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Article 1.

Politico

## **What do Egyptians want?**

Shibley Telhami

May 21, 2012 -- As Egyptians vote to select a president later this week, it is heartening that no one really knows how it will turn out — not even the

pollsters. Egyptian public opinion has been fluid, seemingly changing daily. Since the whole process is new, no one has a model for voter turnout. But with a poll I conducted among a sample of 772 Egyptians May 4-10 with JZ Analytics, we have a better picture of what Egyptians are looking for.

Among the presidential candidates, moderate Islamist Abdel-Men'em Abul Fotouh lead the way with 32 percent' followed by Amr Mousa with 28 percent (just outside of the margin of error of 3.6 percent); followed by former Prime Minister Ahmad Shafiq with 14 percent. The Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohamed Morsi tied Nasserist candidate Hamdeen Sabahi for fourth place at 8 percent.

The picture remains fluid, but there are some telling findings in the poll. One major question is about the Muslim Brotherhood and their Freedom and Justice Party, Egypt's best-organized political group. They had garnered a majority in the parliamentary elections, and seemed on track to substantially influence the shape of Egypt's next constitution. Many were already predicting their dominance — including determining the next presidential candidate. If not one of their own, at least one they endorse. But that picture has changed.

To be sure, the Brotherhood is still a powerful force and will remain so for years to come. Though their candidate, Mohamed Morsi, is now far behind in the polls, he is likely to do better than predicted simply because of the machinery his party can use to turn out the vote. But the polls indicate that something has changed.

First, 71 percent of Egyptians polled say the Brotherhood made a mistake by fielding its own presidential candidate after pledging not to.

Second, Egyptians appear to use different criteria for selecting a president than in the parliamentary elections. Egyptians who voted in those elections say that the most important factors in determining their choices were political party (24 percent); followed by a candidate's record and experience (21 percent), and a candidate's position on the economy (19 percent).

But they rank these factors differently in selecting a president, with personal trust in the candidate being the most important (31 percent), followed by the economy (22 percent) and record and experience (19 percent).

Third, while the role of religion is important and is on many voters' minds, it is listed as the most important issue of candidate selection by only 8 percent of respondents.

The importance of turnout is demonstrated by demographics: In rural areas, both Mousa and Morsi do better than the other candidates — so the turnout in these areas will be key.

Candidates' support also varies across demographic categories. For example, Abul-Fotouh does best among youth (under 25) and Mousa does best among Christians. In early voting among Egyptians outside the country, there is also a trend, where secular candidates do better among Egyptians in Western countries and Islamist candidates perform better among the large numbers of Egyptians working in the Gulf Arab states — particularly Saudi Arabia.

Who ends up voting in larger numbers will undoubtedly have an impact on the outcome.

One central question facing Egyptians is the role they envision for religion in Egyptian politics. Though less than 10 percent of respondents said that the role of religion is the most important factor in their voting in both the parliamentary and presidential elections, two-thirds of respondents (66 percent) say they support making Shariia as the basis of Egyptian law. However, only 17 percent say that they prefer applying Shariia literally, including to its harsh penal code, while 83 percent say they prefer applying the spirit of Shariia but with adaptation to modern times.

In envisioning the role Islam should play in the Egyptian political system, respondents were asked to choose which of six models — Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Tunisia, Malaysia and Morocco — is closest to their aspirations. A majority chose Turkey (54 percent), followed by Saudi Arabia (32 percent).

Beyond the immediate elections, respondents were asked their views on important issues of foreign policy — including attitudes toward the United States. These attitudes remained highly unfavorable, mostly due to frustrations with U.S. policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In fact, the absence of serious peace prospects has made the attitudes of Egyptians and other Arabs, on the one hand, and Israelis, on the other, zero-sum. I ran a poll in Israel in February, and found that a majority of Israeli Jews favored President Barack Obama for the U.S. presidency over

any of the Republican candidates — particularly after Obama’s United Nations speech last fall, in which he mostly embraced Israel’s position. For largely the same reasons Arab public opinion toward Obama has soured — as we found in the Annual Arab Public Opinion poll in October 2011. In the current poll, 71 percent of Egyptian respondents say that they prefer the Republican candidate, though they probably know little about Mitt Romney since they are too consumed by their own unfolding political picture.

