10

Rage and Rebellion in the Arab World

Potential Impacts on Terrorism

FREEDOM IS NOT FOR FREE

—Egyptian Protest Sign

Overview of Regional Events

Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, and other countries in North Africa and the Middle East exploded in revolution in 2011. Rage against autocrats, many of them elderly, yet holding tenaciously to power, spread quickly, ultimately involving—to one extent or another—all 22 Arab countries and hundreds of millions of people. The impact on non-Arab Muslim countries, like Turkey, Afghanistan, Iran, and parts of Africa, has also been considerable.

Waves of democracy had engulfed other regions of the world in previous decades, including Eastern Europe, Latin America, Eastern Asia, and parts of Africa. Revolutionary fervor had hit almost every region in the world except the regions inhabited by Arabs, a Semitic people who speak Arabic, a Semitic language. Ajami (2012) noted this about Arab lands:

> Tyrants had closed up the political world, become owners of their countries in all but name. It was a bleak landscape: terrible rulers, sullen populations, a terrorist fringe that hurled itself in frustration at an order bereft of any legitimacy. Arabs had started to feel they were cursed, doomed to despotism. The region's exceptionalism was becoming not just a human disaster but a moral embarrassment. (p. 1)

The epic convulsion that swept the region with amazing speed, accompanied by cries for basic human rights and democratic reforms, are far from over. In many of the countries in the region, for example Syria and Bahrain, protests continue in 2012, as do violent government crackdowns on the protesters. In other countries, like Saudi Arabia, the rumblings of the populace have been quelled with money, at least temporarily. Rulers in Morocco,

Jordan, and other countries have made reforms aimed at pacifying the calls for change. And in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, where the strongmen were deposed or killed, new governments are struggling to form viable societies.

Tarek Osman, an author and analyst, has attributed the cataclysmic change in the region to demography. He has noted the following:

> [The] Arab world numbers more than 190 million people under 30. There are 45 million young people in Egypt only. Nearly 56% of youth is under 20. Once serious economic problems started, the youth understood that they suffer from the problems, which they are not responsible for, which they have not created. (Osman, 2011, p. 1)

Osman went on to predict that within 5 to 10 years, all the monarchies throughout the region will topple.

When one looks at countries like Syria, it is difficult to call the protests the Arab Spring, which symbolizes so many positive emotions. Others have called the various movements the Arab Awakening, the Arab Winter, the Era of the Islamist, etc., but it is impossible to capture the complexity and diversity of the movement in a single short, albeit catchy, phrase. Regardless of how we label events in the Arab world, a distinction needs to be made at the outset between an Islamist and a Muslim terrorist. They are far from the same thing; Islamists want to work within the state and terrorists want to blow up the state. Democratic elections in Tunisia and Egypt have resulted in large majorities for Islamic political parties, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

The impact of the rebellions on recruitment to terrorism, and support for terrorists, are largely unknown. Some experts argue that the uprisings inspired an anti-jihad attitude. Wright (2011) said the following:

> The counter-jihad is the rejection of specific violent movements as well as the principle of violence to achieve political goals. . . . Every reliable poll since 2007 shows steadily declining support for the destructive and disruptive jihads, even in communities where politics are partly shaped by the Arab-Israel conflict. The counter-jihad has been especially evident among Sunni Muslims, who account for more than 80 percent of the Islamic world. (p. 3)

Yet, despite Wright's optimism, it would be premature to predict an Arab future without terrorism. The initial al-Qaeda appears to have lost some clout during the revolutions as Islamists joined the political process to make changes from within. The first reprint in this chapter explores the possibility that the original al-Qaeda is no longer a major threat. Nevertheless, the violence spawned by al-Qaeda lingers in multiple franchises or spin-offs, which will also be discussed.

The impact on U.S. relations with Arab countries is changing as well. The United States was an ally of the strongmen that the protesters deposed. These rulers cloaked themselves in counterterrorism credentials and thus appealed to the United States' need for allies in the region. The United States remains an ally of the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and several other despots of the Arab world. The United States forms its allies for strategic reasons and thus the United States joins the group of the outside powers who "had winked" at their allies' abuses of authority (Ajami, 2012). This raises serious concerns about U.S. support for non-democracies. The traditional legalism versus realism debate is exemplified by U.S. foreign policy. Should the United States follow a strictly legalistic view and shun all dictators, refusing to give then financial aid because they are not democratically elected? Or should the United States be realistic about its influence and attempt to befriend the regions rulers regardless of their policies? The implications for the United States are dramatic and yet unfolding.

For example, U.S. foreign policy may also be impacted by Israel, which has long counted on the support of Egypt and the tacit acceptance by the strongmen who are now

deposed or may soon be. Will those who gain power in their place continue relatively benign postures on Israel? The Iranian threat to Israel is real and has been ongoing for some time.

The term *Arab Spring* signifies rebirth and renewal, but the rebirth may be counter to U.S. interests. And the renewal may well be the renewal of Islamic political power antithetical to Western interests. How will the United States react if these countries adopt Sharia law, a very strict Islamic code that supports harsh punishments, like stoning to death, for what we might seem to us as relatively minor transgressions? If Sharia law allows polygamy, torture, and discrimination against women, will the Arab Spring become the Arab Winter?

Recent events in the Arab world could be traced to their ancient and more modern history. For example, the breakup of the Ottoman Empire following World War I and the partition of the region into states run by the victorious Allies, including Great Britain, France, Italy, and others, could be linked to today's events, although that is beyond the scope of this textbook.

