about this difference between Islam and Islamism.

I completely agree: the data show that in Muslim countries, once Islamists become professional politicians, they tend to have a sort of greater discredit when they become institutionalized in the political process. At the same time, what we have seen in the last 30 years is the greater Islamization of public spaces everywhere -- even under the Mubarak regime, actually.

So that's where there is a discrepancy here, between people advocating on a specific political repertoire, and the fact that people who are involved in civic and civil actions in the name of Islam are still very, very popular. And that's, I think, an

important point to maintain, especially when we are looking at the future of this kind of social movement and rebellion everywhere.

They may not be, I would say, directed or controlled by the Muslim Brothers. But the work that has been done -- and, again, not only by political opponents to the Mubarak regime, but even by actors or agents from the state itself -- have pushed Islam as a major element of any political equation.

And I don't think that Egypt is alone in this case. I mean, the discussion today in Tunisia around Rachid Ghannouchi is exactly the same thing.

So I don't think we're going to move towards Islamic states, but much more toward a sort of more inclusive position, that will also take into account, as a political group.

And it's interesting you mentioned --

MR. POLLACK: Thank you -- ma'am. Ma'am --

MS. CESARE: -- it's not an Islamic revolution.

MR. POLLACK: Ma'am -- we've got.

MS. CESARE: I just want to say --

MR. POLLACK: Ma'am, we've got your point. Thank you so much. Please allow someone else to ask a question. We've got to wrap up at 10:30.

MS. CESARE: I have one thing.

MR. POLLACK: Ma'am. Thank you very much. We've got your question. You've made some wonderful points.

If we could move right down here, to the lady with the blond hair? And we'll take her and one other question, and then we'll put it back to our panel.

MS. MARCONI: Janice Marconi, Marconi Works International.

It's not necessarily that the comparison to the Iranian revolution is a false comparison, but nobody's really made any comparisons to the revolution of 1916 in Egypt. That would be very useful, your comments.

MR. POLLACK: Thank you. Okay -- and then let's go right over there.

And my apologies to everyone else. This, I promise you, will not be the last Egypt event that we will wind up doing.

MS. LAKSHMANAN: Thanks, Ken. Indira Lakshmanan from Bloomberg News.

I wanted to ask the panel, including Ken -- Shibley has already alluded to this -- but to give a little bit of a rating of how the Administration has done already on its first 3:00 a.m. moment. I know you've talked a lot about going forward, but how have they done so far?

And also like to know, as part of that, how much of an impact -- does it matter what the Obama Administration has done or not done about democracy promotion, compared to what the Bush Administration was doing, both in terms of the money spent and words, like in speeches.

Thank you.

MR. POLLACK: Thank you.

Okay, let's start with Ibrahim. We'll go in reverse order.

So, Ibrahim -- your thoughts, your responses to any of those questions.

MR. SHARQIEH: Thank you, Ken. Actually, I'm glad you've asked this question, because we have so far, in the past two weeks, one of the most important issues that came up is actually the Islamist dimension and the Muslim Brotherhood. And in the past two weeks I received questions from the Western media on the Muslim

Brotherhood, probably more than the uprising itself -- which shows that, you know, how important this is.

And to that, I would like to answer is that, yes, the Muslim Brotherhood are important, they are very important player in Egypt.

But here is one thing that's also happening at the same time. Change is happening in Egypt and in the rest of the Arab world. Change, not only on the level of the government, but change on the attitude and the behavior of the Arab youth and the Arab public across the Middle East. So change has happened, regardless of where this uprising in Egypt is taking us.

I think we are -- only this can say, now we're going to see what form of change this is going to happen. And for the youth, you should have seen Wael Ghonim when he was released yesterday from prison, who's his political career, has been only two years. And Wael Ghonim has proved to be more effective, more influential in the Egyptian society, more than the 80-year-old Brotherhood that are in Egypt.

So we have seen support and calls for Wael Ghonim to take the lead. So really, change is happening, and people, the youth, are making their voices loud.

And this will prevent a future domination of the political scene, whether it's from the Brotherhood or from other forces. Because it has been compared sometimes with the Iranian revolution, where the Muslim Brotherhood will take over.

I can assure you that today, who are demonstrating in Tahrir Square against dictatorship, they will demonstrate tomorrow against totalitarianism.

So change, that is what I am referring to as the important, real change that is happening, which is on the attitude and the behavior of the public. And the youth

who are demonstrating in Tahrir Square today will not accept a future totalitarian regime, whether it's coming from the Brotherhood or from other sources.