By the end of the week, Egyptians will know the result of the first round of the presidential elections. No one candidate is likely to receive a majority of the vote, so there will probably be a run-off election between the top two. The results will inevitably be controversial — since many Egyptians still fear the military is manipulating the results, despite the presence of international observers, including people from the Carter Center.

This public suspicion could grow if the results of one last-minute opinion poll by the semi-official Al-Ahram Center turns out to be correct. That poll found that none of the Islamist candidates are in the top two.

Adding to potential challenges to the results are concerns about re-writing the constitution, which will define the limits of presidential and parliamentary power. The stakes are high and the Egyptian public is now mobilized. The good fortune of Egypt so far is that, despite an amazing revolution in a country of 80 million, there has been only limited violence and the contestation has been primarily political.

The challenge for Egypt is to keep it that way as Egyptians move to define their country and their future.

*Shibley Telhami is Anwar Sadat professor for peace and development at the University of Maryland and nonresident senior fellow at the Saban Center of the Brookings Institution. The poll is now posted at [Brookings.edu](http://Brookings.edu) and [Sadat.edu](http://Sadat.edu).*

Article 2.

Guardian

# These are crucial times in Egypt's transition to democracy

[Wadah Khanfar](#)

20 May 2012 -- Earlier this month, millions of people throughout the Arab world viewed, for the first time, [a televised debate between two presidential candidates](#): Egypt's secularist Amr Moussa, and Islamist Abdel-Moneim Abul-Futoh. The debate, which lasted four hours, was unique in itself. This is because for many decades the Arab masses were accustomed to hearing one leader and one candidate. Today, they feel democracy has indeed been attained. They also feel that their next president, whoever he may be, will not be a gift from a merciful providence, or a leader for whom the nation must sacrifice its blood and soul. Instead, they believe he will be an ordinary human being like them. He will be grilled and interrogated, and he may choose to give straight answers sometimes and be evasive on other occasions. In the end, they will choose him by their own free will and according to their own convictions. From the standpoint of substance, the debate examined at length the vision of the two candidates on how to revive Egypt's economy, health and education. More importantly, it also dealt with the relationship between religion and the state. While Moussa spoke about Islamic values such as justice and equality as the basis of legislation, Abul-Futoh spoke about the implementation of the Islamic laws (sharia) that would assure national harmony and freedom of religion. As for their positions towards Israel, that part of the debate was controversial, to say the least. Whereas Moussa referred to Israel as an adversary, Abul-Futoh regarded it as an enemy. Naturally, it is important to assess these positions within the context of the election campaigns. So even though Abul-Futoh described Israel as an enemy, that does not mean he would prepare for war if elected. It is certain that the priorities of the next president will not be ideological. Instead, he will be preoccupied by the economic needs of the state and its political interests. Although the [electoral map includes 13 candidates](#), there are three clear frontrunners. Since the elections will be in two stages, it is expected that two of these three will contest the second run-off. Each one of them has his own distinctive features. Moussa, 76, presents himself as the

experienced statesman who will deliver stability in the midst of an uncertain economic climate. Having worked as foreign minister under Hosni Mubarak and secretary general of the Arab League, he would be the preferred choice of the ruling military council, the intelligence agencies and large sections of the Egyptian bureaucracy. Indeed, sizeable sections of the population see in him a guardian of economic stability. On the other hand, many others view him as an extension of the defunct regime and, therefore, he contradicts the spirit of the people's revolution. Abul-Futoh, 62 – who is renowned for his opposition to the Sadat and Mubarak regimes, for which he was imprisoned – presents himself as the candidate of the revolution who is able to reach out to the youth and various political forces. He promises not to take unilateral decisions, but instead work with a team of experts. This contrasts with Moussa, who appeared in the debate to be notably self-centred. It should be noted, though, that the latter has some Islamic credentials and enjoys reasonable support among the Salafists. In fact, key figures among the secularists, leftists and liberals have declared their support for him; a precedent not offered to any other. On this basis, Moussa could qualify for the second round. The third candidate is [Mohammad Mursi](#), 61, leader of the Freedom and Justice party and the Muslim Brotherhood's candidate. The Brotherhood is, without doubt, the largest political force in Egypt. Their acquisition of 42% of the parliamentary seats in the recent elections is ample proof of their extensive electoral base. Although Mursi entered the race for the presidency late, the numbers that attended his rallies in provinces throughout Egypt were astounding. Mursi's supporters argue that Egypt needs a leader who has a strong party backing that would secure the stability of the country; and that his links to the Brotherhood will ensure a synergy between the presidency and the parliament. On the other hand, his opponents point out that the Brotherhood's control of the presidency, the government and the parliament would alienate the other parties at a time when the country needs a broad national base.