The discussion now turns to a few individual counties, examining what happened, how it happened, and where it appears to be leading. Since the revolts began in Tunisia, after an unemployed fruit vendor immolated himself, we begin there.

Tunisia

Located in Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Algiers and Libya, Tunisia is relatively small, with just over 10 million people, and its land area is about the size of the U.S. state of Georgia. Tunisia won its independence from its colonial overlord, France, in 1956.

Tunisia, like Morocco, Algeria, and Libya, occupies an area in North Africa called the Maghreb. A major al-Qaeda franchise, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), based in Algeria, operates in several areas in North Africa. As the revolutionary spirit has increased throughout adjacent countries that comprise an area known as the Sahel (Chad, Mali, and Niger), AQIM has found opportunities for radicalizing their dissatisfied neighbors (*The Economist,* 2011b).

There is little dissent about the facts that ignited the so-called Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia (Jasmine is the country's national flower). On December 17, 2010, a 26-year-old fruit peddler named Mohamed Bouazizi refused to pay the customary bribe to a city inspector. The city inspector retaliated by confiscating his fruit. Bouazizi later pushed his fruit cart to the center of Sidi Bouzid, the capital of one of Tunisia's rural providences. After failing in his efforts to appeal to the government, Bouazizi, using paint thinner, set himself on fire. With burns over 90% of his body, he died a few weeks later.

The news of Bouazizi's self-immolation spread quickly, fueled by the Internet. Wright (2011) noted the following:

> Cell phones are common, and the Internet is popular. Over one-third of Tunisians are Internet users. Some 20 percent use Facebook. Bouazizi's cousin posted a video of the family protest on YouTube. Al Jazeera picked it up and aired it within hours, as eventually did other independent satellite stations circumventing state-controlled television. A local lawyer who witnessed Bouazizi's self-immolation used Facebook, one of the few online video sites not censored, to mobilize the public for broader protests. Word spread quickly on Twitter. Within twenty-four hours, the world's first "virtual" revolution rumbled across Tunisia. (p. 16)

The dictator in question, U.S. ally president Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, had ruled Tunisia with an iron fist since engineering a coup of the former leader, Habib Bourguiba, in 1987. Corruption was apparently widespread within the leader's extended family, and a WikiLeaks cable in 2010 called the Ben Ali's clan a "quasi-mafia" (Wright, 2011, p. 17).

In response to the street protests that followed Bouazizi's self-immolation, Ben Ali imposed a state of emergency and instructed the army to fire on the crowd. But the military turned against Ben Ali, refusing their orders to shoot the protestors. On January 14, Ben Ali flew into exile in Saudi Arabia, thus quickly ending his 23-year rule.

Ben Ali subsequently claimed that he had been tricked into staying in Saudi Arabia. A statement released by Ben Ali said that he had been warned of an assassination plot, so he flew his family to safety in Saudi Arabia. He said he planned to return to Tunisia on the same flight, but the plane's pilot disobeyed orders and took off without him (Jensen, 2011).

A transitional government was formed, in large part composed of former officials in the Ben Ali government and military. An interim prime minister was appointed (Kirkpatrick, 2011a). A general and seemingly fair election followed.

Voting for Change

In October 2011, millions of Tunisians cast votes for an assembly to draft a constitution and form a new government. The first election of the Arab uprisings signaled a turn to a more religious society. Rejecting secular government, the voters overwhelmingly endorsed Islamic political parties, which had been excluded during the reign of Ben Ali. The switch to a more religious government concerned many, including many liberal Tunisians (Sayare, 2011).

The Ennahda Party, seen as one of the most pragmatic of the region's Islamist movements, won a plurality (41%) in the election. Ennahda's task was to form a coalition government and name the prime minister. A new interim president, Moncef Marzouki, a member of the Congress for Republic party supports a coalition with the Ennahda party. He argues that Tunisia has not become an Islamic state as many in the West fear (Middle East Online, 2012).

Not surprisingly, the optimism fueled by the revolution collided with the hard reality that the day-to-day life of most people in Tunisia. Many are poverty-stricken, unemployed, and marginalized. Youth unemployment in Tunisia is said to be at least 30% (Fahim, 2011). The new rulers try to impose order on the bedlam left by the regime's collapse. In April 2012, the new government fired tear gas into a crowd protesting the new ban on demonstrations (Aljazeera, 2012a)

Tunisia was the first, and perhaps the easiest, of the revolutions. It has a young, educated population with high youth unemployment. The willingness of the Tunisia military to disobey their orders to fire on civilians was pivotal (Kirkpatrick, 2011a). It is thus sadly ironic that the new government used force against its people after the election. Egypt, where we turn next, experienced a similar, yet different, trajectory.

Egypt

Another U.S. ally was soon to fall. Tunisia's revolutionary fervor next hit Egypt, two countries to the east. It skipped, for the time being, Libya, which lies in between Tunisia and Egypt. Unlike Tunisia, Egypt is a big country—the 30th largest country in the world, covering over 386,000,000 square miles (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2012). Egypt has an estimated population of over 82 million. The long and often-studied history of Egypt will not be recounted here, other than to note that in 1952 Egypt obtained full independence from its colonial master: Great Britain.

Within less than 2 weeks from Ben Ali's flight from Tunisia, the Egyptian "Day of Rage" was organized, again with the help of the Internet. Wright reported (2011, p. 21) that more than 500,000 people used Facebook to support the planned protest. The numbers of protestors in the newly named Liberation Square (formerly Tahrir Square) swelled.

