The Situation in West Asia and North Africa and its Impact on the International Strategic Configuration

Editor
David Mulrooney

Institute for Security &
Development Policy

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4th Annual ISDP-AMS Conference
September 16–17, 2011, Beijing

David Mulrooney, editor

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Foreword

Global cooperation and understanding the mindsets of different actors are becoming increasingly important factors in handling international conflicts and crises. The series of annual conferences jointly arranged by the PLA Academy of Military Science (AMS) and the Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP) have become an important venue for discussing China's increasing global role and its interaction with other actors on the international arena.

The fourth annual conference, which took place in Beijing in September 2011, was the first to discuss an ongoing conflict, the war in Libya. All the non-Chinese participants represented EU countries (Sweden, Denmark and the United Kingdom) that were actively engaged in the military operations supporting the rebels against the Qadhafi regime. The presentations by high-ranking military officers, and diplomats and academics with deep knowledge of the Middle East, covered a broad spectrum of topics regarding the conflict, including security policy, international politics, the role of Islam in the region and the ongoing military operations. The diverging views on the EU/US intervention that became evident during the discussions clearly showed the need for this kind of conference.

The Libya conflict, which raises questions about the legitimacy of intervention, the desire to protect innocent civilians, the need to save one's own citizens stuck in a war-zone and also perhaps doubts regarding the ulterior motives of the intervening countries, will not be the last of its kind. Therefore, if we are not aware of the policies, thinking and capacities of the main players on the global arena, it will not just be harder for everyone to act in a rational way the next time the international community has to consider its options when a crisis erupts, it may also create unnecessary international tensions. Only by meeting and engaging in discussion with one another, will representatives from different countries and organizations be able to predict each other's reactions, understand the different points of view of the parties involved and not least establish contacts and friendships that might be useful in creating trust and understanding.

Another aspect of these conferences that should not be forgotten is the opportunity to share lessons learned. International interventions may look

quite simple on paper, or sound straightforward in public declarations –
they are not. No one can predict all possible constellations of actors, with
sometimes diverging agendas, that might have to work together in future
contingencies. By analyzing the challenges – political and technical – that
had to be resolved in the Libyan case, hopefully there will be fewer frictions
and surprises next time.

It is therefore my sincere hope that the Swedish Foreign Ministry and
the PLA Academy of Military Science will continue to sponsor this series of
annual joint conferences, and other similar activities.

Karlis Neretnieks
Major General (ret)
Swedish Armed Forces

Acknowledgements

Order of Events

Welcoming Reception: Thursday, September 15

Major General He Lei, the Head of the Science Research Guidance Department at AMS, hosted a reception for the participants on the eve of conference. Welcoming remarks were made by Major General Wang Weixing.

Day 1: Friday, September 16

Opening speeches were made by Major General He Lei, who set the discussion in the context of security in the era of globalization, and by Dr. Niklas Swanström, the Director of ISDP, who expressed his hope that the conference might provide an opportunity for participants from China and the EU to identity common ground and areas for future co-operation.

The first session was chaired by Major General Wang Weixing, and the first presentation was made by Madame Li Rong, the Director of the Asia-Africa Institute at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR). Madame Li described the current turbulence in the Middle East and North Africa as a "great political earthquake" and presented an analysis of the main causes of the unrest. Professor Timothy Niblock of the University of Exeter discussed the mistaken assumptions that had led specialists on the region to fail to anticipate the uprisings of the past year and explored the implications of the unrest for the monarchies of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Ambassador Robert Rydberg presented an analysis of the forces that had given rise to the popular revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa, ranging from the increase in social inequality to the catalyzing effect of social networks and mass media.

The second session was chaired by Brigadier General Mats Engman, Head of Swedish Armed Forces International Operations. The first speaker of the second session was Professor Wang Lincong of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, who detailed some of the concerns that have been felt in China with regard to the military intervention in Libya from an international governance perspective. He was followed by Lieutenant Colonel Joachim Isacsson, a former officer in the Swedish armed forces who currently

teaches at the Swedish National Defence College, who discussed the contribution of the Swedish Air Force to the intervention in Libya.

Day 2: Saturday, September 17

The third session was chaired by Senior Colonel Nie Songlai. The first presentation was given by Major General Chen Zhou, a Senior Fellow in the Department of War Theories and Strategic Studies at AMS, who explored the implications of the turbulence in the Middle East and North Africa for the international strategic landscape. The second presentation was made by Mr. Greg Shapland of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK), who explored the regional implications of the "Arab Spring." The final presentation was made by Dr. Liselotte Odgaard, who presented an analysis of China's actions in the UN Security Council within the framework of coexistence and argued that China is increasingly acting as a "maker rather than a taker" of international order. Following lunch, the speakers reconvened for a roundtable discussion with scholars from the Academy of Military Science and National Defense University, chaired jointly by Senior Colonel Nie Songlai and Dr. Niklas Swanström.

Basic Views on the Current Political Turbulence in the Middle East and North Africa

Ms. Li Rong, Senior Fellow, Director, Asia-Africa Institute, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR)

I. Nature of the Political Turbulence

The extent, depth and intensity of the current turbulence in the Middle East and North Africa is extraordinary. Being a "great political earthquake" touching upon the fundamentals of governance, shaking the foundation of political power and bearing on the overall regional situation, it reflects the political appeals of the Arab world to seek transformation and rejuvenation, and will have a far-reaching influence on the history of Arab development. This turbulence has opened a prelude to great political and social changes in the Arab world, and will inevitably bring the Arab world into times of great turbulence, adjustment and transformation.

II. Analysis of Main Causes

From a global perspective, this turbulence is one with "Arab characteristics," because the main cause for this historical drama is an explosion of internal contradictions that have accumulated over a long time in Arab countries. It is an "endogenetic" and "autogenetic" revolution, which originated from uniquely "Arab diseases." Politically, in many Arab countries, the political system is ossified. The supreme power in monarchies is hereditary, while in republics it is lifelong tenure. Some countries even seek to let the son inherit from his father, passing on power within their own families. As a result, autocracy is breeding, corruption is being solidified, and discontent among the people surges high. Economically, the single-product economy is lopsided. Some countries depend for a long time on huge government subsidies to obtain social stability; others depend heavily on external aid to survive. Years of economic reform have had no effect. Socially, old problems die hard. The severely unfair distribution of wealth has kept widening the gap between the poor and the rich. The contradiction between traditional

forces and the modern system is aggravating. The conflict between Islamism and democratization is sharpening. Problems concerning the youth are prominent, and rates of unemployment have remained high for many years. Diplomatically, Arab countries have felt deeply humiliated. They cannot defeat the small country of Israel. Suffering from external "suppression by force" and "democratic reform," they feel their national self-respect has been injured. More than half a century of confusion, humiliation, resentment and even desperation have been pent up so long that they might burst out at any time. In addition, the impact of the global financial crisis on Arab economies, the spread of newly emerging network technologies, the long-time subtle influence of U.S.-promoted democratic reconstruction, and the interference and armed intervention of big powers have played a stimulating, catalyzing and encouraging role.

III. Developing Trends

The curtain of the great change induced by the turbulence in the Middle East and North Africa has just been drawn. In the short term, it will take three to five years for the dust to settle down; in the long term, it may take ten years or even longer. The turning point from chaos to order in the Middle East is far from having arrived.

1. In terms of scope, it is likely that the turbulence may extend and spread. With the collapse of the Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan regimes, opposition forces in countries in the Middle East are encouraged. Protests are rising one after another, and conflicts between the authorities and demonstrators constantly occur. It has become a habit of some people to give vent to their discontent about the government through street protests. On that issue, those governments, both those that have completed and those that are undergoing a "revolution," are at a loss what to do and have failed to take effective measures to stabilize the political situation. The weakness of the governments has facilitated the expansion and spread of the unrest.

2. In terms of degree, competition over national power will continue. After the collapse of the Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan regimes, Syria and Yemen have become the "worst-hit areas." The contest between the Syrian authorities and the opposition party has kept escalating. With the connivance of outside forces, the opposition party grows in strength, and has declared that it will overthrow the Bashar regime. After a period of stalemate

in Yemen, a new wave of protests, the largest since the beginning of Yemen's turmoil, broke out recently. Bloody conflicts are escalating. The two regimes are in danger. The possibility that the situations will keep deteriorating cannot be ruled out.

3. In terms of transformational process, a "second revolution" may break out in some countries. Due to the discontent about the traditional administration mode and development path, the collapse of ruling authorities may temporarily alleviate the turmoil in some countries, but cannot fundamentally dissolve the deep-rooted contradictions that led to the turbulence. Overthrowing existing regimes is not the end point of this round of political storms, but rather the starting point for a new round of political struggles. A new round of fierce competition among different political forces to determine how power should be distributed and which development path should be followed begins. For example, the stepping-down of Mubarak only symbolizes the ending of the "first stage of the Egyptian Revolution," and a new contention has just started.

4. In terms of the external environment, Middle Eastern and North African countries may find it difficult to obtain powerful external support. The world economy is unable to recover, the U.S. and Europe are drawn into financial and debt crises and are busy enough with their own affairs; their pledges to Arab countries may not be made good. The road of reconstruction of the Middle East is hard and long.

IV. Effects and Influence

In view of the unique position and role of the Middle East and North Africa in the world, this round of large-scale political turbulence will have a far-reaching influence on the region and even the globe.

1. The Arab world will step into a historical cycle of revolution and turbulence. Its features are as follows:

(a) The regional turbulence will be long lasting. At present, the revolution with the characteristic of overthrowing existing regimes continues. In the future, comprehensive political reform is inevitable. The turbulence brought by revolution and reform will be long lasting.

(b) The era of autocracy will end. Family rule faces severe challenges, and the process of finding for a new mode of regime will extend over a long time. In the future, it will not be possible for the president of a republic to

be endlessly reelected to serve another term, let alone for the son to inherit from his father. Therefore, monarchies will feel more and more political pressure to "restrict royal rights." It will be difficult for the traditional ruling mode of Middle Eastern and North African countries to be maintained, while the process of finding a new mode will take a fairly long time.

(c) In the process of reestablishing political power and recovering, there will be fierce fights among different political forces that represent different ideological trends. Firstly, Arab nationalism will rise, and nationalist sentiments will quickly gain ground. Secondly, the influence of Islamist political forces is extending, and their role in the political arena is becoming greater. Thirdly, Western ideologies and concepts of democracy will quicken their steps to enter this region. Competition among different forces will become a prominent feature of the future politics of the Middle East.

2. It will be difficult to get rid of deep-rooted problems of the economy and people's livelihood, and they will come in succession as frost is added on top of snow.

In the Middle East, the average unemployment rate reaches 10 percent, and the poverty rate of most countries ranges from 20 percent to 50 percent. Radical social turbulence cannot quickly eradicate the deep-seated contradictions restricting economic development; rather, it will exacerbate those economic and livelihood problems, which are already very serious. The prominent livelihood difficulties will still be an important factor threatening national stability of some countries.

3. Great changes will take place in the geopolitical pattern and balance of power in the Middle East and North Africa, posing grave challenges to regional peace and stability. Relative strength will grow and decline among the four major forces in the Middle East. Firstly, the overall influence of the Arab world is greatly reduced. The governments of Iraq, Egypt, Libya and Syria have either fallen or become trapped in crises. The Arab world is increasingly weakened. Secondly, the living environment for Israel is deteriorating. Egypt, Jordan and Qatar have kept Israel at a distance, while Israel's long-standing foes, Iran, Hamas and Hezbollah, grow stronger. Besides, Turkey launched an open attack against Israel. Now Israel is in dire circumstances. Thirdly, Iran has gained a respite, sped up improving the relations between pro-U.S. countries like Egypt, and taken the opportunity to build its weapons, equipment and military strength. Its influence in the

geopolitics of the Middle East has been elevated. Fourthly, Turkey is striving for the status of a regional power. Because of its growth in economic strength and obstruction of its attempts to join the EU, Turkey has invested more efforts in "moving southward" (to the Middle East), and has tried to play a role as a big power in solving the hot issues of Iran, Libya and Syria. Since the traditional strategic balance has been broken, frictions and conflicts between Israel and Egypt, Iran, Turkey and Syria will be increased. Bilateral and multilateral contention will be intensified; as a result, the situation in the Middle East will be more turbulent. Fifthly, peace-promoting forces are weakened, and peace and stability will be challenged. Owing to internal turbulence, such peace-promoting countries as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Libya cannot concentrate their efforts, and thus the solution of Middle Eastern and African hot issues will be harder. The Arab moderate camp is divided, and hostile forces grow up. Israel's sense of crisis increases, as it always pursues "absolute security." The possibility that Israel might launch "pre-emptive" military strikes and drag the Middle East into large-scale armed conflicts cannot be ruled out.

4. The drastic changes in the Middle East and North Africa have impinged upon the international oil market, endangering global economic recovery. The output of oil from the Middle East accounts for one-third of world oil production. A quarter of world oil supply is transported to the West via the Suez Canal and through Suez-Mediterranean pipelines, while one-third of international oil transportation goes through the Hormuz Strait. Since the political situation of the oil-producing countries remains unstable, the world energy supply will surely suffer new blows. To make matters worse, if terrorist forces take the opportunity to make trouble and if regional armed conflicts break out, the security of sea lines of communication in the Middle East will be threatened. The turbulence in the Middle East has already enhanced and will further intensify the sense of crisis in the international community; therefore competition for oil and natural gas resources will be fiercer. Against the background of the global financial crisis, acute problems of debt, unemployment and inflation exist in many countries. The price of oil lingers at a high level, increasing the pressure of inputted inflation in oil-consuming countries. Additionally, the rising of oil prices will divert world investment, shake the stability of the world stock

market and foreign exchange market, and further impair world economic recovery.

