THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

UNDERSTANDING TAHRIR SQUARE:

THE PROSPECTS FOR ARAB DEMOCRACY

Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, April 23, 2014

PARTICIPANTS:

Welcoming Remarks:

TAMARA COFMAN WITTES
Senior Fellow and Director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy
The Brookings Institution

Featured Speaker:

STEPHEN R. GRAND
Nonresident Senior Fellow, Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World
Saban Center for Middle East Policy
The Brookings Institution

Moderator:

JACKSON DIEHL
Deputy Editorial Page Editor
The Washington Post

* * * * *

P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. WITTES: Hello, everyone, and good morning. Welcome to The Brookings Institution. I'm Tamara Wittes, director of our Saban Center for Middle East Policy. And I'm really delighted to have you with us today for the launch of a new book by our colleague Steve Grand, *Understanding Tahrir Square*, which is available for sale outside this room. And if you haven't bought your copy yet, I hope you'll do so on the way out.

It's always a special day when we launch a new book at Brookings. Books are so much at the heart of the work that we do here, trying to distill the lessons that we garner from our practical work in the field, from our academic and analytic research, from our time talking to government officials and grappling with the policy challenges they face. Steve has done all of that and more, and this book is the result not only of the work he did as a scholar here at Brookings and as director for more than six years of our Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, but really, in many ways, distills lessons that he's gathered through the whole of his career, which has been devoted to work on the Middle East and work on democracy and democratic transitions.

And I think that as you look at *Understanding Tahrir Square,* you'll see the richness of that comparative perspective and of that sifting that Steve has done over all these years. Steve has also moved between scholarship and practice throughout his career and I think that lends his analysis here a degree of ground truth and pragmatism that really sets it apart. So I hope that you'll find it as insightful and as valuable as I have.

It's also, I think, the first Brookings Press book ever to get a blurb from Bassem Youssef, and so I'm so excited about this that I have to share with you what Bassem Youssef had to say about Steve's book. He said, "*Understanding Tahrir Square* is not just the name of a book, it is a long forgotten fantasy, a desperate wish, and a

dilemma more complicated than a daytime soap opera. So if you really have a weird urge to still try to understand Tahrir Square, get an 8-ball or, better, try your luck with this book."

But I think that what Bassem Youssef is getting at in his take on *Understanding Tahrir Square* is that all of us observing and some of us participating in the events three years ago in Cairo, or across the Arab World, understood that we were seeing something beautifully compelling. And I think all the challenges and turmoil of the years since has led many to -- some to cynicism, some to despair, but many of us, at least, to a rethinking. And what Steve's doing in this book and what I know Steve and Jackson will do in their discussion with us today is really to try and think through what these people power movements mean, what they add up to, how well they work, and how we should think about them, not only in the Middle East, but worldwide.

I'm really delighted that joining Steve today to talk about *Understanding Tahrir Square* is our good friend, Jackson Diehl. Jackson, of course, is the deputy editorial page editor of *The Washington Post*, but over many years as a foreign correspondent at the *Post* -- working in Warsaw, in Buenos Aires, in Jerusalem -- he saw a number of democratic transitions firsthand. And so his own comparative perspective, I think, will add a lot to our conversation and our consideration of how to think about where the Arab world is today and where it may be headed with respect to democratic change.

So with this, let me say, Steve, congratulations. Brookings and the Saban Center are truly proud that we have the honor of publishing this book and launching it today, and we really look forward to your opening remarks. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. GRAND: Thanks, Tamara. And thank you to my many colleagues at the Saban Center and the Project on U.S. Relations for the Islamic World for pulling

this event together today. And thank you all for joining today. I see so many old friends and colleagues in the room, and I particularly want to acknowledge my parents who join us today, as well, and have honored me in that way. Without them this book would not have been possible. (Applause)

As Tamara alluded to, and it's not mentioned in my resume, but I lived and worked in Eastern Europe for much of the 1990s. And what I witnessed there was that it was far, far easier to mobilize citizens to unseat a despotic regime than it was to construct a liberal, democratic order in its place. One is an act of destruction, the other a much longer term act of construction. As my friend Ivan Krastev has often said, you can Tweet a revolution, but it's much harder to Tweet a transition to democracy. And I think the citizens of the Arab world are finding that there's some tremendous truth to that, that there's a long, large distance between the moment of political breakthrough when the old leaders are cast aside and the point when you actually get consolidated, liberal democracy.

And I say "liberal democracy" because I think that really is the aim of these transitions, both from the perspective of U.S. policy, but also, I think, that's really what citizens in the region are looking for in the end: a government that not only holds regularized elections -- and in that sense it's an electoral democracy -- but one that also upholds basic human rights and freedoms and upholds the rule of law. So I will talk today about liberal democracy in that way.

So, having witnessed dramatic popular revolutions in Eastern Europe and then lived with the aftermaths of it, I've long puzzled over the role that people power and civil society can play in consolidating liberal democracy. And then came the Arab Spring and the opportunity to write this book. The book looks at the transition experiences of so-called third wave democratizers -- that is countries that embarked

transitions to democracy between the mid-'70s and the end of the 20th century -- about a 25-year period of remarkable change in the internal makeup of a number of states. And then it tries to draw lessons from those experiences for the prospects of Arab democratization.

The book includes chapters on the transition experiences of the former Eastern bloc, of Muslim majority countries in Asia, of Latin America, and of Sub-Saharan Africa. All four of the regional chapters look at how democracy came to that particular region, how it spread, to what degree countries were successful in democratizing, and what challenges still remain. In each of those four regional chapters there are four country case studies -- two of countries that were relatively successful and two of countries that were less so -- that allowed me to examine in much greater detail how democratization faired in particular countries.

So, 16 case studies in total from around the world, and then the book ends with a set of concluding chapters that try to draw out the lessons for the Arab Spring. And let me, just to set the stage for our discussion, give you briefly three of my chief takeaways from the research and writing that went into this book, and then we'll go into a larger discussion.

