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13 September, 2012

Article 1.
The Washington Post

In Egypt and Libya, radicals are jockeying for power

David Ignatius

What's happening in Cairo and Benghazi appears to be a case of political opportunism — no, not by Mitt Romney, though there was some of that Wednesday — but by Salafist Islamic extremists who are unhappy with the

success that more moderate Islamist and secularist parties in Egypt and Libya have had in building political support.

We're still in what I like to call the "fog of revolution" in both countries, where it's hard to know for sure what's happening and who benefits, so my reporting comes with a basic caveat. But based on conversations with sources who were on the streets Tuesday in the midst of the Cairo demonstration and who have been following events in Libya closely, it's possible to pierce the fog a bit and offer some basic analysis:

First, the situation in Cairo: The Arabic banners of the protesters moving toward the U.S. Embassy identified them as members of the Nour Partyand the al-Asala Party, the two leading Salafist groups that have competed in the Egyptian elections. The Salafists, whose name connotes respect for the Islamic "ancestors" of the prophet Mohammed's time, are more conservative and less pragmatic than the Muslim Brotherhood, now ruling Egypt.

An analyst who was in the midst of that crowd Tuesday told me that he thinks the Salafist demonstrators were using the pretext of a supposedly anti-Islamic American film to send two messages: The first was obviously anti-Americanism, which is potent in today's Egypt; the second and more interesting message was a challenge by the Salafists to their rivals in the Muslim Brotherhood government of President Mohamed Morsi.

As is so often the case in revolutions, the Cairo uproar appears to be partly a case of radicals wanting to undermine a more moderate governing party. The Salafist demonstrators' threat was augmented by violent hooligans, who are often described as soccer fans but increasingly are inflammatory anarchists.

A similar process of post-revolutionary jockeying is going on in Libya, and it tragically led to the death Tuesday of Ambassador Christopher J. Stevens and three other Americans. The Salafists' assault on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi at first appeared to be a "copycat" attack like the one in Cairo, but U.S. officials said it may have been planned by extremists linked to al-Qaeda. They were augmented by a well-armed Islamic militia. Their anger, again, is mixed between a baseline anti-Americanism (sadly, always a draw in the region) and a challenge to Prime Minister Abdurraheem el-Keib and the secularist parties that are the backbone of the new Libyan government.

Does America have an interest in the internal fights taking place in these countries still quaking from the Arab uprisings? Of course it does, especially when U.S. embassies are targets of protesters and U.S. diplomats get killed in the crossfire. But this isn't really about America: It's about factions battling for power in a fluid political situation.

Unfortunately, the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979 is an apt parallel. That was the work of a group of extremist Iranian "students" who were unhappy that the post-revolutionary government of Ayatollah Khomeini wasn't proving radical enough. They captured the revolution when they seized the embassy. The lesson of that disaster is that local security authorities must quickly restore order — and if they can't or won't, then Americans must move out of harm's way.

Also worrisome is the link between Salafists (whose posters worryingly appear in Cairo neighborhoods near Heliopolis that are populated by members of the military) and the more violent "takfiri" wing, which believes it's permissible to kill apostate Muslims and has links with al-Qaeda. The takfiris hate the ruling Muslim Brotherhood, if that's any consolation.

The delicate political balance in Egypt and Libya makes the blunderbuss campaign rhetoric of Romney, the Republican presidential candidate, especially unfortunate. His comments make this crisis more "about America" than it needs to be.

Let's return to the main trigger for these events: It's the success of the tolerably non-extremist (I won't say "moderate") governments in Egypt and Libya in consolidating power, and the anger of the more radical Salafists at this success. Morsi, for example, has just won pledges of billions in financial support from Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The Gulf Arabs are making a bet that over the next year, Morsi can stabilize Egypt and get the economy moving again. Despite Tuesday's tragic events, the United States should make the same bet.

Article 2.

The Wall Street Journal

The New World Disorder

Editorial

September 12, 2012 -- By their nature, foreign policy problems often have a long fuse. The successes of one Administration (Truman, Reagan) sometimes don't pay off for years (Bush 41), while dangers can simmer until they suddenly explode (al Qaeda). The Obama Presidency has been an era of slowly building tension and disorder that seems likely to flare into larger troubles and perhaps even military conflict no matter who wins in November. This is the bigger picture behind this week's public fight between the U.S. and Israel, as well as the anti-American violence in Cairo and Benghazi. In the Persian Gulf, across the Arab Spring and into the Western Pacific, the U.S. is perceived as a declining power. As that perception spreads, the world's bad actors are asserting themselves to fill the vacuum, and American interests and assets will increasingly become targets unless the trend is reversed. The Administration can't be blamed for the 9/11 anniversary attack in Benghazi, which was an act of terrorism by anti-American Islamists that wasn't stopped by a weak new government. Chris Stevens, the first U.S. Ambassador killed abroad in 33 years, was one of America's most capable diplomats who was deeply engaged in the post-Gadhafi transition. Libya's government has condemned the attack, and one test of its desire for close U.S. ties will be whether it punishes the perpetrators. Though less violent, the mob that was able to scale the U.S. Embassy wall in Cairo is in other ways more troubling. Egypt and the U.S. have worked closely since Anwar Sadat, and Cairo is one of the largest recipients of U.S. aid. Only last week the U.S. announced it will forgive about $1 billion in Egyptian debt. Yet the new Muslim Brotherhood government of Mohamed Morsi has failed to stop an assault on the Cairo Embassy, and it hadn't condemned the latest attack by late Wednesday. Almost as disconcerting was President Obama's failure to mention the Cairo assault in his Rose Garden remarks on Wednesday morning. He condemned the Libyan attacks, praised the fallen U.S. diplomats, and pledged that "justice will be done." But he didn't offer any larger warning that such attacks will have consequences if they continue elsewhere around the world.

This is no idle worry. The 1979 seizure of U.S. diplomats in Tehran was followed that year by attacks on American Embassies in Tripoli and

Islamabad. The U.S. Ambassador to Kabul was also killed. It isn't enough for a President to say, as Mr. Obama did Wednesday, that he will work with other countries to secure the safety of U.S. diplomats. These governments have to know they will be held accountable if they don't do so.

The larger concern is that these attacks fit a pattern of declining respect for U.S. power and influence. The Obama Administration has been saying for four years that the U.S. needs to defer to the U.N. and other nations, and the world has taken notice and is more willing to ignore U.S. desires and interests.

Across the Arab Spring, the U.S. has done little to shape events and is increasingly irrelevant. The U.S. angered Saudi Arabia by calling for the ouster of Egypt's Hosni Mubarak and now has little sway in Bahrain. Mr. Obama has washed his hands of Syria, allowing Russia and Iran to keep their proxy in power and stir up trouble for Turkey and Lebanon. The Chinese have brazenly occupied disputed territories in the South China Sea, hinting at war if the U.S. intercedes on behalf of its Asian allies.