During the revolution, Egyptians tended to come together as one—the age-old differences between the religious and the secular approach seemed to fade. Egypt is 90% Muslim—mostly Sunni. Coptic Christians and a few other groups make up 10% of the population.

By 2011, Egypt's strongman, Hosni Mubarak "had ruled longer than all but three pharaohs and pashas in Egypt's six-thousand-year history" (Wright, 2011, p. 23). Mubarak did not give up at first. He unleashed his forces on the protestors. Mubarak's police were widely feared and hated by the people because of their brutal methods. During the less than 3-week uprising, more than 800 people were killed. The police were often forced to retreat. Ultimately, 18 police generals and 9 other senior police officers were forced into early retirement as punishment for their treatment of the nonviolent protestors (Kirkpatrick, 2011c).

The protestors ultimately won when the army would not obey Mubarak's orders to fire on them, and like Ben Ali in Tunisia, Mubarak was forced to step down, which he did on February 18, 2011, going into exile at his coastal home in Egypt's Sharm El Sheikh on the Red Sea, on the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula. He and his sons subsequently went on trial in Cairo for conspiracy to kill unarmed protestors: he was apparently very ill. Mubarak was found guilty of complicity in the murders of the protestors. He was sentenced to life in prison but is being held in a military hospital. Tahrir Square again erupted in anger when many former regime officials were acquitted. (Aljazerra, 2012b).

After Mubarak left office, a state of emergency was declared and a military council, called Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), made up of former Mubarak loyalists, ran the country. SCAF announced that, despite the promise of upcoming elections, it would promulgate a declaration of basic principles for the new constitution. Amid heavy protests, SCAF ultimately revised some of their more hated edicts.

SOURCE: Presidenza della Repubblica.

Photo 10.1   Hosni Mubarak, president of Egypt, from 1981 to 2011. He resigned his office after 18 days of street protests.

The new spirit of cooperation did not last long. On May 7, 2011, Muslims launched a brutal attack on the Coptic Christian Church located in a Cairo slum; churches were burned, as were Coptic businesses, 15 people were killed (a different report said 12 were killed), and almost 200 injured (El Rashidi, 2011). The dream of a secular and tolerant society appeared in tatters.

In May 2011, Tahrir Square was again in the headlines, as protestors called for an end to emergency law and the removal from power of several of Mubarak's former officials. Clashes between the police and protestors left more than a thousand injured (Gibaly & Amer, 2011). In July 2011, tens of thousands of Islamists gathered in Tahrir Square, where secular forces had started the revolution.

The Islamists demanded a state run by strict religious laws (Shadid, 2011a). Instead, Egypt's military flexed its muscles and expanded its power. Many feared that Egypt's military would intervene in the election results, particularly the generals who seized power from Mubarak and had been running the country ever since (Kirkpatrick, 2012). Thus, between the time Mubarak fled and the elections for parliament were held, Egypt suffered from many of the old problems, as well as some new problems, including a crime wave that could not have happened when Mubarak ruled (Kirkpatrick, 2011b).

Voting

Egypt held parliamentary elections in January 2012, and almost 28 million people voted. The final results were a clear victory for the Islamists: the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party won 47% of the vote; second, with about 25% of the vote, was the Al-Nour Party, representing hard-line Salafists. Thus, the non-secular Islamists won more than 70% of the vote. Further, less than 2% of the new Parliament is female (Garcia-Navarro, 2012).

A presidential runoff was held in June 2012, pitting the Muslim Brotherhood candidate, Mohamed Morsi, against Ahmed Shafiq, the last prime minister to serve under Mubarak. Morsi won, but the day before the elections, SCAF disbanded parliament, thus undermining the president's power. Morsi called the parliament back in, but the session was brief, and questions remain about who is making the key decisions in Egypt.

The Muslim Brotherhood is not a terrorist organization, although members have been convicted of terrorist attacks on two prior presidents, and the group was banned for decades in Egypt, as well as several other parts of the Arab world. Brotherhood members tried unsuccessfully to assassinate Gamal Abdel Nasser, who ruled from 1956 to 1970. Nasser was seen as one of the most important leaders in the Arab world, and he retaliated against the Muslim Brotherhood by jailing many of their leaders (Trager, 2011, p. 1118). Four members of the Brotherhood were blamed for the successful assassination of Nasser's successor, Anwar Sadat, in 1981. Not surprisingly, the secretive Brotherhood continued to be banned as a political party under Sadat's successor, Mubarak.

Today, the Muslim Brotherhood can best be characterized as the fountainhead of Islamic ideology. It permeates life in many areas of the region. Its transformation into a legitimate political party leaves many questions. Violent clashes between the military and protestors continue, and the Muslim Brotherhood has demanded that the military cede power at once. Whether they will is an open question. The final reprint for this book discusses the recruiting and organizational history of the Brotherhood. Although it is not labeled a terrorist organization, the Brotherhood will be very important in determining the direction of Egypt's popular revolts.

The Salafists were also big winners in Egypt's election. Like the Muslim Brotherhood, they had been banned under Mubarak from participating in elections. The Salifists, described as "bearded and dressed as though they had just stepped out of the seventh century, their women shrouded in black except for their eyes…" (Heard, 2011, p. 2), have now joined the political process. Ultraconservative and anti-Western, Salafists want an Islamic

state based on Sharia law. They are particularly popular in rural areas, where almost half of Egypt's population lives.