First, I came away a rare optimist about the Arab Spring, not because events today are necessarily going particularly well, but because I found they rarely go well. The transitions that I studied were extremely lengthy ones, the work of decades, if not generations. Almost every transition that I looked at was full of dramatic twists and turns, sudden advances, heartbreaking reversals. These seemed to be normal parts of any transition experiences. And from the setbacks, often important political learning takes place that moves that democratic forward.

I came away convinced that under the right conditions -- and I would

stress under the right conditions -- many, though by no means all, the countries of the Arab world could become democratic over time. By “right conditions” I mean if the U.S. exercises thoughtful leadership in the region, for one. That rather than leaving the geopolitics of the region to major regional powers, like the Saudis and the Iranians, that we play a constructive role in managing change in the region. And, also, if the sectarian violence and the political polarization that is now roiling the region can be tamped down so that the situation begins to become less a battle that’s defined by questions of security and more one that’s grounded in personal choice.

The second takeaway that I came away with was that I became convinced that the global trend towards democratization is a solid one and one that is likely to continue. The Arab world, after all, is not the first region of the world to democratize, but really the last. The third wave brought tremendous changes in the internal governance of states, whereas 40 countries, according to Freedom House, were electoral democracies in the mid-1970s, when the third wave began. By its end, at the end of the 20th century, 120 countries were considered electoral democracies. So, in the span of 25 years, 80 countries moved towards the ranks of electoral democracies.

And whereas Freedom House, when it did its very first report on freedom in the world in 1972, ranked about a quarter of the countries of the world as free, by the end of the century, it ranked nearly half as free. So about a quarter of the world’s states moved to the column of free during that period.

And of the 90 or so countries that embarked on transitions to democracy in the third wave, most succeeded in becoming electoral democracies and nearly half became liberal democracies. And those that didn’t have kept trying. At the same time, totalitarianism -- which at one point, for those of us who remember the 8-ball and anything beyond the last century -- totalitarianism at one time covered half the globe and

has now been largely relegated to the dustbin of history. Today, only North Korea and, arguably, Cuba remain totalitarian states. There are no empires and the only remaining ruling monarchies outside the Middle East are tiny Brunei and Swaziland.

Undergirding those political changes of the third wave were important shifts of ordinary citizens' attitudes towards political authority, people becoming less deferential to ecclesiastical and earthly authority over time; a likely result of globalization and modernization. And you see those same attitudinal shifts underway now in the Arab world and in other parts of the world, what Zbigniew Brzezinski refers to as a global churning for greater human dignity.

These are powerful trends. Since 2000, we've seen a minor correction. The war in Iraq and the economic recession have brought a slight political recession, but, again, these seem more like a mild correction than a change in the underlying trend. Democracy is the only system of government that is recognized around the world as legitimate and is demanded by a majority of publics, a far cry from the middle of the last century when various ideologies competed for popular support.

The third takeaway was that I became convinced that a long and political struggle will be required to make democracy actually work in the Middle East. In my research I found that in the cases elsewhere around the globe where liberal democracies successfully did take root, it was because you saw emerge an effective political constituency for democracy that actively pushed for it to take shape -- pushed from below for it to take shape. And by a "political constituency for democracy" I mean a critical mass of citizens who, regardless of their political ideology or party affiliation, value democracy in its own right and are willing and able to advocate for it.

There is, I've found along the way, a certain political logic to democratization, and it goes something like this: Successful democratization, it seems to

me, is really about decentralizing power in states where power has for long been tightly consolidated and centralized. It's about trying to bring power closer to the people, who are ultimately supposed to be sovereign, just somehow separate, limit, and delegate authority. This proves to be an exceedingly difficult task to do. Why? Because political leaders, once in power, are exceedingly unwilling to relinquish that power. It's simply human nature. It generally requires a lengthy political struggle to get new constitutions and new democratic institutions, not to just be these flowery ornamentations on paper, but to actually place limits on the behavior of political leaders. There needs to be political demand from citizens for constitutions to be abided by and democratic institutions to be respected for these institutions to begin to work.

It's only when political leaders fear that they'll pay a high price if they violate the new rules of the game that you begin to see institutions beginning to stick, beginning to take hold, and democracy beginning to function as intended. I think it will take some time to create this kind of demand in the Middle East and for it to effectively have an impact on politics. It will take more Tahrir Squares, not less.

It will mean expanding upon the base of revolutionary youth who took to Tahrir, who seem to be better educated, more connected, and more exposed to the world, and, therefore, have different values than their parents. Growing that political constituency will require education, political learning, and greater political organization. But over the long-term, I am cautiously optimistic.

Under the right conditions -- and, again, I emphasize under the right conditions -- I'm confident democracy eventually can and will take root in many countries of the Arab Middle East and that the spirit of Tahrir will prevail. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. DIEHL: So, hello, everybody. I'm Jackson Diehl and I'd like to kick off our discussion of this book. I want to say, first, that I found it a terrific book to read.

As somebody who covered the democratic transitions in Latin America and Eastern Europe, I think you'll find in this book a really excellent narrative of what happened, how Latin America went back to democracy, how Eastern Europe went back to democracy, what happened in Africa, and what lessons can be drawn from those transitions. So anybody who just wants a sort of encapsulation of the third wave of democracy, I would advise them to read this book.

But there's also excellent comparisons, which we're going to get to in a minute, with the Middle East and the lessons to be drawn from the Middle East and some very fine policy prescriptions at the end -- which I hope we'll talk about -- which are, in fact, quite different from the policy that's being pursued by the Obama administration at the moment.

But I want to start with one of your central conclusions. I think, as you point to the difficulties of the Arab Spring and the difficulties of the transition so far, but you say again and again the genie cannot be put back into the bottle. You say, now that they've broken open the old system, the people who did that -- those mass movements -- are not going to tolerate a return to the old order. And I just want to test you on that because it certainly looks like there's a very concerted effort going on to put the genie back in the bottle, and not just in Egypt, but in other places of the world, and it looks kind of successful so far.

You have the El-Sisi regime which is restoring something that looks very much like the old Mubarak order. And they seem not only to have got much of the populace to go along with them, but they seem to have gotten the United States and the European Union to go along with it so far. And you wonder why wouldn't they be able to pretty much restore the old order and keep it that way indefinitely?