5. Competition between the U.S. and European countries in the Middle East and North Africa will heat up, and the regional situation will become more complicated. In recent years, the relative strength of international powers has actively grown and declined, increasing the U.S. sense of crisis. In order to enhance its control over the Asia-Pacific region and limit the influence of emerging powers like China and Russia, the U.S. has sped up its withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan. Regarding the turbulence in the Middle East, the U.S. is very cautious and not willing to get involved directly. On the issue of Libya, under the banner of "sharing responsibilities," the U.S. has pushed the EU and NATO onto the stage. However, as the "post-Qadhafi era" arrives, the curtain of competition for interests between the U.S. and European countries has been drawn. Although the U.S. and European countries have common interests and objectives in the post-war reconstruction of Libya, on the issue of distributing specific interests, they will lay more stress on basing the reward on the contribution. For the first time, the EU came before the U.S., and can stand up with their heads high. Because it fired the first shot against Libya, France claimed credit for itself and became arrogant. On September 1, France gathered the world powers in Paris to discuss the Libya issue. NATO intended to play an important role in the reconstruction of Libya, proposing that the UN and the "National Transitional Council" of Libya lead the post-war reconstruction, while NATO countries provide support. Though the U.S. withdrew to the second line, the funds it provided still occupied a large proportion. Naturally, the U.S. required some compensation and a share of the profits. Currently, the U.S. is getting ready to be paid off, sending many military and security advisors to provide guidance to the transitional government. Economically, the U.S. has promised to thaw the frozen US\$1–1.5 billion to be invested in the post-war reconstruction. The U.S. will not give up the Middle East. Internal competition inside the EU is now appearing. As Libya's largest partner in energy cooperation, Italy wants to protect its vested interests; hence it is stepping up its efforts to nurture connections with Libya's opposition party. With their "achievements" in war, the UK, France and other countries plan to expand their energy turf. On the issue of Libya's post-war reconstruction,

every big power has its own axe to grind. Competition among those big powers will make the Libyan situation more complicated and volatile.

V. The Shock Waves of the Turbulence Spreading and Becoming a Common Subject for the Whole World

Although this round of political turbulence has distinctively Arab characteristics, its impact is not limited to the Middle East. In recent months, like a domino effect, street protests and demonstrations have been breaking out in Asia, Africa, Europe and America, and in almost every corner of the world. The mode and means by which governments are responding to these events are quite similar to those of the Arab "revolutions." This illustrates that in terms of political turbulence, there is no difference between developed countries and developing countries. In some sense, this political crisis, which started from the Arab world, has gradually "globalized" and become a common problem facing all countries.

The reasons are simple. The first one is that the economic recession, which is triggered by the financial crisis, is global, and not a single country can escape. The only difference is the degree of damage. Now the political turbulence in the Arab world is increasingly spilling out of the region, like a "political epidemic" spreading around the globe. Not a single country can stay uninfected. The second reason is that there is no national boundary for modern communications and network technologies, which can be effective as a boost motor for gathering and stirring up the masses to launch street campaigns, not only in the Arab world, but also in developed countries. Since the world economy is unable to recover, the pressure on the U.S. and European countries is increasingly heavy. Until now, quite a number of EU countries are still plagued by the crisis, and are even sinking deeper and deeper. The political and economic pressure facing big powers is increasing rather than decreasing. They have many problems in common with Arab countries.

As a result, problems of the economy and of people's livelihood will be aggravated; great changes will take place in the geopolitical configuration and power balance in the Middle East and North Africa, posing grave challenges to regional peace and stability; the international oil market will be impacted, threatening the recovery of the global economy; and competition in the Middle East and North Africa among such big powers as the U.S. and

Europe will be intensified, complicating the regional situation. The spread of the turbulence has become a common problem facing the whole world.

VI. Suggestions

1. In view of the fact that the shock waves of the turbulence in the Middle East and North Africa are growing increasingly and not a single country can guarantee its immunity, the international community should join hands to meet the new challenge. In the fields of promoting an overall recovery of the international economy, solving the problem of employment and training for the youth, and strengthening Internet supervision and guidance, there are many common interests and much room for cooperation among countries in the world.

2. The international community should understand and support the transformation in Arab countries, and help them choose a path of democratic reform that conforms to their national conditions, and conduct political reform in a mode featuring non-violence and peaceful negotiation. Historical experience has proven that, hurricane-like, shock-style or imposed reform is not conducive to national stability and solidarity, or to economic development. The result is usually far from, or even contrary to the intention. There are too many examples: not only Iraq and Afghanistan, but also Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, which have become mired in war or chaos following a "revolution." Their people are faring worse instead of better, and the aims of the initiators have not been achieved. The Arab world is a group with the same civilization and historical tradition as well as a strong sense of nationality and religion; hence reform in any Arab country cannot break away from its national conditions, people's situation or history. Therefore, reform in an Arab country should feel its way and make progress step by step. Great ups and downs, as well as great happiness and sadness, should be avoided. Only by setting a definite goal and proceeding steadily and surely, can they get twice the result with half the effort.

3. Under the UN framework, in a peaceful way and following the principles of justice and equality, the international community should support and help the political and economic reconstruction of Middle Eastern and North Africa countries. It should be particularly emphasized that, in this process, big powers ought to avoid double and multiple standards, favoring one and discriminating against the other; otherwise simple issues will

become more complicated, and hidden contradictions will become sharper. In this respect, the big powers should make more thorough research and conduct more effective cooperation. The political democracy we are talking about not only applies to a single country, but also covers larger-scope and higher-level democracy in international relations. This objective needs joint efforts from the international community, and we should make unremitting efforts to achieve it.

Explaining the Arab Uprisings and Predicting Their Future Course[1]

Professor Timothy C. Niblock, Emeritus Professor, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter; and Vice-President, British Society for Middle East Studies

1. Perspective

2011 has been an uncomfortable year for Middle East specialists. The speed at which unrest took root within the Arab world, starting with the death of a fruit and vegetable seller in a small Tunisian town, spreading to the wider Tunisian scene, leading on to the fall of the regimes in Tunisia and Egypt, and then infusing the political scene in many other parts of the region, has been remarkable. Inevitably the question arises: why did all this come as a surprise to Middle East specialists? Why, with their knowledge of the region, had they not predicted such an outcome? The question applies with equal force to all specialists, whether academics, diplomats or journalists.

A defensive response might be that, in any complex system, surprises are bound to occur. Where there are many random factors affecting outcomes, the course of events is inherently uncertain. An unpredictable event (in this case the self-immolation of a fruit and vegetable seller in Tunisia) can set off chain reactions which might not have happened if the timing or location of the event had been different. The failure of economists to predict the global financial crisis, and of international relations specialists to foresee the rapid disintegration of the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, have been explained in this manner.

Specialists, however, do engage in prediction, and to explain away failures of prediction in this manner suggests that specialist expertise may be of little practical help to policy-makers. Their professional worth is devalued. What may be more useful, therefore, is to examine the assumptions and pre-suppositions that shaped analysis prior to the uprisings. What key

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[1] This presentation is similar to one presented at the New Zealand Institute for International Affairs (also to be published as conference proceedings).

factors did specialists fail to take into account? These factors will, of course, provide an insight into the dynamics that shaped the uprisings. They constitute the framework within which social unrest was transformed into revolution or attempted revolution.

All Arab countries have been subject to similar influences and transformative pressures. They have, however, been affected in different ways and to different extents. Each country has its own specific characteristics (of history, economic resource, social and ethnic/religious composition, political and security regime, and ideological tradition), and these have shaped the trajectory that the uprising has taken in each. They will be critical in determining the eventual outcomes.

After examining the (mistaken) assumptions that guided pre-uprising analysis, the article will go on to examine the specific dynamics affecting the Arab monarchies of the Gulf, as these are the Arab states with which China has the closest economic ties. Do their particular characteristics weaken the impact of the transformative factors, such that regime change is rendered unlikely (or even, in current circumstances, impossible)?

2. Mistaken Assumptions in Pre-Uprising Analysis

There were five mistaken assumptions in pre-uprising analysis of the Arab world that will be identified here. These were the belief that populations in the Arab world deemed popular protest neither practicable nor desirable; that while the levels of inequality and injustice in the Arab world were substantial, they were nonetheless tolerable; that the regimes were domestically solid, based on the perceived common interests of presidential, military, security and perhaps business elites; that the regimes possessed a significant level of "secondary legitimacy" at the popular level, and that pan-Arab identification had ceased to be of any relevance to the Arab political scene. The experience of the Arab Spring has shown that none of these assumptions were valid.

i. "The Age of Popular Protest in the Arab World Is Past"

Specialists well acquainted with Arab history were, no doubt, aware that popular protest had been a key ingredient in Arab political development over a prolonged period. Up to the 1960s, indeed, Arab politics seemed to

be infused with protest. Key political developments were shaped by the ability of political leaders or movements to mobilize parts of the population, bring supporters into the streets in demonstrations or riots, and create new regimes or re-enforce existing ones. The term "the Arab street" was no doubt perversely Orientalist in its projection of Arab particularity, but its widespread use reflected an element of reality. Street demonstrations, where urban and sometimes rural populations were mobilized to buttress a political cause, were relatively common.

In Egypt, such public protests helped to shape political outcomes during the 'Urabi Revolt of the 1880s, the nationalist revolution of 1919, and the struggles for effective autonomy from British control during the 1930s and 1940s. They also contributed crucially to the overthrow of the monarchy in 1952 and the stabilization of the Nasserist regime in the wake of the 1956 Suez War. Similar observations can be made about other Arab countries, although protest was not always as persistent and pervasive as in Egypt. The Arab defeat in the 1967 War led to militant and sometimes violent demonstrations across the Arab world.

Although occasional protests have occurred in more recent years, Arab populations have appeared increasingly quiescent. The major exception to this has been in Palestine, where the Palestinian intifadas have given expression to the frustration of a population under occupation. The dynamics of the Palestinian case, however, are different from those shaping events elsewhere.

The structuring of the relationship between Arab peoples and rulers seemed to have become entrenched: power, force and authority were exclusively in the hands of the regimes; while fear and submission were inherent in the attitudes and conduct of populations. It seemed natural to assume that the pattern was fixed for the foreseeable future. There was an apparent rigidity to the relationship, where complex and interacting factors (domestic and international, social and economic, cultural and practical) bound the relationship in place. Change through popular protest did not figure in assessments of future political development.

Yet this assumption was mistaken. Over the course of January, February and March 2011, the power and the fear changed sides.[2] Populations began

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[2]   I am indebted to my colleague Marc Valeri for the conceptualisation I am employing here (of power and fear changing sides).

to sense that popular empowerment was a realistic possibility. Regimes, conversely, began to react through fear, sensing that they were in danger of losing control over their peoples. Some regimes struck back with violence, some sought to defuse unrest through reform or increased welfarism, and some pursued a combination of both. The only Arab government that made no change to policy at any level was that of Qatar.[3]

ii. "The Levels of Inequality and Injustice, While Substantial, Are Nonetheless Tolerable"

The existence of substantial social and economic inequality and of injustices in the exercise of political power in the Arab world were acknowledged by external as well as domestic observers. The possibility that this was of an extent and character to lead on to regime-threatening unrest, however, was not given serious attention. One reason for this was that the growing inequality appeared to be part of a global trend set in train by the processes of globalization. Economic liberalization has generally engendered significant growth in GDPs of countries around the world, while increasing income inequalities within states. While the poor may be materially better off than before, the gap between them and the wealthiest layer of the population has tended to widen. Inequality, therefore, can be interpreted as a side effect of a wider process that can be projected as both necessary and ultimately beneficial. Without growth, societies would be trapped in a cycle of perpetuated poverty.

Some of the statistics of economic growth in the Arab world appeared to give credence to this analysis. The Egyptian economy, for example, was growing at an average six percent per annum for most of the 1998–2008 period – a substantially higher rate than that of any European country. It was easy to assume that the material needs of the Egyptian people would ultimately be satisfied through sustained economic growth. Anger at inequality was, it was believed, being dulled by greater well-being.

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[3]   The Qatari government's exceptional position is explained by the very high per capita income and welfare (stemming from the scale of oil revenues relative to the population); the privileged position of the heavily-outnumbered native population; the close family ties which bind much of the country's elite together, and perhaps the elements of reform that were already in place.

The assumption was, nonetheless, mistaken. Four aspects of developments help to explain why the extent of inequality and injustice were not compatible with the maintenance of a stable polity. First, economic liberalization in most Arab countries (especially those whose GDP were not dependent mainly on oil revenue) carried with it a fundamental change in the "bargain" between rulers and ruled. Prior to economic liberalization the political systems of the presidential republics of the Arab world had been based on an informal social contract: regimes would provide welfare and steadily improving social and physical infrastructure for the population, and populations would remain politically quiescent and respectful of regime authority. Economic liberalization reduced the role of the state in the economy and its ability or desire to maintain welfare and services. Even the state educational facilities, in some countries, began to levy fees and charges. The other side of the contract, however, was maintained: populations were still expected to remain politically quiescent. The "bargain," therefore, had lost its rationale.

Second, populations were hit by a sharply rising cost of living. To some extent this stemmed from the form of economic liberalization that had been adopted. Populations had in the past benefited not only from relatively cheap food and basic consumer goods. This stemmed in part from government subsidies that kept these goods affordable, and in part from the goods' local origin – they were produced within the country concerned. Government subsidies were reduced or abolished as part of the process of economic liberalization, and markets were opened up to competition from abroad. While the imported goods were sometimes more expensive than local produce, they also tended to be of higher quality. This had a negative impact on local agricultural and manufacturing production (especially the undertakings engaged in production of basic goods). The growth of GDP came mainly from the services and trade sectors of the economy. Imports accounted for an increasing proportion of the basic goods consumed by the population. With the rapid rise in global prices of commodities from the middle of the first decade of the 21st century, therefore, populations found it increasingly difficult to cover their primary needs.

Third, notwithstanding the economic growth that was being achieved, the conditions facing a significant part of the population were in fact deteriorating. Of greatest import here were the unemployed – especially the

youth unemployed. Rates of overall unemployment were in practice not greatly in excess of those in some European countries (the Arab average was 10.5 percent of those available for work), but the rates of youth employment were unacceptably high. ILO figures for 2008 show that unemployment in the 15–29 age cohort stood at 21 percent for Egypt, 38 percent for Tunisia, 40 percent for Libya, and 50 percent for Yemen.[4] The rates of youth unemployment, moreover, had been steadily rising since the early 1990s.

Fourth, populations were becoming increasingly aware of the extent of social and economic inequality in their societies. At one level, this related to the evident and sometimes-flaunted wealth of the class that had drawn most benefit from economic liberalization. Luxury cars flashed past the housing areas where poorer people lived, engendering suspicions (many well-grounded) about the provenance of this new wealth. Stories of corrupt deals between government/regime personnel and businessmen, to the immense benefit of each, were rife. At another level, more was now known about the amassed wealth at the center of regimes. The making public of U.S. diplomatic cables by WikiLeaks played some part in this. Tunisians, for example, were able to read, in a cable from the U.S. Ambassador in Tunis to the State Department in Washington, that more than half of Tunisia's business elite was personally related to President Ben Ali (much of this through his wife's family).[5] Egyptians read estimates that the wealth of the Mubarak family ran to billions of dollars.[6] The combination of inequality and perceived injustice generated among the populations an ever-deepening disgust of the ruling establishment.

iii. "The Regimes Are Internally Solid, Based on the Perceived Common Interests of Key Elites"

Most regimes in the Arab world are kept in power by the close collaboration of presidential, military, security and sometimes business elites. The same applies to many regimes elsewhere also, especially in Africa and Asia. Many observers assumed that these elites were effectively and inevitably bound together by common interest. Division at the top would lead to the loss of power. The military and security needed the regime to safeguard

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[4]   International Labour Organisation, statistics accessed at the website www.ilo.org.
[5]   See *The Guardian*, January 13 and 14, 2011.
[6]   See *The Guardian*, February 12 and 13, 2011.

their privileged position in the state; and the presidential elite needed them so as to keep control of the population. They were forced to "hang together, otherwise they would hang separately."