Ultimately, Moussa may win more votes than any other candidate in the first round; but he is not expected to win in the second round. It is highly unlikely that those who vote for Abul-Futoh and Mursi in the first round will vote for Moussa in the second. Instead, the Islamists voters would unite behind a single candidate who is recognisably Islamist, whether he is

Mursi or Abul-Futoh. Thus, it appears the next president of Egypt would be an Islamist. That will ensure a break from the past. Moreover, it will safeguard the transition toward democracy. However, if Moussa were to be elected, the revolutionary forces would suffer a huge setback and relations between the presidency and the parliament could become tense. Not only this, the army would continue to predominate in one form or another. That may embroil Egypt in disputes and divert it from the transition toward democracy.

*Wadah Khanfar is a former director general of the al-Jazeera television network.*

Article 3.

The Daily Beast

## **The Failures of the Facebook Generation in the Arab Spring**

Francis Fukuyama

May 21 - It is hard to know whom to root for in Wednesday's presidential election in Egypt. Two of the leading candidates, Amr Moussa and Ahmed Shafiq, were officials in the former Mubarak regime and are suspected of having ties to the military. Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh is a self-proclaimed liberal Islamist who was expelled from the Muslim Brotherhood, but who is for some reason being endorsed by the ultra-conservative Salafis. Lagging behind these three is Mohamed Morsi, candidate of the Muslim Brotherhood, an organization that came out of the starting blocks showing a moderate face but which has recently given out disturbing signals of a more conservative religious agenda. What is missing from this lineup of potentially electable candidates is a genuine liberal, that is, a candidate with no taint from the authoritarian past, and who does not advocate an Islamist agenda in some form. The candidate closest to this profile was Mohamed ElBaradei, the Noble Peace Prize-winning former director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, whose sputtering campaign ended last January.

How did we come to this pass, where the two most powerful forces in the new Egypt either represent its authoritarian past, or else are Islamists of

suspect liberal credentials? The Tahrir Square revolution of early last year was powered by angry young, middle-class Egyptians who used social media like Facebook and Twitter to organize their protests, spread word of regime atrocities, and build support for a democratic Egypt. At the time, there was much talk about how technology was empowering democracy and forcing open a closed society that could not prevent the flow of information.

And yet, this group of young activists, which can still be mobilized for street protests like the recent demonstrations in front of the Defense Ministry, has failed to turn itself into a meaningful player in post-Mubarak electoral politics. Granted, this group did not represent the vast bulk of Egyptians, who remain less educated, socially conservative, and rural. But surely a liberal, modernizing leader could have appealed to the hopes of many Egyptians for economic growth and political freedom, and placed at least within the top four presidential candidates?

We will have to await more information and analysis about the election, including the degree to which it was manipulated, before we can fully answer this question. It seems clear in retrospect that Mubarak's ouster constituted much less of a revolution than met the eye; the military still remains a powerful institution unwilling to give up substantial power. But part of the blame lies with Egypt's liberals themselves. They could organize protests and demonstrations, and act with often reckless courage to challenge the old regime. But they could not go on to rally around a single candidate, and then engage in the slow, dull, grinding work of organizing a political party that could contest an election, district by district. Political parties exist in order to institutionalize political participation; those who were best at organizing, like the Muslim Brotherhood, have walked off with most of the marbles. Facebook, it seems, produces a sharp, blinding flash in the pan, but it does not generate enough heat over an extended period to warm the house. The failure to organize a coherent political party has been the failing of liberal groups in many of the would-be democratic transitions of the last two decades. Boris Yeltsin helped bring down the former Soviet Union in the 1990s and was supported by many Russian liberals, but he never saw the need to create a political party and hoped to survive on his own charisma. Existing liberal groups squabbled among themselves and failed to form a single, durable

party. Similarly, the young idealists in Ukraine who supported Viktor Yushchenko during Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution did not go on to create a cohesive political party, and the Orange coalition itself fell apart amidst infighting between Yushchenko and prime minister Iulia Timoshenko.