Now, you argue in your book that that's not going to work at the end, so

I'd love to hear about that. And in doing that, they wouldn't necessarily be isolated, if you look elsewhere in the world. If you look at what Vladimir Putin is up to in Russia, he is trying to put the genie back in the bottle, as well, and also seems to be having a fair amount of success there. And he's creating -- or aspires to create -- a kind of global model that people like El-Sisi can look to, of an autocratic, authoritarian system that is an alternative to the democratic West, and it has even some kind of ideological foundation. Why won't that succeed?

MR. GRAND: Yeah, a very good question. I was just in Cairo and it certainly feels like they're trying to put the genie back in the bottle. I think the reason it would be very, very difficult to pull off is because you do have the memory of Tahrir that people always know that there is a way to make change, that there is this exit out there, and that when the lights burn bright, everyone can move to that exit and political leaders have to pay attention. That's a very powerful change from what the Middle East looked like before, where leaders did what they wanted to and citizens just sort of kowtowed.

You continue to see in Cairo, and in Egypt more generally, a tremendous amount of civic energy. I think the challenge has been for that group of activists to translate that civic activism into concrete political results. They've gone out on the streets against Mubarak and what they got -- they ended up deposing Mubarak, but what they got was something quite different in the end. They ended up protesting against the SCAF and its interim period of governance and they got the Brotherhood. They finally went out against the Brotherhood and instead of getting rid of the Brotherhood -- they did get rid of the Brotherhood, but they got the military in return.

So there's a disconnect between the tremendous civic energy that I think you still see, and the civic potential that you still see in Egypt, and getting political results that are satisfactory, getting towards a more functioning democratic order. But I think that

just takes time and practice.

You know, I mentioned as I sort of talked about how the world has changed over the last 50 years, you don't see empires any more. They've disappeared, right? What Vladimir Putin seems to be doing is trying to reassemble empire, and I don't think from an economic perspective or from a political perspective that's any longer possible in this world.

From an economic perspective, I don't think you can pull yourself away from the global economy and succeed or at least keep pace with the rest of the world. And in political terms, I think citizens have moved beyond that and are demanding certain freedoms and rights that an empire cannot provide. So I think it may be a very attractive, short-term political project for Russian nationalists and ultra-nationalists and it shores up his base. But over the long-term, I think it's got inherent contradictions, to use an old Soviet term.

MR. DIEHL: Just to come back to Tahrir for a minute. If you sort of dissect who was in Tahrir in January 2011, you had a secular liberal vanguard of revolutionary youth that organized some of those demonstrations, or at least kicked the whole thing off, and then you had a vast mass of people who were discontented with the regime. I mean, you could make the argument now that the liberal vanguard is in jail, Ahmed Maher and others, whereas the vast mass is going to go out and vote for El-Sisi next month in the presidential elections. So, what's going to bring those people back?

MR. GRAND: Well, I think that there's a much wider constituency, I think, for political change in Egypt than just those who have been thrown in jail, though we should be paying much more attention to those who have been thrown in jail because it's a really tragic situation. The very people who went to the streets and enabled the military to take over are now themselves sitting in jail. It doesn't speak well of the current

regime.

But the larger point is that what's missing, I think, is time and experience and organization. As often has been talked about, you know, before the end of Mubarak, there was really just the regime and the Brotherhood, which was, because of its religious beliefs and its sort of proximity to the mosque, was very hard for the regime to close down. And in many respects, the regime didn't want to close it down because there were political advantages to having the Brotherhood as a bogeyman.

So, when Mubarak departs from the scene, you have only the Brotherhood as an organized political force. It doesn't mean it's the only political trend within Egypt; it's just at the time the only one that was organized. And I think that kind of political organization, among other trends, is going to take much longer. And it's something that requires time, patience, and experience, and I would argue experience from other parts of the world where this has been done before.

MR. DIEHL: I'd like to turn to one of the central points of the book, which is you emphasize that in all of these transitions, the decisive factor is engaged civic movement, people power. And you say at one point that basically the difference between successful transitions to democracy that have taken place and ones that have failed is whether or not there was an engaged popular civic movement.

And I was reflecting on that and I thought that is certainly true, that those movements were necessary to open the space for democracy, but it's also been the case that those mass movements have destroyed some democracies that were then set up. If you look at the cases of Venezuela, if you look at the cases of Thailand, where mass movements then brought people who then attacked the establishment, attacked the democratic system, and the system broke down. And that arguably is what happened in Egypt, as well.

So it made me wonder if really the decisive factor is not so much the mass popular movements, but actually the elites. Is it not the elite that leads those movements or comes to lead those movements, and the elite that was in power before the movements began, that determine whether or not a democratic transition can succeed? Can those elites come together and fashion a deal that allows democracy to flourish? And here we would have the examples of Poland, where, of course, you have -- you discuss in your book, where you had the Round Table Agreement that created a democratic system. You have the example recently of Tunisia, where there's been a very hopeful progress towards agreement between the Islamists and the seculars on a constitution that brings everybody to together. So, is it the elites or is it the popular movements that determine whether democracy succeeds?

MR. GRAND: Well, I think both are important. You need that bottom-up pressure from below to really make a nascent democracy function and begin to really work the way it's intended to work. And I spent a lot of time in the book talking about that demand part of the equation. You also need the supply part of the equation, which is political institutions. I'm not advocating for government by mass movement at all, but I think those mass movements, particularly in the early stages of a democratization process, are critical to making institutions on paper become institutions in practice that actually function and bite the way that they're supposed to bite, in the sense that they constrain the behavior of political leaders.

As I mentioned in the book, you know, there used to be a view that democratization was driven by elite bargains, but more and more we're seeing democratization come not from those top-down elite bargains but from bottom-up processes, from bottom-up pressure. I'm not sure whether that's good or bad. I think that's just a reality. I do think that there's room for elite bargains and for pacts, and I think

there's room in a place like Egypt for thoughtful, elite leadership of publics. As I said, right now in Egypt there's this tremendous gap between what's happening in the street and what's happening at the political level, and part of that is a failure of elites. And if you could get a significant group of Egyptian elites to put together a roadmap of where Egypt goes from here that connects to those popular aspirations, I think it would make an important difference. But I don't think that elites alone are going to bring necessarily -- I would not rely on elites alone to bring democracy.