In practice the uprisings revealed that this pattern did not hold universally. In fact, the outcome of the uprisings has in part been dependent on the nature of the relationship between presidential and military / security elites. In Egypt, the army has historically had a sense of national mission, critical to ending foreign interference in Egypt's affairs in the early 1950s and combating Israeli forces with varying degrees of success in the three major Arab–Israeli conflicts. Despite the army leadership being closely embroiled with the Mubarak regime, its support had limits. It was ultimately unwilling to oppose a trend that had gained the support of large sectors of the populace. A similar point can be made with regard to Tunisia. The Tunisian army, however, had retained a rather greater separation from the political sphere, in part because the President relied more on the internal security forces than the military.

In Syria, on the other hand, the armed forces had been molded and shaped by the Ba'thist regime. Its character, command structures, and identity were in effect interwoven with those of the regime. There was, therefore, little possibility that the army leadership might distance itself from President Bashar al-Assad and the Ba'thist leadership. It has, therefore, defended the regime with all the means at its disposal. The extensive loss of life in the uprising derives from this dynamic.

In Libya, the protection of the Qadhafi regime was vested in two main structures: the internal security organizations (some of which came under the Coordinating Council of Revolutionary Committees, while others reported directly to Qadhafi) and the "security battalions." The latter, while formally part of the regular army, were in practice directly under the control of sons of Qadhafi, with the largest force under Khamis. Mercenaries were recruited to strengthen these forces. The main part of the regular army was accorded a position of lesser status in the regime and, relative to the security battalions, was less well resourced – at least in the regime's final decade. Qadhafi sought, in this manner, to limit the possibility of army officers staging a military coup. It is not surprising, therefore, that when the uprising began it was the security battalions and the internal security organizations

which undertook the fighting. Much of the regular army, especially that in the east of the country, melted away.

iv. "The Regimes Retain a Significant Degree of 'Secondary Legitimacy' At the Popular Level"

When the presidential/republican regimes of the Arab world first came to power, they enjoyed a significant level of popular support. They had, mostly, come to replace regimes which were perceived as ineffective in achieving development, dominated by traditional religious and tribal forces, and protective of external commercial, political and strategic interests. The removal of these regimes was widely seen as an extension of the struggle for independence and self-determination. The presidential/republican regimes projected themselves as grounded in popular legitimacy, in so far as their objectives and rationale was to satisfy the needs and demands of the people. No opportunity was provided for this popular legitimacy to be directly tested through competitive elections, but there was nonetheless some basis to their claim.

Over time, and especially once the basis of the social contract had disappeared, popular support for the regimes changed in extent and in character. The far-reaching ideological slogans, envisaging the country's rapid transformation and development, no longer carried weight. The pace of development had proved slow and some of its outcomes problematic, the social order was becoming less egalitarian, and on the international level compromises were being made which belied nationalist agendas. Nonetheless, the regimes continued to enjoy some popular support. Much of this could be described as "secondary": people supported the regime not because they liked it, but because they were afraid of a possible alternative. The feared alternative might be a political trend (e.g. secularists concerned that militant Islamists would take power, or Islamists concerned that ardent secularists might do so) or else a scenario (e.g. the disintegration of the country through divisive conflict).

Most observers believed that a form of secondary legitimacy, based on the support just described, remained strong. In practice, however, secondary support was steadily waning. Opposition groups had begun to reach out to each other, exploring commonalities in their agendas. There was a strengthening conviction that it was the regimes themselves that were the problem,

and not the potential alternatives. Attempts by Egyptian, Lebanese, Moroccan, Syrian, Tunisian and Yemeni opposition groupings to agree on common platforms are documented in the Arab Reform Initiative's report, *Critical Dialogue between Diverse Opposition Groups*. The report was based on contacts made during 2009 and 2010, although it was not published until early in 2011.[7] The report revealed the difficulties encountered as well as the progress made. The critical point here, however, is that opposition groupings were becoming more aware of their shared interests and concerns; an urgent desire to see the removal of the existing regimes was common to all. Political pluralism now appeared more feasible. Regimes, having lost most of their primary legitimacy, were now losing their secondary legitimacy too.

v. "Pan-Arab Identification Has Ceased to Be of Any Relevance to the Arab Political Scene"

Ever since the publication of Fouad Ajami's *The Arab Predicament* in 1977, outside observers had paid diminishing attention to Arab identification.[8] Arab nationalism was seen as a spent force, and the conclusion was drawn that Pan-Arab identification carried no political significance. This sentiment was strengthened by the events of the 1990s and early 2000s. The 1991 Gulf War placed in sharp outline the divisions between Arab countries, as also did the 2003 war (perhaps less starkly). The Arab League played no significant role in either war; nor was it active in resolving Libya's Lockerbie issue. UN sanctions remained in place for nine years. The "War on Terror" (after 2001) further shifted the dynamics of regional security policy outside of regional control or influence.

The Arab uprisings have put Arab identification back on the political map. Events in one Arab country clearly had a major impact on developments in others. Unrest and resistance in one triggered similar phenomena in others. The experience showed that the Arab world constitutes a common ideational space, with information and opinion resting in a shared cultural pool. Satellite television channels (especially Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya) have played a key role in creating the contemporary articulation and vitality of this cultural pool. Arab populations currently watch the same television,

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7   Arab Reform Initiative, *Critical Dialogue between Diverse Opposition Groups*, www.arab-reform.net
8   Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

absorb the same news and views, and relate to the reported developments as integral to their domestic experience and environment. State oppression in one country, therefore, creates echoes and vibrations across the region.

External commentators have highlighted the use that demonstrators have made of Twitter and social networking sites. No doubt these were of significance in mobilizing people for specific demonstrations, but satellite television was more important. Popular access to a shared source of news and information, located within a common cultural context, enabled the spirit of resistance to spread. It is instructive to compare the experience of the Arab Spring with Arab reactions to the 2009 Iranian Green Revolution. Pro-democracy demonstrations in Tehran and other Iranian cities stimulated no copycat demonstrations in the Arab world. The resonance coming from shared Arab identification was missing.

3. Applying the Lessons of the Arab Spring: Is Regime Change to Be Expected in the Arab Countries of the Gulf?

All of the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have been affected by the Arab Spring. In the case of Bahrain, this has taken the form of a major confrontation between protestors and the authorities. In Oman, there have also been protests, although rather more muted in character. In Kuwait, parliamentary pressures on the ruling family for political reform have become more intense, and (separately) there have been demonstrations by stateless Kuwaitis. The Qatari, Saudi and United Arab Emirates (UAE) governments have reacted to the fear of unrest rather than to actual unrest: the Qatari government has raised the salaries of government employees, the Saudi government has introduced a massive program aimed at improving its population's material welfare, and the UAE government has applied a combination of welfarism and reform. A degree of quiescence has returned to the region, but the future remains worthy of debate.

Assessments of whether regime change can be envisaged in the GCC states tend to emphasize the aspects in which they differ from other Arab states. A well-balanced assessment, however, requires acknowledgement of commonalities as well as differences. The analysis below will focus first on the commonalities, before going on to considering whether these commonalities are outweighed by the differences. "Outweighed" would imply that the dynamic towards regime-change is blunted.

i. Commonalities Between the GCC States and Other Arab States. On All of the Dimensions Underlying the "mistaken Assumptions," Substantial Commonality Exists.

As in other Arab countries, popular protest has figured significantly in the GCC states' historical background. Indeed, the Arabian Peninsula could lay claim to have hosted the last "popular liberation struggle" in the Arab world, prior to the current uprisings.[9] The Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf (later dividing into the PFLO and PFLB, focusing specifically on Oman and Bahrain) remained active as a political movement and guerrilla force in Oman through to the mid-1970s. Its roots stretched back to the mid-1960s. Attempts at popular mobilization have, of course, also been made on bases of region and religion.

The measures that GCC governments have taken in the wake of the Arab Spring, furthermore, reflect some shift in the power / fear balance. The motivation of the measures (whether repressive, reform-inclined or welfarist) clearly stems from a sense of insecurity. Action was perceived as necessary to buttress the regimes. Some parts of Gulf society experienced a corresponding sense of potential empowerment.

On issues of inequality and injustice, there is also a significant measure of commonality. Despite the image that the GCC states have in the outside world, oil wealth has not resolved some of the urgent material issues facing the population. Youth unemployment, in particular, has remained a serious problem – especially in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. The rate of youth unemployment in Saudi Arabia, according to ILO figures, is higher than it is in Egypt. The figures for 2008 (the most recent available) show that unemployment in the 15–29 age bracket stood at 27 percent in Saudi Arabia, as against 21 percent in Egypt. Even more significant was unemployment in the 20–24 age bracket, which stood at 40 percent for Saudi Arabia. In Bahrain, unemployment in the 15–29 bracket stood at 38 percent.[10] Unemployment inevitably carries a particular edge in societies characterized by extremes of flaunted wealth.

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[9]   The case of the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), especially when it was led by John Garang, could be taken as a later instance of popular liberation struggle. The SPLM, however, was always strongly regionally based, with an agenda that had a significant separatist dimension – eventually leading on to the secession of South Sudan.
[10]   According to ILO statistics, available at www.ilo.org

The GCC states rank moderately in international corruption indexes. They do not figure among the more corrupt countries in the world. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2010 (the most recent to be produced) ranks all of the GCC states more favorably than any African state north of Botswana, and above most Latin American and Asian countries.[11] Yet the picture provided may be misleading. The Corruption Perceptions Index covers only the public sector, and the "perceptions" are those of development banks, major consultancies, etc. Perceptions at the popular level can be different, and the focus may be more on injustice rather than corruption per se. "Injustice" here includes practices that can be characterized as "the legal misallocation of resources": where elites benefit massively from procedures to which they have privileged access. The procedures concerned (such as land allocation by royal grant) are legally compliant.

Arab identification affects the citizens of GCC states in much the same way as it does other Arab states. Indeed, the main satellite channels that have enabled news and views to be carried around the Arab world, triggering demonstrations and a new consciousness, are themselves GCC-based. Past attempts to fashion a new Gulf identity, undertaken in the period since the 1991 Gulf War, have no doubt achieved some success. Gulf identity, however, appears now to have constituted an overlay rather than a replacement. Arab identification has retained its vitality among Gulf populations.

ii. Differences Between the GCC States and Other Arab States.

Although the GCC states have been significantly affected by the Arab Spring, and one of them (Bahrain) has seen prolonged and bitter conflict on the streets, it will be contended here that regime change is unlikely in any of the six states. In certain key respects, the dynamics affecting their political life are distinctively different from those of the Arab countries that have undergone regime change.

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[11]   The rankings for the GCC states, on a 1-10 scale where 10 is the best and 1 is the worst, are: Kuwait 4.5, Saudi Arabia 4.7, Bahrain 4.9, Oman 5.3, UAE 6.3, and Qatar 7.7. Some European countries rank substantially lower on the scale, such as Italy at 3.9. Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2010*, accessed at www.transparency.org

First, while severe social and economic problems face the populations of GCC states (as has been shown above), the acuteness with which inequality and injustice are experienced is blunted by greater material welfare. Unlike most other Arab countries, the social contract remains in being in the GCC states. Oil wealth has enabled the GCC governments to maintain levels of service provision, and welfare support, which have been phased out elsewhere. There are, therefore, safety nets that give some support (however rudimentary) to the unemployed and underprivileged.

Salaries for those in employment, moreover, are high relative to salaries elsewhere in the Arab region. This has implications for the unemployed as well as the employed. For as long as one member of a family, or a number of members of an extended family, is in employment, a reasonable standard of family welfare can be maintained. Custom ensures that family support is available to those without the means to provide for themselves.

At one level, moreover, all nationals of GCC states enjoy some measure of privilege. They have opportunities and access to services that migrant workers, mostly employed in the lowest-paid occupations in the economy, do not possess. In Egypt and Tunisia, the size and strength of the demonstrations were buttressed by the participation of those from the lowest-paid occupations. In the GCC states (more so in some than in others) migrants dominate this sector of employment. Migrants generally have neither the motivation nor the security to engage in politically driven movements within their host country. The political dynamics of countries heavily dependent on migrant labor, therefore, differ substantially from those dependent on national labor.

Second, the armed forces and security organizations of GCC states tend to be integral to, and closely integrated within, the regimes. This relationship with the regimes resembles more the pattern found in Syria than that in Egypt. Ruling families, and individuals with close tribal, religious or ethnic links to the ruling families, dominate the command structures of the armed and security forces. Those recruited to the soldiery, moreover, also tend to come from trusted ethnic and religious groupings. The severity with which the security forces in Bahrain ultimately reacted to the unrest in the country reflects the solidarity of the regime-security linkage. The security forces were not likely to adopt an independent line, nor to fear the implications of acting strongly against one sector of the population. Support from Saudi

Arabia and the UAE, itself reflecting the pan-GCC character of regime-security linkages, further enhanced the strength and severity of the action taken.

Third, the support and legitimacy bases of GCC regimes are, to varying degrees, different to those in the presidential republics of the Arab world. The regimes in GCC states emerged on a foundation of tradition-oriented legitimacy (ethnic, tribal and/or religious), buttressed in some cases by elements of charismatic legitimacy. The "right to rule" was not projected in terms of satisfying popular demands for radical economic and social transformation. Rather, it rested in traditional patterns of rule, where the ruler managed power in association with other members of the ruling family and key tribal and/or religious figures. The latter, in turn, brought with them the support of their tribes or religious movements.

Support of this kind does not necessarily diminish if a regime fails to deliver material benefit or social/political reform. Indeed, when threats arise from other parts of the population or from outside, the core support may strengthen. Core groupings, in such situations, feel impelled to rally around a regime which they helped to create and within which they enjoy privileged status. GCC regimes, therefore, continue to enjoy a significant degree of primary support, although perhaps only within narrowly circumscribed circles.

