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Article 1.

Foreign Affairs

The Arab Spring at One

Fouad Ajami

January 24, 2012 -- Throughout 2011, a rhythmic chant echoed across the Arab lands: "The people want to topple the regime." It skipped borders with ease, carried in newspapers and magazines, on Twitter and Facebook, on the airwaves of al Jazeera and al Arabiya. Arab nationalism had been written off, but here, in full bloom, was what certainly looked like a pan-Arab awakening. Young people in search of political freedom and economic opportunity, weary of waking up to the same tedium day after day, rose up against their sclerotic masters.

It came as a surprise. For almost two generations, waves of democracy had swept over other regions, from southern and

eastern Europe to Latin America, from East Asia to Africa. But not the Middle East. There, tyrants had closed up the political world, become owners of their countries in all but name. It was a bleak landscape: terrible rulers, sullen populations, a terrorist fringe that hurled itself in frustration at an order bereft of any legitimacy. Arabs had started to feel they were cursed, doomed to despotism. The region's exceptionalism was becoming not just a human disaster but a moral embarrassment.

Outside powers had winked at this reality, silently thinking this was the best the Arabs could do. In a sudden burst of Wilsonianism in Iraq and after, the United States had put its power behind liberty. Saddam Hussein was flushed out of a spider hole, the Syrian brigades of terror and extortion were pushed out of Lebanon, and the despotism of Hosni Mubarak, long a pillar of Pax Americana, seemed to lose some of its mastery. But post-Saddam Iraq held out mixed messages: there was democracy, but also blood in the streets and sectarianism. The autocracies hunkered down and did their best to thwart the new Iraqi project. Iraq was set ablaze, and the Arab autocrats could point to it as a cautionary tale of the folly of unseating even the worst of despots. Moreover, Iraq carried a double burden of humiliation for Sunni Arabs: the bearer of liberty there was the United States, and the war had empowered the Shiite stepchildren of the Arab world. The result was a standoff: the Arabs could not snuff out or ignore the flicker of freedom, but nor did the Iraqi example prove the subversive beacon of hope its proponents had expected.

It was said by Arabs themselves that George W. Bush had unleashed a tsunami on the region. True, but the Arabs were good at waiting out storms, and before long, the Americans

themselves lost heart and abandoned the quest. An election in 2006 in the Palestinian territories went the way of Hamas, and a new disillusionment with democracy's verdict overtook the Bush administration. The "surge" in Iraq rescued the American war there just in time, but the more ambitious vision of reforming the Arab world was given up. The autocracies had survived the brief moment of American assertiveness. And soon, a new standard-bearer of American power, Barack Obama, came with a reassuring message: the United States was done with change; it would make its peace with the status quo, renewing its partnership with friendly autocrats even as it engaged the hostile regimes in Damascus and Tehran. The United States was to remain on the Kabul hook for a while longer, but the greater Middle East would be left to its Furies.

When a revolt erupted in Iran against the theocrats in the first summer of his presidency, Obama was caught flatfooted by the turmoil. Determined to conciliate the rulers, he could not find the language to speak to the rebels. Meanwhile, the Syrian regime, which had given up its dominion in Lebanon under duress, was now keen to retrieve it. A stealth campaign of terror and assassinations, the power of Hezbollah on the ground, and the subsidies of Iran all but snuffed out the "Cedar Revolution" that had been the pride of Bush's diplomacy.

Observers looking at the balance of forces in the region in late 2010 would have been smart to bet on a perpetuation of autocracy. Beholding Bashar al-Assad in Damascus, they would have been forgiven the conclusion that a similar fate awaited Libya, Tunisia, Yemen, and the large Egyptian state that had been the trendsetter in Arab political and cultural life. Yet beneath the surface stability, there was political misery and

sterility. Arabs did not need a "human development report" to tell them of their desolation. Consent had drained out of public life; the only glue between ruler and ruled was suspicion and fear. There was no public project to bequeath to a generation coming into its own -- and this the largest and youngest population yet.

And then it happened. In December, a despairing Tunisian fruit vendor named Mohamed Bouazizi took one way out, setting himself on fire to protest the injustices of the status quo. Soon, millions of his unnamed fellows took another, pouring into the streets. Suddenly, the despots, seemingly secure in their dominion, deities in all but name, were on the run. For its part, the United States scurried to catch up with the upheaval. "In too many places, in too many ways, the region's foundations are sinking into the sand," U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton proclaimed in Qatar in mid-January 2011, as the storm was breaking out. The Arab landscape lent her remarks ample confirmation; what she omitted was that generations of American diplomacy would be buried, too.

THE FIRE THIS TIME

The revolt was a settlement of accounts between the powers that be and populations determined to be done with despots. It erupted in a small country on the margins of the Arab political experience, more educated and prosperous and linked to Europe than the norm. As the rebellion made its way eastward, it skipped Libya and arrived in Cairo, "the mother of the world." There, it found a stage worthy of its ambitions.

Often written off as the quintessential land of political

submission, Egypt has actually known ferocious rebellions. It had been Mubarak's good fortune that the land tolerated him for three decades. The designated successor to Anwar al-Sadat, Mubarak had been a cautious man, but his reign had sprouted dynastic ambitions. For 18 magical days in January and February, Egyptians of all walks of life came together in Tahrir Square demanding to be rid of him. The senior commanders of the armed forces cast him aside, and he joined his fellow despot, Tunisia's Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, who had fallen a month earlier.