The U.S. withdrew in toto from Iraq, and now its Prime Minister ignores Vice President Joe Biden's request to stop Iranian arms flights to Damascus. Even America's dependent in Kabul, Hamid Karzai, is refusing to honor his commitments on holding Taliban detainees. Perhaps he has heard Mr. Obama describe Afghanistan in his re-election campaign as if the U.S. is already halfway out the door.

Most of all, Iran continues its march toward a nuclear weapon despite the President's vow that it is "unacceptable." The U.S. says it has isolated Iran, but only last month the U.N. Secretary-General defied a U.S. plea and attended a non-aligned summit in Tehran. The Administration has issued wholesale exemptions to Congressional sanctions, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared on the weekend that the U.S. is "not setting deadlines" for Iran as it sprints to a bomb.

Meanwhile, the U.S. has engaged in repeated public arguments with Israel, supposedly its best ally in the region. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, recently declared that he doesn't want to be "complicit" in any Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear sites. The White House failed to contradict him. A nation that appears so reluctant to stand by its friends won't be respected or feared by its enemies.

President Obama has had successes against terrorism, notably Osama bin Laden and a stepped-up pace of drone strikes. But both the hunt for al Qaeda and the drone program were part of the larger antiterror policy architecture established by his predecessor. He campaigned against much of that policy only to adopt it while in office.

Mr. Obama also came to office saying, and apparently believing, that a more deferential America would be better respected around the world. He will finish his term having disproved his own argument. The real lesson of the last four years—a lesson as much for Republican isolationists as for Democrats who want to lead from behind—is the ancient one that weakness is provocative.

Article 3.

NYT

Seven Lean Years of Peacemaking

Daniel Levy

September 11, 2012 -- Seven years ago today, the Israeli flag was lowered over the Gaza Strip after approximately 7,500 Israeli settlers left or were forcibly removed.

We cannot know with certainty what Ariel Sharon, Israel's prime minister at the time and the architect of the Gaza disengagement, had in mind: A dramatic step toward peace? The first of several removals of Israeli settlements from Palestinian land? Or a tactical and minimalist retreat — giving a little (Gaza) to keep a lot (the West Bank)?

One thing is clear: The years from 2005 to 2012 have been seven decidedly lean ones for peacemaking and withdrawal and seven gluttonously fat ones for entrenching Israel's occupation and settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. In these areas, almost 94,000 new settlers have been added since 2005, some settler outposts have been legalized and thousands of Palestinians have been displaced.

In the Book of Genesis, Joseph is called on to interpret Pharaoh's dream of seven fat cattle followed by seven emaciated cattle emerging from the river. He tells Pharaoh that seven years of plenty will be followed by seven years of famine — and to gather the necessary grain to see Egypt through the lean years.

But in interpreting the seven lean years of peacemaking, we can forget dreams and dream-readers. One need only look at how the Gaza withdrawal has reshaped debate within Israel's dominant political bloc, the right-nationalist-religious camp — call it the rise of Israel's 1.5 percent doctrine.

In terms of land mass, the Gaza Strip encompasses just under 1.5 percent of the total area of British Mandate-era Palestine, (or "Greater Israel" as the settlers like to call it). However, that same tiny area is today home to approximately 1.7 million Palestinians, or over a quarter of the total Palestinian population between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. So, in divesting itself of just 1.5 percent of the land, Israel significantly recalibrated the so-called "demographic equation" (the ratio of Jews to Arabs in the area under its control).

The 1.5 percent doctrine paves the way to permanent Israeli control of 98.5 percent of the land. West Bank Palestinians can either join their left-behind-in-1948 confreres as second-class citizens in an enlarged Jewish state or continue their stateless existence in insecure and disconnected enclaves of limited autonomy, a kind of Bantustan status.

Meanwhile the inhabitants of the forgotten 1.5 percent, Gazans, remain isolated in an area that a recent United Nations report concluded might not be "a liveable place" by 2020.

Maybe this is all just a bad dream and there is no such thing as a 1.5 percent doctrine. Perhaps leadership changes, security escalations and recent upheavals in the Arab world are to blame. The post-withdrawal rocket fire from Gaza onto civilian areas in southern Israel is a frequent explanation for the lack of progress. And it's true that these occasional attacks are inexcusable and a violation of international law (as are many of Israel's responses and its own military provocations).

But the bigger picture is characterized by a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas-run Gaza and by strong security cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority-run areas of the West Bank. Even accounting for the continuing rivalry between the Palestinian factions Fatah and Hamas, Israel could have handed the West Bank over to the Palestinian Authority's unthreatening current leaders.

The debate within Israel today is in a very different place from where most outside observers think it is. Despite vehemently opposing the Gaza

withdrawal, elements on Israel's right belatedly came to see a dramatic opportunity arising from it. A constant problem with their Greater Israel ideology was that the area simply contained too many Arabs — losing on demography has always been a far scarier prospect for many Israelis than sacrificing democracy. Dropping Gaza — the 1.5 percent doctrine — went a long way toward fixing that problem. Indeed, some Israeli demographers also claim that there are one million fewer West Bank Palestinians than appear in official American and United Nations statistics.

New dividing lines have emerged within Israel's ruling elites, and the disagreements do not revolve around the details or timing of cutting a peace deal with Mahmoud Abbas. There are three competing tendencies within Israel's ruling coalition: annexationists (who want to formally take over the West Bank), status quo merchants (who wink at the notion of two states while expanding settlements), and Bantustan two-staters (who want the Palestinians to accept 50 percent of the West Bank as constituting a state).

A growing number of rightist leaders — parliamentarians, rabbis, prominent settlers — are openly advocating "Greater Israel," their version of a one-state solution. Openly discussing such full annexation of the West Bank is a relatively new phenomenon in Israeli politics — and sans Gaza, it resonates.

That Israel will never live in peace and security with the Palestinians or the wider Arab and Muslim world under such terms doesn't seem to matter. Forty-five years of Israeli impunity as settlements metastasized in defiance of international law has bred an understandable sense of invincibility. Add to that mix the emaciated state of liberal Israeli politics, the messianic orientation that infuses religious nationalism and the catastrophism endemic to much Zionist thinking — and the seven lean years look set to continue. But don't be under any illusions; such injustice will not be sustainable.

The famine predicted in Pharaoh's dream was averted by Joseph's cunning plans. But no plan yet exists to avert more lean years ahead for Palestinians and Israelis who value universal rights, democracy and freedom.