Secondary support has also been less likely to ebb away in the GCC states. As the regimes developed after the oil boom, they began to benefit from a new source of legitimacy: eudemonic legitimacy. Populations began to support regimes because of the welfare and material benefits that the regimes had delivered. Moreover, the rise in oil prices after 2002, and the relatively high levels of oil revenue that have accrued to the GCC states since then, have created boom conditions for significant parts of the population. Material welfare, and the contrast with conditions in many other regional states, have created an increased fear of alternatives. Political division, regional or ethnic/religious conflict, or externally orchestrated subversion could all threaten this personal and communal well-being. The projection of an "Iranian threat," whether realistic or not, deepened the fear of alternatives, strengthening secondary support among business, professional and state-salaried social groupings.

5. Concluding Remarks

The Arab uprisings appeared at the start to be shaped in a similar fashion: popular revolts against authoritarian governments, calling for more open, accountable and representative systems. The manner in which unrest in one state triggered off unrest in others added to this sense of commonality. In practice, however, the manner in which popular frustration with government impinges on individual states, and the likely outcome of the unrest, varies considerably from one state to another. This is most marked when contrasting the states of the GCC with other Arab states – especially Egypt and Tunisia. In practice, however, the other Arab states also present a diverse pattern. Of particular significance in this latter diversity is the differing ways in which the military and security organizations relate to the presidential/monarchical core of regimes. Where the relationship is close and integral, the military/security response has tended to be fiercest. Whether the use of violence will guarantee regime survival in the long-term, however, remains to be seen.

The Causes of the Social Unrest in Western Asia and North Africa[1]

Ambassador Robert Rydberg, Deputy Director-General, Head of Department for Middle East and North Africa, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

The Events of 2011

Historical developments are difficult to assess without the benefit of historical hindsight. Moreover, the social unrest in Western Asia and North Africa – or the Arab spring or revolt, or whatever term we may want to apply – is still an ongoing process, the end of which we have not seen yet. An analysis of the causes of the dramatic developments of the beginning of 2011 is therefore also in part an analysis of what is happening today.

Developments were indeed dramatic. What cannot be described as anything but revolutionary events spread with uncharacteristic speed, perhaps only experienced with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The beginning is well known: on December 17, 2010, Mohammed Bouazizi, a 26-year old vegetable vendor immolated himself in a town in the center of Tunisia because of police action depriving him of his livelihood. A protest wave swept through the country forcing the resignation of President Ben Ali on January 14. Shortly afterwards, on January 25, mass demonstrations and meetings began in Cairo and elsewhere in Egypt, with President Hosni Mubarak leaving in even shorter time, on February 11. Two Presidents had left within less than two months.

Mid-February also saw major protests in Bahrain, Iran and Yemen, and the first manifestations in Libya. The state of emergency was lifted in Algeria and the pro-democracy February 20 Movement was established in Morocco. Processes for constitutional reform were launched in Morocco and, amidst more controversy, in Jordan. Protests spread to Syria in March, quickly to be met by a strong violent response. Saudi troops were sent to Bahrain and the situation quickly deteriorated in Yemen, with President Saleh reneging on agreements to resign brokered by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

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[1]   The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Swedish Government.

Civil war broke out in Libya and Colonel Qadhafi's threats against the population in Eastern Libya impelled the Security Council to authorize military action, carried out under NATO leadership.[2]

Protests seemingly inspired by Tunisia and Egypt have at the same time occurred elsewhere in the region, including in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, in Oman and in Kuwait.[3] The remaining GCC countries have been tranquil with the exception of a few incidents in eastern Saudi Arabia, sparking nervous reactions and prompting generous economic measures by King Abdullah.[4] Little direct effect has been visible in Lebanon, which has its own dynamics, but the Syrian development is likely to have a profound impact.

After the quick departures of Presidents Ben Ali and Mubarak there were hopes, and fears, of a domino effect throughout the region sweeping away other long-time leaders. Such an effect did not produce itself immediately, and we have seen stronger and more violent resistance by the forces in power. Differences between the states of the region have been obvious, with some engulfed in violence, some on a still tenuous path of reform and some believing – correctly or not – that this is a phase which they can pass without profound change.

In Tunisia and Egypt, the military leadership fairly quickly came to the conclusion that their long-term interests, and those of their nations, were not served by the army using all its power to contain popular protests. That determined the immediate outcome and limited the number of casualties, which was still in the several hundreds in both countries.

The Syrian army leadership, with its close connections to the ruling elite, has not seen a similar course of action as an option. More than 2,000 people, mostly civilians, have already been killed and there are concerns that the situation will deteriorate dramatically.

In Libya, many high officers defected to the NTC rebels. The civil war is now all but over, with Libya entering a complex, challenging but fundamentally promising post-Qadhafi era.

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[2]   Sweden has participated primarily with reconnaissance aircraft.
[3]   The inspiration seems to have spread even to non-Arab and democratic Israel, with major demonstrations calling for social change – with the occasional placard about Tahrir Square.
[4]   Benefitting Saudi citizens but less so the approximately seven million overseas workers.

Yemen remains at the brink of full civil war, in spite of continuing regional efforts to secure the departure of President Saleh.[5] In Bahrain, most protests appear to have been quelled, but the fundamental reasons behind the unrest have not been addressed.

Significant proposals for constitutional reform, limiting executive power and strengthening parliaments, have been approved in Morocco, and have been put forward in Jordan and Algeria. The region is also gearing up for a number of important elections in the next few months: for Parliament and President in Egypt, and for Parliament in Morocco and Oman and Constituent Assembly in Tunisia.

Main Factors

The differences in the genesis of the popular protests in e.g. Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria were certainly significant. Protests in Tunisia began in the neglected hinterland. In Egypt, they arose in the main cities. Libya saw risings in the traditional anti-Qadhafi east, and also in Syria protests began in areas far away from the central power.

Protests have occurred in sophisticated modern states such as Tunisia, in Egypt – with a history of statehood perhaps only surpassed by China – and in clan-based societies with weak or non-existent institutions, such as Libya or Yemen.

Such differences notwithstanding, there are important common elements in what has occurred in most parts of the region. Previous Arab revolutions took place in a colonial or post-colonial context and were in a sense revolutions of ruling elites, often with a pan-Arab or Arab socialist flavor. The Iranian revolution of 1979 had obvious popular roots, an agenda that was both socialist and anti-Western and it expressed strong religious sentiments, including those of Shia exceptionalism and martyrdom.

The events of 2011 have been driven by broad and loosely organized popular movements, often with youth in the forefront. The agendas have been secular and domestic, and have merged economic, social and overtly political demands.

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[5]   President Saleh left Yemen for medical treatment following the assault in June, but, at the time of writing, has not stepped down.

This broad agenda seems to be a logical response to a number of characteristics of many countries of the Arab world today. It was summarized in the UNDP Arab Human Development Report of 2009, before the events: "[There] is an all-too-common sense of limited opportunities and personal insecurity, witnessed in the world's highest levels of unemployment, deep and contentious patterns of exclusion, and, ultimately, strong calls from within for reform."[6]

Demographics play a role. Arab states have a young population, with a median age in 2010 of 23 years, as compared to for example 34 years for China and 41 years for Sweden – a figure well below all other regions of the world, except sub-Saharan Africa. It is a reasonably educated young population,[7] with 23 percent of the age group enrolled in tertiary education – a figure above even that of China and the East Asia/Pacific region. At the same time youth unemployment in Arab states is said to be twice the global average, and 40 percent of high school and university graduates do not find work. This reality has for years been visible to visitors to Arab cities, with scores of idle and frustrated mostly young men providing a source of recruitment for many a cause.[8]

Economic policy has typically oscillated between liberalization, mainly giving opportunities for short-term gain to a small well-connected elite, and costly subsidies on basic commodities. Few countries have pursued a coordinated policy of economic and political reform. Even relatively good economic growth has not been able to reduce unemployment in new generations. Nor have the non-oil producing countries been able to create sustainable buffers to handle for example recent spikes in the price for food commodities, which have dramatically affected populations.

Corruption has been rampant. When Transparency International ranks perceptions of corruption, many Arab states fare badly: Morocco 85, Egypt 98, Algeria 105, Syria 127, Libya 146 and Iraq 175 to mention some (China 78 and Sweden 4, by way of comparison).

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[6]   UNDP, Regional Bureau for Arab States, *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries* (New York: United Nations Publications, 2009), 5f.

[7]   At least from a formal point of view; many question the quality of education provided.

[8]   Statistics on median age and tertiary enrolment quoted from the UNDP's *Human Development Report 2010*, and on youth unemployment from the *Arab Human Development Report 2009*.

The young Arab population has endured seeing their countries being led for decades by an old, ineffective, isolated and increasingly corrupt leadership. Arab states have provided some of the world's most long-standing political leaders. When the median Egyptian, Tunisian or Yemeni was born, Mubarak, Ben Ali and Saleh were already in power. The parents of the median Libyan were at best in primary school when Qadhafi took office.

Old political leadership in many Arab countries has gradually lost much of its remaining legitimacy. It has not put itself to the test through genuine democratic elections. It has not been able to deliver good economic and social improvements for ordinary people. It has continued – apparently with less and less appeal – to justify itself by extolling its importance for stability and security, and perhaps for Arab causes, notably that of the Palestinians.

Arab governments have over the years established security systems geared at keeping track of dissent and independent political organization, often with the struggle against militant Islamism or terrorism as an excuse. In reality these security systems have typically served the particular or even personal interests of ruling elites, which have tried to substitute fear and repression for legitimacy.

But at one point at the beginning of 2011 that strategy did not work any more. The sense of frustration and even desperation among large segments of the population in Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere was such that enough people were willing to take the risk to challenge oppressive regimes.

Particular events sparked developments in Tunisia and Egypt. Both countries had seen increased political turbulence and civil society action since 2007–08. Miners went on a major strike in Tunisia in 2008. The personal greed of the clan of Ben Ali and his wife grow rapidly to the point of threatening even the interests of the elite. The fraudulent elections in Egypt in 2010, which largely left the opposition outside of parliament, the illness of President Mubarak and fear that he intended to pass power to his son Gamal, opened for a new and critical political climate.

International News and IT

A mixture of economic, social and political factors thus produced the conditions for a revolutionary situation in the Arab world. It has been aided by widespread access to modern communication technology.

International news networks, in particular the Arab channel of Al-Ja-zeera, reach throughout the region. A common language, understood at least by the educated elite, and a still strong sense of belonging to one Arab nation and people, ensure that news of regional developments have a strong impact. Good and bad experiences from other countries in the same region are therefore more likely to influence thought and action than e.g. in Europe or East Asia.

Internet penetration has increased rapidly, with for example 34 percent of Tunisians and 25 percent of Egyptians having direct access.[9] The number of Facebook users is said to be some 18 percent of the population in Tuni-sia, five percent in Egypt, one percent in Syria, four percent in Libya – and 45 percent in the United Arab Emirates. Mobile telephone networks have a wide coverage all over the region.

Facebook, Twitter, blogs, text messaging etc., were used to spread infor-mation and to bring people together for meetings and demonstrations. Where there is no or limited access by independent international media, such as today in Syria or in Iran, videos caught on mobiles and transmit-ted on YouTube – or streamed directly using the Swedish-developed service Bambuser – have become an alternative. It is today substantially more dif-ficult to hide facts and cover up atrocities, in the way in which for example President Hafez al-Assad did after the killing of 10,000–40,000 people in Hama in 1982.

Information technology facilitated the Arab revolt, and will continue to facilitate the spread of ideas in the region. Access to independent informa-tion will influence the way in which people in the region will act as well as the way in which the outside world will respond.

Notwithstanding the fact that modern information technology can of course be used as an instrument of repression to control dissent, events in the Arab world this year illustrate the fact that technological development will, by and large, help to democratize information and knowledge, and thereby also power.

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[9]   Internet World Stats and ITU. Cf. China 36 percent and Sweden 92 percent.

Character of the Forces of Change

The Arab revolt has been largely secular and driven by internal forces. The role of the international community has so far been limited, with the notable exception of the case of Libya.

References to Islam, religion, political ideology or international issues – such as the Israeli/Palestinian conflict – were absent in the major popular demonstrations in Tunisia and Egypt and elsewhere. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt initially appeared to take a standoffish position and it took some time for its members and supporters to join in numbers.

That said, the large majority of protesters everywhere in the region have obviously been Muslims, many of them pious and devout. But the daily prayers at the Tahrir Square first and foremost conveyed a message of a united people.

Protesters in Tunisia and Egypt were aided by the fact that they represented a broad cross-section of their peoples. They could in particular not be portrayed as representing any particular religious or ethnic segment, nor did they oppose regimes with a particular religious or ethnic basis. Such aspects, however, add a complicating layer to situations such as those in Syria and Bahrain.

Attempts by, for example, Iran to portray developments in the rest of the region as a Muslim protest against pro-Western governments, bear little relation to realities on the ground. Syria's claim at the start of protests in the region that it would be immune due to its government's stand against Israel was also soon disproved.

If issues of the role of Islam in Arab societies and the Israeli/Palestinian conflict played little or no role in triggering the wave of popular protests in the Arab world, it is obvious that such issues will be influenced by further developments. Bans and restrictions against Islamist parties have been lifted in different countries, and it is clear that they will find a new space and will have an important role to play in the future. There is reason to hope that more extreme policies will be tempered by democratic interaction with other political forces.

The Palestinian question has contributed to a sense of humiliation in the Arab world. Arab governments attuned to popular opinion will no doubt continue to focus on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and inaction will come at a political price, also for Western governments. A viable two-state

solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security, will in the longer term also be essential for stability and development in the region.

No one has been able to show that popular movements have been guided or manipulated by Western governments. On the contrary, Western governments and the international community as a whole were by and large caught off-guard by the so-called Arab Spring. Few initially believed that the regime in Tunisia would fall, and even fewer that it would happen in Egypt.

The United States and some European states were indeed criticized for being slow to react and for over-estimating the transient stability of repressive Arab governments. But once people took to the streets it was obvious that the sympathies of democratic nations could only be with the forces of change that laid claim to values of popular power, democracy and human rights.

This is not the occasion to analyze the international reaction to events this year in the Arab world. Suffice to say, however, that although that reaction – and specifically concrete support for reform efforts – may impact on their future success, it was not their cause or even a major driving force. On the contrary, we are seeing a proud and self-reliant Arab movement, sometimes not even willing to accept the support offered by outsiders.

A Unique Development?

A number of the social, economic, political and cultural factors that play a role in the Arab revolt obviously exist elsewhere. The demography is not unique. Many countries face the problems of a growing, frustrated young generation. Unemployment is a global challenge. So is corruption. And many countries are stuck with a political leadership that is seen as increasingly isolated and unable to understand the problems of their populations, let alone devise any solutions.

Nor is the Arab world unique in having a cultural affinity that facilitates the spread of ideas across national boundaries. It is in fact interesting to note that contemporary history provides a number of examples in which democracy has made advances in regional leaps, such as Southern Europe after 1975, Latin America and parts of East Asia in the 1980s and Central and Eastern Europe after 1989.