What I try to do in the book is to get away from sort of the "Great Man" theory of history, which is that it was George Washington who brought democracy to America or it's Nelson Mandela that we need in every country if a country's going to be democratic. What I, in fact, find in the case studies is that the incumbents are usually the biggest problem of all. Those who were first elected into office are usually the biggest problem of all because they come into office and there are very few constraints on their power and they end up sort of behaving the way the guy before them, the strong man before them, did. So I think that sort of pressure from below is very, very important, and that's the story I'm trying to tell in the book is the demand piece of this. But, at the same time, I wouldn't -- I try to make clear that institutions are horribly important and that elites matter and elites can make a difference.

MR. DIEHL: So no Great Man theory of history, but you have to wonder if things in Egypt could have turned out differently with different sets of -- I mean, there were repeated attempts there to forge some kind of a bargain. And as you point out in your book, at the beginning the Muslim Brotherhood looked like it was willing to restrain its ambitions, to back off when it came up against hard power, but, increasingly, it abandoned its restraints. It seemed to be at the end to be kind of trying to dismantle the democratic system it encountered. Even after the coup there were again attempts, some

of them brokered by the United States and the European Union to bring the parties together, try and fashion a roadmap, again failure. I mean, was that because Rachid Ghannouchi is a Tunisian and not an Egyptian or are there larger problems in Egypt that prevent some kind of bargain being struck?

MR. GRAND: That's a question that probably others here would be better equipped than I to answer, but my two-second answer would be that I think that you had a greater pushback in the Tunisian case, both at the level of civil society and at the level of political parties. I mean, Ghannouchi did not have the same majority to work with as the Muslim Brotherhood did in Egypt, so if you go back to, say, November of 2012, you have a Tunisia and Egypt that look very similar. They have elected moderate Islamist governments that have spent six months in power. Both sets of ruling leaderships are getting tired of the constitutional process because they're not getting their way. There's much debate about the role of religion in the constitution. In both cases it looks like the ruling leadership might just sort of run roughshod through the constitutional process and just put a constitution through regardless of what the opposition might think or others within society might think. That's the path that Egypt ends up taking really. But in Tunisia's case, I think because there was more of a pushback from women and women's groups because there's more of a pushback in terms of the number of votes the opposition had, the ability of the opposition to consolidate, that made Ghannouchi in the case of Tunisia hesitate and not take that step.

So elites are an important part of this, but so, too, are sort of the quality of sort of civic life in either case.

MR. DIEHL: And yet anyone who has sat and listened to Ghannouchi and sat and listened to Morsi would recognize a pretty important difference between the two of them in terms of their ideology, their understanding of politics, and so forth.

MR. GRAND: True.

MR. DIEHL: That brings me to the question which is really important to hear you address. You're an expert on Islam and on Western relations with Islam. And I think one of the fundamental assumptions you see in this book is that there's nothing about the Middle East that makes it different from the rest of the world, that should make it impossible for the same democratic process to eventually happen albeit with difficulties. And I want to push you a little bit on that.

Is it possible, in fact, and I think many would argue that what makes -- there is something that makes it different and that is Islam and that Islam is a fundamental obstacle to democratization. And I think you see arguments back and forth about that, but Egypt would be an argument that people would say there is -- you argue in the book that the Muslim Brotherhood would restrain itself. In the end, they didn't restrain themselves. They did sort of grab for power.

And if you look elsewhere in the region, you see a worrying trend in Turkey, where you have an Islamic movement that played by the rules for a considerable period of time, now appears ready not to play by the rules within a democratic system and is starting to badly erode the Turkish democracy. Is it possible that there is something ideological about Islam that means that rulers who come to power aren't able to play by the democratic rules or is this just again a problem of elites, a problem of not enough mobilized civic movements to keep them in check?

MR. GRAND: I don't talk as much as one would expect in the book about religion, and I do that on purpose because I'm trying to sort of de-Orientalize the Middle East and say let's look at this region as if we would look at any other region of the world. And I think that there are some similarities between the kinds of religious political movements you see in the Middle East and the kinds of nationalist movements that you

saw in Eastern Europe and that you've seen in other parts of the world, that you see in Russia today.

And so part of me wants to say that there is not a large difference, but the book also looks at the question of, you know, what role does religion play and what do you do about actors that don't want to play by the democratic rules of the game? I spent a lot of time looking at the cases of Turkey, of Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan. And there, you know, it strikes me that Islam and politics, or Islamists more accurately, I think, and politics have coexisted and can coexist.

In the case of Turkey, I think it's an open question as to whether what is guiding Erdogan's behavior right now is just the fact the guy's been in power for far, far too long or if it's something more ideological. I think that's an open question.

And if you look at sort of raw numbers it seems that in any given Muslim majority society there is a segment of the population that feels that Islam should play a role in politics, which is not unusual as you look across the world. But that Islamist strand is rarely more than 20 to 25 percent of the population. In Egypt, it happened to be a better organized part of the population, but I think that number still holds even for Egypt. And I think the way that you need to move forward is by clearly setting out the democratic rules of the game, the rules for participation, and by allowing those groups that are willing to abide by those rules to take part, that inclusion tends to increase moderation over time. And that seems to be the pattern that we've seen in Southeast Asia and I would expect it would be what we would see in the rest of the region, as well.

MR. DIEHL: Lastly -- I'm going to open it up for questions in a second -- I really hope to hear comments from the audience, but I do want to ask you about U.S. policy, which you mentioned in passing. But you have a very forceful chapter at the end of the book in which you make recommendations about what the United States should do

going forward, particularly in Egypt. And it struck me as rather different from the policy that the Obama administration is pursuing. I mean, you seem to be suggesting that it's a mistake -- it would be a mistake for the United States to sort of put its chips on the Sisi regime at this point. Why is that?