By contrast, Islamist parties throughout the Middle East have survived over the years despite severe repression because they understand how to organize. This was not just a matter of selecting cadres and promoting an ideology; they also lived among the poor and would often provide social services directly to constituents. Political parties prosper because they stand for something: not just opposition to dictatorship, but a positive program for economic growth, social assistance, or help for farmers. If you were to ask a typical liberal Egyptian activist what their plan for economic development was, ■■■ not sure ■■■ get a coherent answer.

The scenario that has unfolded in Egypt is thus a very familiar one. The political scientist Samuel Huntington in his 1968 book *Political Order in Changing Societies* noted that revolutions are never made by the poor; they are made by upwardly mobile, urban middle class activists whose hopes and expectations are thwarted by the existing political system. Students invariably play a key role in such uprisings.

Facebook, it seems, produces a sharp, blinding flash in the pan, but it does not generate enough heat over an extended period to warm the house. He went on to say, however, that this type of middle class individual almost never finishes the revolution, unless he or she is successful in connecting with the rural masses. Students know how to demonstrate and riot, but they generally can't organize their way out of a paper bag (my words, not his). Both Lenin and Mao were master organizers, and succeeded in making the connection to the countryside. This is something that has eluded many young liberal activists both in the period Huntington was describing, and at the present moment.

Facebook, which went public last week, has been credited with helping to build democracy internationally. It is true that it and other social media have democratized access to information, and have made collaboration easier. These media have also helped promote short-term mobilization of crowds and demonstrators. But networking is not organization-building. For that, we need a different and more durable platform.

*The writer is a senior fellow at Stanford's Freeman Spogli Institute. His latest book is 'The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution'*

Article 4.

The National Interest

## **Engaging Russia on Iran**

[Robert W. Merry](#)

May 21, 2012 -- There are many reasons to lament the wary state of relations between the United States and Russia—and between President Obama and Russian president Putin—but the most gnawing reason concerns the ongoing Iran nuclear talks, set to resume in Baghdad on May 23. To understand this, it helps to note a number of diplomatic and geopolitical realities.

Reality #1: America today faces no global issue more grave than the question of whether Iran builds a nuclear arsenal. Obama has repudiated any intention of adopting deterrence of a nuclear Iran as an acceptable policy option, and most Republican leaders seem to embrace this approach as well. That means, most likely, that one of only three outcomes will ensue: either these negotiations reach an agreement whereby Iran gives up any resolve to acquire nuclear weapons; the U.S. president retreats from a solemnly expressed resolve; or there will be war.

Reality #2: Iran seems to be signaling a renewed willingness to take seriously these talks between the Islamic Republic and the so-called "P5+1" (the five UN Security Council members—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States—plus Germany). Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei recently said: "Iran is not after nuclear weapons because the Islamic Republic, logically, religiously and theoretically, considers the possession of nuclear weapons a grave sin and believes the proliferation of such weapons is senseless, destructive and dangerous." President Obama seemed to credit this pronouncement when he sent word to Khamenei, via Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, that he considered the supreme leader's pronouncement to be a foundation for negotiations.

Reality #3: Iran's apparent willingness to talk probably stems in large measure from international sanctions imposed on the country in recent years, ratcheted up significantly the past year or so. The country is shackled by tough constrictions on its banking system and an expanding global boycott of its petroleum. The Washington Post reported recently that Iran's oil revenues are declining as its oil sits in storage tanks or floats in tankers with no destination for off-loading the cargo. In 2009, according to estimates, Iran's oil sector accounted for 60 percent of total government revenue, and the regime's sensitivity to this revenue flow is reflected in the estimate that a dollar decline in the price of crude oil could reduce government revenue by \$1 billion. The Post quoted the Treasury's undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, David Cohen, as saying: "I don't think there is any question that the impact of this pressure played a role in Iran's decision to come to the table. . . . The value of their currency, the rial, has dropped like a rock."

Reality #4: America and most other countries still remain highly skeptical of Iran's true intentions and purposes. One particular danger in the negotiations is that the Islamic Republic will use them as a stalling tactic—talking a good game while continuing to spin its centrifuges and produce the kind of highly enriched uranium used in bombs. Particularly mindful of this danger is America's prime Middle Eastern ally, Israel, which could lose patience with the negotiating process and seek to curtail the time and space Obama may consider necessary for an eventual deal.