What was remarkable in the Arab world in 2011 was the combination of factors of change. Stagnation was apparent. The security and international environment was permissive. Modern technology undid the information monopoly of established regimes and spread news and ideas at a pace hitherto unknown.

Events this year put an end to talk of an exceptionalism that meant that democracy has no place in Arab or Muslim societies.

Concluding Remarks

The fall of Colonel Qadhafi, seven months after President Mubarak and eight months after President Ben Ali, again demonstrated that the period of dramatic change in the Arab world is not a past event but very much an ongoing process. Major uncertainties remain, to name some: how profound will reform be in Tunisia and Egypt? Will economic hardship provoke new protest? How difficult will state-building be in Libya? How much worse will the situation get in Syria before it gets better? Will the pace of reform be enough in Morocco, Jordan and Algeria? Can the implosion of Yemen be stopped? How will Saudi Arabia be affected? How will the region affect Iran, and how will Iran affect the region? How will the region affect Palestine, and how will Palestine affect the region?

With such major uncertainties any analysis has to be preliminary. What is clear is that the Arab world is being transformed in a way that has profound implications for its own peoples and for the international system.

Change is underway. Turbulence is likely to continue. But we have reason to believe that when the dust settles, the Arab world that will emerge will be more responsive to the expectations of its own people and to the requirements of today's world.

Events so far also inspire humility. It is difficult to predict when a society under stress will reach the tipping point. It is difficult to predict how the balance of forces will develop, let alone how it will impact on its neighbors, close and far.

From a Swedish perspective, it is also natural to see that events so far vindicate our view that good governance, respect for human rights and governments that are ultimately responsible to their own peoples are essential factors for real political stability. Bad governance, abuse of rights and

ineffective and self-serving governments produce social unrest – not always immediately, but almost inevitably.

Rethinking the Libya War from an International Governance Perspective

Dr. Wang Lincong, Professor of Political Science and History, Director of International Relations Division of the Institute of West Asian & African Studies and Secretary-General of the Gulf Research Center, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)

The year 2011 is a watershed in the historical development of the Middle East, and also a watershed in Libya's history. A major symbol of the drastic changes in the Middle East is the successive collapse of "strongman regimes," and the era of autocracies in the Middle East is on the wane. There are two manifestations: one is the ending of autocracy through bottom-up mass campaigns, as in Tunisia and Egypt; the other is the ending of autocracy through people's revolts, and more importantly, through relying on external forces, as in Libya. By comparing the two different modes, we may find that each has its unique causes. As for the latter, it has become an urgent subject to examine the Libya War and post-war reconstruction from the perspective of international governance.

The following analyses will center around three aspects: (i) Why can an internal turmoil evolve into an international war? (ii) What are the deficiencies in international governance, as exposed in the Libya War? (iii) The importance of strengthening international governance in the process of post-war reconstruction in Libya.

I. Causes of the Libya War

1. Internal Causes: Gradual Loss of the Legitimacy of the Qadhafi Regime and Revolt of the Libyan People

People usually characterize modern Libya by three key phrases: oil wealth, political strongman and tribe formation, which are the key elements that determined the social development of Libya. During Qadhafi's regime, though political integration was quickened, the social structure of Libya has not changed. What is more important, the corruption of the Qadhafi

administration as well as inequality in the distribution of oil wealth have sharpened social contradictions and opposition between ethnic groups. Popular support has been gradually lost. Tribes in the east of Libya are hostile to Qadhafi's regime, and held large-scale protests against Qadhafi in 1993 and 2006. Many people were expelled or imprisoned. As a result, even with great oil wealth, Libya's unemployment rate reaches 30 percent, and those below the poverty line constitute 33 percent of its population. In fact, Libya has been trapped in a so-called "resource curse." All the above has greatly shaken Qadhafi's ruling foundation. Therefore, it was inevitable that the Libyan people would rise up, when they were inspired by demonstrations against the government in the neighboring countries of Tunisia and Egypt.

2. External Causes: European Strategy of "Mediterranean Union" and the Libya War

The core reason why the internal revolts in Libya quickly evolved into an international war is the promotion of the strategy of the "Mediterranean Union."

As everyone knows, North Africa is adjacent to the European continent, and can be regarded as the backyard of the EU. Besides, it is one of the sources of European oil, and has an important geopolitical status. In 2008, on behalf of the EU, France first proposed a plan for a Mediterranean Union, which actually originated from the "Barcelona Process" established in 1995. After the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon, the plan for a Mediterranean Union quickened its steps. However, this plan was obstructed because of Qadhafi's open objection. He denounced the Mediterranean Union plan on the grounds that it intended to undermine unity in the Arab world and among African countries. At a deeper level, the reason why France took the lead in attacking Qadhafi's regime was to speed up the Mediterranean Union plan. In March 2011, French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé pointed out: "The Mediterranean Union must be re-established. This decision to form a union on the two shores of the Mediterranean was ahead of its time. The Union was to be not only economic but also cultural and political. Certainly what is happening today in the southern Mediterranean changes the situation. It is our duty to reflect on this and to retake the initiative."[1] On

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[1]   http://www.france24.com/fr/20110301-alain-juppe-quai-orsay-nouveau-souffle-monde-arabe-diplomatie-alliot-marie-mam

March 17, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1973, establishing a no-fly zone over Libya in order to protect civilians and civilian residential areas from the threat of armed attacks. On March 19, French fighters took the lead in launching air strikes against Libyan military facilities. A multinational coalition began a military campaign against Libya. France also took the lead in acknowledging Libya's National Transitional Council. Hence, the reason why Libya quickly marched toward war is not only that it was pushed forward by external forces, but also that it is one of the major steps of European countries (like France) to advance the Mediterranean Union plan with the help of military means.

II. Basic Characteristics of the Libya War and Their Implications

The characteristics of the Libya War are as follows: (i) use of the "selective interference" strategy by Western countries, i.e. following the principle of being advantageous to their own strategic interests in selecting the object and goal of influencing or interfering. Now, a case in point of "selective interference" is the military operations against Libya; (ii) use of "limited interference" mode, i.e., taking advantage of UN authorization and opposition forces within Libya and conducting limited military strikes to reach the goal of interference. The influence of this war is profound.

1. NATO's military interference has rendered high casualties of innocent civilians and destruction of civil infrastructure. Due to continuous bombings, the number of civilian casualties reaches as high as 50,000. For a small country with a population of 6.3 million, the cost is tremendous, incurring new and serious humanitarian disasters. At the same time, many refugees are pouring into neighboring countries and South Europe, drawing the attention and concern of the international community.

2. NATO's military interference has posed a challenge to international governance, particularly to the concept of sovereignty in the international codes of conduct. UNSCR 1973 specifies that "all necessary means to protect Libyan civilians" does not include sending land troops to occupy Libya. However, NATO's military intervention goes far beyond UN authorization. It reflects UN's deficiencies in capability and organization, though the UN is one of the subjects of international governance.

3. NATO's military intervention has revealed its intention of "expanding southward" following its "eastward expansion," not excluding its

connection with India and attempt to expand into Asia. NATO's functions are gradually moving around the globe, which will have a far-reaching influence on the international strategic configuration.

4. The collapse of Qadhafi's autocracy has shown the collapse of the "Libya Model," which had been promoted by the U.S. as a solution to nuclear issues. It will have consequences for the international community in finding solutions to nuclear issues in the future, and pose a brand-new challenge to international governance. In the past ten years, the Qadhafi regime had eased up its relations with the West by openly condemning the 9/11 attacks, shouldering responsibility for compensating for the victims of the Lockerbie air disaster, voluntarily declaring that it would give up the development of weapons of mass destruction, etc. In return, Western countries not only resumed relations with Libya, but also provided security guarantees. Thus, in negotiations to solve nuclear issues (the DPRK nuclear issue and the Iran nuclear issue), the international community regards the "Libya Model" as a paradigm. However, NATO's military operations against Libya show that the submission of Qadhafi to the West did not earn a true security guarantee in exchange. As a result, in order to protect themselves, some countries in the Middle East may even take the risk of re-starting plans to develop nuclear weapons, leading to a nuclear arms race.

5. The Libya War has intensified internal dissension and tribal confrontation, and provided opportunities for extremists to expand their influence. It is very likely that Libya will become a main position of regional extremist forces, posing new challenges to regional and international security.

III. Importance of Post-War Reconstruction in Libya and Strengthening International Governance

The Libya War shows clearly the predicament of international governance, and reminds people to think about how to guarantee international order and strengthen international governance. When people find, in warring areas of Africa, that famine prevails and "it is easier to find a bullet than a grain," they should see more clearly the urgency of strengthening international governance. At present, the smoke of the Libya War has not dispersed completely. Post-war reconstruction will be long and arduous.

Libya's political integration and transition toward democracy demand a tolerant political framework. The recent declaration of Mustafa Abdul Jalil,

head of the National Transitional Council, to build a "moderate Islamist" country shows some tolerance. The National Transitional Council has been acknowledged by more and more countries.

From the perspective of international governance, the principle of maintaining national sovereignty is still a basic precondition to international governance. Advancing international governance cannot be achieved without the participation of sovereign states, nor can it be done without the coordination of the international community. The subjects of international governance include the governments of sovereign states and international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, etc. International governance does not equal the abandonment of sovereignty. A sovereign state remains a subject of international governance, and should play a leading role in international governance. In the same vein, international governance is not equal to great-power governance. The rights of developing countries should not be ignored or deprived through global governance. As for Libya, post-war reconstruction tasks should include the reconstruction of the economy, the political system and security order. The following three aspects should be emphasized: (i) Reconstruction must be based on respecting the right of choice and independence of the Libyan people. Only by using the substantial profits gained from oil resources to solve the problem of the Libyan people's livelihood can the legitimacy of the country's new administration and social stability be ensured; (ii) The leading role of the UN must be enhanced. For the present, the United Nations is still an important platform for the promotion of international governance. Strengthening the role of the UN can also prevent neocolonialism from taking the opportunity of reconstruction to control Libya and scramble for oil interests. What many African countries are concerned about is that Western "neocolonialism" would take advantage of Libya's post-war reconstruction to reappear in Africa; (iii) The role of the African Union (AU) must be strengthened. In the Libya War, the weakening of the AU's role calls for deep thought. Up to now, the African Union has not acknowledged Libya's National Transitional Council, which, to some degree, reflects the concerns of AU countries over Western intervention.

The second decade of the 21st century witnesses a watershed in the history of the Middle East. Additionally, the year 2011 witnesses the 10th

anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. At this special moment, people need to consider: Has the world become safe? How to strengthen international governance? Knowing that terrorist attacks also appeared in Norway and that there was turmoil even in the UK, people are more concerned about world security. The turbulence in Arab countries has reflected the deep-seated problems in the social development of Middle East. Undoubtedly, the Libya War is a major event in the field of international relations in the 21st century. This event shows that how to establish effective ways and means of international governance has become an urgent problem to be solved.

The Military Intervention in Libya to Protect Civilians[1]

Lieutenant Colonel Joachim Isacsson, Lecturer in Strategic Studies at the Institute for Security and Strategy, Swedish National Defence College

Introduction

On March 19, a multinational coalition spearheaded by France, the UK and the U.S. began a broad military campaign against pro-Qadhafi forces to enforce United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1973. NATO has been in full command of the operation, named Unified Protector, since March 31. Even though the fighting still continues in some areas, the now seven-month-old revolt against Qadhafi's rule is drawing to a close. At the conference on Libya in Paris on September 1, NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen stressed that NATO stands ready to continue operations as long as necessary.

The purpose of my presentation is to discuss Sweden's participation in the military intervention in Libya. To do that I have chosen to put the Swedish participation into a broader context, taking into consideration NATO and EU perspectives but also implications for future interventions.

Let me start with a background picture of our engagement in international operations. Sweden is and will remain an active partner in international efforts to promote stability and security in Europe and around the world. Sweden contributes to European security primarily through its membership in the European Union (EU) and also continues to cooperate closely with NATO. Sweden's strong support for the UN will continue. As you probably know, Sweden has a long tradition in participating in international peace support operations. Since 1948 more than 100,000 Swedes have served in 120 missions in 60 countries. Today Sweden has about 950 soldiers deployed in different operations across the world – predominantly NATO-led operations.

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[1]   This presentation represents my personal views only.

About fifty years ago Sweden deployed a total of eleven fighter-bombers and reconnaissance aircrafts in a legendary mission to support the UN in Katanga, Congo. In those days, the Swedish Air Force had the strength of about 1,000 aircrafts and when the operation in Katanga was concluded, it was cheaper to destroy the aircraft on the ground than to transport them back to Sweden. Operation Karakal, as we call the Swedish part of Operation Unified Protector in Libya, is the second time Sweden has deployed fighter aircrafts to an international operation.

The Road to Operation Unified Protector

To begin with, I think it would be useful to spend some time looking into some of the background issues behind the intervention, such as our understanding of the causes of the unrest, the different national interests at play and the steps that led to the intervention in Libya becoming a NATO operation.

Concerning the causes of the unrest, I would say that, even though the Arab countries are not homogenous and each country has its own individual dynamics, one important factor was that the protests were fed by socio-economic stagnation in combination with decades of political marginalization and repression – to put it simply: a number of stark inequalities existed, with small ruling elites living privileged lives at the cost of the vast majority of the population. It was also striking that in a number of the Arab countries the fear the people had shown for the regimes previously seemed to have dissipated. Both official and social media have had an important role in creating a domino effect across a number of different countries. While the unrest in Tunisia and Egypt actually led to relatively speedy regime changes, other protests were met with massive state violence, which was very much the case in Libya.

Concerning European interests in the events in North Africa, I believe that apart from the economic interests in the region and the fear of Islamic extremism thriving on any political instability, a major concern in Europe was the potential threat of more illegal immigration and the possibility of massive flows of refugees following any crisis. In other words, regional stability around Europe's borders is a key interest when North Africa is on the agenda.

The really important driving factor in making support for foreign intervention more likely, especially for countries like Sweden, was the humanitarian situation and the perceived obligation by European countries to act to protect defenseless civilians. Since I served as a young officer in the UN mission in Bosnia in the early 1990s, I can only stress how strong the memory of the horrible massacre of Srebrenica in 1995 still is – a massacre that could have been prevented. Historical events like that have certainly shaped how Sweden acts today and explain why both politicians and the population take a proactive attitude to foreign intervention in alleviating humanitarian crises.

That leads me to a decisive factor when considering Swedish participation in a military intervention – its legitimacy!