The United States, while long a supporter of Mubarak, has recognized that the election results require it to engage in dialogue with the Muslim Brotherhood (Duss, 2012). Can Egypt, a net importer of oil, afford to turn its back on its former trading partners? Unlike Saudi Arabia or Iran, Egypt cannot draw on oil wealth to appease the populace.

Part of Egypt's role as a U.S. ally was to sign a peace treaty with Israel. What will happen if the peace is renounced?

Does the Egyptian revolution undermine terrorism? An Egyptian, Ayman al-Zawahiri, became the leader of al-Qaeda following bin Laden's death. Continuing to espouse extremist ideology and violence, Zawahiri and al-Qaeda seem somewhat diminished by the events in Egypt. Zawahiri and the Egyptian protestors had the same goal: to oust the tyrant Mubarak. But the peaceful nature of the protests—and their ultimate success—underscored how attitudes may be changing in the Arab world.

Libya

Libya is in Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Egypt and Tunisia. It also borders Algeria, Chad, Niger, and Sudan.

Ninety-seven percent of Libyans are Muslim, mostly Sunni. The country is primarily made up of Arabs and Berbers, who speak an Afro-Asiatic language. Berbers are believed to have originally come from Spain and Portugal, where they were known as Iberians.

Libya was part of the Ottoman Empire until Italy overthrew the Turks in 1911. It became independent from its Italian colonial rulers in 1951. In 1969, Col. Muammar Qaddafi took over control of the country after a military coup. Until his death in 2011, he had been an on and off ally with the United States.

Qaddafi endorsed what he called the Third Universal Theory, which combined socialism, Islam, and tribal practices. He saw himself as a ruler of a new Pan-African society. When Qaddafi came to power, Libya was divided among loose confederacies and insular tribes. Qaddafi forged them into a single country; some say it was a country built around Qaddafi's personality cult (Kirkpatrick, 2011d).

The United Nations imposed sanctions on Libya after the explosion on Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. Sanctions were finally lifted after Libya accepted fiscal responsibility for the bombing. Libya was removed from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism subsequently. See Chapter 3 for more details of the tragedy on Pan Am Flight 103.

The Revolution

Libya's revolution began on February 15, 2011, in Benghazi, in eastern Libya, only 4 days after Egypt's Mubarak resigned. Wright (2011) wrote that the revolt's "flashpoint was the arrest of human rights lawyer Fathi Terbil, who was representing families of 1,2000 men killed by security forces in a 1996 prison massacre" (p. 249). In March, a Transitional National Council (TNC) was formed in Benghazi with the goal of overthrowing Qaddafi and turning the country into a democracy.

Libya's dictator was 42 years into his rule and long considered erratic and perhaps insane. He was also defiant and responded to the protests with ruthless force. His troops fired on unarmed protestors. He sent troops to surround Benghazi, prompting the UN Security Council to pass a resolution to stop the "loss of civilian life by targeting Qaddafi's war-making machine" and establish a no-fly zone over Libya (Fahim & Mazzetti, 2011). Shortly thereafter, the United States, France, Britain, other North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces, and two Arab countries commenced bombing of Libyan military bases, airplanes, and air defense. Nevertheless, many Libyan cities, including the

Photo 10.2   Muammar Qaddafi attends an Arab Union summit in 2009.

port city of Misurata to the west of Benghazi, continued to be bombarded by forces loyal to Qaddafi (Chivers, 2011).

NATO stepped up the bombing of Libyan military facilities. The United States, while facilitating the air strikes, was unwilling to put "boots on the ground," as Britain and France did (Tisdall, 2011). It is widely believed, however that the U.S. CIA was assisting the TNC. After more than a month of NATO airstrikes, the U.S. military warned that the fighting in Libya could become a dangerous stalemate (Nordland & Myers, 2011).

As the fighting dragged on, the TNC was recognized as the legitimate interim government by the UN General Assembly. Many countries sent emissaries to Benghazi, which remained under rebel control, and several billion dollars in support was pledged by the nations intervening in Libya. By July, the United States formally recognized the TNC as the country's legitimate government and pledged to release Libya's frozen assets (Arsu & Erlanger, 2011). After several months of victories and retreats, the anti-Qaddafi forces, with the assistance of NATO airstrikes, captured the capital, Tripoli, in August of 2011.

By this time, several of Qaddafi's top officials had gone into exile, and several of his family members had been killed or fled. Concerns mounted that even if Qaddafi was captured the various tribal factions that comprise Libya would seek revenge on those who had been associated with the regime, as well as on other tribal factions (Kirkpatrick & Chivers, 2011). Of further concern to the West was the growth of the Islamist movement in Libya, which would unlikely favor a democracy and acceptance of tribal pluralism. As in Tunisia and Egypt, the Islamists had been banned under Qaddafi (Nordland & Kirpatrick, 2011).

Unlike Tunisia or Egypt, where the dictators fell quickly, the protracted war in Libya was not going to end without the capture (or killing) of Qaddafi, which finally happed on October 20, 2011, in Sirte, his home city. Initial video footage showed him alive when he was pulled from a drainage ditch after his convoy was hit by NATO planes. Soon after, it was

announced he was dead, and a video showed him with a bullet hole in his head. The TNC announced the revolution was over and promised that the new government would be based on Islamic beliefs. A free election was also promised (Nossiter & Fahim, 2011). A parliamentary election was held in July 2012, and to many observers' surprise, the candidate from the Muslim Brotherhood lost to the candidate from the centralist National Forces Alliance. The parliament is responsible for writing a new constitution and selecting a prime minister.