MR. GRAND: I don't see an El-Sisi presidency as being a stable, long-term alternative for Egypt. This to me looks a good bit like a rerun of the SCAF, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, back in 2011, the transitional government that governed Egypt after the fall of Mubarak. You see in his pronouncements and in the people that he has assembled around him many of the same instincts that you saw then that sort of come out of a military mindset, come out of a tradition of sort of etatist behavior. And I don't see in an era where popular demands are sky-high, where the economic problems that Egypt faces are sky-high, where the global -- the strategic challenges that Egypt faces are sky-high that the military's the solution. And I think that just as the Egyptian public was deeply dissatisfied, they had very high expectations for the initial Morsi government and then saw those expectations quickly dashed, I think the same will be true in this case.

MR. DIEHL: So what should the United States be doing? If that's what's coming, how do we position ourselves and how do we help Egypt?

MR. GRAND: Everyone has presented the events of July as a train wreck, and they were a train wreck, but they were a train wreck because some people in Egypt saw this very binary choice: it's either the state or it's chaos. And so I think the challenge is to build up a more pluralistic society within Egypt to support -- to strengthen other actors, other institutions, so that we don't always come back to this choice of, well, do we go back to the military or this sort of democratic experiment that's got no institutions and no real boom to it?

MR. DIEHL: And how do we do that? Because it seems like, you know, the Egyptian security services have gotten wise to what have been the methods that you discuss a lot in the book over time, of giving funding to civil society groups, of sending in the National Endowment for Democracy. They're on to us if we try that sort of thing. So how do we do this?

MR. GRAND: Jackson, you're hitting on a real problem and it's one that the U.S. Government's grappling with and Western governments around the world are grappling with. There are a range of governments -- Venezuela, Russia, Egypt -- that do not want to see regime change on their watch and are very suspicious of U.S. policies and U.S. development assistance, and have made it very difficult there for the U.S. to operate and to be supportive of democratic activists in these countries.

You know, I would argue that, you know, these activists are doing nothing more than espousing the values that we as a country stand for and that we believe in as a country. And it's part of our national character to want to support them and we should do everything in our power to support, and it's going to require new methods and more sophisticated policies.

MR. DIEHL: Or perhaps the old methods. During the Cold War, as you know, in Eastern Europe we used broadcasting and we used clandestine aid to underground movements.

MR. GRAND: Well, the Internet is a pretty effective tool, too, and it's the opposite of clandestine. (Laughter)

MR. DIEHL: Right. Okay, I'd like to open it up for questions and discussion. I see there's a microphone, so the only thing I would ask is that you identify yourself before asking a question.

Yes, ma'am, on the end.

MS. WHITE: Hi. Maureen White from SAIS. Thank you very much for a very interesting presentation, but I just want to drill down a little bit on this issue of the importance of popular demand and again focus on Egypt.

I'm concerned about sort of the lifeblood and the longevity of popular demand, especially in a case like Egypt, where people went to the streets, they brought down a dictatorship, but they ended up with a lot of dead, a lot in jail, and a regime that looks very much like before. So isn't there a very real possibility that the spirit to move again, to try again, to change as they did before will have been undermined by their failure in the past? And so I'm wondering what you have learned from your examination of other countries.

You know, you obviously have done a very thorough examination of countries that have succeeded in their transition to democracy. Are there examples of countries that had real setbacks, like Egypt has, but persevered?

MR. GRAND: You know, my experience -- I'll talk about my experience as a practitioner first rather than as an academic. It's usually in those countries where people come and say things have just become absolutely hopeless in this country, it's never going to change, where, two weeks later, things change completely. So I would always hold out a greater dose of hope.

But more to your point, having just been in Cairo, there's still a tremendous amount of civic energy. There are certainly people that have fled for very good reasons. There are certainly people who have given up on the struggle and gone into making money or whatever it may be, getting a higher education. But there are still a lot of really interesting, dynamic people fighting the good fight in Egypt right now. And it may have a less political tone at the moment, but they're still there and they're kind of waiting to see what happens.

As Egyptians, and this was sort of hard for me to understand and wrap my head around when I first got there, as Egyptians they hope this government will succeed and they want it to do well. But they're not going to stand by if thousands just continue to get put into jail and if repression continues and if there's an attempt to really pull Egypt back to the Mubarak era. I just don't see people allowing for that and they've said that in many different ways.

MR. DIEHL: No, she asked if there are examples of other countries that have done this. And I wonder if, arguably, if Ukraine isn't an example. I mean, here's a country that --

MR. GRAND: Again and again.

MR. DIEHL: -- 2004 had the Orange Revolution. For a while they had a functioning democracy that functioned badly, but eventually kind of broke down. You had a restoration of an autocratic system culminating with a decision not to sign an association agreement with the European Union, and that then brings your people power back on the street.

MR. GRAND: Serbia, you know, a failed effort to oust Milosevic in the mid-'90s, people were horribly disillusioned. You have the war in Kosovo and then, you know, once more you had people in the streets in 2000, and they eventually succeed in ousting Milosevic. So, yeah, we could go on.

MR. DIEHL: Yes, sir.

MR. BYRNE: Yeah, I'm Jim Byrne. I'm a long-term journalist here in Washington. I attended two outstanding forums on Egypt late last year, one very depressing and one very uplifting. The depressing one was where almost every element of Egyptian political parties and the like were represented, including a Canadian who had been the top aide to Morsi. That was a very interesting discussion. Well, the basic

conclusion, and I'd say a genuine consensus there, on this whole spectrum of political leaders was there aren't any leaders, that there's a paucity of real leadership in every single one of the organizations.

The other session was organized around a book by an American journalist that celebrated the tremendous growth of successful entrepreneurship in Egypt, and the Egyptians agreed at that. So I'm wondering what your view is of that.

MR. GRAND: Yeah, I think the book you're referring to is by Chris Schroeder and there have been others written about this tremendous not only entrepreneurial dynamism, but social entrepreneurship, civic engagement that's going on in the region. It's really impressive and it's this younger generation that is feeling very empowered and looks at the world, I think, in very different ways than their parents. And the group is -- those under 30, if I'm not mistaken, in Egypt now form a majority, so it's really they who will be driving the Egypt of the future.

MR. BYRNE: How about the issue of the paucity of the leadership across the whole spectrum?