From Cairo, the awakening became a pan-Arab affair, catching fire in Yemen and Bahrain. As a monarchy, the latter was a rare exception, since in this season it was chiefly the republics of strongmen that were seized with unrest. But where most monarchies had a fit between ruler and ruled, Bahrain was riven by a fault line between its Sunni rulers and its Shiite majority. So it was vulnerable, and it was in the nature of things that an eruption there would turn into a sectarian feud. Yemen, meanwhile, was the poorest of the Arab states, with secessionist movements raging in its north and south and a polarizing leader, Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had no skills save the art of political survival. The feuds of Yemen were obscure, the quarrels of tribes and warlords. The wider Arab tumult gave Yemenis eager to be rid of their ruler the heart to challenge him.

Then, the revolt doubled back to Libya. This was the kingdom of silence, the realm of the deranged, self-proclaimed "dean of Arab rulers," Muammar al-Qaddafi. For four tormenting decades, Libyans had been at the mercy of this prison warden, part tyrant, part buffoon. Qaddafi had eviscerated his country, the richest in Africa yet with an abysmally impoverished

population. In the interwar years, Libya had known savage colonial rule under the Italians. It gained a brief respite under an ascetic ruler, King Idris, but in the late 1960s was gripped by a revolutionary fever. Iblis wa la Idris, went the maxim of the time, "Better the devil than Idris." And the country got what it wanted. Oil sustained the madness; European leaders and American intellectuals alike came courting. Now, in 2011, Benghazi, at some remove from the capital, rose up, and history gave the Libyans a chance.

The Egyptian rulers had said that their country was not Tunisia. Qaddafi said that his republic was not Tunisia or Egypt. Eventually, Assad was saying that Syria was not Tunisia, Egypt, or Libya. Assad was young, not old; his regime had more legitimacy because it had confronted Israel rather than collaborated with it. He spoke too soon: in mid-March, it was Syria's turn.

Syria was where Islam had made its home after it outgrew the Arabian Peninsula and before it slipped out of the hands of the Arabs into those of the Persians and the Turks. Yet decades earlier, Bashar al-Assad's father, Hafez -- a man of supreme cunning and political skill -- had ridden the military and the Baath Party to absolute power, creating a regime in which power rested with the country's Alawite minority. The marriage of despotism and sectarianism begat the most fearsome state in the Arab east.

When the rebellion broke out there in 2011, it had a distinct geography, as the French political scientist Fabrice Balanche has shown, based in the territories and urban quarters of the country's Sunni Arabs. It erupted in Dara'a, a remote provincial

town in the south, then spread to Hamah, Homs, Jisr al-Shughour, Rastan, Idlib, and Dayr az Zawr -- skipping over Kurdish and Druze areas and the mountain villages and coastal towns that make up the Alawite strongholds. The violence in the Syrian uprising has been most pronounced in Homs, the country's third-largest city, because of its explosive demographics -- two-thirds Sunni, one-quarter Alawite, one-tenth Christian.

Sectarianism was not all, of course. Syria has had one of the highest birthrates in the region, with its population having almost quadrupled since Hafez seized power in 1970. The arteries of the regime had hardened, with a military-merchant complex dominating political and economic life. There was not much patronage left for the state to dispose of, since under the banner of privatization in recent years, the state had pulled off a disappearing act. The revolt fused a sense of economic disinheritance and the wrath of a Sunni majority determined to rid itself of the rule of a godless lot.

WHERE THINGS STAND

There has, of course, been no uniform script for the Arab regimes in play. Tunisia, an old state with a defined national identity, settled its affairs with relative ease. It elected a constituent assembly in which al Nahda, an Islamist party, secured a plurality. Al Nahda's leader, Rachid al-Ghannouchi, was a shrewd man; years in exile had taught him caution, and his party formed a coalition government with two secular partners.

In Libya, foreign intervention helped the rebels topple the regime. Qaddafi was pulled out of a drainage pipe and beaten

and murdered, and so was one of his sons. These were the hatreds and the wrath that the ruler himself had planted; he reaped what he had sown. But wealth, a sparse population, and foreign attention should see Libya through. No history in the making there could be as deadly to Libyans, and others, as the Qaddafi years.

The shadows of Iran and Saudi Arabia hover over Bahrain. There is no mass terror, but the political order is not pretty. There is sectarian discrimination and the oddness of a ruling dynasty, the House of Khalifa, that conquered the area in the late years of the eighteenth century but has still not made peace with the population. Outsiders man the security forces, and true stability seems a long way off.

As for Yemen, it is the quintessential failed state. The footprint of the government is light, the rulers offer no redemption, but there is no draconian terror. The country is running out of water; jihadists on the run from the Hindu Kush have found a home: it is Afghanistan with a coastline. The men and women who went out into the streets of Sanaa in 2011 sought the rehabilitation of their country, a more dignified politics than they have been getting from the cynical acrobat at the helm for more than three decades. Whether they will get it is unclear.

Syria remains in chaos. Hamas left Damascus in December because it feared being left on the wrong side of the mounting Arab consensus against the Syrian regime. "No Iran, no Hezbollah; we want rulers who fear Allah," has been one of the more meaningful chants of the protesters. Alawite rule has been an anomaly, and the regime, through its brutal response to the uprising, with security forces desecrating mosques, firing at

worshippers, and ordering hapless captives to proclaim, "There is no God but Bashar," has written its own regional banishment. Hafez committed cruelties of his own, but he always managed to remain within the Arab fold. Bashar is different -- reckless -- and has prompted even the Arab League, which has a history of overlooking the follies of its members, to suspend Damascus' membership.