The choices are stark. Either Israel takes bold and urgent action to reverse the 1.5 percent doctrine by getting out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, or it acknowledges that the doctrine has triumphed and

embraces a democratic solution that moves beyond the classic two-state paradigm and guarantees full and equal rights for all residents in some form of confederation or unitary state.

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Article 4.

The Washington Post

‘Red line’ folly

Fareed Zakaria

13 September -- Underneath the headlines of the presidential campaign, there are growing signs that we are moving toward another war in the Middle East. This week Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu publicly scolded the United States for refusing to draw a “red line” on Iran’s nuclear program that, if crossed, would commit Washington to military strikes. He added that he would not accept a “red light” placed in front of Israel. Unless something dramatic changes its course, Israel is on a path to strike Iran’s nuclear facilities in the next six to nine months. Israel’s rhetoric over the past year had seemed, to me, designed to force the international community into action and the United States into hyper-action. It worked in the sense that international sanctions and isolation of Iran are at their highest point ever. But Iran has not surrendered, and Israel seems to view any other scenario as unacceptable. Last month, an Israeli “decision maker” — widely reported to be Defense Minister Ehud Barak — gave a revealing interview to the newspaper Haaretz in which he implied that Israel could not wait for the United States to act and might not be able to wait until next spring before taking matters into its own hands. The “decision maker” made the point that Israel might find itself more hamstrung if Mitt Romney were elected in November. “[H]istory shows that presidents do not undertake dramatic operations in their first year in office unless forced to,” he said. This strikes me as an accurate reading of

the likely scenario that a Romney administration would view economic policy as its urgent preoccupation upon taking office.

The Obama administration has brought together a global coalition, put into place the toughest sanctions ever, worked with Israel on a series of covert programs and given Israel military hardware it has long wanted. In addition, the Obama administration has strongly implied that it would be willing to use force as a final resort. But to go further and define a red line in advance would commit the United States to waging a war; no country would make such a commitment.

Notice that while Netanyahu assails Obama for refusing to draw a clear line, he himself has not drawn such a line. Israel has not specified an activity or enrichment level it would consider a casus belli.The reason is obvious: Doing so would restrict Israel's options and signal its actions and timetable to Iran. If it doesn't make sense for Israel to do this, why would it make sense for the United States?

Israeli action is not certain. There continues to be a vigorous debate in Israel, with a majority opposed to unilateral action. Because Israel operates under a parliamentary system with a cabinet government, action would require an affirmative vote in the full cabinet and the smaller security cabinet. And there are some indications that Netanyahu does not have a clear majority.

Many Israelis, particularly in the military and defense establishment, understand that an Israeli strike would delay, not destroy, Iran's program. The program could be rebuilt, probably quickly and with greater determination. Colin Kahl is among several scholars who have documented how, contrary to conventional wisdom, Israel's 1981 attack on Iraq's Osirak reactor actually accelerated Saddam Hussein's determination to build nuclear weapons. When United Nations inspectors went into Iraq after the Persian Gulf War in 1991, they were stunned at how quickly Hussein had rebuilt his program.

Iran's nuclear program is already popular. Mir Hossein Moussavi, the leader of the Green Movement who is under house arrest, has been a vocal supporter, and he has criticized Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for making too many concessions to the West on nuclear issues. An Israeli attack would enhance the program's popularity among Iranians and might

even bolster the Tehran regime, just as sanctions and weak economic performance are causing deep internal tensions.

In his book "Confront and Conceal," David Sanger of the New York Times describes the many U.S. war simulations that have assumed an Israeli attack on Iran: "Soon, the battle sucks the region in, and then Washington. The war shifts to defending Saudi oil facilities against Iranian attacks, and Iran's use of proxies means that other regional players quickly become involved. And in the end, no one wins."

The Obama administration is trying to assure Israel not to act. But in doing so, it will have to be careful not to lock itself onto a path that makes U.S. military action inevitable. We should have a national debate before the United States finds itself going to war in the Middle East — again — on auto-pilot.

Article 5.

The Cairo Review of Global Affairs

Egypt in the World

Nabil Fahmy

13 September -- Perched astride two continents, sandwiched between two seas, and watered by a river that feeds ten countries, Egypt is a nation destined to have extensive contact with the outside world. Though the nature of this relationship has ebbed and flowed in the past—sometimes encouraging Egypt's ambitious aspirations and at other times relegating her to subject status—foreign policy is a dynamic fundamental to the success or failure of the Egyptian state. Today, as we finish the formation of our first representative civilian government in over sixty years, the political limelight will remain fixed on the domestic trials ahead. How Egypt will face the staggering economic and demographic pressures upon it, the position of religion in the new republic, and the effort to found a representative government against the crushing weight of an authoritarian past all remain to be seen. But, in the process of tackling these historic domestic tasks, we must not ignore the foreign policy challenges and

opportunities that will face this representative government in a new Middle East.

Regrettably, Egypt has shrunk to the periphery of regional relations, exchanging the leadership and vision of Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar Sadat for a far less ambitious foreign policy. Though Hosni Mubarak's policies were initially successful in ensuring stability and security and reconciling Egypt with the Arab world, this early proactive phase was followed by a long period of political dormancy and stagnation. Now, in a region transformed by popular upheaval, Egypt has a chance to pick up the mantle and renew her place as a political and ideological wellspring for the Arab and North African Middle East. We should grasp this opportunity to help lead the Middle East and Africa into a new era of inclusiveness and political modernity. We can create a blueprint for Egypt's future foreign policy that will enact this strategic shift. It should seek a path toward renewed leadership in the Arab world that emphasizes Egypt's strengths in the region, its cultural claim to the Arab identity, and its intellectual influence on Arab political thought, while formulating precise and proactive measures designed to regain Egypt's lost position of moral authority and regional leadership in the Middle East.

As a point of departure, and with a view to establishing functional, concrete options, these prescriptions suggest that Egypt approach its foreign policy in three expanding concentric circles of interest. First, those close and vital neighbors that share a border, a fundamental identity, or upriver access to Egypt's riparian water source. Second, that group of foreign and regional powers outside of Egypt's direct sphere that, nevertheless, exert strong influence over Egyptian policy. Third, relations with the rest of the world—those nations that do not play a vital role in Egypt's immediate neighborhood but with whom mutually beneficial relations should be pursued or improved upon.