Reality #5: Whatever's Iran's true intentions and purposes, it will seek bargaining leverage in the talks by driving wedges between the various P5+1 participants, seeking to generate tensions among its negotiating adversaries while maintaining a tight diplomatic unity of its own. This is diplomacy at its most elementary level, and Iran's leaders are known to practice the arts of diplomacy at a far higher level than that.

Reality #6: Hence, a bargaining coherence within the P5+1 will be crucial to success. As Obama and his top officials contemplate the forthcoming talks, they can assume a number of things about the group's internal dynamics. First, Germany and Britain will play their traditional role of going along but providing little leadership in steering the contingent toward the kind of hard-line stances that will be necessary to extract needed concessions from Iran. China, fixated on its own economic interests

and need for oil, won't be particularly helpful, though it likely will take pains to avoid being publicly isolated on such a high-profile issue. And France likely will be doing a bit of a flip-flop—from the firm, hard-line leadership of outgoing French president Nicolas Sarkozy to a likely more accommodative and soft approach from his successor, Francois Hollande. Reality #7: That leaves Russia, which might be coaxed into playing a significant role in bringing other P5+1 participants into line with America's diplomatic aims. Some foreign-affairs watchers believe Russia has become increasingly concerned about a nuclear-armed Iran and perhaps more willing to act accordingly as the talks unfold. But Russian leaders also have developed a skepticism toward American diplomacy, fueled largely by feelings that stated U.S. aims in Libya in 2011 turned out to be cover for larger, unstated aims. That was one reason Russia, along with China, on two occasions last year vetoed UN Security Council resolutions threatening sanctions against Syria because of Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad's mass killing of civilian protesters.

What these realities signify is that America's relationship with Russia may be more important than ever, given the grave danger of war with Iran, the delicacy of the nuclear talks, and the prospect Russia could become, at least potentially, a U.S. partner in these highly complex negotiations. And yet the relations between the two nations are abysmal, as reflected in Putin's recent decision to reverse earlier plans to attend the Group of Eight summit at Camp David. It's telling that he plans a state visit to China before any trip to the United States.

As Ariel Cohen wrote in these spaces recently, there are many issues that require cooperation between Washington and Moscow—Syria, Afghanistan, missile defense, nonproliferation, Russia's WTO entrance and of course Iran. But Iran is the most pressing, and it may be difficult to get Russian cooperation on this imperative without progress on some of the other fronts. That could mean granting Russia what Putin has said he wants from the United States.

Thus, the question facing Obama is what he would give up on these other fronts—and what kind of negotiating atmospherics he might be willing to create—in order to "reset the reset" and get Russian cooperation in the P5+1. In a policy document signed hours after his inauguration as president, Putin said that, in its relations with the United States, Russia

wants "equality, non-interference in internal affairs and respect for one another's interests." Obama could respond by signaling privately that his government won't carp on Russia's internal matters, as it did during the recent political campaign, and by offering guarantees that the missile-defense system being built in Europe, ostensibly to protect the Continent from Iran, won't be used against Russia.

Those would be concessions the U.S. government may not be inclined to give. And these are not insignificant issues between the two nations. But for national leaders of great powers, no issues are more important than the ones involving war and peace.

*Robert W. Merry is editor of [The National Interest](#).*

Article 5.

Foreign Policy

## **[Afghanistan: Obama's Debacle](#)**

David Rothkopf

May 21, 2012 -- He cut out the generals. He cut out the secretary of defense. He cut out the secretary of state. And in the end, he produced a schizophrenic policy that will almost certainly go down as the greatest foreign-policy debacle of his administration.

Afghanistan may not be Barack Obama's Vietnam, but that is only because it has failed to stir national tensions in the way the war in Southeast Asia did. He may therefore get away with his errors in judgment and his victimization by circumstance to a degree that Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon could not. But it is impossible to read accounts like [David Sanger's](#) in the New York Times this weekend without concluding that the primary drivers behind U.S. AfPak policy for the past three years have been politics, naivete, and intellectual dishonesty. It also clear that on this issue, the White House's self-imposed distance from the rest of the president's cabinet and the military may have kept the United States from making even more egregious errors and suffering even greater losses in this latest tragic round of the distant region's great game.