The fight still rages, Aleppo and Damascus have not risen, and the embattled ruler appears convinced that he can resist the laws of gravity. Unlike in Libya, no foreign rescue mission is on the horizon. But with all the uncertainties, this much can be said: the fearsome security state that Hafez, the Baath Party, and the Alawite soldiers and intelligence barons built is gone for good. When consent and popular enthusiasm fell away, the state rested on fear, and fear was defeated. In Syria, the bonds between the holders of power and the population have been irreparably broken.

WHAT FOLLOWS PHARAOH

Egypt, meanwhile, may have lost the luster of old, but this Arab time shall be judged by what eventually happens there. In the scenarios of catastrophe, the revolution will spawn an Islamic republic: the Copts will flee, tourism revenues be lost for good, and Egyptians will yearn for the iron grip of a pharaoh. The strong performance of the Muslim Brotherhood and of an even more extremist Salafi party in recent parliamentary elections, together with the splintering of the secular, liberal vote, appears to justify concern about the country's direction. But Egyptians have proud memories of liberal periods in their history. Six decades of military rule robbed them of the experience of open

politics, and they are unlikely to give it up now without a struggle.

The elections were transparent and clarifying. Liberal and secular forces were not ready for the contest, whereas the Brotherhood had been waiting for such a historic moment for decades and seized its opportunity. No sooner had the Salafists come out of the catacombs than they began to unnerve the population, and so they pulled back somewhat from their extreme positions. The events in Tahrir Square transfixed the world, but as the young Egyptian intellectual Samuel Tadros has put it, "Egypt is not Cairo and Cairo is not Tahrir Square." When the dust settles, three forces will contest Egypt's future -- the army, the Brotherhood, and a broad liberal and secular coalition of those who want a civil polity, the separation of religion and politics, and the saving graces of a normal political life.

The Brotherhood brings to the struggle its time-honored mix of political cunning and an essential commitment to imposing a political order shaped by Islam. Its founder, Hasan al-Banna, was struck down by an assassin in 1949 but still stalks the politics of the Muslim world. A ceaseless plotter, he talked of God's rule, but in the shadows, he struck deals with the palace against the dominant political party of his day, the Wafd. He played the political game as he put together a formidable paramilitary force, seeking to penetrate the officer corps -- something his inheritors have pined for ever since. He would doubtless look with admiration on the tactical skills of his successors as they maneuver between the liberals and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, partaking of the tumult of Tahrir Square but stepping back from the exuberance to

underline their commitment to sobriety and public order.

The plain truth of it is that Egypt lacks the economic wherewithal to build a successful modern Islamic order, whatever that might mean. The Islamic Republic of Iran rests on oil, and even the moderate ascendancy of the Justice and Development Party, or AKP, in Turkey is secured by prosperity stemming from the "devout bourgeoisie" in the Anatolian hill towns. Egypt lies at the crossroads of the world, living off tourism, the Suez Canal, infusions of foreign aid, and remittances from Egyptians abroad. Virtue must bow to necessity: in the last year, the country's foreign reserves dwindled from \$36 billion to \$20 billion. Inflation hammers at the door, the price of imported wheat is high, and the bills have to be paid. Four finance ministers have come and gone since Mubarak's fall. A desire for stability now balances the heady satisfaction that a despot was brought down.

There are monumental problems staring Egypt's leaders in the face, and the reluctance of both the Brotherhood and the armed forces to assume power is telling. Good sense and pragmatism might yet prevail. A plausible division of spoils and responsibility might give the Brotherhood the domains of governance dearest to it -- education, social welfare, and the judiciary -- with the military getting defense, intelligence, the peace with Israel, the military ties to the United States, and a retention of the officer corps' economic prerogatives. Liberal secularists would have large numbers, a say in the rhythm of daily life in a country so hard to regiment and organize, and the chance to field a compelling potential leader in a future presidential election.

For two centuries now, Egypt has been engaged in a Sisyphean struggle for modernity and a place among the nations worthy of its ambitions. It has not fared well, yet it continues to try. Last August, a scene played out that could give Egyptians a measure of solace. The country's last pharaoh -- may it be so -- came to court on a gurney. "Sir, I am present," the former ruler said to the presiding judge. Mubarak was not pulled out of a drainage pipe and slaughtered, as was Qaddafi, nor did he hunker down with his family and murder his own people at will, as has Assad. The Egyptians have always had, in E. M. Forster's words, the ability to harmonize contending assertions, and they may do so once again.

THE THIRD GREAT AWAKENING

This tumult, this awakening, is the third of its kind in modern Arab history. The first, a political-cultural renaissance born of a desire to join the modern world, came in the late 1800s. Led by scribes and lawyers, would-be parliamentarians and Christian intellectuals, it sought to reform political life, separate religion from politics, emancipate women, and move past the debris of the Ottoman Empire. Fittingly enough, that great movement, with Beirut and Cairo at the head of the pack, found its chronicler in George Antonius, a Christian writer of Lebanese birth, Alexandrian youth, a Cambridge education, and service in the British administration in Palestine. His 1938 book, *The Arab Awakening*, remains the principal manifesto of Arab nationalism.

The second awakening came in the 1950s and gathered force in the decade following. This was the era of Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt, Habib Bourguiba in Tunisia, and the early leaders of

the Baath Party in Iraq and Syria. No democrats, the leaders of that time were intensely political men engaged in the great issues of the day. They came from the middle class or even lower and had dreams of power, of industrialization, of ridding their people of the sense of inferiority instilled by Ottoman and then colonial rule. No simple audit can do these men justice: they had monumental accomplishments, but then, explosive demographics and their own authoritarian proclivities and shortcomings undid most of their work. When they faltered, police states and political Islam filled the void.