So we are really moving into a world, a flat world in Egypt, where the political forces are being (interruption) name is being as effective as the Muslim Brotherhood, where only two years old in his political career.

So the world is flat today in Egypt, in terms of the political map. And we are here to see how this leadership is going to emerge and continue to follow.

Thank you.

MR. POLLACK: Thank you, Ibrahim.

Dalia, any brief comments to any -- (inaudible)?

MS. MOGAHED: Sure. I'll pick up on a thread that was being asked about the stratification of the data.

We did find that the top 20 percent -- and if we had a big enough sample size we could have gone a little narrower, a top 10 percent -- but the top 20 percent of the economic range in Egypt actually went up in their life-sat and optimism in the last year, whereas everyone else went sharply down. So there is definitely a difference in how people are reacting to what's going on.

The only other thing that I wanted to bring up is something picking up on something Shibley said, and some of you have alluded to -- which is, the risks, the risks of actually this not working, of the protests not succeeding in fulfilling their goes, and that is a fortification of the terrorist, extremist narrative.

So if we remember Al Qaeda's original goal was to actually topple the Mubarak regime. I think we forget that. We think it's all about us. It was actually not all about us in the beginning. And they completely failed, obviously. And their entire

narrative is, “There is only one way to change injustice. There is only way to correct a wrong, and that is through violence.”

If these young people are able to successfully do what Al Qaeda couldn’t -- with all of its bombs, and all of its resources -- peacefully, we will have dealt a fatal blow to their ability to make a case. And I think we have to put that in context, in terms of the security implications of this protest.

MR. POLLACK: Thank you, Dalia.

Shibley, you get the last word.

MR. TELHAMI: Well, I certainly want to echo that. And, obviously, I’ve been making that argument -- which I think is very central -- that we have to understand. Because there are costs for the failure, to the United States, as well as to the region.

But just two very quick questions that were asked towards me directly -- one about the information revolution. And we have to understand this.

I’m a political scientist. Information revolution is not the cause of the revolution. It never was. As a political scientist, every single year I study the Middle East, I say, “Why haven’t people revolted already?” The puzzle has not been, “Is there reason for them revolt?” We knew there was reason for them to revolt. We can enumerate them. It’s been, “Why haven’t they been able to do it?”

And so information revolution, it provided a mechanism different from the ones that we have witnessed from before. And it works at two levels, one of which is this empowerment that comes from the government not being able to control the narrative anymore -- which was a major instrument in their hand. And the interactive part, which is controlling.

I have no doubt that that is what explains the timing -- not the cause -- of both the Tunisian and the Egyptian revolution. As a political scientist, I find it, you know, a satisfying answer that is confirmed by all of what we've been studying. Because I've been studying the impact of the information revolution for a decade. So we have data to see how it affected attitudes.

So that, I'm very comfortable with.

Just a quick question -- response to Indira's question about Bush and Obama.

Now, we can score it -- I think the Obama Administration initially did very well. They were forced to appear to be taking a side. I think that's a mistake. Maybe they, you know, it went -- particularly with Frank Wisner's comments and how they were interpreted as speaking for the Administration, a bit of a problem. They're going to have to walk away from it.

But the advocacy of democracy by the Obama Administration was not an issue. If you look at why people -- you know, I tested the Obama Administration, the perception in the region of the Obama Administration. When he was elected, in the first few months after his election, I polled. Most people had a somewhat favorable view of him in the Arab world, which was remarkable. A year later, it was -- most people had a negative view of him. And when you asked them what it was about, the critical change over that year was not his advocacy of democracy. It was primarily the Arab-Israeli issue. Over two-thirds -- particularly in Egypt -- said the Arab-Israeli issue, his position on that.

I also take the position -- you heard me say it -- that the Bush Administration's advocacy of democracy actually slowed it down, because we were -- not

because, in and of itself, it was a bad idea, but because, simultaneously, people were angry with the American foreign policy on other issues that mattered to them, and they didn't want to be part of that agenda.

It works -- the reason it worked in Tunisia, that America wasn't about it, it wasn't about America, it wasn't about Europe, it wasn't about France. And let's not make Egypt about America, either.

MR. POLLACK: Thank you, Shibley.

Thank you, Dalia, for joining us.

Thank you, Ibrahim, in Doha.

Thank all of you. As I said, this will not be the last time we address this issue. (Applause.)

Thank you, on.

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