Historical Context: Egypt's Rich Legacy

Before Egypt's future options can be fully explored, we must examine the constants and variables that have shaped Egyptian foreign policy throughout its long and turbulent past. There is an instinct on the part of some observers and local participants to assume that Egyptian foreign policy is essentially unchanging in nature. This assumption is imprecise, to say the least. To be sure, as with any nation, there are constants that

perennially influence the pursuit of Egypt's foreign policy, but these factors are principles and parameters upon and within which Egypt must shape its interests rather than strict constraints on her ability to act. Indeed, whether during the height of the Fatimid Caliphate, the quiet conquests and rapid modernization of Mohammed Ali, or the anti-colonialism and Arab Nationalism of the Nasser era, Egypt has not only built a history of strong and active regional foreign policy, but consistently displayed the will and ability to lead in the regional and even in the international arena. Still, what is true of Egyptian foreign policy is that it has most frequently been defined by two factors—geography and history—and that these factors have inspired relatively centrist policy trends throughout consecutive Egyptian governments, even those commonly perceived as radical or reactionary.

Geography is, for obvious reasons, the most important element in determining Egypt's national security and threat perceptions. Egypt sits on the historical trading crossroads of three continents of the old world and relies for sustenance upon a single river whose headwaters lie outside its borders. This interconnection and essential vulnerability has rendered the country extremely sensitive to the actions of external powers and shapes a pattern of stability, security, and balance in international relations. This describes the submissive policies of the Ptolemaic kings of Egypt who assured grain shipments to Rome in return for relative independence, as well as those of Hosni Mubarak's government, which often sought to accommodate Western interests and leverage that to create regional heft rather than exercise leadership on regional issues. Yet even the actions of more ambitious Egyptian governments have been grounded in concepts of stability and security, though they may have strayed from the center. Abdel Nasser's military interference in Yemen, his instigation of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and Anwar Sadat's bilateral peace treaty with Israel are frequently cited as negatives. Egypt also had its foreign policy successes under these two leaders. The former's leadership of of decolonization efforts and the latter's courageous step in initiating the October 6, 1973, war were high points of Egyptian leadership. In those instances when foreign policy sharply swayed from the centrist trend, it has traditionally been the result of charismatic or ambitious individuals, empowered by authoritarian rule, attempting to implant their personal vision on the nation.

In these instances, the ability of such figures to impose their priorities on foreign policy helps explain deviation from the norm but when these individuals overreach, reality invariably punishes their hubris and, more often than not, they return to the center, hat in hand.

In conjunction with geographic and idiosyncratic variables, historical prejudice has also played a major part in defining this centrist trend in Egyptian foreign policy. Due to the longevity of the Egyptian state, the effect of history upon current policy is especially acute. Few nations in the region have remained untouched by contact with Egypt and most have had hundreds, if not thousands, of years to develop preconceived norms of interaction. Egypt's own preconceptions, emanating from past cultural, social, and political interactions, similarly define current interests and threat perceptions in dealing with each of her neighbors—particularly those along the Nile or major trade corridors—and such biases will continue to shape foreign policy trends.

In terms of these historical determinants, the most relevant factor in the development of Egyptian foreign policy during the modern era was the effect of European colonialism. As a result of this colonial heritage, and subsequent Cold War competition for influence over the new nations of a post-colonial Middle East, Egyptian foreign policy in the 1950s and 60s was focused upon the threat of foreign hegemonic domination. Various American attempts to impose anti-communist security regimes, manifest in efforts such as the Baghdad Pact and the Eisenhower Doctrine, stoked this public fear and helped shape the Nasserite doctrine of pan-Arab and African solidarity against Western intrusion. At the same time, the creation of the State of Israel on the territory of Arab Palestine in 1948 posed a new and imminent threat dimension to Egyptian foreign policy—one that strengthened the doctrine of Egyptian-led pan-Arabism, and focused Egyptian security calculations around consistent military confrontation with Israel until the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979.

A second key legacy from the colonial era was the construction of the Suez Canal in 1869 and its subsequent nationalization by Nasser during the 1956 Suez Crisis. This Egyptian ownership of a direct maritime passage from Europe to Asia served both to renew Egypt's position at the heart of international commerce after the decline of overland trade routes and to bolster its contemporary stature as a champion of the Non-Aligned

Movement. However, in the long term, the nationalization of the canal also helped link the health of the Egyptian economy to the maintaining stability and security in the Arabian Gulf region— a foreign policy concern that assumed particular importance after the rise of Gulf oil economies to international political prominence in the 1970s and 80s. Almost 20 percent of the world's oil now travels through the Gulf and a significant portion of that trade passes through the Red Sea. In addition to this direct trade through the Suez Canal, Arabian Gulf countries provide bilateral aid and direct investment to Egypt, while human exchange between Egypt and the Gulf region is significant. Remittances from Egyptians currently working abroad totaled around $12.6 billion in 2011 with a majority of those transfers originating in the Arabian Gulf.

Accordingly, when war or instability threatens the Gulf, Egypt feels the effects. This happened during the first and second Gulf wars, where nearly 1.4 million of the two million Egyptian workers in Iraq had left the country by 2003, and has repeated itself in nearly every crisis where oil prices, Suez revenues, or tourism have been adversely affected by uncertainty in the region. Partly as a result of this connection, stability in the Arabian Gulf and, indeed, throughout the Middle East has gradually become one of Egypt's greatest foreign policy priorities. This pattern has perpetuated itself in the strategic calculus of nearly every major foreign policy decision, especially after the death of Nasser. Under Sadat, the expulsion of Soviet advisers from Egypt in 1975 effectively ended major U.S.-Soviet competition in the Arab Middle East, paving the way for calmer regional relations, while the peace treaty with Israel was a practical measure designed to end the streak of costly and politically destabilizing wars against Israel since 1948. Similarly, Egyptian policy during the Iran-Iraq war from 1980 to 1988 favored Iraq due to the potentially region-wide destabilizing effects of a powerful and aggressive revolutionary Iran in the Gulf. But when the tables turned and it was instead Iraq's Saddam Hussein threatening regional stability with the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Egypt collaborated with Western military intervention to preserve regional security.