Yet things have not gone smoothly for the new government. Rebels have been reluctant to hand back arms and various factions continue to battle. The new government has little legitimacy, and the militias are fostering chaos in Libya. Many observers fear that the militias have made the country chaotic and susceptible to the rise of another strongman.

The repercussions from Libya's downfall are beginning to spread to other areas of Africa as mercenary fighters hired by Qaddafi bring home Libyan arms. For example, in February 2012, Tuareg rebels, who had fought for Qaddafi and taken his weapons, stormed Mali's northern desert, demanding independence for the Tuareg people (Nossiter, 2011).

Yemen

With an area about twice the size of Wyoming, Yemen is located in the Middle East, between Oman and Saudi Arabia. Over 20 million people live in Yemen, and almost half of the population is 14 years old or younger.

The northern part of the country was ruled by the Ottoman Empire until 1918. The north stayed independent, but southern Yemen was ruled by the British until 1967 and then became independent. Political strife in the south resulted in the migration of hundreds of thousands of Yemenis to the north. In 1990, the two countries were united into the Republic of Yemen (CIA, 2012).

Wright (2011) noted that Yemen "represented the perfect storm, the potentially catastrophic confluence of crises" (p. 237). Yemen is the poorest nation in the Arab world. The majority of people live below the poverty line, and at least one third of the adult population is unemployed. Further complications include tribal divisions—an almost even split between Sunni and Shite Muslims, southern secessionists, and northern rebels. Yemen has an active al-Qaeda franchise, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) (Wright, 2011, p. 237). Or, as Ajami (2012) said, Yemen is the "quintessential failed state."

President Ali Abdullah Saleh had ruled since 1978; he was the leader of the north before the unification of Yemen. Saleh was unable to quell the political revolt that began in January 2011, despite cracking down brutally on the peaceful protestors camped in what became known as Change Square. President Saleh quickly suspended the constitution, declared martial law, and outlawed protests.

The revolt was protracted, unlike in Tunisia or Egypt. First, the president said he would leave office, but thereafter he balked at doing so. He pledged to resign if certain conditions were met, including full immunity from prosecution for him and his family. Each time Saleh reversed course, concerns were raised that the stalemate was leading to civil war (Worth, 2011a).

Saleh, like many of the long-ruling despots in the region, had been an important ally of the United States in its "war" on terrorism. Again, the impact of the Arab uprisings on U.S. foreign policy are evolving and unknown, but the question of the U.S. policy of embracing dictators is clearly worth debate at the highest levels of government.

The six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council, in consultation with the United States and the European Union, proposed a plan for Saleh to leave with full immunity, but then the president announced that he would not leave until the street protests stopped. Gunfights broke out in the capital, Sana, between pro-Saleh forces and members and associates of his main political rivals, the Ahmar family.

Yemen was on the brink of economic collapse. Its domestic oil and electricity networks were shut down by anti-Saleh forces. Lines for gas in some areas extended for miles, and

electricity was available only a few hours a day. Food prices soared, water was scarce, banks refused to lend money, and many businesses stopped paying taxes (Worth, 2011b). Life for the average Yemeni remains dangerous and sparse.

The impasse was broken, at least in part, when, on June 3, 2011, anti-Saleh forces attacked the Presidential Palace, seriously injuring Saleh and other top officials who were praying in the mosque inside the palace. At first, the government reported that the president had sustained minor injuries, but this was proved false the next day when Saleh flew to Saudi Arabia for urgent medical treatment. Yet he refused to resign as president and pledged to return to Yemen following treatment.

The United States responded to the crisis in Yemen by increasing its strikes of unmanned drones. As discussed in the previous chapter of this text, the United States' heavy use of drones is changing the way that modern war is being conducted. On September 30, 2011, U.S. armed drones operated by the CIA killed American-born Anwar al-Awlaki, a fiery preacher and AQAP's most ardent propagandist. The United States considered al-Awlaki an extremely important figure in AQAP; the drone strike also killed Samir Khan, another American citizen, who was believed to be the editor of al-Qaeda's online English magazine, *Inspire*. Al-Awlaki delivered many Internet lectures and sermons, apparently inspiring many jihadists, including Major Nidal Malik Hasan, with whom he had several e-mail exchanges before Hasan's deadly rampage at Fort Hood, Texas, in 2009. Faisal Shahzad, whose failed attempt to set off a car bomb in New York City's Time Square in 2010, called al-Awlaki an inspiration (Carter, 2011).

The drone strike raised many questions about the legality and morality of putting American citizens on a list of militants slated for assassination. An internal memo from the Obama administration provided justification for the killing of an American citizen despite an executive order banning assassinations (Savage, 2011).

The crisis in Yemen provides fertile ground for the growth of AQAP, which also goes by the name Ansar al-Sharia. This and other jihad groups have exploited the turmoil to entrench their position in the country. In the south, the port city of Aden was surrounded by AQAP fighters. Several cities, including Zinjibar, a provincial capital near the port of Aden, were under the control of AQAP. Further, a massive assault on a southern prison holding al-Qaeda militants resulted in the escape of 57 prisoners (Al-Haj, 2011).