This third awakening came in the nick of time. The Arab world had grown morose and menacing. Its populations loathed their rulers and those leaders' foreign patrons. Bands of jihadists, forged in the cruel prisons of dreadful regimes, were scattered about everywhere looking to kill and be killed. Mohamed Bouazizi summoned his fellows to a new history, and across the region, millions have heeded his call. Last June, the Algerian author Boualem Sansal wrote Bouazizi an open letter. "Dear Brother," it said,

I write these few lines to let you know we're doing well, on the whole, though it varies from day to day: sometimes the wind changes, it rains lead, life bleeds from every pore. . . .

But let's take the long view for a moment. Can he who does not know where to go find the way? Is driving the dictator out the end? From where you are, Mohamed, next to God, you can tell that not all roads lead to Rome; ousting a tyrant doesn't lead to freedom. Prisoners like trading one prison for another, for a change of scenery and the chance to gain a little something along the way.

"The best day after a bad emperor is the first," the Roman historian Tacitus once memorably observed. This third Arab awakening is in the scales of history. It has in it both peril and promise, the possibility of prison but also the possibility of freedom.

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Article 2.

NYT

The State of the Union in 2012

Editorial

January 24, 2012 -- A year ago, after the last State of the Union address, we applauded President Obama for challenging the Republicans' blame-government, slash-and-burn rhetoric. He explained why Washington must do more to help put millions of struggling people back to work and why any credible plan to wrestle down the deficit must include the wealthy paying a fairer share of taxes.

After a rough start to 2011, economic numbers have improved,

and Mr. Obama has pushed Congress to extend the payroll tax cut and unemployment benefits and outlined an ambitious jobs agenda. But the country's problems are profound. There are 13.1 million unemployed, and the risk of stagnation is real. Republican candidates are pounding on the wrong, but seductive, notion that the real problem is government spending — especially on the “others,” the poor and minorities. Congressional Republicans have barely wavered in their obstructionism.

Mr. Obama has become steadily more assertive, but he will have to push even harder. The State of the Union address was a chance to do that, and he did not squander it.

He sounded many of the same themes as last year, but his tone was sharper and he was far more willing to apportion blame, particularly singling out the financial industry for its excesses and politicians who are still determined to defend tax cuts for the rich and undo desperately needed financial regulations. “We can either settle for a country where a shrinking number of people do really well, while a growing number of Americans barely get by,” he said, “or we can restore an economy where everyone gets a fair shot, everyone does their fair share, and everyone plays by the same set of rules.”

Mr. Obama's talk of “an economy built to last” was a bit too folksy, but he is right that the country can't rely on some invisible hand to develop a strategy to compete in the 21st century. Washington must do a lot more to create good jobs, to encourage new industries, to build the infrastructure to support a vibrant economy and to address climate change and promote energy independence.

The president's calls to deny tax breaks to companies that outsource and provide a tax credit to companies that bring jobs back home are good ones. The real challenge will be to ensure that those repatriated jobs are good-paying jobs. The president called for better job training and education, but a skills gap isn't the main problem. Employers aren't going to do a lot more hiring until consumers buy more products. Demand is unlikely to recover until Congress agrees to more federal spending, including aid to states for hiring.

Mr. Obama's idea to use half of the savings from winding down the wars for public-works projects is laudable and could put hundreds of thousands back to work. Republicans are sure to insist that the money be used for deficit reduction, setting up another battle to simply do the obviously right thing. Mr. Obama has pushed banks and Congress to make it easier for borrowers who are current in their payments to refinance. On Tuesday night, he called — finally — for a full investigation of the lending abuses that inflated the bubble and led to the crash. That is the best hope for getting meaningful redress for borrowers.

In addition to his longstanding call to let the high-end Bush-era tax cuts expire, Mr. Obama called for a "Buffett rule" to ensure that millionaires pay an effective rate of at least 30 percent, ensuring that they never pay less than the middle class. "You can call this class warfare all you want," he said. "But asking a billionaire to pay at least as much as his secretary in taxes? Most Americans would call that common sense." We agree.

Over the last year, Americans have become more aware of the deep inequities in the economy and of the government's responsibility to act. Mr. Obama deserves some of the credit for

that, but it has a lot more to do with the unrelenting tough times and the efforts of Occupy Wall Street and other protests. What Americans want now is strong political leadership.

Article 3.

Wall Street Journal

The State of His Policies

Editorial

January 25, 2012 -- Obama has done nearly everything he wanted. That's the problem.

President Obama delivered a State of the Union address Tuesday night that by the account of his own advisers is more campaign document than a plan for governing. He's running against Republicans in Congress, Reaganomics, wealthy bankers and inequality.

Normally a President at the start of his fourth year would be running on his record, accentuating the legislation he's passed. Mr. Obama can't do that with any specificity because the economic recovery has been so weak and the legislation he has passed is so unpopular. So last night he took credit for the shale gas revolution he had nothing to do with and proposed new policies to "spread the wealth around," as he famously told Joe the Plumber in 2008 before he took the words back. We thought he meant it then, and now he's admitting it.

Perhaps this will work if Republicans nominate a standard-

bearer who is damaged, or too cautious or guilty to challenge this politics of envy. Mr. Obama clearly has Mitt Romney and his 14% effective tax rate in his sights (see the editorial nearby). The President will try to portray Mr. Romney as Mr. 1%, and if the Republican settles for defending the current tax code, he will lose. He needs a tax reform proposal of his own, as well as the self-confidence to argue for it in the same moral terms that Mr. Obama will attack him. Meantime, as Mr. Obama begins his fourth year in power it's a good moment to recount the economic record that he'd rather not talk about. The President inherited a deep recession, but in political terms that should have been a blessing. History shows that the deeper the recession, the sharper the recovery, and Mr. Obama was poised by take credit for the economy's natural recuperative powers. Instead, we've had the weakest recovery since the Great Depression and stubbornly high joblessness.