Combined with this fundamental and long established interest in regional order and stability is Egypt's natural ability to lead the Middle East toward such foreign policy goals. This stems not only from the country's

demographic weight, geopolitical location, and military capability, but also from its historic and contemporary role as the heart of cultural and intellectual innovation in the Arab world. As early as the nineteenth century, Cairo has been at the vanguard of modern Arab political thought. Trained in both Islamic jurisprudence and European political philosophy, Egyptian intellectuals like Rifa'a El-Tahtawi pioneered some of the earliest attempts to equate Arab-Islamic principles with the concepts and ideals of European modernism. Sent abroad to study at the great universities of Europe, these individuals brought back the knowledge and know-how necessary to enact Mohammed Ali's ambitious modernization schemes. However, they also brought with them the concepts of reasoned deduction, individuality, and democratic process, which would provide the first intellectual kernels of future anti-colonialist, pan-Arab, and Islamist ideologies. Building upon the works of early reformers and intellectuals like Tahtawi, Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani, and Mohammed Abduh, who introduced the ideas of national self-determination and Islamic Modernism, Egypt has become one of the strongest generators of Arab political thought. Be it through Egyptian nationalism, socialism, pan-Arab nationalism, or Islamism, Egypt has provided either the birthplace or the fertile ground for most of the major Arab political movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

That preeminence in intellectual and political innovation has always been one of Egypt's greatest assets in the Arab regional context. During the 1950s and 60s Nasser was able to harness this power and lead the Middle East, as well as much of Africa, in opposition to the remnants of colonialism. But when Nasser's rhetorical brinksmanship ended in Egypt's disastrous defeat by Israel during the 1967 war, the model of Arab leadership was broken. President Sadat tried to revive Egypt's stature with his ambitious vision of a reformed Egypt and a Middle East at peace, but the unilateral nature of the peace treaty with Israel and his reckless pace of economic restructuring alienated both regional and domestic partners alike. Mubarak, for his part, prided himself on claiming Egypt's leadership role, but was risk-averse and ultimately unwilling to bear the responsibilities of leadership.

Now however, as in the heyday of pan-Arab Nationalism, the January 25 revolution has helped inspire a generation of Arabs to action. Egypt once

again has the chance to lead if she is willing, but any new government must learn from the lessons of the past. Much-needed reform can no longer be postponed but its progress must not be derailed into populist politicking or religious dogmatism, especially in foreign relations. Egypt must lead the region rather than leave it behind and guide its neighbors not try to dominate them if it wants to seize this opportunity and regain its proper regional and international role.

After January 25: New Chance to Lead

To achieve that balance, the new Egyptian government must define—and swiftly—the situation it has inherited and tackle the long list of foreign policy reforms, which were necessary even before the January 25 revolution. Consequently, this should first entail an assessment of the rapidly changing global and regional environment within which Egypt operates. Such an assessment will, of course, need to highlight the variety of short-term issues that have essentially been put on hold during the transitional period and which will draw the most public pressure for resolution. However, the larger aim of this assessment will be a better understanding of the medium and long-term consequences of foreign policy decisions and, on that basis, a sweeping review of Egyptian foreign policy to date.

A second task for the architects of Egypt's new foreign policy will be finding a way to effectively communicate the substance of that policy to a newly open and aware Egyptian society. This may seem self-evident, but for policymakers accustomed to effecting top-down decisions insulated from public criticism or reproach, listening and responding to the desires of the people will be a difficult transition. A careful balance must be struck between the lofty subjects of long-term significance, not necessarily evident to the layman, and the settlement of immediate hot-button issues such as security along the border with Israel or negotiations over upriver development along the Nile. But, in light of the public awakening, Egyptian governments will nevertheless need to cultivate the ability to explain foreign policy decisions clearly and consistently to the public. This process will assuredly require a consistent and comprehensive strategic vision, which takes both long and short-term factors into account, if it is to be successful.

Most important for the new republic, however, will be the challenge of earning and sustaining the moral authority and legitimacy necessary to regain Egypt's leadership role. Egypt's greatest strength in international affairs is its intellectual power to lead and influence its region. Historically, the efficacy of that leadership has always been relative to popular faith in the sincerity of its rhetoric, even if the content of that rhetoric is proven false with the luxury of hindsight. Egypt now has a chance to restore this faith by embracing a policy of principle aimed at sustaining and encouraging the spread of democratic reform and social justice throughout the region. These concepts should be proactively promoted to the peoples and governments throughout the region, while allowing them to embrace new ideas at a pace comfortable to them.

This must be a process of osmotic not catalytic change, and care must be taken not to pursue ideological policy in a manner that would cause conflicts with other nations unready for reform. Egypt should provide the seeds of freedom by supporting openness, transparency, and the rule of law throughout the Middle East, but the demand for and pace of reform must come from within states, not across their borders. In short, Egypt should return to its niche as the source of dynamic political thought in the Middle East and seek to rebuild the moral authority lost during the Mubarak era. However, it is paramount to recognize that successful foreign policy cannot be divorced from a country's domestic policy, especially in the type of open democratic society we hope Egypt will become. In this, Egypt must lead by example. If domestic reality does not match the principled stand of our international proclamations, our newfound legitimacy will be unsustainable and our claim of leadership will fall on deaf ears.

To effectively claim and keep that leadership role, Egypt must not only realize that its greatest asset is the intellectual capital of its population, but that smart, knowledge-based diplomatic strategy must be reinforced with the will and ability to proactively exercise foreign policy. Though she does not have the capability to assert herself on a global scale, in its region Egypt has consistently pursued active and politically visionary decisions. But the test of true leadership for Egypt, and indeed for any state, is the ability to take and act out its own foreign policy decisions, independent of external influence. In order to achieve such independence in international affairs, a state must safeguard four basic interests: secure access to

sufficient and renewable water sources, a reliable supply of fuel to feed domestic energy consumption, stable access to affordable foodstuffs, and the ability to purchase or produce sufficient arms and ammunition for national defense.

These four strategic resources ultimately determine the independence and strength of a state's foreign policy decisions and, ideally, a country should be able to sustain them locally. Realistically, this is an impossible goal for most nations in the modern era, so if Egypt wants to pursue a foreign policy of real and proactive leadership it must ensure the security and the diversification of foreign access points to such indispensable national resources. Accordingly, the quality of Egypt's relationships with foreign nations must be approached along levels of priority that match relations to these four basic interests, as well as factors of geography, history, and shared identity. It is for this purpose that the country-specific proposals will, here, be split into three concentric circles of policy interest. And it is for this reason that the shape of relations with those vital states included in the first and second circles will be of such importance to the success and influence of future Egyptian foreign policy.

The First Circle: Regaining Self-Confidence

The first circle of Egyptian foreign policy consists primarily of neighboring countries, states where Egypt has a natural resource dependency, those who bear common burdens, those with whom she has had constant relations in times of war and peace, and those nations with which she shares a common identity. These are relationships of the greatest and most immediate concern to Egyptian welfare and security. Thus, the review and necessary redefinition of relations with them should take the highest priority.

Perhaps most pressing in this area will be Egypt's approach toward Sudan and the Nile Basin states, particularly in the context of plans by upriver countries to redraw the treaty governing approval for hydrological development on the Nile. Under the British, and even before that time, Egypt and North and South Sudan were one state. Though eventually split under British rule, Egypt and the Sudans have maintained traditionally close ties and jealously guard their historical rights to the Nile waters. The positions of Egypt and Sudan in this regard are valid and should be recognized by the other Nile Basin states. At the same time, for Egypt and

Sudan to search for solutions to this problem based exclusively on historical rights without accounting for contemporary political developments is bound to place the different parties at loggerheads.