MR. GRAND: You know, I think it's harder to lead. There are others who have written on this. I think it's harder to lead in an age where it's much easier to Tweet. The advantage of social media is it's easy to bring people out in the streets really quickly. The disadvantage of social media is it's really hard to then coordinate those people into anything meaningful, and I think that's kind of what you're seeing happen. But, you know, many Egyptians I've talked to understand that challenge and are trying to figure out ways of coordinating better to ensure that what happens in terms of public demands made in the street translate into actual political outcomes over time.

MR. DIEHL: Yes, you, sir, in the back. There's a microphone right next to you.

MR. GLENN: Thank you. Hi, I'm John Glenn from the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition. Congratulations, Steve.

I know one of the things that you've done that is most interesting to me because we know each other is you brought activists from Eastern Europe to the Middle East to talk about lessons learned, things that they've been able to carry, stories, insights. I wonder if you could share with us those moments when you were there where there was sort of an ah-ha moment. Oh, that's really helpful. Oh, that's really interesting. Oh, that really helps us understanding what's going on here in a different way.

MR. GRAND: Sure. One of the really interesting things that's come up in the conversations that I've brokered between some East European what I would call civic strategists and those in Egypt who are trying to do similar things today in Egypt is, one, this question of how do you translate all this tremendous civic energy in Egypt because the East Europeans are really impressed when they see a country that can turn so many people out onto the street, that can get millions and millions of people -- we don't know exactly how many millions, but millions of people -- to sign a petition. These are things that the East Europeans would have salivated for in their time. It was, you know, a problem of apathy that they were confronted with, the problem that civic activists faced. In Egypt it's almost the opposite, that there's just too much energy and chaos to control.

But secondly, and to address your point more directly, it's this question of how does civil society become more than just a sum of its parts? How can we find ways to coordinate our efforts in a non-hierarchical way so that my group and -- my human rights group and your advocacy group and your economic development organization actually have an impact that's larger than just the three of our organizations could achieve separately? And there are many, many instances in Eastern Europe of how

usually around elections or political campaigns horizontal mechanisms were created for coordination that were highly effective.

MR. DIEHL: Yes, sir.

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks very much, Steve. I'm Garrett Mitchell and I write The Mitchell Report.

And I'd like to come back to the question of this long-term view you take, which is a positive view, that leads me to say and to ask two of your colleagues here at Brookings have written sort of defining little books on this subject. Bob Kagan, who says if you like the liberal democratic order that you're looking at it, it's the world America made. Just recently, Bruce Jones has come along saying, despite all the declinists and the rise of the rest and et cetera, Jones' argument is still ours to lead. And if you've made some observations on that regard, I've missed them.

My question is, if those two theses are accurate, it's the world we made, it's still ours to lead, and there's no greater place where that leadership needs to become effective, it's in the Middle East. It's what you're writing about now. So if you're thinking about running, I'm not suggesting you are, but if you're thinking about for President in 2016 -- (Laughter)

MR. GRAND: I'm not. Let me just say that right here.

MR. MITCHELL: I will say there are rumors, you know. You've written a book. That's always the first step. (Laughter) And if you vacation in New Hampshire, then it's all over. (Laughter)

How might someone who might be thinking about taking the mantle of leadership be thinking about a way that America can be effective in a region where, arguably, it has not been able to be? And if you have some thinking along those lines, I'd really be interested if you could share that with us.

MR. GRAND: Sure. As someone who sort of grew up during the response to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the revolutions in Eastern Europe, I've been very struck by the very limited American response, not just U.S. Government, but American response, or even Western response to these tremendous changes that have washed over the Arab world. They've been different and some of those differences have made people cautious, more cautious than they would otherwise be.

The mood language is different. We were warmly welcomed in the former Soviet space after the collapse of the Soviet system. We're not so warmly welcomed in the Middle East.

But I think what's really missing besides money is constructive leadership. I think this is really a moment where the United States needs to imaginatively manage change in the region because no one else will. I think what we've seen in recent months and even years is if we leave it to the Saudis and the Iranians, the region's really going to go to hell in a handbasket very quickly. And there's no other player that's ready to step up and play that kind of leadership role.

So I think there's a real role for the United States Government to play in managing change and doing so in a thoughtful and imaginative way, in a visionary way. And I think the starting premise of that kind of leadership needs to be that change is afoot and, like it or not, this region's going to look very different in the next generation than it did during the last generation, and we need to prepare for that time without abandoning our friends today or tomorrow. We need to begin to imagine what that looks like. And in places like Bahrain, in places like Syria, in places like Yemen, we need to be proactive in trying to think about scenarios that will be better than the chaos that comes from a vacuum. You know, the old ways are dead, but there's a real vacuum there in terms of what's going to fill in behind it.

MR. DIEHL: Yes, ma'am.

MS. DAVIS-PACKARD: Thank you. I'm Kent Davis-Packard. I'm a Council on Foreign Relations fellow and visiting fellow here at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings.

When it comes to managing change could you speak more specifically about this imbalanced power that the military in Egypt has? You, in response to Jackson's question, said that the Egyptian people always have the memory of Tahrir Square, of being successful. And, at the same time, that may be true. At the same time, some people say that that would not have been successful had the military not been okay with that change. They were not adverse to the downfall of Hosni Mubarak. His son was being groomed to be next in line. He had business interests that conflicted apparently with the military's business interests. And as we know, the military controls 38 percent, 40 percent of the economy.

So I'm wondering if you could comment specifically on how either people power could dismantle that imbalance in military power and/or the United States could assist in that process. Thank you.

MR. GRAND: I'm going to tell a Latin American story and Jackson's going to tell me if I'm wrong because, as I told him, the Latin American cases were the ones I felt most uncomfortable about because I know them the least.

But, you know, my understanding is that for a long time in Latin America, the military played a very prominent role in politics in sort of intervening when sort of politics didn't go the way that they wanted it to. But then something very fundamental happened in the '50s and '60s, which is the military, because of the Cold War, really began to run governments rather than sort of being in the shadows in the background. And you saw military governments take over and, with the exception of Chile, really run

the economies and the countries into the ground. And there was an enormous public -- I want to say back-swell, but that's not the word -- backlash against that.