The question remains whether, as it scuttles for the door in Afghanistan, the United States will intentionally or inadvertently usher in forces that could leave the region more dangerous. The charade of the NATO summit wrapping up in Chicago does not bode well in that respect. While President Obama and Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai posed for cameras and spoke warmly of their shared vision for the country after the U.S. departure, what they offered up was a kind of joint hallucination -- a better-functioning, more democratic, more stable Afghanistan that is patently impossible if it continues to be ruled by the weak and corrupt Karzai, if the country remains as fragmented as it is, if its neighbors continue to meddle in its affairs (as they will), if we deal in the Taliban as if somehow they were now changed men, if we turn our backs on the undoubtedly worsening plight of Afghan women, and if we ignore the fact that the single most successful U.S. agricultural development program in history was the restoration of Afghanistan's heroin industry.

That the United States and Pakistan, a country the Obama team acknowledged, according to Sanger, as the region's primary threat from its first days in office, had [yet another public diplomatic tiff](#) on the edges of the Chicago conference only shows that every inch of the fabric of America's policies in the region seems to be fraying simultaneously. That the tiff was over the reopening of Pakistani supply lines into Afghanistan illustrates the confounding circularity of U.S. problems in the region: To reach al Qaeda in Afghanistan we needed Pakistan's assistance, so we dialed back the pressure over Pakistan's nuclear program and ignored the fact that its intelligence services were key supporters of al Qaeda and its Taliban allies. We also started pouring in aid, which enabled the Pakistanis to expand their nuclear stockpiles and their military. Once we went in to Afghanistan to get al Qaeda and the Taliban, they fled to Pakistan. When we pursued them, it inflamed the Pakistanis. But we failed to effectively pressure them to act against the militants for fear that the country might fracture irreparably. And now, after more than a decade of this, we are willing to cut a deal with anyone to paper over the problem in our eagerness to get out of Afghanistan and declare "mission accomplished" even if it includes the not persuasively rehabilitated Taliban we were after in the first place.

As Sanger's story reveals, the president opposed his own policy of sending in more troops to stabilize Afghanistan from the moment he approved it after months and months of messy internal wrangling. So why did he do it? The answer is that that Obama was leaving Iraq and could not afford to look weak in Afghanistan at the same time or he would come under political attack from the right. Getting out faster might also alienate the military to the point that public discord would damage the president. Although White House-military relations were strained from the beginning of his administration, Obama's team worked hard to keep a lid on tensions. So they swallowed their doubts about the military judgments they were getting about a conflict they were increasingly sure was unwinnable. The result was a strategy straight out of the Wizard of Oz: As the scarecrow informed Dorothy when she reached a fork in the Yellow Brick Road, "Of course, some people do go both ways." The United States would increase its troops but only as a prelude to getting them out. Sanger's reporting suggests that this was not a confused policy, but rather an intellectually dishonest one. Obama's plan from the beginning was to cover his tracks to the exits with the Afghan "surge."

"I think he hated the idea from the beginning," Sanger quotes one of the president's advisors as saying about his boss. "[T]he military was 'all in,' as they say, and Obama wasn't."

Within just over a year of the announcement of sending 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan, the president ordered his advisers to start making plans for a U.S. exit. "This time there would be no announced national security meetings, no debates with the generals. Even Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton were left out until the final six weeks," according to Sanger. In other words, the planning process would be left to those who agreed with the president. Dissenters were not invited. It's hardly the picture of a harmonious policy process or a "tough-guy" leader in sync with the military that the White House was eager to sell around the moves against villains like Osama bin Laden, Anwar al-Awlaki, or Muammar al-Qaddafi.

The process is troubling, but in the final analysis, Obama's biggest error was in not trusting his judgment earlier. His White House team -- from Vice President Joe Biden to National Security Advisor Tom Donilon -- were Afghan skeptics from Day 1. And frankly, they were right about the

situation even while many in the Pentagon were calling for much deeper involvement. Perhaps the president felt he had no choice, defending himself with those 30,000 troops not so much against AfPak enemies as against political opponents on the right. Perhaps he was right that this approach produced the swiftest, least acrimonious exit.

Still, the whole thing leaves a bad taste. In handling the matter as he did, the president has now assured that when the post-conflict mess in Afghanistan and Pakistan grows uglier still, he will own those results. He may have protected himself against attacks from the right for a brief while, but the judgment of history may prove harsh.

*David Rothkopf, CEO and editor at large of Foreign Policy, is author of [Power, Inc.: The Epic Rivalry Between Big Business and Government -- and the Reckoning That Lies Ahead.](#)*

Article 6.