In October 2011, the UN Security Council unanimously called for Saleh to immediately transfer power to a deputy. Finally, in November 2011, Saleh signed the agreement. The plan was to have elections within a short period and to form a national unity government that included both members of the opposition and ruling party. The Human Rights Watch (2012) issued a scathing report against the immunity deal, calling it a blow against justice.

After receiving full immunity from prosecution, Saleh went to the United States for further medical treatment in early 2012. There is speculation that his family still controls the military and other important institutions in Yemen, so the degree of power that Saleh continues to hold is unclear. The new president, Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi, is faced with enormous problems, not the least of which is the AQAP control of the south, where daytime shoot-outs between the police and the terrorists are a daily occurrence. For example, a suicide bombing—which is blamed on AQAP—in the capital in May 2012 left hundreds dead or injured. The crisis in Yemen is far from over.

Syria

The revolution against President Bashar al-Assad began in March 2011. Just like Tunisia's revolution was ignited with a relatively insignificant event—a fruit vendor's self-immolation—the trouble in Syria started when several youngsters, influenced by the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, were arrested in the southern city of Daraa for writing antigovernment graffiti ("the people want to topple the regime") on a public wall.

Photo 10.3   President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, son of Hafez al-Assad who ruled Syria for three decades before his death in 2000.

In Tunisia, the leader went into exile before a single shot was fired. In Egypt, the leader was forced into exile by the military after a few weeks of fighting. In Libya, the leader was killed after a prolonged attack assisted by NATO warplanes. In Yemen, the leader is gone, but the control of the country remains, at least in part, with his family and loyalists. But in Syria, the leadership responded to street protests with horrific violence. As this book goes to print, more than a year after the revolt began, President Bashar Assad remains in power and enormous protests continue, as do violent military crackdowns. Despite many promises to stop the killing, it not only continues but it has escalated.

Background

Syria, which is in the Middle East between Lebanon and Turkey and also borders Iraq, Jordan, and Israel, is a little larger than North Dakota. It is almost 90% Arab and also includes a smaller Druse, Kurdish, Armenian, and Christian population. Over 70% of the population is Sunni Muslim (CIA, 2012).

President Assad's lineage is from an unorthodox, or breakaway, type of Shiite Islam called Alawites. The Alawites split from the main branch of Shiism more than 1,000 years ago (Ruthven, 2011a, p. 4); they make up only about 12% of the population that they rule with increasing cruelty.

Syria's major cities are Damascus, the capital; Aleppo; Homs; and Hama. The political party of Assad is the Arab Socialist Renaissance, or Ba'ath Party, which had also been the political party of Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

Following World War I and the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, France became the colonial master of Syria. Syria gained independence from France in 1946. A brief union with Egypt occurred thereafter, but in 1961, the two countries separated, and the Syrian Arab Republic was formed. After a series of military coups, Hafiz al-Assad seized power in 1970. His son Bashar, who had trained in England as an ophthalmologist, became the Syrian president in 2000 upon the death of his father; another son, Maher al-Assad, leads the Syrian army's dreaded Fourth Armoured Division and Republican Guard.

The Assads' loyalists in the minority Alawite community, which used to be called Nusayris, named for their 9th-century founder, Ibn Nusayr, have fought to keep the Assad

dynasty in power. Minority Christians hold a number of senior government officials, and they have mostly supported the Alawites, as have businessmen. But that support has been eroding as the assaults on the Syrian people continue (Amos, 2012).

The Protests and the Vicious Response

Calling for an end to the emergency law that allowed secret detentions for any reason—or no reason at all—the protestors have been insistent in their demands that Assad should step down. Some of the worst military attacks have come as protestors bury other protestors. Syrian security forces have repeatedly fired their weapons into crowds of mourners. Unlike revolts in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, the Syrian government prohibits foreign journalists or human rights activists from entering the country. It shut down Internet services and all cell phones within governmental control (Ruthven, 2011a). Groups of exiled activists have smuggled in satellite phones, modems, laptops, and cameras (Shadid, 2011d).

In April 2011, the military surrounded Daraa, the poor and drought-stricken city near where the children had written antigovernment slogans on the walls. The military cut electricity and phones and stormed the town with tanks and soldiers (Shadid, 2011c). As he continued to do, Assad blamed others for his army's atrocities: A global conspiracy of the United States, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Israel and hard-line Salafists, Islamists, and others were all offered up by Assad as the real culprits.

Since then, protests and fierce crackdowns have occurred in many parts of Syria: In May 2011, the military attacked the Sunni Muslim town of Baniyas, on the Mediterranean coast and Homs, the second largest city in Syria. A subsequent attack on the city of Hama recalled Assad's father's treatment of an uprising of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1982, when Assad's army massacred somewhere between 10,000 and 20,000 Sunni Muslims (*The Economist*, 2011a). After the Hama massacre, the elder Assad banned all Islamist parties, including the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood; many of those not killed were imprisoned. Other areas, including Aleppo, Syria's second largest city, have been bombarded, as has Moadimiyeh, which is just outside of Damascus.

For the past year, the reported number of deaths in Syria mounted almost daily. Likewise, although difficult to know with certainty, the number of people secretly detained by the security forces continues to expand; detainees are often brutally tortured. Estimates of death vary widely, with the Syrian government saying in May 2012 that just over 6,000 soldiers and civilians have been killed; the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights put the death toll at over 11,000 (Khera, 2012).

Many Syrians have been forced to flee their homes. According to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, which is a humanitarian agency that is affiliated with the Red Cross, an estimated 1.5 million people are homeless within their own country, and another 115,000 have fled to Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq (Day Press-News, 2012).