The current crisis has arisen around an initiative by five Nile Basin states to form the Cooperative Framework Agreement in May 2010 to seek more water from the Nile. This would effectively abrogate a 1929 treaty Egypt signed with British colonial authorities allowing the country veto rights over any upriver Nile development projects such as irrigation. Egypt and Sudan strongly opposed this measure as threatening their national security, with particular criticism directed at Ethiopian plans to construct the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, a large hydropower project on the Nile.

The argument of the Nile Basin states is that they were not yet states when the 1929 agreement was signed, or if they were states they were under occupation. This is an understandable argument that can and should be recognized by Egypt and Sudan without prejudice. But these particular upriver states do not suffer a water shortage, nor do they see negative consequences from Egypt's consumption of water. Their interest in dam construction is, at this point, purely economic. Thus, Egypt must stress the importance of this issue to its most basic national interest and assert its historical right to a vital resource. However, it should do so in a fashion that underlines collective interest-based policies with the Nile Basin states and shuns belligerent rhetoric of the sort exchanged between Mubarak's regime and the Ethiopian government. The process might include the strengthening of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, as well as cooperating on development projects, in exchange for the assured flow of water to Egypt's ever-growing population.

Though already close, the same policies of collective interest should be applied to Egyptian relations with North and South Sudan. Reinvigorated cultural and economic cooperation could provide mutual benefit in the areas of education, agriculture, electrical energy, and transportation infrastructure.

A second area of pivotal interest to Egypt and for the region as a whole will be the development of events in Israel and Palestine, and the evolution of Egypt's relations with these two entities. Traditionally, Egypt has looked at these relationships as one, and in many respects it is impossible to separate them. Still, lumping the two together has hobbled Egypt's ability to deal

with Israel on separate issues of deep concern such as Israel's military buildup, Israel's extensive and undeclared nuclear weapons program, energy expansion into the Mediterranean, as well as the local resource and environmental concerns that accompany these factors. Equally true is that, while Egypt must be careful to address the Palestinians as one entity fundamentally represented by the Palestinian Authority, we cannot afford to ignore the Hamas leadership in Gaza, nor should we give up on recent efforts to reconcile Hamas and Fatah.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is at a crossroads. On the Palestinian side you have in Mahmoud Abbas and Salem Fayyad, a president and prime minister of a Palestinian Authority committed to nonviolence, transparent governance, and finding a negotiated solution. You also have a Palestinian constituency that, at least at present, has little stomach for war or violence. Even in Gaza, Hamas deputy head Moussa Abu Marzouq has affirmed that a long-term peace arrangement might be acceptable to Hamas as a form of hudna (truce). At the same time, on the Israeli side, the government is led by a by a right-leaning politician with a Knesset majority. To explain the lack of progress, the argument is often made that Israel cannot make peace until Palestinians commit to nonviolence, or that peace can only be made with the political right in Israel, or even that weak coalitions prevented Israeli leaders from adopting strategic, progressive positions on peace. The situation today is truly unique and provides a direct test for all these premises. Personally, I have never been convinced by these arguments and I am extremely skeptical, given the pronounced policies of the leaders of Likud and Kadima. My sense is that Kadima, and with it Israel, is moving further toward the expansionist, militaristic position of Likud and therefore beyond a viable compromise with the Palestinians.

If our objective is peace through the creation of two states, then developments on the ground have come very close to the point of no return because the constant expansion of Israeli settlements has almost irreparably eroded the ability of Palestinians to govern over a continuous landmass. Given the current military and political balance of power, the incentive and disincentives needed to generate a serious attempt at negotiating peace simply do not exist. Egypt must highlight for the international community the fact that the Arab-Israeli peace process has all but come to an end. It should urge the international community to move from a policy of problem

management to one of conflict resolution under international auspices. Preferably this new effort would take the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the 2002 Arab summit in Beirut as a foundation for negotiating final settlement.

In parallel to this work, Egypt should begin a review of its peace agreement with Israel. This is not to say that Egypt should abrogate the treaty, flawed though it is. That would be a rash and destabilizing act with far reaching implications for both Egyptian-Israeli relations and Egyptian-U.S. relations. However, Egypt should be more robust and aggressive in insisting that Israel abide by the spirit of the agreement. And we should take a look at renegotiation of some of the security annexes concerning rules of engagement along the border, especially after the accidental killing of Egyptian soldiers by Israeli forces in 2011. In conjunction with this effort, the new Egyptian government must strive to open a candid dialogue with Israel that emphasizes lasting peace and eventual assimilation into the region. This is attainable, but cannot be achieved if Israel continues to pursue Cold War policies of military deterrence toward threats rather than political resolution of their source and of exclusivity from the basic norms that govern international behavior and regional diplomacy.

Libya too is a foreign policy requirement within Egypt's first circle of interest, but relations with Libya take on a sub-regional if not domestic character due to the relatively free flow of Libyans across the border. Since both countries are experiencing political transformation, it will be difficult to predict the evolution of their mutual foreign policies. However, the key to solid future relations with the new Libyan state will be through a traditional grassroots process of cultural, political, and economic cooperation. Helping to build the human and political infrastructure of a contemporary post-revolutionary state should be a high priority for Egypt. This should include the provision of educators and expertise in political, governmental, and developmental fields combined with joint investment in the expansion of North African transportation systems and tourism sectors. Needless to say, this should be complemented by the development of a new sustained economic paradigm between the two countries, including cross-border road and energy projects, reciprocal investments, and the utilization of Egypt's expanding labor force.

Finally, Egypt should not underestimate her inherent ability to influence the Arab world as a whole, politically and intellectually. In order to realize this goal we must remember how much the world has changed since Nasser's time. Today the Arab world is triple the size it was when the Arab League was established in 1945, and Egyptian policymakers must shape their claim to Arab identity along the new political, economic, and social realities that have reshaped Arab countries. First, Arabs do not possess as strong a sense of common cause today as existed in the mid-twentieth century. Though the commonalities of the Arab identity still serve to forge uniquely strong bonds of cultural and religious kinship across the region, years of stagnation in the Arab-Israeli process have long jaded once mesmerized populations, while the rallying cry of decolonization has disappeared. Indeed, we now find that North Africa and the Gulf often look toward Europe and America rather than to their Arab neighbors. Another significant shift in the region has been the transfer of money and influence toward the Arabian Gulf region, resulting in a general movement from the preeminence of left-of-center regimes to right-of-center regimes.