Project Syndicate

## **Ten Reasons for Europe**

Dominique Moisi

21 May 2012 -- The euro, many now believe, will not survive a failed political class in Greece or escalating levels of unemployment in Spain: just wait another few months, they say, the European Union's irresistible collapse has started.

Dark prophecies are often wrong, but they may also become self-fulfilling. Let's be honest: playing Cassandra nowadays is not only tempting in a media world where "good news is no news"; it actually seems more justified than ever. For the EU, the situation has never appeared more serious.

It is precisely at this critical moment that it is essential to re-inject hope and, above all, common sense into the equation. So here are ten good reasons to believe in Europe – ten rational arguments to convince

pessimistic analysts, and worried investors alike, that it is highly premature to bury the euro and the EU altogether.

The first reason for hope is that statesmanship is returning to Europe, even if in homeopathic doses. It is too early to predict the impact of François Hollande's election as President of France. But, in Italy, one man, Mario Monti, is already making a difference.

Of course, no one elected Monti, and his position is fragile and already contested, but there is a positive near-consensus that has allowed him to launch long-overdue structural reforms. It is too early to say how long this consensus will last, and what changes it will bring. But Italy, a country that under Silvio's Berlusconi's cavalier rule was a source of despair, has turned into a source of real, if fragile, optimism.

A second reason to believe in Europe is that with statesmanship comes progress in governance. Monti and Hollande have both appointed women to key ministerial positions. Marginalized for so long, women bring an appetite for success that will benefit Europe.

Third, European public opinion has, at last, fully comprehended the gravity of the crisis. Nothing could be further from the truth than the claim that Europe and Europeans, with the possible exception of the Greeks, are in denial. Without lucidity born of despair, Monti would never have come to power in Italy.

In France, too, citizens have no illusions. Their vote for Hollande was a vote against Sarkozy, not against austerity. They are convinced, according to recently published public-opinion polls, that their new president will not keep some of his "untenable promises," and they seem to accept this as inevitable.

The fourth reason for hope is linked to Europe's creativity. Europe is not condemned to be a museum of its own past. Tourism is important, of course, and from that standpoint Europe's diversity is a unique source of attractiveness. But this diversity is also a source of inventiveness. From German cars to French luxury goods, European industrial competitiveness should not be underestimated.

The moment when Europe truly believes in itself, the way Germany does, and combines strategic long-term planning with well allocated ██████████ investments, will make all the difference. Indeed, in certain key fields,

Europe possesses a globally recognized tradition of excellence linked to a very deep culture of quality.

The fifth source of optimism is slightly paradoxical. Nationalist excesses have tended to lead Europe to catastrophic wars. But the return of nationalist sentiment within Europe today creates a sense of emulation and competition, which proved instrumental in the rise of Asia yesterday. Koreans, Chinese, and Taiwanese wanted to do as well as Japan. In the same way, the moment will soon come when the French want to do as well as Germany.

The sixth reason is linked to the very nature of Europe's political system. Churchill's famous adage that democracy is the worst political system, with the exception of all the others, has been borne out across the continent. More than 80% of French citizens voted in the presidential election. Watching on their televisions the solemn, dignified, peaceful, and transparent transfer of power from the president they had defeated to the president they had elected, French citizens could only feel good about themselves and privileged to live in a democratic state. Europeans may be confused, inefficient, and slow to take decisions, but democracy still constitutes a wall of stability against economic and other uncertainties. The seventh reason to believe in Europe is linked to the universalism of its message and languages. Few people dream of becoming Chinese, or of learning its various languages other than Mandarin. By contrast, English, Spanish, French, and, increasingly, German transcend national boundaries. Beyond universalism comes the eighth factor supporting the EU's survival: multiculturalism. It is a disputed model, but multiculturalism is more a source of strength than of weakness. The continent's fusion of culture makes its people richer rather than poorer.

The ninth reason for hope stems from the EU's new and upcoming members. Poland, a country that belongs to "New Europe," is repaying the EU with a legitimacy that it had gained from Europe during its post-communist transition. And the entrance of Croatia, followed by Montenegro and a few other Balkan countries, could compensate for the departure of Greece (should it come to that for the Greeks).

Finally, and most important, Europe and the world have no better alternative. The Greek crisis may be forcing Europe to move towards greater integration, with or without Greece. The German philosopher

Jürgen Habermas speaks of a “transformational reality” – a complex word for a simple reality: divided we fall, whereas united, in our own complex manner, we may strive for “greatness” in the best sense.