The nearby chart compares rates of quarterly growth during the Reagan and Obama economic recoveries. The comparison is apt because both recoveries followed deep recessions in which the jobless rate reached more than 10%. Once the Reagan recovery got cooking, in 1983, growth stayed above 5% for 18 months and never fell below 3.3% for 13 consecutive quarters.

In the Obama recovery, growth has never exceeded 4% in any quarter and fell off markedly in mid-2010 through the third quarter of 2011. For the first nine months of 2011, growth averaged less than 1.2%. The economy finally picked up again in the fourth quarter, but still at a rate that is subpar for a recovery that long ago should have become robust and durable.

As he runs for re-election, Mr. Obama is trying to campaign as

an incumbent who is striving to help the economy but has been stymied at every turn by Congress. Not even MSNBC can believe this. For two years he had the largest Democratic majorities in Congress since the 1970s and achieved nearly everything he wanted.

The New Yorker magazine this week has posted on its website a 57-page memo that economic adviser Larry Summers wrote to Mr. Obama in December 2008. It lays out nearly his entire agenda for the "stimulus," reviving housing, the auto bailout and saving the financial industry. If anything, the memo overstates what would be needed to stabilize the financial panic, but nearly all of the stimulus spending priorities that the memo deemed "feasible" made it into law. They simply didn't work as promised.

The Pelosi Congress also passed ObamaCare, Dodd-Frank, cash for clunkers, the housing tax credit, and much more. The only Obama priority it didn't pass was cap-and-trade, which was killed by Senate Democrats.

Mr. Obama's regulators also currently have some 149 major rules underway, which are those that cost more than \$100 million. The 112th Congress hasn't been able to kill a single major rule. The most it has been able to do is extend the Bush tax rates—which helped the economy by avoiding a tax shock—and slow the rate of increase in federal spending. This President has been "obstructed" less than anyone since LBJ.

Mr. Obama clearly has a spring in his step these days, figuring that the public hates Congress and thinks Republicans run it, that the GOP will field a weak presidential candidate, and that

he can fool the public into believing only Mitt Romney's taxes will rise if Mr. Obama wins a second term. He has only one big obstacle: his record.

Article 4.

Los Angeles Times

No joy in Egypt

Daniel Williams

January 25, 2012 -- As Egypt marks the first anniversary of the Jan. 25 civilian revolt that eventually toppled the 30-year rule of Hosni Mubarak, there's no agreement — on how to celebrate or even whether rejoicing is in order. The current military rulers — the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, or SCAF — want to hold parades and aerial jet exhibitions to exult in the revolution, of which their main part was to ease Mubarak out of power.

Youth groups and democracy activists who originally engineered the uprising are carrying on a campaign called "The Generals are Liars," with mini-demonstrations and audiovisual presentations in the streets documenting police and military abuses. Islamic politicians, triumphant in recent parliamentary elections, extol the military's role while pressing for an eventual transfer of power to civilians.

As for human rights, though, just what do Egyptians have to celebrate? Not all that much — a sad commentary on the uprising in the Middle East's most populous country, one that is a reference point for regional politics despite its poverty and

stagnation. Yes, Mubarak is on trial for the killings of protesters, which is at least a symbolic repudiation of his oppressive reign. Yes, Egypt held a free election for a new parliament in which Islamic parties prevailed in competition with secular and liberal slates. Yes, independent media work hard to bird-dog government malfeasance. Yet, much of Mubarak's repressive legacy has been preserved and even strengthened. SCAF rules in his place and has indicated it should remain a power behind the scenes, as it has for the 60 years since the overthrow of the country's monarchy. Egyptians still live under the emergency law — in place since the assassination of President Anwar Sadat in 1981 — that permits bans on public assembly, indefinite detention without charge, prosecution in special courts that allow no appeal process and that are notorious for reliance on confessions obtained under torture. On Tuesday, SCAF's chieftain, Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, partially lifted the 30-year state of emergency but said Egypt would continue to apply the emergency law to cases of "thuggery." Tantawi's gesture is far from sufficient. In the last year, military tribunals have convicted hundreds of peaceful protesters on charges of thuggery. During almost a year in power, SCAF has liberally referred civilians to military courts, another practice of the Mubarak years, though under him it was reserved for so-called exceptional cases. Sometimes the magistrates have announced a verdict before a trial began. The military has arbitrarily arrested and convicted peaceful protesters, some of whom remain imprisoned. Measures that date from Britain's early 20th century domination of Egypt ban assemblies of more than five people "that threaten the public peace." Although by international standards, lethal force should be used only when strictly necessary to protect life, under current Egyptian law,

police — who are effectively under SCAF control — possess wide scope for shooting at demonstrators. The minister of interior has broad discretion to decide on use of weapons and what warnings need be given demonstrators before firing on them. On Jan. 6, the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, an independent human rights organization, denounced a statement by the interior minister that police will get bonuses for shooting "thugs," government shorthand for demonstrators. Police regulations are bad enough, but the actions of security forces — both police and military — have been abominable. In October, soldiers ran over demonstrators with armored cars and shot them, killing 27 marchers at a Christian rally held to protest the burning of a church. In November, at least 40 demonstrators were killed by anti-riot forces during unrest in and around Tahrir Square, the epicenter of protest. Police routinely beat demonstrators, women included. Human Rights Watch has documented torture and abuse of detainees by soldiers. Military personnel carried out abusive "virginity tests" on women in detention. Servile state media demonize opposition groups and non-governmental organizations as subversive tools of dark foreign forces. Laws endure that make citizens vulnerable to prosecution for "insulting" speech or words "harmful" to morals or tantamount to changing the existing political order. In March, SCAF added a new wrinkle to restrictions on speech and assembly by criminalizing strikes and demonstrations "that impede public works." In April, a military court sentenced young blogger Maikel Nabil Sanad to three years in prison for "insulting the military establishment" when he criticized army rule on his blog and Facebook page. SCAF said last weekend that Nabil would be pardoned and released along with more than 1,900 other prisoners convicted in military trials. It was a