Here we need to recall the deteriorating situation in Libya, with continued violence against civilians, including air attacks. We need to remember that Qadhafi displayed an uncompromising attitude towards the opposition, directly threatened to continue attacking his own people and showed total disregard for international pleas for restraint. The remarkable plea from Libya's deputy head of mission to the UN for an arms embargo against his own country and a no-fly zone to prevent more air attacks on innocent civilians and to stop foreign mercenaries from entering the country underlined the gravity of the situation. Needless to say, the plea had strong support from the Libyan opposition. This resulted in UNSCR 1970, the first resolution on Libya, followed by UNSCR 1973 after three weeks of diplomatic efforts.

UNSCR 1973 defines the protection of civilians by all necessary means, establishes a no-fly zone (NFZ) and defines the enforcement of the arms embargo. In this respect, UNSCR 1973, drafted by France, the UK, the U.S. and Lebanon, may be seen as a historical mandate, since it is the first UN mandate in line with the newly adopted principle of responsibility to protect. This principle establishes that the international community has a responsibility to intervene when a government is unable or unwilling to protect its population. Responsibility to protect is therefore a justification for an armed intervention. That the People's Republic of China and Russia through their abstentions allowed a resolution that would form the basis for such an intervention to pass adds to its importance. However, most important was its full backing by the Arab League and the Cooperation Council for

the Arab States of the Gulf, which gave the mandate a unique legitimacy in the Arab world. This unprecedented level of support is likely to have been achieved so quickly thanks to Lebanese advice, which included a text in the resolution that strictly ruled out any foreign occupation on the ground.

Historical reasons have created a most delicate relationship between the West and the Arab world. In line with that the initial reactions towards the unrest in North Africa, both in Europe and the U.S., were characterized by a great deal of caution towards any form of military intervention. The difficulty of foreseeing the possible outcome of the unrest and an obvious unwillingness to end up in another Iraq or Afghanistan added to the reluctance to engage in an intervention. That France and the UK together pressed for action had a decisive impact.

While there was little international dispute over the measures included in UNSCR 1970, such as the arms embargo and the sanctions, the discussions around the implications for a NFZ were a different matter and revealed a myriad of fears regarding the political risks and raised questions over whether such a zone would actually make any difference at all on the ground. However, when discussing the prospects for success and possible risks of a military intervention, the pro-Qadhafi forces were probably not seen as a major challenge.

This leads me to the question of how the coalition of the willing intervening in Libya came to be the first operative NATO operation in an Arab country.

First, I believe there was a significant difference from earlier crises like those in Georgia, Iraq and Kosovo in terms of the strong UN mandate and the tight partnership NATO developed with a number of Arab states. This provided invaluable regional support and importantly led to a number of Arab countries taking part in the operation. Second, it needs to be recognized that the advance NATO planning machinery worked continuously without any significant delays. Third, there was an urgent need to unify the military command and the dependence on the U.S. to launch and sustain the operation. That the operation excluded forces on the ground was a key issue. A final factor was probably that a number of NATO member states strongly resisted a French lead and also it was not really conceivable that a European Union (EU) operation was a viable alternative.

The EU has a wide range of crisis management instruments, including diplomatic measures, humanitarian assistance and civil protection, military and civilian operations and migration and trade-related activities. The extraordinary European Council meeting on March 11 signaled a strong concern across Europe over the events in Libya, and the EU went beyond the UNSC in implementing sanctions. The European Commission launched the civilian protection mechanism and humanitarian assistance, making the EU the largest humanitarian donor to Libya. Diverging priorities and interests among the member states – and as mentioned the dependence on the U.S. for the military part – together with the lack of a permanent planning mechanism prevented the EU from presenting an alternative to the NATO-operation. The EU proposed an operation "EUFOR Libya" in order to support the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) – but this seems to have been more of a symbolic gesture. However, the EU will, as mentioned earlier, have the potential to support in a number of fields – not least the vital post-conflict stabilization phase.

So what in fact is Operation Unified Protector? The operation includes the NATO embargo operation – to be upheld by naval forces in response to UNSCR 1970 and the operations needed to fulfill the UNSCR call to close the Libyan airspace to all flights except humanitarian ones and to take all necessary measures to protect civilians under threat of attack. In line with this, NATO conducts reconnaissance, surveillance and information collection to identify those forces that present a threat to civilians and civilian-populated areas. Acting on this information, NATO air and maritime assets can engage targets on the ground or in the air.

The Swedish Participation

Guided by humanitarian considerations, Sweden strongly supported the UNSCR 1973. Sweden is one of the main contributors of humanitarian aid to Libya. At the end of March the possibilities of supporting a NATO operation in Libya were reviewed. At the time, Sweden had the responsibility to keep an EU Battlegroup in readiness. In that force package an air force enabling unit was identified as a suitable contribution. After the North Atlantic Council (NAC)-decision on March 27 to let NATO implement all military aspects of the UNSC resolution, partner nations were invited to contribute (the NATO Secretary General paid a personal visit to Sweden) and on April

1 the Swedish government responded by offering NATO eight JAS 39 "Griffin" multi-role fighters and a tanker for upholding the NFZ.

The Swedish air force unit was deployed to Sigonella Naval Air Station in Sicily 17 hours after the government decision. The Danish unit, deployed earlier, gave valuable support. The Swedish unit flies about 2–3 sorties with two fighters a day, mainly focusing on tactical reconnaissance. In addition to the air force unit, liaison officers have been posted in the NATO command structure, e.g. the air operation center commanding the air operations. The JAS 39 has proved to be a robust fighter that has been able to carry out its task without problems. On June 17 it was decided by the government to prolong the engagement of the Swedish participation; now with five fighters focusing entirely on tactical reconnaissance, a critical capability where the standard of the Swedish equipment has been highly appreciated. By providing tactical air reconnaissance with high precision before and after an attack, Sweden has played a vital part in minimizing collateral damage.

If we look at the value of a military contribution to a multinational operation, three important factors need to be considered:

- Participation from the beginning of the operation
- Participation with assets and units that make a difference
- Participation built on sharing the major challenges to the end

In this respect the rapid deployment and sustainment by Sweden of a substantial Air Force contribution demonstrated a serious political will to support the implementation of the UNSCR 1973, which also creates expectations to be met. Sweden's relatively strong air force makes it an important partner country, but the Swedish participation also contributes to the legitimacy of the NATO operation. Another important aspect is also that after more than a decade of efforts to make the Swedish armed forces, including the air units, compatible with NATO, the Swedish integration in the operation was free from friction and also helped place Sweden among the top-standard air units.

Reflections on the Operation

In my view Operation Unified Protector (OUP) has been a success, but much has been at stake and it has also been an eye-opener for Europe. The

no-fly zone has been upheld and the operation has strongly limited the possibilities for Qadhafi to attack his own population with military means. The operation has also contributed to the removal of Qadhafi. The most important success of all though, is that the victory was achieved mostly by Libyans themselves, which is vital for the legitimacy of the Libyan opposition; the National Transitional Council, now taking over the government of Libya. A key issue is that the same opposition retains its legitimacy by acting with dignity and respect for the rule of law (especially towards those they had been fighting against).

Key lessons on the part played by NATO are that the operation was successfully launched in a few days and that despite resistance among some of the member states the operation was not vetoed. It is also highly significant that a NATO-led operation in an Arab country was not only accepted by the world community – especially the Arab League – but also the fact that a number of Arab states are participating in the operation. At the conference on Libya in Paris on September 1, which was attended by representatives from 63 countries, it was agreed by the leaders to continue the NATO operations as long as necessary, bring those guilty of war crimes to justice and support the Libyan National Transitional Council to achieve political transition, which is a remarkable signal of support. However, political coherence – not least the coordination between different actors in their dealing with the Libyan opposition and of course Qadhafi – has been, and is likely to continue to be, a great challenge.

Problems recognized early have included the significant number of member states not participating in the air strikes and an unclear end state. But the most important eye-opener has probably been the difficulty in handling the strain resulting from a protracted operation.

Qadhafi's capability to stay in power was probably underestimated, much as the strength of the opposition was overestimated during the planning phase of the operation. A major challenge in this respect is the limits of air power, even without the restraints imposed on Operation Unified Protector. Professional ground forces (infantry) are still a prerequisite for establishing control and decisively influencing the situation on the ground. Air power has clear limitations in facing an enemy that does not present traditional targets. Even with high-precision arms, it is difficult to avoid

collateral damage (even though it took 80 days of attack until the first collateral damage was confirmed following a NATO air strike during OUP).

A Libyan opposition without adequate fighting power and lacking a well-coordinated command facing a well dug-in Qadhafi determined to put up a fight without restraint, supported by mercenaries, led to a many months long stalemate on the ground. Only the cumulative impact of the alliance's air attacks and a gradually more determined and capable opposition (trained and equipped by some of the nations participating in the operation) managed to break it.

The stalemate led to the operation increasingly being questioned. Even though the cohesion of the alliance held, extensive media reports on the efforts to break the stalemate such as the use of attack helicopters in close coordination with the opposition, use of Special Forces for training and advice on the ground, support with military equipment and directly targeting Qadhafi and his sons have led to a discussion about the interpretation of the mandate.

The difficulty of sustaining the operation raises new concerns over the status of Europe's defense forces. The operation has been dependent on U.S. key strategic assets and competences even after the U.S. withdrew their units participating in the air strikes. The former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates' last policy speech on June 10 is interesting. It is a strong message about Europe's paltry defense efforts, including a number of shortcomings in OUP such as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets among others. He also points out that, with the coming of a new generation of American politicians without their roots in the Cold War, U.S. key areas of interest now lie in Asia and the Middle East, which will have consequences for Europe.

My view is that the U.S. has never really been satisfied with European defense efforts – often rightfully so. When criticizing Europe, one needs to remember the support given to the U.S. in Iraq but even more so in Afghanistan, where European countries contributed about 40,000 soldiers to ISAF – small in comparison to the 90,000 Americans but most of them still of high value on the ground. Those who criticize NATO's performance in Libya are also missing a bigger story; in Libya, the Europeans have for the first time responded to Washington's calls to assume more responsibility for their neighborhood. As a result, the United States could take a back seat while

the Europeans have absorbed most of the risks and costs of the ultimately successful war. This should be cause for cautious optimism about NATO.

The lack of a traditional armed threat probably means that the NATO operation in Libya will reinforce the gradual shifting of the alliance towards a role as a military crisis manager outside Europe. What will define the importance of NATO will continue to be its value to the member states in handling vital security challenges. As long as the U.S. sees NATO as an important political instrument and values the different aspects of the support of Europe, NATO is likely to retain its importance. With the difficulty of developing a credible EU capability for armed interventions on a higher scale, we are also likely to see France, but also Turkey, playing a greater role in the alliance. Despite the efforts to develop a comprehensive approach to operations, the operation in Libya underlines NATO limitations in other areas, for example in peacebuilding, which still means a need for complementary efforts from other organizations.

Still, the reduction of forces and procurement of new military equipment in Europe is likely to continue in the coming years as a consequence of severe strain on the economies. The transformation of the European armed forces from Cold War invasion defense to smaller, but more flexible and rapidly deployable forces proceeds slowly. In Europe, I believe it is still only Britain – if not to its full extent after the recent defense cuts – and France that have an intervention capability of their own. The NATO Response Force and the EU Battlegroup concept have served as important drivers for the transformation and for Sweden, the responsibility to uphold readiness with an EU Battlegroup has been decisive for its defense reform. To provide political freedom of action when it comes to suitable ways of contributing to an international operation, Sweden has made the choice of keeping a wide range of military capabilities but smaller quantities of forces.

Altogether, this leads me to the conclusion that future interventions in times of huge economic problems in the West will be seriously discussed only if the stakes are high enough. Such interventions will most likely continue to consist of a coalition of the willing, most likely under a NATO umbrella, if the U.S. shares the interest, but possibly the EU if the circumstances allow. The consequences of the reduction of military capabilities are likely to reinforce the already ongoing regionalization of defense cooperation. The cooperation between the Nordic countries is a good example. A

key issue is to make the European armed forces more independent from the U.S. by putting more resources into vital strategic enablers. Another logical need is to review the availability of the European rapid reaction capabilities.

A final perspective on the crisis is that the successful evacuation by China of its nationals from Libya sheds light not only on the extent of the Asian presence in the area and its strong economic interests in this part of the world, but also on expectations that the Chinese population may have of its leadership in the future to act in protection of its expatriates. But it is not only China that is an actor of great importance here – nations like the Republic of Korea, Japan and India are other important actors on this scene. Due to their expanding economic development, many of the major Asian actors will increase their demands for energy and vital natural resources from parts of the world characterized by potential instability, and will of course also need safe global trade routes. The majority of the Asian armed forces are under continuous expansion, not least their expeditionary capabilities. This, together with its increased economic strength, provides Asia with a wide range of instruments for crisis management. Will we see a more proactive Asia in future crises – perhaps taking the lead in the stabilization of vital areas?

Concluding Remarks

Let me conclude this presentation by saying that the dramatic events in North Africa and Western Asia not only took us by surprise – as these kind of developments often tend to do, but that they also present a serious challenge when it comes to predicting their eventual outcome. The so-called "Arab Spring" is far from over.

The military intervention in Libya is coming close to its conclusion. The first French air strikes probably saved the population of Benghazi just before it would have been too late, and helped pave the way for something better for most Libyans. Some critics of the intervention in Libya have argued that a Libyan regime change would be counterproductive to the long-term interest of the West since Qadhafi had not only abandoned his nuclear arms program but also acknowledged his own terrorist activities in the past and fought against terrorist organizations. Here we need to remember the fact that it was Qadhafi himself through his own actions who lost his legitimacy as a responsible head of state – ultimately demonstrated by the

International Criminal Court arrest warrant – and that it was the Libyans themselves who liberated their country from Qadhafi's dictatorship. Lasting stability in Libya has now to be provided for by other more responsible stakeholders. How to best support the transition to peace is now the key issue. The Libyans must also have the main role in this process. Despite the many challenges, I find some reason to be optimistic about the future.

The responsibility to protect demands the means to protect. A key lesson to be remembered from Operation Unified Protector is that the U.S. will no longer insist on taking the lead in Western military operations, especially when no vital U.S. interests are involved. If Europe wants to be a player of importance able to handle future challenges of common interest it has to learn to conduct major military operations without the backing of U.S. leadership and it will need to find the resources to do so.

Those future challenges will most likely also be challenges for Asia. Future stability, something from which we all will benefit, will increase the demand for a common understanding of the crisis and new ways to handle them in the best common interest.