Investors, of course, are hedging their bets. Having ventured successfully into emerging non-democratic countries whose frailty they are starting to fear, some, out of prudence, are starting to rediscover Europe. They may well be the wise ones.

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Article 7.

The Atlantic

## **The Next Asia Is Africa: Inside the Continent's Rapid Economic Growth**

Howard W. French

May 21 - Lusaka, Zambia -- The teenagers started arriving at the Arcades outdoor shopping center here just as the sun began to set. They took over the parking lot first, then the sidewalks. Within half an hour, the strutting and preening groups occupied just about every available pedestrian space. Joshua Banda, a 15-year-old who wore green Converse All Stars with matching laces, sat with two friends at the edge of a gurgling fountain, surveying the crowds of girls. He proclaimed himself a fan of Lil Wayne and then told me he wants to be a lawyer. Joshua's parents moved to a Lusaka shanty when he was small. His father is a watchman, his mother cleans offices. Seeing Joshua's education as the best guarantor of their own future, they saved from their measly earnings to pay for school for him and an older brother. Joshua has learned a bit about sacrifice as well, though of a different sort. Since he can't afford a cell phone on his own -- and since,

in Lusaka, teenagers are nobodies without cell phones -- he shares one with his best friend. The new mall culture in Zambia's capital, which I've watched expand almost exponentially in visits over the last three years, is booming all over Africa, in places like Accra and Dakar, Windhoek and Gaborone, Nairobi and Maputo. Driving it are young people like Joshua and his friends, a generation that is growing up like none that preceded it: a bulging new cohort of young people with disposable income, however modest, a keen and up-to-the-minute sense of youth trends and of consumerism around the world, and, most importantly, the expectation that life that will continue to get better and richer and fuller of choices. Africa, with a population expected to roughly double by mid-century, has become recognized as the world's fastest growing continent. But the less-told story is of Africa's economic rise. In the last decade Africa's overall growth rates have quietly approached those of Asia, and according to projections by the IMF, on average Africa will have the world's fastest growing economy of any continent over the next five years. Seven of the world's 10 fastest-growing economies are African. The continent is famously resource rich, which has surely helped, but some recent studies suggest that the biggest drivers are far less customary for Africa, and far more encouraging for its future: wholesale and retail commerce, transportation, telecommunications, and manufacturing. A recent report by the African Development Bank projected that, by 2030, much of Africa will attain lower-middle- and middle-class majorities, and that consumer spending will explode from \$680 billion in 2008 to \$2.2 trillion. According to McKinsey and Co., Africa already has more middle class consumers than India, which has a larger population. American media have largely failed to pick up on these trends, hewing instead to their long-running traditional narratives of African violence and suffering to the exclusion of most other news. Corporate America, though, is proving itself increasingly attentive to Africa as a big new growth story. Big companies, from retail to technology, are approaching Africa as a promising new growth frontier. Many are already investing heavily there. In March, a South African court approved Walmart's \$2.4 billion takeover of Massmart, one of that country's largest retailers. IBM has opened offices in more than 20 African countries. In 2009, AES, one of America's biggest private suppliers of electricity, became majority owner and operator of the national grid in

Cameroon. In Ghana, a large American data processing company called ACS now employs over 1,800 people. And around the continent, Google is investing in web infrastructure and is launching search pages in a growing number of African languages.

The African Development Bank report defines lower-middle-class as those with a daily per capita expenditure of \$2 to \$20 in 2005 dollars, a threshold so low that skeptics worry it may have created some possibly premature exuberance about the continent's improving fortunes. But the report's authors point out that the definition includes other variables such as education, aspirations, and lifestyle. Throughout sub-Saharan Africa, investment in education has risen sharply over the last decade. Enrollment in secondary schools jumped 48 percent between 2000 and 2008, according to the United Nations, and higher education rates grew by 80 percent. Isaac Nilongo, a 17-year-old in a plaid shirt with yellow highlights, had come to Arcades with his friends to see a movie at the five-screen multiplex, which that weekend was showing Transformers and Captain America. The high school junior hopes to become a pilot. He likes coming to the mall, he told me, because "it just feels good when you come out and see a lot of people just like you."

When I asked him how he sees Zambia in the future, he paused to survey the lively mall scene around us. "It will definitely be different," he said. "There will be lots more shops, and lots more goods. Sort of like this, but much better."

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