gesture in advance of the Jan. 25 holiday; Nabil shouldn't have been arrested and convicted in the first place. Egypt seated a new parliament on Monday. It should act quickly to wipe clean the slate of laws that restrict free speech, association and assembly and that permit police too much latitude to shoot protesters. Members of the parliament should limit military court jurisdiction to military officials and repeal the emergency law. Egypt's foreign friends — including the aid-giving U.S. government — should wholeheartedly support the reforms and resist suggestions that continued dictatorship means stability. With Egypt's revolution in its first stages, the time is now for the parliament to end Egypt's long-term rule by military fiat.

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Article 5.

Foreign Policy

Why China's rise really is bad for America -- and other dark forces at work

Gideon Rachman

January 24, 2012 -- I have spent my working life writing about international politics from the vantage points of the Economist and now the Financial Times. Surrounded by people who tracked markets and business, it has always felt natural for me to

see international economics and international politics as deeply intertwined.

In my book Zero-Sum Future, written in 2009, I attempted to predict how the global economic crisis would change international politics. As the rather bleak title implied, I argued that relations between the major powers were likely to become increasingly tense and conflict-ridden. In a worsening economic climate, it would be harder for the big economies to see their relationships as mutually beneficial -- as a win-win. Instead, they would increasingly judge their relationships in zero-sum terms. What was good for China would be seen as bad for America. What was good for Germany would be bad for Italy, Spain, and Greece. Now, as the paperback edition of my book comes out, the prediction is being borne out -- which is gratifying as an author, although slightly worrying as a member of the human race. The rise of zero-sum logic is the common thread, tying together seemingly disparate strands in international politics: the crisis inside the European Union, deteriorating U.S.-Chinese relations, and the deadlock in global governance. This new, more troubled mood is reflected at this year's World Economic Forum. In the 20 years before the financial crisis, Davos was almost a festival of globalization -- as political leaders from all over the world bought into the same ideas about the mutual benefits of trade and investment and wooed the same investment bankers and multinational executives. At Davos, this year, the mood is more questioning -- with numerous sessions on rethinking capitalism and on the crisis in the eurozone. The European Union is an organization built around a win-win economic logic. Europe's founding fathers believed that the nations of Europe could put centuries of

conflict behind them by concentrating on mutually beneficial economic cooperation. By building a common market and tearing down barriers to trade and investment, they would all become richer -- and, eventually, would get used to working together. Good economics would make good politics. The nations of Europe would grow together. For decades, this logic worked beautifully. But, faced with a grave economic crisis, this positive win-win logic has gone into reverse. Rather than building each other up, European nations fear that they are dragging each other down. The countries of southern Europe -- Greece, Portugal, Italy, and Spain -- increasingly feel that they are locked into a currency union with Germany that has made their economies disastrously uncompetitive. For them, European unity is no longer associated with rising prosperity. Instead, it has become a route to crippling debt and mass unemployment. As for the countries of northern Europe -- Germany, Finland, and the Netherlands -- they are increasingly resentful of having to lend billions of euros to bail out their struggling southern neighbors. They fear that they will never get the money back, and their own prosperous economies will be dragged down. Now that France has lost its AAA credit-rating, Germany is left as the only large AAA-rated country in the eurozone. Many Germans feel that they have worked hard and played by the rules -- and are now being asked to save countries where people routinely cheat on their taxes and retire in their fifties. From the beginning of the crisis, Europe's politicians have argued that the solution to a severe crisis within the EU was "more Europe" -- deeper integration. Unfortunately, their interpretation of what this means is rather different and dictated by the singular nature of their national debates. For the southern Europeans, "more Europe" means Eurobonds -- common debt issuance by the

whole European Union that would lower their interest rates and make it easier to fund their governments.. But the Germans regard this as a dangerous pledge simply to underwrite their neighbors' debts, long into the future. For them, "more Europe" means stricter enforcement of budgetary austerity from the center -- German rules for everybody. Over the next year, this inherent contradiction is likely to cause increasing discord and rivalry within the EU as the political argument plays out against a deteriorating economic climate. Britain's refusal to go along with a new European treaty at the December 2011 Brussels summit led to screaming headlines about a continental divorce. But it is likely to be just a foretaste of things to come. The development to watch for in European politics will be the rise of political parties that are more nationalist in tone and that take a much more skeptical attitude to the European Union -- not to mention the single currency. Marine Le Pen and the National Front will do well in the upcoming French presidential election. Other rising Euroskeptic parties include the Freedom Parties in the Netherlands and Austria, the Northern League in Italy, the True Finns in Finland, and a motley collection of far-right and far-left parties in Greece. Ironically, this intensifying crisis in Europe comes just at the time that the United States has decided to readjust its foreign policy to concentrate much more on Asia and Pacific. Although the "pivot to Asia" is being presented as a far-sighted reaction to long-term economic trends, it also represents an adjustment to a shift in the global balance-of-power in the aftermath of the global economic crisis. Put bluntly, the United States is taking the rise of China much more seriously. American preeminence, long into the future, can no longer be taken for granted. Nor can it be assumed that a stronger, richer China is good news for America -- as successive