All this would seem to suggest a concentration of power in the resource-rich monarchies of the Arabian Gulf. This however is a superficial, if not false, assumption. It is sometimes postulated that Qatar and Saudi Arabia are competitors with Egypt for foreign policy influence in the Arab world. This has been true in particular instances and, inevitably, there will be recurring incidents of competition. Such competition is mutually beneficial insofar as it provides a regional set of checks and balances. But no other Arab country truly has the diversity, intellectual infrastructure, or sheer demographic manpower necessary to pursue the extensive, substance-based foreign policy that Egypt is able to. Egypt's leadership role has been left vacant due to Egypt's own policies rather than the emergence of a rival. In fact, as the Arab world becomes more accustomed to its new reality, Egypt and Saudi Arabia can both benefit from close relations. The former as a vehicle of enlightened progressiveness and the latter as a bastion of moderate and modern Islamic conservatism, anchoring the Arab world left and right of center. To achieve these results both countries have to deal with fundamental domestic problems and act on them boldly and strategically.

Following the 2011 revolution, Egypt needs to regain its self-confidence and remember that its leadership in the Arab world was, for decades, predicated on intellectual capital and the dominance of Egyptian scholars and experts in fields ranging from political thought to economic policy to culture and education. It has been too long since Egypt exerted influence through material assistance to Arab countries and, as society opens up, Egyptians will find the creative intellectual assets available to them are far beyond those of any other country in the region. Egypt should approach the new Arab reality with the full utilization of these inherent intellectual and demographic advantages in mind. Egypt's greatest strength emanates naturally from its regional base and it must reestablish its new foreign policy on the bedrock of that Arab and African identity, while molding its policies to the realities of the twenty-first century.

The Second Circle: Seeking New Directions

For generations, states have conducted foreign policy not only with their immediate neighbors and core constituencies, but also with the group of countries that exert significant influence on a regional or global scale. Modern technology and globalization have, with their effect on international security, economics, and the flow of ideas, changed the definition and scope of international relations and increased the number of peripheral nations with direct interest in each other's affairs. For today's Egypt, this secondary circle includes Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, Turkey, Iran, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, and a number of significant emerging states such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Egypt's current relationship with Europe stands on relatively solid ground and is not in need of drastic overhaul. However, there is significant room for improvement in economic cooperation as well as political and cultural partnerships. Such partnerships do, in some instances, already exist. The idea for a Mediterranean Forum bringing together in dialogue the Arab, North African, and European countries of the Mediterranean, as well as mainland members of the European Union (EU), was first proposed by Egypt in the early 1990s. The more comprehensive and ambitious Barcelona Process of 1995 succeeded in bringing together this group of nations and in creating a forum for further dialogue between the EU and

Mediterranean partners but its focus was somewhat skewed toward European concerns such as terrorism, immigration, human rights, and democracy. Now, in light of the prospect of political change in Egypt and the Arab world, Egypt should make the improvement of cultural relations a priority, which—along with efforts at economic cooperation such as the creation of a Mediterranean free trade zone, the attraction of European and foreign investment, and the acquisition of greater access for Egyptian goods in European markets—will help create an environment of mutual and collective interest. People to people interaction needs to be expanded and promoted to respond to the increasing anxiety and xenophobia which exists between nations across the Mediterranean.

Looking southward, to the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, Egyptian foreign policy could also use new direction. As was the case in the Arab world, the anti-colonial brand of Nasserite Egypt commanded great respect in Africa during the 1950s and 60s because he embraced African causes such as decolonization and the anti-apartheid movement. Since that time, however, Egypt has maintained a bland, security-focused Africa policy marked by the country's relative absence from African affairs. To regain her position in Africa, Egypt cannot simply say "We are African" or offer technical assistance here and there, she must find resonance on the issues that concern the African leadership and the public. Issues such as the alleviation of poverty, support for economic development and environmental protection, regional security efforts such as the regulation of illegal small arms traffic, and political reform. Egypt must create a well-articulated and consistent Africa strategy that outlines policy on these key issues and backs up rhetoric with practical solutions. This should be complemented by renewed efforts to expand bilateral and multilateral economic free trade agreements, thereby encouraging freer access for Egyptian businesses to African markets and vice versa. Policymakers should also promote academic exchanges for African youths at Egypt's English and French-speaking universities. Finally, Egypt must build close political relationships with leading states in Africa's different sub-regions. Emerging African powers such as Senegal, Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa require a new strategy of active, but not exclusive, diplomacy.

Egypt's relations with the two non-Arab power players of the Middle East —Turkey and Iran—will likewise require consideration and redirection. On Iran in particular, Egypt's evolving stance has drawn heavy scrutiny at home and abroad. Iran is a modern Middle Eastern state with a rich heritage, strategic location in the vicinity of generous oil and gas resources, and an active foreign policy that has traditionally constituted a dilemma for contemporary Egyptian policy makers and entwined interested third parties in their affairs. Egypt and Iran share a reciprocal respect for each other's concerns. Nevertheless, Nasser's Egypt and the Shah's Iran were frequently at odds as pawns in the U.S.-Soviet Union superpower rivalry, or as a function of conflicting positions on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Sadat and Reza Pahlavi found common ground as the former moved politically westward and pursued Arab-Israeli peace. But, ironically, it was the ensuing close nature of Egyptian relations with the Shah that gave genesis to a new era of Egyptian-Iranian enmity after the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini during Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution.

The question now is not whether Egypt should open relations with the Islamic Republic—the Egyptian public widely supports this move and gradual normalization had already begun under Mubarak, and Egypt's new government should continue this. The question now is what role Egypt will seek to play in the diplomatic theater surrounding Tehran's alleged quest for nuclear weapons capability and its aspirations of increased influence in the Arabian Gulf region. The electoral victories of the Muslim Brotherhood have stoked concerns that an Islamist government in Egypt will drift closer to the Islamic Republic.

Such fears, however, are overblown and fail to recognize the cultural and geostrategic complexities of future relations between Shiite Iran and Sunni Egypt. Regardless of religious proclivity, any new government will be wary of Tehran's intentions and fully cognizant of the security threat Iran poses to Egypt's vital allies and interests in the Arabian Peninsula. Indeed, the real challenge will be building trust between the two countries after the years of enmity following 1979. To gain that trust, Cairo and Tehran should engage in a comprehensive open-book dialogue addressing security, political, and military issues in the Middle East, but also exploring avenues of economic cooperation, and cultural exchange. With time this open and substantive dialogue could, if successful, have a gradual calming effect on

Egyptian-Iranian relations bilaterally, regionally, and internationally. As Egypt's political, economic, military, and cultural weight reinforces the tenants of Arab centrism, Cairo could prove a non-confrontational counterbalance to Iranian influence and thus provide space for a healthy relationship between Iran and the Arab world.