And after that, the idea of military rule in Latin America was really delegitimized to a point where in a region where you had coups almost every week, you have since seen coups -- a number of successful coups since then you can count on one hand, I think. And I talk about this more specifically in the book.

But I think you could see a similar scenario play out in Egypt. That's why I'm telling this story. Because I think the Egyptian military is going to be heavily identified with an El-Sisi government, no matter how the general chooses to take of the hat and change titles and everything like that. And I think that whatever the fate of this government will be, will be the fate of the Egyptian military. And I wouldn't be surprised if there is a delegitimization of Egyptian military playing a political role going forward after this experience, but we'll see.

MR. DIEHL: I would just add to that, because you talk about the power of the military in Egypt and the economy, you know, the Latin American experience was even after the military destroyed its credibility and delegitimized itself as a ruler, it took decades, literally, to edge the military out of that position of extraordinary power. Even in Argentina, you know, the Falkland Islands War, which destroyed the military's political credibility, and it wasn't till 20 years later the civilian governments in Argentina were strong enough to put the leaders of that war on trial. It took 20 years in Chile to remove the military's special place in the constitution, where they had a third of the members of the Senate and so forth.

So, I think, it's a challenge to civilian leaders to try and move step by step, realizing that you're not going to be able to remove them from power all at once and that you have to do it a little bit at a time. And I think that was the problem with the

Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. They started out seeming to understand that idea, that they couldn't get rid of the military and that they were going to have to accept some things from the military. But by the time you got to the fall of 2012, they were trying to do it all in one lump. They were trying to remove dozens of generals at a time. They were trying to install their own people and they ended up going further than you can really go. It has to be step by step.

MR. GRAND: Indonesia's another example of that, too.

MR. DIEHL: Yes, sir.

SPEAKER: Believe it or not, I'm an Egyptian who's going to ask another question about Egypt. (Laughter)

I want you to share with us your latest thinking on the opportunities for Russia in the region these days, particularly in its relationship to Egypt. There have been a lot of announcements of increased sort of military cooperation; Sisi's actual campaign video, the second person who appears in the video endorsing his candidacy is Putin, which actually he technically didn't do, but it's kind of edited to imply that. Is this a real opportunity for Putin? Is that a real thing or is this a lot of public diplomacy to kind of set a new balance for the Egyptian government politically with its public?

MR. GRAND: Yeah. This takes me a little bit afield from the book and probably my expertise. There are others in the room who can answer this better than I, but, you know, I don't think -- and many of my colleagues have written on this. I don't think that the Egyptians' government could quickly replace American assistance with Russian assistance, both in terms of sort of the parts and equipment that they use, but also in terms of the kind of political and financial support that would mean, as well.

MR. DIEHL: It strikes me that, you know, the only possible route of recovery for Egypt economically is to go back to where they were before, to open

themselves up to the world and to attract Western investment, Western trade, and Western tourists, and Russia can offer none of those things.

All the way in the back.

SPEAKER: I have sort of a two-part question. You talk about the masses and particularly the countries maybe more in Egypt, but also Russia and Venezuela. Who are these masses? Are they not urban intellectuals or urban people as opposed to people out in the country?

And the second part of my question is, if they are people out in the countryside, is it not true that in many cases -- and I think it is true in Russia -- that stability is more important than liberal democracy, that they would rather just leave me alone, let me do my thing, and I don't care what's happening in Cairo or Moscow or Caracas?

MR. GRAND: I do talk a lot in the book about, you know, what makes for a successful civic revolution or what makes civic movements effective over the long term. And it is the challenge of getting beyond the urban elite, who usually are the core constituency of most protest movements. It's when you see farmers, other rural dwellers, unions coming on board that a regime really begins to be in trouble because, you know, then it's got nowhere else to turn to for political support.

You know, I think by nature these tend to be urban phenomenon, but to be successful they have to grow their base beyond that. And I think that's the real challenge for democratic activists in Egypt today, is to get beyond that Tahrir base; to connect with people in upper Egypt where the illiteracy rate is tremendously high, where poverty is widespread; and to build a constituency there.

MR. DIEHL: Yeah, I wrote something about this at the end of last year. You know, the paradox is that it's often the urban elites who bring about democratic

change or go to the streets and demand a democratic system, but then once democracy is set up it's often the people from the countryside, the people who have previously been marginalized, who then drive the system and elect the new governments. If you look at Venezuela, the Chavez phenomena, his supporters are in the shanty towns and the countryside. In Thailand, the Thaksin movement represents the people of Northern Thailand, in the rural areas, who had previously been excluded. And in Egypt, the Morsi government was elected by people from the countryside, not by people in Cairo. He lost the vote in Cairo every time he ran. Every time the Brotherhood ran, they lost in Cairo.

So what happens is that the people who actually led the revolution end up getting trumped by the people who then vote in the elections. It's a paradox.

SPEAKER: So do the people really care once you get beyond what sort of political system they have vice having some sort of stability? I mean, Russia's an easier example and I know more about that than Egypt, admittedly. But it seems to me that there are quite a few people in that country that prefer the stability of Putin to the times that they had the transition or even going back to Peter the Great, sorry, the changing in the tsars and looking for new tsars.

So I'm wondering whether to convince people that I need a new political system is something that most people think about or care about if I have stability. In other words, living in Mubarak, hey, that's fine because they didn't bother me and I don't bother them.

MR. GRAND: You know, in every country there are going to be conservative forces that will oppose change and may well be anti-democratic. But politics is a numbers game and attitudes can change over time, and I show in the book how attitudes do change and have been changing dramatically. And one of the ways that they change is through education and through exposure to the world. And, you know,

globalization and new technologies provide new opportunities to expose people in ways that were never possible before and to show them how -- that give people the ability to compare to other societies, and that has made a tremendous difference, I think, in politics around the globe. That's why you have this political churning among youth for change is that they're able to see how their society stacks up with other societies.