The Impact of the Turbulence in West Asia and North Africa on the International Strategic Configuration

Major General Chen Zhou, Department of War Theories and Strategic Studies, Academy of Military Sciences, People's Liberation Army

Since the end of 2010, beginning with the political upheaval in Tunisia, Yemen and Egypt, a regional turbulence has been spreading quickly in the Middle East, and has started the most profound and turbulent political change in decades in this region. With the direct military intervention from the West, the war in Libya has added to this turbulence more global influence. The turbulence is caused by internal problems in such fields as the economy, people's livelihood, development mode and social contradictions. Besides, the international financial crisis, newly emerging network media, as well as political and military intervention from external forces have played a direct or indirect role in the turbulence. Following the upheaval in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, 9/11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the international financial crisis, the social and political turbulence in the Middle East is not only another historic event in the 20 years since the end of the Cold War, but also the first major event with strategic and long-term influence on the international situation in the second decade of the 21st century. The development and changes in the Middle East situation not only affect the adjustment of policies by every strategic force, but will also have a far-reaching impact on the evolution of the international strategic configuration.

I. New Changes in the International Balance of Power

At present, the speed, scope, extent and complexity of the changes in the international situation are unprecedented. A new situation is emerging in the international balance of power. The soft and hard power of Western countries like the U.S. is impaired, while the economic strength as well as international status and influence of emerging countries and developing powers are notably increasing. World multipolarization is becoming more

obvious. Although the turbulence in the Middle East is far from ending, its influence, in essence, is promoting rather than reversing the trend of multipolarization.

The performance of Western countries like the U.S. in the turbulence in the Middle East once again shows the ebb and flow of the international balance of power. The turbulence in the Middle East started from the pro-West camp. The policies adopted by the U.S. to respond to the abrupt changes in Tunisia and Egypt are inconsistent, getting bogged down in a dilemma between the two objectives of "maintaining stability" and "promoting change." In addition, in the war in Libya, the U.S. was abnormally willing to play a "supporting role" and pushed its European allies onto the stage. All the above shows that the U.S. has been deeply affected by the "two wars and one crisis" (the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the international financial crisis), its strength has been weakened and its control over the Middle East is continuously being reduced. Western countries have actively stepped into the internal political affairs of Mediterranean countries, taken advantage of the Internet to add fuel to the fire in the Middle East, and attempted to expand their influence in this region. In particular, for their geopolitical, energy and ideological interests, countries such as France and the UK launched the war in Libya, and played a key role in the rapid escalation and continuous dissemination of Libya's turbulence. On the other hand, with internal rebellion and without external support, the Gaddafi administration could still sustain NATO's air raid for more than five months. It reveals that having not got rid of debt crises, European countries lack the ability to do what they would like to do.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the quick adjustment of U.S. policies on the Middle East, its lingering regional influence, and NATO's military success in the Libyan War have demonstrated that the international strategic configuration, featuring one superpower and multiple powers and dominated by the West, has not changed fundamentally.

II. The Trend Towards Multipolarization in the Middle East

For quite a long time, Egypt, Iran and Israel have dominated Middle East affairs and have been the key powers influencing the political and security order in the Middle East. After the Iraq War in 2003, two opposing camps have taken shape in the Middle East: one is a pro-U.S. camp, with Egypt

and Saudi Arabia as the core and including Jordan and other Gulf and Arab countries; the other is an anti-U.S. camp, with Iran as the core and including Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas. A Chinese scholar has summarized the strategic configuration in the Middle East as "the U.S. seeking hegemony and two camps opposing each other."

This turbulence has weakened Egypt, stimulated Iran, aggravated the security environment of Israel, provided opportunities for other regional powers to grow in strength, and promoted changes in the regional balance of power. With its stable political situation and developing economy, Turkey has increased its influence during the regional turbulence. It has played an active role in mediating the internal turmoil in Libya, Yemen and Syria, continued to keep some distance with Israel, and accelerated its steps to become a primary power in the region. While a democratic regime has not been established in Egypt, Iran's military ships sailed through the Suez Canal, which shows that post-Mubarak Egypt will take a middle course. Hence, a middle camp, with Turkey and Egypt as the core, is taking shape. Further, this turbulence has revealed that the secularist regime is terribly weak in governance and administration, providing a historical opportunity for Islam to ascend to the center stage of politics. Such religious organizations as the Muslim Brotherhood have established a legal party, symbolizing that Islam will play an important role in the politics of the Middle East in the future.

The essence of the multipolarization in the Middle East is Arab countries' strong pursuit of independence and urgent demand for development. Undoubtedly, Western countries will continue to intervene in the internal development of these turbulent countries. For the present, it is difficult to discern what kind of political system these countries are going to establish. However, what is certain is that the old power pattern in the Middle East is disintegrating. This evolution will inevitably pose new and bigger challenges to the international order dominated by the U.S. and the West.

III. Economic Globalization Forging Ahead in Turbulence

After the Cold War, the surging economic globalization has greatly promoted world economic development. The free flow and distribution of commodities, technologies, information and especially capital around the globe have brought new development opportunities, deepened intercommunication

and interdependence between different economies, and increased common interests among different countries and regions. However, it should be noted that economic globalization is a double-edged sword. At the same time as it enhances productivity, it has intensified the contradictions caused by the imbalances in world development, and brought to the world new insecurity and instability. The continuous development of the international financial crisis has exposed not only the deep-seated malpractices accumulated by the capitalist economic system, but also the deep-seated contradictions accumulated by the world economy under conditions of economic globalization.

The social and political turbulence in West Asia and North Africa is not only relevant to development imbalance and the enlarged gap between the haves and have-nots brought by globalization, but is also connected with the serious disjointing of those countries with globalization. Under conditions of globalization, most Middle Eastern countries are at the low end of global industrial chains, and strongly dependent on external markets. A direct external factor of the turbulence is the impact of secondary disasters caused by the international financial crisis. Originating in the U.S., the international financial crisis has been gradually transmitted and shifted onto Middle Eastern countries. As a result, the external environment for their economic development has been deteriorating, economic and social development has become stagnant, and poverty has been intensified and then transformed into social problems and crises. Besides, the situation has been accompanied by the world food crisis, further increasing the difficulty of solving livelihood problems. Of course, some Middle Eastern countries have assumed an exclusive attitude toward globalization, simply imputing the problems that emerged in the process of modernization to the negative effects of globalization, and thus missed development opportunities brought by globalization. This is also an important cause of the turbulence.

With scientific and technological advancement and global distribution of production elements as the basis, economic globalization will not be reversed. Nevertheless, the existing international system and global governance mechanism must be reformed, so that the process of globalized development will become more orderly, and distribution of interests will be more balanced. This is an important implication of the turbulence in West Asia and North Africa.

IV. Increasing Strategic Importance of Military Security

In today's world, peace and development remain the themes of the times. Seeking peace, pursuing development and promoting cooperation are obvious trends of the times. However, turbulence in the Middle East, particularly the war in Libya, shows again that neither of the two missions (peace or development) has been accomplished. Hegemony and power politics are still important factors affecting international security. In the second decade of the 21st century, the military intervention in Libya by Western countries has set a precedent of new armed intervention in the internal affairs of countries. It will inevitably lead to more attention paid to the strategic importance of military security by all countries.

Under the banner of "humanitarian intervention," NATO countries went beyond the original intention of the UNSCR 1973, launched unprecedentedly violent air strikes against Libya, contributed funds and weapons to the Libyan opposition party to engage in land warfare, and even sent special forces and military advisors to directly participate in land operations, resulting in casualties of thousands of innocent civilians, displacement of large quantities of refugees, great losses of property and grave humanitarian disasters. From the very beginning, it is not a pure civil war, but an external military intervention with the aim of overthrowing the regime. It has disrupted the international order within the UN framework, and violated the UN Charter and world-recognized rules for international relations. Consequently, the Libya model of solving nuclear issues has thoroughly lost its persuasion. It will have a far-reaching negative influence on world peace and stability.

Entitled "Active Engagement, Modern Defense," NATO's new strategic concept declares that in the future NATO will engage, where possible and when necessary, in the whole process of crises and conflicts beyond NATO's traditional defense borders. The war in Libya is the first war dominated by NATO outside its traditional defense areas. It further reflects the fact that NATO's military function has expanded from a defensive to an offensive one. After the Cold War, NATO countries have fought from Europe to South Asia and North Africa, from general participation to direct organizing and commanding. It reveals NATO's intention of expanding and moving around the globe by force. Without doubt, it is a dangerous factor in the changes and development of the international situation.

The turbulence in West Asia and North Africa has sounded an alarm and prompted the Chinese people to deep thought. Firstly, we must unswervingly focus on the center of economic development. Development remains the key to solving all problems in China. We must concentrate on construction and development, pay more attention to guaranteeing and improving people's livelihood, and promoting social equality and justice. Secondly, we must combine promoting reform and development with maintaining social stability. Development is a hard fact, and stability is a hard task. Without stability, nothing can be achieved, and that which has been achieved will also be lost. Finally, we must make our country prosperous and our armed forces powerful while building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. Consolidated national defense and powerful armed forces are strong supports for national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity. Continuing to enhance national defense and military modernization is not only one of the historical responsibilities of the People's Liberation Army, but also a common cause for the people of all ethnic groups in the country.

Regional Implications of the "Arab Spring"

Mr. Greg Shapland, Head of Research Analysts, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, London

What follows are my personal thoughts: they do not represent the views of HM Government.

The Middle East / North Africa (MENA) region has been turbulent since the end of the colonial period. But for the last several decades, most of the regimes in the region were stable. That stability has now been shaken by popular uprisings in a number of countries.

Much of the analysis of the Arab Spring has centered on developments in individual countries. Rightly so. But what happens in individual countries will have an impact across the region. That's what I want to look at today.

Inevitably, a lot of what I have to say will be highly speculative. The purpose is not to predict the future – just to stimulate some discussion about the possible implications of what's been happening over the last nine months. Given the breadth of the subject and the limitations of time, I will only be able to suggest some of the possible developments that might occur.

I'll be looking at the Arab–Israel dispute; Iranian influence in the Middle East; Sunni-Shia divisions; Gulf security; counter-terrorism; counter-piracy, and the establishment of new relationships in the Arab world.

All these questions could be affected by the Arab Spring. At the same time, we need to remember that they all have their own dynamics (the Palestinian move to seek statehood at the UN is a highly topical case in point). Even without the Arab Spring, the region would not have remained in a state of suspended animation.

The fall of President Mubarak has already affected the security situation in the region and so has implications for the Arab–Israel dispute. The current regime in Egypt, led by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), has committed itself to maintaining the peace treaty with Israel. But there have already been a number of incidents in the Sinai, including attacks

on gas pipelines (at least four since February) and Israeli border guards (in early August).

Maintaining Egypt's overall relationship with Israel has also become a more difficult balancing act for Egypt's transitional regime – ordinary Egyptians can now express their distaste for that relationship more openly, putting the government under pressure. The attack on the Israeli Embassy in Cairo on September 9 was simply the most dramatic manifestation of this phenomenon.

Egypt is in a transitional phase. The SCAF will not be in power forever. (I believe they are genuine when they say they want to hand over power.) The Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists will probably do well in elections, being better organized than the secularists. And a strong Islamist presence in government will probably mean greater pressure to downgrade ties with Israel.

Developments in Egypt have led to greater uncertainty in Israel. This uncertainty will only have been increased by the remark made by Essam Sharaf, the Egyptian Prime Minister, to the effect that Egypt would "make changes to the treaty if necessary." Now, I'm certainly not predicting an outbreak of armed conflict between Egypt and Israel. But one should bear in mind that Israelis – by their own admission – tend to focus on the worst-case scenario. And a nervous mood in Israel is never conducive to a positive attitude to relations with neighbors and to negotiations with the Palestinians. And this at a time when Israel is already feeling threatened diplomatically by the Palestinian initiative at the UN and by the deterioration of its relationship with Turkey.

In Syria, of course, the regime remains in place and seems determined to fight for its survival. But it may not survive. If it does not, insecurity in the region will intensify further – at least in the short term. Why so? Well, the Assad regime has of course been hostile to Israel. But it has also been predictable. It might well be replaced by a less predictable regime – or by chaos. This too would make for increased Israeli nervousness and greater reluctance to compromise in negotiations.

In other ways, though, the fall of the Assad regime might produce greater stability in the region – through a reduction in Iranian influence. Under Bashar al-Assad, Syria has been Iran's most reliable ally in the region. A new regime in Damascus would probably have a stronger Sunni Muslim

component – and so would have less interest in maintaining the alliance with Shia Iran.

One of the benefits to Iran from its alliance with Syria has been the use of Syrian territory as a conduit for the supply of Hizbullah in Lebanon. What would Iran do if it lost this route, as the result of a change of regime in Damascus? Would it attempt to re-supply Hizbullah by sea, via the Suez Canal? (We have already seen Iranian naval vessels using the Canal to sail to Latakia in Syria in February 2011 – the first time this has happened since the Iranian Revolution). If it did, how would Israel react?

Moreover, the loss of Syria as an ally could affect Iranian behavior elsewhere in the region. For example, Iran might try to increase its influence in Iraq. Or it might work harder at other targets, such as the Shia communities in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia – or vulnerable countries such as Yemen. The Iranians are both determined and adaptable.

Talking about Iranian influence brings me to Sunni–Shia divisions in the Middle East. Now, these divisions are just one of the various fault-lines in the political landscape of the region: one should not see everything that happens in the region through a sectarian lens. But these divisions are important and the unrest in Bahrain has brought them to the fore in an intriguing way.

The majority of the protesters in Bahrain were, of course, Shia. Prime Minister Maliki of Iraq felt compelled to condemn publicly the repression of the protests in Bahrain (Iraq has a Shia majority and sectarian affiliation is an important factor in Iraqi politics). That led to a reaction on the part of the GCC regimes – all but one of them Sunni, of course.[1] This in turn reversed the trend towards the greater acceptance of Iraq in this Sunni-dominated region. One manifestation of this was that Iraq was denied the opportunity to host the Arab League summit, which was due to have taken place in Baghdad this year.

Let's look now at security in the Gulf. Security in the Gulf is important to all of us, because it affects the security of the world's energy supplies. Since Britain's withdrawal from the area in the early 1970s and the collapse of the Shah's regime in Iran in 1979, security has been largely provided by the U.S. – which has operated through bilateral agreements with the Arab countries of the Gulf.

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[1]   The exception is Oman, which adheres to the Ibadi doctrine.

These countries are, of course, members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The GCC, set up in 1981, had security as part of its original mandate.[2] It might have developed into a regional security organization but did not. There is currently no collective provision for security against external attack, despite the perception of a threat from Iran.