U.S. presidents argued all the way back to 1978. On the contrary, both as individuals and as a nation, Americans are getting the queasy feeling that a richer, more powerful China might just mean a relatively poorer, relatively weaker America. In other words, the rise of China is not a win-win for both nations. It is a zero-sum game. That belief is now feeding through into the presidential election -- and is reflected both in the protectionist rhetoric of Mitt Romney and in the soft containment of China of the Obama administration. Romney has promised to designate China a "currency manipulator" and to slap tariffs on Chinese goods. These kinds of arguments have surfaced before, particularly during presidential elections -- but they are not normally made by pro-business Republicans. However, with America beset by worries about high unemployment and a spiraling national debt, old nostrums about free trade are easier to jettison. Missed in all the excitement of a presidential election is the extent to which protectionism is being intellectually rehabilitated in the United States. Respected economists like Paul Krugman and Fred Bergsten have argued that imposing tariffs would be a legitimate U.S. response to Chinese currency policies. A similar shift is underway in America's military and strategic thinking. The Obama administration's much-ballyhooed Asian turn is essentially a response to the rise of China. According to the Economist, China is likely to be the world's largest economy (in real terms) by 2018. And Washington sees Beijing as already flexing its muscles, with increases in military spending and a harder-line in border disputes with a range of neighbors, including India, Japan, and Vietnam. As a result, the United States is seeking to make common cause with China's nervous neighbors -- bolstering alliances with its traditional Asian allies, while

committing to strengthen its own military presence in the region. This move is all the more significant since it comes in the context of a plan to make deep cuts in overall U.S. military spending.

The Chinese are not wrong to see this policy as essentially one of "soft containment." They are unlikely to respond passively. A new Chinese leadership -- under pressure from a nationalist public -- might push back hard.

American-Chinese relations have long contained elements of rivalry and co-operation. But, increasingly, the rival elements are coming to the fore. This is not yet a new cold war. However, the state of relations between the United States and China -- the sole superpower and its only plausible rival -- are likely to set the tone for international politics in the coming decade.

In fact, the increasing rivalry between Washington and Beijing is an important contributor to the third major manifestation of the spread of zero-sum logic through the international system -- the increasing deadlock in multilateral diplomacy, from the World Trade Organization (WTO) to climate-change negotiations to the G-20's stalled efforts at global financial regulation.

In the heyday of globalization over the past three decades, big trade agreements were both a symbol and a driver of the strengthening of common interests between the world's major powers. The creation of a European single market in 1992 and of a North American free-trade area in 1994, the setting-up of the WTO in 1995, and the admission of China to the WTO in 2001, were all landmarks in the creation of a truly globalized

economy. But the days of heroic new trade accords are over. World leaders have stopped even calling for a completion of the Doha round of trade talks; the repeated empty exhortations have become embarrassing. There have been, however, some small victories: At the end of 2011, Congress finally passed a free-trade deal between the United States and South Korea, and Russia was admitted to the WTO around the same time. But the WTO is now largely playing defense, trying to prevent a major new outbreak of protectionism. Officials there dread the prospect of being asked to adjudicate a U.S.-Chinese dispute over currency -- fearing that any such case would be so politically charged that it could blow apart the world trading system.

It is a similar picture in other areas where there were once high hopes for multilateral cooperation. The world climate talks were saved from complete disaster in Durban, South Africa, at the end of 2011 -- but few believe that the vague and vestigial agreement reached there will have any real impact on the global problem. The G-20's efforts to push forward with new forms of global financial regulation have also disappointed. The crisis within the European Union -- which has so long seen itself as the champion of global governance -- has damaged the whole cause of multilateralism.

A few months ago, I found myself sitting next to a senior EU official who turned out to have read my book. "My job is to prove your zero-sum thesis wrong," he told me. I replied that, as an author I hoped to be proved right -- but as a European and a human being I was hoping to be proved wrong. My lunch companion laughed and said, "That is too dialectical for me."

It is one of the nice things about the best EU officials that they are happy to talk to their critics, and comfortable using words like "dialectical." However, I fear that cultured technocrats will not do terribly well in the new era. A zero-sum world may summon up rather darker forces.

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Article 6.

The Christian Science Monitor

Can democracies thrive with financial systems that are out of control?

An interview with Zbigniew Brzezinski

Nathan Gardels: The core of your strategic vision for the future is of a “larger West” comprised of democratic powers that accommodates China. Yet the West, starting with the US, is in a period of political decay. As you have noted, while China focuses on the long term and plots out its future, the US in particular is beset with a short-term mentality. In effect, we are no longer an “industrial democracy” in the strict sense, but a “consumer democracy” where all the feedback signals – the market, the media, and politics – are short-term and geared to immediate gratification. Doesn’t that give China the competitive advantage of political capacity in the times ahead?

Zbigniew Brzezinski: Obviously so.

Gardels: How can America's short-term mentality be changed? Are the West's political institutions up to the challenge?

Brzezinski: Yes, if we develop a more effective and longer-range response to the current crisis instead of simply wallowing in the present difficulties – which is likely to further produce the same negative effects that got us into this mess. We are so preoccupied with the current crisis and so lacking in a longer-term perspective that we have no strategic vision which would give us some sense of historical momentum. Democracy is capable of responding provided we focus on the right aims. The question today is whether democracies can thrive with financial systems that are out of control, that are capable of generating selfishly beneficial consequences only for the few, without any effective framework that gives us a larger, more ambitious sense of purpose. That is the real problem. There is today a very dangerous imbalance between the lack of budgetary discipline, the commitment to austerity, the determination to keep inflation under control, and to maintain a costly social policy on the one hand — all, on the other hand, without any larger conception about which direction our societies as a whole should be heading.