Assad pledged early on in the revolt to remove the almost five-decade-old emergency law that allows his security forces to detain citizens for any cause, but his rhetoric did not match the actions of his military. It is no wonder that many fear that Syria will be consumed by sectarian violence if Assad remains in power; Assad's regime is known to have chemical weapons, and many fear that he would use them against NATO or other invading forces. Likewise, if his regime crumbles, sectarian violence pitting Sunni Muslims against the Shite Alawites and the Christians is of major concern. If Assad's regime topples, some type of peacekeeping force will likely be necessary to prevent a civil war.

The World's Reaction

The reaction from the world to the violence in Syria has been much less straightforward than it was in Libya, where the UN Security Council approved a no-fly zone and NATO airstrikes. No such assistance has been given to Syrian rebels.

The UN Security Council could not move forward because of threatened vetos to military action from Russia and China. Finally, in August 2011, the UN Security Council issued a condemnation of the violence, but in February 2012, Russia and China vetoed a resolution to back the Arab League's peace plan for Syria.

Many countries have recalled their ambassadors to Syria, including the countries that make up the Gulf Cooperation Council: Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. Turkey, long an ally of the Assads, issued several strong rebukes of the regime. The Arab League severed trade and investments in Syria. Eventually, the Arab League sent in monitors, but the killing continued, forcing the withdrawal of the observers.

Kofi Annan, a former secretary general of the United Nations, was appointed an envoy to Syria. Assad verbally accepted a cease-fire, but thus far, the military has not pulled out of the Syrian cities it encircles. When UN monitors have been allowed in Syria, they have often been barred from the sites of massacres.

The United States has limited options in Syria. In April 2011, the U.S. Department of State urged Americans not to visit Syria and advised Americans already there to leave. The State Department advised the evacuation of diplomats' families and some diplomatic personnel (Shadid, 2001b). In May 2011, the United States imposed sanctions on Assad and some his government colleagues, freezing their assets in U.S. financial institutions and prohibiting trade with Syria. Of course, the Assads could have tucked their apparent fortune elsewhere.

And Where Will It End?

A Free Syrian Army is based on the border with Turkey, and its power appears to be growing. It has been asserted that the Free Syrian Army has sent representatives throughout the country to form neighborhood brigades or militias (Fahim, 2012a). In July 2012, the Free Syrian Army claimed responsibility for the assassination of three top security officials; the following day, the rebels seized the border crossings with Turkey and Iraq (MacFarouhar & Arango, 2012). As this book goes to press, the ancient city of Aleppo is bracing for a major showdown between Assad's forces and the Free Syrian Army. Further, there are indications that Syria has become a haven for Sunni extremists, including al-Qaeda (Nordland, 2012).

Young people in Syria may have stimulated a revolution, but what have they wrought? One grim scenario is noted by Ruthven (2011a):

> Despite the increasingly desperate efforts of the region's authoritarian governments to keep their people in the dark about the realities of the outside world by restricting information, the younger generation identifies with its peers in the liberal West and it knows what it is missing in access to material and educational benefits as well as civil and democratic rights. The problem is that while the Facebook generation knows what it doesn't like, it is far from clear that there are structures in place, or being planned, that could provide a basis for an alternative political system if the regime collapses. Pessimists envisage a scenario encapsulated in the phrase "one man, one vote, one time" leading to a Salafist takeover and a settling of scores against minorities (including Christians) who were protected by the regime. (p. 4)

One wonders to what extent the world economic situation has impacted the Arab revolts? Khouri (2011) said the following:

> The Syrian situation captures very neatly the basic drivers of the many revolts across the Arab world. Ordinary citizens who for decades supported and benefited from government policies that broadly improved living conditions for most of the people found themselves in the past

decade squeezed by the twin forces of socio-economic stagnation and political humiliation—while a small minority of fellow citizens grew fabulously wealthy because of their connections with the centers of power.

Elsewhere in the Arab World

The countries that were previously discussed—Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria—are only 5 of the 22 predominately Arab nations. No attempt here will be made to cover the remaining 17 countries other than to note a few highlights. No Arab country has been totally spared the sentiments that convulsed the region in early 2011, but some leaders have responded differently to placate or control their people.

Bahrain

Bahrain is a very small country in the Middle East connected to Saudi Arabia by a bridge, which became notorious when it was used to send armed forces to suppress an uprising against the long-standing Bahrain ruler. In the 19th century, Bahrain was a British protectorate, but it has been independent since 1971. It is ruled by the Al-Khalifa family, who are Sunni Muslims; 70% of the population are Shiite Muslims.

As the Arab unrest grew, so did the resentment of many of the Shia Muslims; they called for an end to the Sunni Al Khalifa rule. King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, who succeeded his late father in 1999, responded with a heavy hand to the protestors. He asked Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, both led by Sunni Muslims, to assist him after the Shia took to the streets to protest his rule in February 2011. Saudi's military remain in Bahrain, making it a virtual protectorate of Saudi Arabia.

Bahrain is strategically important to the United States because it allows the U.S. Fifth Fleet to be housed there. It is also an oil refining and international banking center. Sporadic violence continues in Bahrain, and the focus of the protestors has expanded to include the United States for continuing to arm the dictator (Fahim, 2012b).