MR. DIEHL: Just on the point of Russia, I just would point out that just before the Sochi Olympics there was a poll done in Russia on Putin's popularity that showed that 63 percent of Russians did not want him to remain president after his current term expired. So the answer to your question do people just prefer stability with Putin was no. And I think that is one reason we've seen what we've seen in Crimea and Ukraine is Putin realized that he no longer had a constituency out there that was willing to support him in power and he needed to do something else to build a base of support, so we see this nationalistic campaign against Ukraine.

Yes, ma'am.

MS. MOGAHED: Thank you, Steve. I'm Dalia Mogahed from Mogahed Consulting.

My question is about discrediting whoever essentially takes power in Egypt, so a lot of people have said that, in fact, the Muslim Brotherhood were allowed to take power precisely to discredit them and because no one could manage Egypt at this time. Do you think it's really possible to ever marginalize the military from Egyptian politics without allowing them to directly govern Egypt? They've always had tremendous political power, but always from the background where they didn't have to take any real responsibility, so they ruled, but they didn't govern.

Will Egypt ever get over its overconfidence in its military without allowing a Sisi government to have a chance? Just as the Muslim Brotherhood's -- you know, the

worst thing that could happen to them was for them to be elected into power and, in fact, that's what happened.

MR. GRAND: You know, I think this is going to be the telling moment because I think the government, like the military, like it or not, is going to be heavily associated with this El-Sisi government and I think it'll be very hard for that government to live up to the expectations that have been created for it. And militaries depend upon popular legitimacy and that legitimacy can be withdrawn.

I don't think it's going to happen quickly in Egypt. The military's a very important and very revered institution in Egypt. But I think people's attitudes towards the military could change drastically over this period because it's the one institution that has escaped public scrutiny and criticism and the Egyptians are very -- there are no sacred cows anymore in Egyptian politics, save for the military. And I think that's about to change.

Anyone but Tammy. (Laughter)

MS. WITTES: Well, no, look, we've had a lot of discussion of Egypt and it's huge and it's hugely important to the United States, and that's merited. But I think that rooted in your last set of comments about education and openness to the world and development and the way that plays into the prospects for building a constituency for democracy that you talk about in the book, it really leads me to ask about some of the other parts of the region where those conditions are less -- are more of a challenge: a place like Yemen, with such intense poverty, a legacy of conflict; Libya right now, which is not only polarized, but fractionalized societally; or Syria, which is now embedded in intense conflict. Looking at the other regions and the 16 cases that you looked at in this book, and maybe Sub-Saharan Africa is instructive here, are there other cases of societies that emerged from that kind of conflict or fragmentation or poverty to develop

successful democratic institutions?

MR. GRAND: If you look at the literature on democratization in the ’70s and ’80s, you know, there’s this belief that you had to reach a certain level of per capita income, I think it was 8,000 per person per year, in order to have a real chance at democracy. Since then, you know, what has actually happened on the ground has just sort of destroyed that theory entirely. Poor countries seem much more likely to backslide over time than richer countries, but there have been a remarkable number of poor countries that have made the transition to at least electoral democracy.

I have the statistic in the book somewhere, but I think of the poorest countries of the world, say of the half-dozen poorest countries of the world, something like four or five are now democratic, which blows my mind and runs contrary to what people had long thought was possible. You know, how deep those democracies are, one doesn’t know, but I tell the story in the book about Ghana and Zambia, you know, both of which are fairly poor countries and some remarkable things have happened in terms of democratic development in both places. It hasn’t occurred easily or quickly, but those who follow Africa carefully tend to be quite bullish these days because there is a part of Africa that is succeeding economically and succeeding politically in ways that we never imagined possible.

MR. DIEHL: Yes, sir, there.

MR. MATZ: My name’s Hy Matz. Thank you.

I’m wondering if we could circle back to the very first question where one asked why you were confident that the genie can’t be put back in the bottle you said is the memory of Tahrir Square. And I’m wondering if there isn’t the counterargument, that is, the very memory of Tahrir Square and all of the chaos that has ensued over the last three years is precisely why the genie could be put back in the bottle. And if you could

share your thoughts on why you'd argue for the former rather than the latter that'd be helpful.

MR. GRAND: Well, I go into much more detail in the book about this, but, you know, there's just been this tremendous attitudinal change across the world and that you're just beginning to see in the Arab world, and seeing most markedly among youth in relation to how they perceive authority and their relationship to authority. And people are just much less -- young people are much less deferential than before, so most anyone in Egypt would say, you know, that lots of things are possible, but it's sort of a return to the darker repression of the worst days of Mubarak are highly unlikely.

I cede your point that, you know, for some, the memories of Tahrir are not wholly positive. And many, when I was recently in Cairo, pointed to the example of Syria as sort of, you know, the worst case to be avoided at all costs. There is a danger if we allow -- we the United States allow -- instability to reign in the region, that people will say I'll take anything over Syria. But I think if you can sort of tamp down the sectarian warfare and you can tamp down some of the political polarization that's going on right now, the general trend in the region, I think, will be quite positive because there's a very different attitude among youth in the region and that will eventually play its way into politics.

MR. DIEHL: Got time for one more question. Yes, sir.

MR. ZARRABI-KASHANI: Thanks. Hanif Zarrabi-Kashani. I'm a research assistant here at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy.

You have a number of insightful posts here in Iran@Saban blog. And I was wondering if you could kind of expand regarding Iran and this long-term historical trend toward democracy within the region, maybe expand on that briefly and maybe include Saudi Arabia. As you said, those two countries are the two main players in the

region. Thanks.

MR. GRAND: Again, there are others in this room that are far better qualified to do that than I, but, you know, my belief from the research that I've done is that countries that are the best educated, that have the greatest contact with the outside world, and that are the most connected are most likely to be successful over the long term. And that has something to do with wealth, but it's not completely tied to wealth. There are plenty of wealthy countries, like Saudi Arabia, where those conditions do not pertain.

So, on the one hand, Iran would seem most ripe for change if you took those three criteria. Saudi Arabia probably one of the least likely for change to happen at this moment.

MR. DIEHL: Okay. Well, we've exhausted our time. Thank you for all the question and thank you, Stephen, for this wonderful book. (Applause)

* * * * *

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

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

Carleton J. Anderson, III

(Signature and Seal on File)

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Commission No. 351998

Expires: November 30, 2016