Gardels: The rest of the West is also mired in paralysis. Europe has turned even further inward with the euro crisis as it decides whether to go all the way back to the nation-state or forward to full political union. What is the solution for Europe?

Brzezinski: I believe that, in the end, the resolution to today's crisis in Europe won't work out that badly. The essential

political leadership in Europe – the Germans and the French mainly, along with some others – are demonstrating a sense of responsibility for the future of Europe. They are increasingly determined to shape a political framework which will supplant what Europe has been lately, namely a financial union for some and a politically loose community for all. Inevitably, a genuine political union will take shape in stages and steps, probably beginning through a de facto treaty reached by inter-governmental agreement in the near future.

Gardels: A two-speed Europe?

Brzezinski: Why not? There is nothing wrong with a Europe that is in part and simultaneously a political and monetary union at the core, which accepts the leading role of Brussels, surrounded by a larger Europe that doesn't share the single currency but does share all the other benefits, for example the free movement of people and goods. That is consistent with the post-Cold War vision of an expanding Europe whole and free.

Gardels: Japan changes prime ministers every few months. It is coasting into a retirement trap based on the accumulated wealth of the past and not looking forward. Is it possible to keep such a Japan within the West, or will it drift toward the Chinese center of gravity?

Brzezinski: I feel confident about the authenticity of Japan's commitment to democracy. Its political culture is now more Western than its traditional political culture. But, of course, Japan is in the East. A good relationship between it and China would contribute immensely to stability in the Far East, and to a better US-China relationship. America can play an active role as

conciliator between Japan and China just as it did in Europe between France and Germany and between Germany and Poland – but without the direct kind of military involvement on the Asian mainland that the US has had in Europe. Perhaps the better analogy with respect to the US and China is the role Britain played in the 19th century as a stabilizer and balancer on the European continent.

Gardels: Given this crisis of governance in the West, the old G7 is receding as the anchor of the world system and is increasingly unable to provide “global public goods” – such as financial stability – yet the emerging economies such as China, Brazil, and Turkey are as yet unable to do so. Some see the G20 as the mechanism of adjustment to a truly multi-polar world. But, is there any precedent in history of a stable global order without one hegemonic power or aligned set of powers setting the rules?

Brzezinski: While the last several centuries did involve a struggle for global domination, and the last 20 years saw a brief moment in which America was globally supreme, we are now entering a phase in which no power is likely to be truly supreme. This is why, in my view, the idea of an expanded West – which eventually should include both Russia and Turkey – would be a very important element contributing to greater global stability. An enlarged West – in which the United States plays the role of conciliator and at the same time of balancer in Asia – would be better able to forge constructive policies to cope with global issues than a world in which there is increasing turmoil and conflict with many small players vying for their own self-interest. Then it would be impossible to put together any large-scale compromise to maintain stability. As for the G20, it has some real movers and shakers both economically and politically,

but also lots of hangers-on who are there because they fit some statistical measurement. But there is no magic to the number 20. What not 25? Why not just 15? The G20 will work or not based upon the core powers building the kind of platform I suggest – an enlarged West composed of democracies working in accommodation with the dynamic economies of Asia led by China.

Gardels: The Chinese leadership has shifted in recent years from the defensive posture of “peaceful rise” to Party theorist Zheng Bijian’s new theme of engagement: “build on a convergence of interests to create a community of interests.” Yet, China is still hesitant to assert a global leadership role, even though it is the world’s largest creditor. If we are “present at the creation” of a post-American order, what ought to be China’s strategic role and responsibilities?

Brzezinski: Zheng is refining his idea of “convergence of interests” in conversations with Henry Kissinger, myself, and others. It is a process. It is a sign that the Chinese are serious in seeking a role to play without hegemonic ambitions – at the moment. Whether they seek hegemony in the future depends on whether we in the West create circumstances in which a convergence of interests becomes attainable for them, or whether accommodation with others instead of us becomes a necessity for their national interests. Two years ago when I gave a speech in China saying that the US and China should have an informal G2 relationship, I was applauded and there was enthusiasm. Within a year or so voices emerged that said, “Wait, this is trap” to force China to share the costs of global stability on Western terms since the West itself can no longer afford to pay. So, China has to decide which role they want to play. With

status comes responsibility and obligation. I think they understand that; they just want a key voice in the new order for which they must share responsibility. For them, this is unprecedented. In the past, their realm of influence has been self-contained. Now it has expanded.

Gardels: The eruption of democracy across the Arab world has meant the resurgence of long-suppressed Islamist parties. How should the West respond to this development? To the extent that Turkey is a template for how Islamist parties can fit within a secular democratic framework – as Prime Minister Erdogan himself recently argued in a speech in Cairo – should the West support rather than oppose this approach?

Brzezinski: I am very much in favor of drawing Turkey as close to, or as much into, the West as possible. Without doubt, it is America's best ally in the Middle East. But Turkey right now is not a template for new Arab democracies because there are no new Arab democracies. We shouldn't confuse the political awakening in several Arab countries, which has produced very active populist movements, with the actual appearance of democracy.

What is happening there may lead to democracy, but it may also lead to populist dictatorship. Turkey is, of course, an example of how Islam and secular democracy are compatible, but so far there is no viable imitation in the Arab world.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, one of America's leading strategists, was national security advisor to President Jimmy Carter. His just published book is "Strategic Vision: America and the Crisis of Global Power."