Egypt faces a different though no less important set of challenges and opportunities in its relations with Turkey. Until recently, Turkish policy tended to favor European entanglement, influenced by its legacy as a key Western bulwark against the Soviet Union and the Eurocentric focus of a ruling secular military elite. However, since the sweeping electoral victory of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2002, Turkey has begun to play a newly active and independent role in Middle Eastern affairs. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey has increasingly deviated from its traditional adherence to Western and American policy stances, most notably in its downgrade of relations with Israel over the killing of Turkish activists during the 2010 Gaza flotilla raid. In a broader context, Turkey is playing a much stronger part in issues of regional import, such as its close involvement with the crisis in Syria and its role as an intermediary in Western negotiations with Iran.

This assumption of a leadership role in regional affairs, as well as the boost to Erdoğan's personal popularity in the Arab world provided by his tough stance on Israel, have given fuel to the idea that Turkey is rising to fill the vacuum left by Egypt's foreign policy decline over the last half of the Mubarak years. This is a notion that has led some Egyptian pundits and policymakers to fear ever-growing Turkish competition, and perhaps even dominance in regional affairs. This perception is, in all fairness, justifiable. Turkey and Egypt are competitors in many ways. Both strive to be a bridge to the West and both seek a greater significance on regional and international arenas. However, Egypt's natural scope will always lie in the Arab world, while Turkey's lies in Europe—and on the periphery of Middle Eastern affairs. Consequently, rather than be competitors in the same domain, Egypt and Turkey should complement and support the other's policies in the Middle East and among those other countries with significant Muslim populations, European or otherwise, as moderate and modern Muslim states. This will be true of any new government in Egypt

due to the moderate, centrist influence of the Al-Azhar clerical establishment on Egyptian Islamic thought.

Egypt must also seek to court those extra-regional emerging powers—especially the BRICS grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa—whose growing economic and strategic clout have already lent considerable weight to their international policies. China and Russia, for example, already play a significant role in regional affairs through relations with Iran and the Arabian Gulf, as well as through China's rapid expansion of economic and business ties into Africa. But they are not the only emerging players in an increasingly multipolar world. The Egyptian foreign ministry should work to determine which states will play key roles in the future and seek to consolidate prompt relations with them. These relationships will prove a great boon if bolstered by successful domestic reform and a position of regional leadership.

The last and perhaps most important second circle relationship to be addressed is that between Egypt's new civilian government and the United States. The future of this vital relationship has become a source of much worry and speculation, both domestically and in international foreign policy circles, partly due to the rise of Islamist groups in Egyptian politics. This is understandable, though hyped out of all proportion. I see no approaching cataclysmic shift in Egyptian-American relations, which I believe will remain of paramount importance to both nations. Few future governments in either country would intentionally damage this relationship. There can be little doubt that, in the balance, close U.S.-Egyptian ties over the last thirty years have reaped overwhelmingly positive rewards for both sides, despite periods of turbulence. Whether this applies to direct political, security, and financial support, the construction of closer economic relations, the absence of major Arab-Israeli conflict, or cooperation on the fight against global terrorism, the Egyptian-American partnership has proved to be a mutually beneficial one. However, given the changes occurring in Egypt and the Arab world, political relationships and confidence do need to be developed. Complacency was, in the past, a luxury provided by the familiarity both sides had in their dealings with the other, which in fact left valuable opportunities for further collaboration overlooked. As a result, the preconceptions and parameters within which this relationship operates should be revisited for the benefit of both parties.

Specifically, the dominance of the Egyptian-Israeli parameter has frequently overshadowed the possible expansion of relations with the U.S. in other key areas. This granular focus on Israel has even led some to describe the Egyptian-American relationship, not incorrectly, as a trilateral one including Israel. Though Israel and Palestine will be an important factor in relations, the current dynamic will need to change if either Egypt or the United States is to truly make progress in a transformed Middle East. Egypt has much else to offer the United States. As a bastion of regional stability, as a partner in maintaining maritime security in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, as a leader in Africa and the Arab world, well-managed relations with countries such as Egypt are of paramount importance for global powers like the United States. America, in turn, wields unparalleled influence on a global scale and friendship with the U.S. offers Egypt invaluable support in pursuing its own political, economic, and security interests, domestic and foreign. Both countries, in essence, need each other but the advent of representative government in Egypt will necessitate that short term Egyptian public interests and sensitivities be factored in to the relationship. In its strategic commitment to peace and stability in the Middle East, Egyptian-American ties are incredibly valuable. However, both parties will have to manage their day-to-day relations much more acutely if this strategic partnership is to keep pace with the changes sweeping Egypt and the region as a whole.

The Third Circle: Engaging Global Stakeholders

The third circle of foreign policy relates to important, but not pressing, relationships with non-regional nations who collectively create the 'international community.' And, in a world of unprecedented economic, technological, political, and individual interconnection, close participation in the evolution of international systems of law and governance should be a vital and necessary part Egypt's foreign policy. A new Egypt calls for renewed involvement in these issues at the international level.

This initiative must include matters of more immediate regional impact but Egypt should also address the deeper mutual interests it shares with other members of the international community concerning the fair and proper functioning of the international system. Here Egypt could, for example, advocate a much needed review of the United Nations charter or take a more active and vocal interest in the creation of environmental protection

agreements, sustainable development efforts, trade rules that are more equitable to small- and medium-size markets, monetary regulations, or the development of international security and disarmament norms. In short, Egypt must reprise the leadership role it desires at the regional level on the international stage, forming close relationships of mutual and collective interest wherever desired and affecting positions of moral and practical leadership wherever possible.

Conclusion: Independent, Not Isolationist

Egypt faces steep challenges on the road ahead. The safe and fair drafting of a constitution, the forestallment of a looming economic crisis, the cleansing of a corrupt bureaucratic leviathan—these issues and more will tax the abilities of the new administration. But as progress, however slow, on these domestic political hurdles are made, Egypt should position herself to gradually resume its half century-old position of moral authority and diplomatic preponderance on the regional stage. Maintaining the international legitimacy won during the 2011 revolution will be difficult as domestic politics navigate the quagmire of transition, plus restraining populist politics from generating reactive foreign policy positions will be a challenge. These obstacles are not, however, insurmountable and if Egypt is to secure her place in the new Middle East, she must not shirk her natural role as a leader in the Middle East and Africa.

Egypt's foreign policy must be one of conscience and principle, not ambition or reckless self-aggrandizement. To lead, she must pursue a strong and proactive set of policies based on a clear determination of her regional and strategic interests. Her policies must be independent but not isolationist, strong but not oppressive. A new Egypt should lead by having the wisdom to learn from the lessons of the past and the foresight to envisage a path through the challenges and opportunities of the future.

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