The unrest in Bahrain might change this. GCC countries intervened to support the regime in Bahrain in March 2011. Could this lead to the strengthening of the GCC – if only as an organization which intervenes to protect the regimes of its member states from internal dissent? If this does happen, might we see the GCC taking the further step of becoming an organization that provides security against external threats? With these thoughts in mind, the GCC invitation to Jordan and Morocco to join the organization is interesting, and may have a security dimension.

I do not see unrest in Bahrain and in other GCC countries leading to the fall of regimes (but then – like so many others – I did not foresee the fall of Presidents Ben Ali and Mubarak). If one or more of the Gulf Arab regimes were to fall, the outcome could be the opposite of the scenario I sketched out a moment ago. That's to say, the GCC as a collective organization might be weakened rather than strengthened – if new regimes in the states affected decided to leave the organization. And a new regime in Bahrain, with its Shia majority, might well be more closely aligned with Iran.

Implications for Counter-Terrorism

One of the most troubling aspects of the Arab Spring – however great the benefits it may bring – must be the possible impact on counter-terrorism work. Perhaps the most likely scenario is:

- An uprising brings about the fall of a regime and its replacement by a weaker regime, or by chaos; and
- An international terrorist organization exploits this lack of security to establish a base from which it can launch attacks.

The most worrying current example must be Yemen. But the same scenario could occur elsewhere, for example, in Syria. Could the fall of a

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2   The reference to security appears in the GCC's Foundation and Objectives document.

number of Arab regimes give a short-term boost to al-Qa'ida, which is currently flagging?

Against this, Arab peoples have shown that peaceful protest can bring about change better than jihadi terrorism – so al-Qa'ida's message has been seriously undermined. And in the longer-term, once periods of transitions are over, the net effect of the Arab Spring could be very positive in counter-terrorism terms. That is, the establishment of more responsive and accountable regimes in the Arab world should drastically reduce the level of support for terrorist organizations.

Similar considerations apply to counter-piracy. Again, Yemen is the big worry – the collapse of effective central government in Yemen could turn it into another Somalia, with no control over pirates operating from its ports. In other words, there would be a Somalia on both sides of the Bab al-Mandab.

The MENA region has long been a kaleidoscope of relationships and influences. Some of these are as much personal as state-to-state. Many of these relationships remain unaffected by the Arab Spring. But some have changed drastically. For example, the fall of the Qadhafi regime has ended the isolation of Libya within the Arab world. It has also brought to prominence a number of Islamist figures with good links to Qatar. What this means for the foreign policies of future governments in Libya remains to be seen – but suffice it to say that these policies will be different from those pursued by Qadhafi.

The change of regimes in Libya and Tunisia has brought signs of a shift in those countries' positions on the Western Sahara. This in turn has strengthened Morocco and made Algeria rather more isolated within the Maghreb. Whether that makes the Western Sahara dispute any easier to resolve is far from clear – but it may change its context.

Elsewhere in the region, the uprising in Syria has intensified the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia. And the violent suppression of that uprising has also damaged Turkey's previously close relationship with the Assad regime.

Just to touch on another issue (and one of great personal interest to me): there are hints that the fall of President Mubarak might lead to a more flexible Egyptian position on the Nile waters question. Of course, there are no guarantees that a resolution of this dispute will be forthcoming.

In this presentation, I have no doubt missed many possible implications (actual or potential) of the Arab Spring. But I hope I've given you some sense of how intricate and intriguing those implications might be.

China's National Security Strategy and Its UNSC Policy on Libya[1]

Dr. Liselotte Odgaard, Associate Professor, Institute for Strategy, Royal Danish Defence College

The debate on China's national security strategy has focused on two aspects. One aspect is China's growing economic and military capabilities, enhancing its ability to project power in the international system. According to most analysts, growing Chinese capabilities will lead to global great power status within a couple of decades. A second aspect is that the majority of analyses and commentaries are about U.S.–China relations. The focus on these two aspects has produced the two main arguments that either defines China as a stakeholder in or as a challenger to international order.

The stakeholder and challenger arguments provide a comprehensive overview of the aspects and consequences of China's national security strategy. Nevertheless, both perspectives seem to overlook three characteristics concerning China's development and relative position in the international system. First, China's economic and military development tells the story of a state that does well in the group of secondary powers, which includes powers such as Russia, India and Brazil. Despite this relatively unfavorable position, China seems to have managed to position itself as a global great power in a political sense. This means that China is one of the states that determine the foreign policy and defense choices that are open to other international actors.

China's position as a political great power increases the power of secondary and small states. These powers have extraordinary influence because China offers them strategic partnerships either in addition to or instead of the U.S. alliance system.

The current international system reflects both the stakeholder and the challenger arguments in the sense that China, coming from a position of

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relative economic and military weakness, uses stakeholder strategies to challenge U.S. pre-eminence in the international system. China is a challenger in the sense that it promotes the seeds of its own international order by means of persuasion rather than by means of enforcement.

The national security strategy pursued by China may be called coexistence. Coexistence can be defined as the attempt to preserve peace and stability through common habits and practices that are designed to regulate behavior in the international system. It is a strategy of influence for powers that do not have the material capabilities to claim great power status but seek the political influence of a great power by diplomatic means. In addition to diplomatic means, the strategy requires a normative model of international order and a forum for multilateral policy coordination and cooperation where the model can be implemented. Coexistence does not presuppose extensive cooperation or preclude conflict. Cooperation is limited to situations where conflicting great power interests necessitate conflict management to avoid the use of force.

Historically, coexistence has not only been pursued by China, but also in some form by, for example, the Soviet Union during the early phases of the Cold War, by Britain in the interwar years in the early twentieth century, and by Austria in the first half of the nineteenth century. In China's case, one problem is that it has no alliance system, and so China's ability to use military capabilities offshore is limited, even if military modernization is progressing fast. In the absence of an alliance system, China relies on expanding its political engagement in bilateral and multilateral security institutions across all the world's regions.

China pursues an international order of coexistence in the sense that it aspires to define the rules of the game of international politics and in this way determine the foreign policy choices that are open to other international actors. In this way, China becomes a maker rather than a taker of international order. China pursues an order of coexistence to avoid its descent into the ranks of secondary powers and to make room for China to focus on its social and economic development.

China's version of coexistence forms part of the Chinese constitution. Peaceful coexistence encompasses non-interference in the internal affairs of others, mutual non-aggression, equality and mutual benefit, and mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. These principles correspond

to the rules of the game of the UN system, although of course China interprets the meaning of these principles according to its own interests and views of the world. I will now turn to how China's coexistence strategy forms the basis of its UNSC policy.

Chinese-style peaceful coexistence at a more practical level of implementation involves four types of practices in the UNSC. One practice is to aim for compromises between conflicting positions when there is a risk of use of force that involves the U.S. and China. Second, China requires consent from host governments to accept peacemaking operations unless the UN system and its affiliated institutions present evidence of threats towards international peace and security. Third, China pursues equality and mutual benefit as a top-down principle that involves treating states rather than individuals as legal equals and the promotion of social and economic development. Also, China supports the efforts of regional and functional organizations of the UN system to help with conflict management. Fourth, China defends the fundamental status of absolute sovereignty in international law. This set of coexistence principles is a mixture of a conservative defensive form of diplomacy based on old UN principles and an offensive form of diplomacy that involves revisions for the old UN system. China's version of international order receives widespread support in non-Western regions of the world and justifies China's status as a maker rather than merely a taker of international order.

China's concern to regulate the use of force in the international system and to demonstrate its commitment to international law means that the UN system has become an important factor in China's attempt to revise the existing international order to suit Chinese interests and world views.

China's UNSC policy on Libya has confirmed that China pursues a mixture of a conservative defensive and a coexistence-style offensive form of diplomacy based on old and new elements of the UN system. China voted for UNSC Resolution 1970. In February 2011, the UNSC imposed sanctions against the Libyan government in response to the use of force against civilians, stressing that the special circumstances in Libya called for an endorsement of the resolution. Beijing's decision reflects its concern to consolidate the regionalization of UNSC security management. This priority prompted China to support Chapter VII measures following the condemnation by the Arab League, the African Union and the Organization of

the Islamic Conference of the serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law that were being committed in Libya. In March 2011, China abstained from voting on UNSC Resolution 1973. Acting under Chapter VII, the resolution approved a no-fly zone over Libya, authorizing all necessary measures to protect civilians by a vote of ten in favor with five abstentions. China's abstention was determined by Beijing's preference for peaceful means of conflict settlement, and its concern not to block measures approved by the Arab League and the African Union. China is critical of NATO's very wide interpretation of the mandate. This choice might make China reluctant to accept that similar UNSC resolutions are endorsed in future. The Libya case has consolidated China's position as a maker of international order on the basis of coexistence-style diplomacy by allowing China to pursue its program for international order.

Where does China's attempt to revise international order leave the contemporary international system? To a large extent, this depends on the response of the Western developed states and their willingness to continue to pursue a value-based, integration-oriented view of international order involving an increased role for civil and political rights. The Libya case may provide clues to the future. On the one hand, despite the difficulties with contributing to civil and political rights regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Western U.S.-led grouping continues to pursue a greater role for humanitarian intervention. On the other hand, European leadership in the military intervention in Libya beginning in March 2011 implies that the Western countries support the calls for regionalization of UNSC security management that has formed part of China's program for international order for some time. Moreover, Germany's agreement with China's abstention on the grounds of unwillingness to authorize the use of force in Libya indicates that the dividing lines between those supporting an integrationist order and those supporting a coexistence-style order are becoming more and more blurred. This development does not indicate a merger between the U.S. and Chinese-led programs for international order. Instead, it indicates that increasing regionalization is necessary in the absence of one coherent set of principles that universally define right and wrong international conduct.

China's uneasy position in between the status of a great power and a secondary power gives rise to an international system without clear rules of the game. In this in-between system, security threats are addressed by

means of ad hoc frameworks of conflict management. The membership and rules of these frameworks are defined on a trial-and-error basis. Also, in this system secondary and small powers are quite influential because the U.S. and China compete for their backing and loyalty.

Speakers (in Alphabetical Order)

Major General Chen Zhou is a Senior Fellow in the Department of War Theories and Strategic Studies at the PLA Academy of Military Science. He holds a doctoral degree in military strategy and national security from the PLA Academy of Military Science and was a visiting Senior Fellow at Harvard's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. He is a key drafter of China's national defense white papers and the author of numerous journal articles and books, including *The Theory and Practice of the Democracy System of Chinese People's Liberation Army*, *Su Yu's Art of War*, *A Theoretical Study of Modern Local Warfare*, *U.S. Security Strategy and East Asia*, *National Security and National Defense Aimed at the Future*, *On Asia-Pacific Security Strategy*, *On National Security Strategy*, and *Striding from Mechanized Warfare to Informationized Warfare*. Major General Chen was one of the five outstanding military individuals honored by President Hu Jintao during the National Day celebrations in October 2011.

Lieutenant Colonel Joachim Isacsson is a Lecturer in Strategic Studies at the Swedish National Defence College, Institute for Security and Strategy. He formerly served as Head of the Asia Section in the Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters. He was an officer in the Swedish Amphibious Corps and has taken part in numerous international missions, many of them training missions in Africa.

Ms. Li Rong is Director of the Asia-Africa Institute, Research Professor and Doctoral Supervisor at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR). She was a visiting scholar at the Third University in Paris, the French Higher Political College and at the International Energy Agency (France). A frequent visitor to the Middle East and Africa, Ms. Li has published extensively on international relations, the economic and political situation, ethnic, religious and oil issues in Middle East. Her books include *Cenozoic Arab Politicians* (2003), *Cross-Century International Environment for China's Modernization* (1998, funded by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), *An Evaluation of International Strategy & Situation* (an annual

report published successively in 2003, 2004, 2007 and 2008) and *Great Global Upheavals* (2010).

Professor Timothy C. Niblock is an Emeritus Professor at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter, and Vice-President of the British Society for Middle East Studies. He holds a D.Phil. in International Relations from the University of Sussex and has taught Politics, International Relations, Middle Eastern Studies and Arab Gulf Studies at the University of Reading, the University of Khartoum, the University of Exeter and the University of Durham. His areas of research include the political economy of Arab and Islamic states; international relations of Middle Eastern states; Islam and the state, and legitimacy, civil society and political power in the Arab World. A prolific author, his most recent publications are *Saudi Arabia: Power, Legitimacy and Survival* (Routledge, 2006) and *The Political Economy of Saudi Arabia* (with Monica Malik, Routledge, 2007).

Dr. Liselotte Odgaard is an Associate Professor at the Institute for Strategy, Royal Danish Defence College. She holds a Ph.D. from Aarhus University. Her areas of expertise include International Relations, Asia-Pacific Security and China Studies. She has been a visiting scholar at the London School of Economics and Political Science; the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research at Harvard University and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. Her publications include *The Balance of Power in Asia-Pacific Security: US-China Policies on Regional Order* (Routledge, 2007) and *China and Coexistence: Beijing's National Security Strategy for the Twenty-First Century* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press/Johns Hopkins University Press, March 2012).

Ambassador Robert Rydberg is Deputy Director-General, Head of Department for Middle East and North Africa, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden. He holds a LLB degree from the University of Stockholm. He previously served as Swedish Ambassador to Chad (2007–8), Israel (2003–7) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (2001–3) and is currently responsible for Sweden's foreign, trade, and development cooperation policy relations with countries in the Middle East, including Iran and Iraq, as well as North Africa.

Mr. Greg Shapland is Head of Research Analysts at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), London. He holds a master's degree in the Geography and Politics of the Middle East from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and is the author of *Rivers of Discord: International Water Disputes in the Middle East* (1997).

Dr. Wang Lincong is Professor of Political Science and History and Director of the International Relations Division of the Institute of West Asian & African Studies and Secretary-General of the Gulf Research Center at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). He has been a visiting scholar at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. His research is on the political development and international relations of the Middle East. He is the author of *The Study of the Democratization in the Middle East* (2007), and *The Causes and Impacts of the Political Turmoil in the Middle East* (Annual Report on Development in the Middle East and Africa, No.13, 2011).

Participants

Brigadier General Mats E. Engman, Head of Swedish Armed Forces International Operations
Major General Wang Weixin, PLA Academy of Military Science
Major General Dr. Yao Yunzhu, Senior Fellow of the PLA Academy of Military Science
Major General Karsten Jakob Møller, Senior Analyst, Head of Research Unit Defence and Security, Danish Institute for International Studies
Senior Colonel Nie Songlai, PLA Academy of Military Science
Senior Colonel Xu Weidi, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Strategic Studies, PLA National Defense University
Dr. Lu Dehong, Director of Research Department, China Foundation for International & Strategic Studies

ISDP Delegation

Dr. Niklas Swanström, Director
Dr. Sangsoo Lee, Research Fellow
Mr. David Mulrooney, Research Fellow