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, a large and wealthy country led by a family of Sunnis, tolerates little dissent. It has its own restive Shia's, who make up about 15% of the population, but it also has fabulous wealth. Using its money to buy order, it increased salaries, built new homes, and gave generous grants to religious organizations. Saudi religious leaders have told the people at Friday services that Islam prohibits protesting. Thus far, the money has largely worked, and most of the planned street protests have fizzled.

Tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran (not an Arab country; Iranians are Persians) over control of the Muslim world has grown with recent developments. Iran attempts to portray itself as the savior of the Shiite people; Saudi Arabia does likewise for the Sunnis. Neither country is currently known to have successfully developed a nuclear bomb, although Iran's efforts to build one could be met with a frenzy of nuclear activity in Saudi Arabia.

Morocco

Morocco remained relatively stable, although it too has experienced street protests against corruption and demanding greater freedom. Unlike other protests in the regions, the leader was not asked to step down; instead, he reputedly remains popular with many of his subjects.

In April 2011, a bomb tore through a busy café in Marrakech, popular with tourists, killing over a dozen people and wounding many more. It is unclear whether it was an act of AQIM, separatists in Western Sahara, or other groups. No one claimed responsibility.

The Alaouite dynasty, to which the current Moroccan royal family belongs, assumed leadership in 1956 once their Spanish and the French overlords left the country. King Mohammed VI succeeded his father to the throne in 1999. The king reacted to the protests by agreeing to a new constitution and making other concessions, including the transfer of much of his power. Parliamentary elections were held, and the Justice and Development party won the most seats, becoming the first Islamist party to run the government. Thus far, King Mohammed VI is secure in his position in Morocco.

Jordan

Under British control after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Jordan became free in 1946. Jordan's Hashemite King Hussein ruled from 1953 to 1999, and his eldest son Abdullah II became king upon his father's death.

Unlike some of its neighbors, Jordan has no oil wealth. It struggles with water and electrical shortages. The country is divided between East Bankers, the original residents, and the majority population of Palestinian refuges who have long made Jordan their home. Ninety-two percent of Jordanians are Sunni Muslim.

Amman, the capital, was the scene to many protests, as were other cities throughout Jordan. The protestors asked for political reforms and an end to government corruption; as elsewhere in the regions, they also asked for social justice, jobs, and lower food prices. King Abdullah II responded to the protestors by promising to reform government and to allow greater participation in the political process. Whether the reforms will eventually satisfy the protestors waits to be seen.

Palestine

Anything that happens in the Middle East can affect the ongoing tensions between the Palestinians and Israelis. Palestine does not technically exist as its own country, although it has unsuccessfully sought statehood at the United Nations.

The Palestinian land is divided into two separate and distant regions surrounded by Israel: (1) the larger West Bank, ruled by Fatah—the Palestine Authority—and (2) the small coastal enclave of the Gaza Strip, now ruled by the terrorist group Hamas.

Fatah and Hamas announced in April 2011 that they were forming a united government before asking the UN Security Council for statehood. Israel objected strenuously, noting that Hamas does not believe that Israel has a right to exist. The tension in the area is even more palpable each May, when many Palestinians commemorate the Nakba, or catastrophe, in 1948 when Israel became independent.

Eventually Hamas refused to accept the prime minister proposal by Fatah, and the Palestinians remain divided politically as well as geographically. Further, with the focus in the region on the other Arab revolutions, some worry that the Palestinian problems have become marginalized.

The Reach of the Revolution

The countries that were previously discussed make up a little less than half of the total of Arab Nations. They were excluded from this chapter for reasons of space, not importance. It is unknown whether similar protests will someday topple the autocrats elsewhere. The Gulf States are U.S. allies, but are these alliances secure for the future?

The Arabs are not the only ones impacted by the rage and revolution sweeping the region. Many non-Arab but predominately Muslim countries, like Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Turkey, to name but a few, have witnessed demonstrations inspired by the Arab movements. Street protests in eastern and western Europe may owe

their origin more to the new economic "austerity" than to the Arab revolt, yet there are similarities between the two.

There is growing concern about the spread of the revolutionary spirit into Africa, as Mali announced the birth of a new state called Azawad and as the Islamist group Boko Haram has stepped up its campaign of violence in Nigeria. Even in China, the Arab revolution has resonance, with calls for a Chinese Jasmine revolution reverberating around the Internet. Fearful of the potential of the followers to foment social and political destabilization, the government cancelled an international jasmine festive and blocked the Chinese character for jasmine from text messages and the Internet (Jacobs & Ansfield, 2011). Many of the authoritarian regimes in the Arab world have been challenged with mixed degrees of success. What will happen next?

Was the act of a single individual, the Tunisian fruit vendor, really enough to fundamentally shift the balance of power or was this a revolution just waiting for a catalyst? While the West seemed shocked at the dramatic changes in their political fortune in the region, others realized change was coming. Spindel (2011) said the following:

> It was not a question of *if,* but of *when.* The economic downturn, high unemployment, waning state influence on the populace, and the corrupt self-indulgent arrogance of shaky governments set the stage making the Arab Spring a certainty rather than an *if.* (p. 9)

According to Ajami (2012), there have been three awakenings or upheavals of major proportion in the Arab world. The first began in the late 1800s and was motivated by a desire to be part of the modern world; ironically, a 1938 book by George Antonius was called *The Arab Awakening.*

The second awakening began in the 1950s with the powerful, and often tyrannical, leadership of well known tyrants like Abdel Nasser in Egypt and Habib Bourguiba in Tunisia. This third awakening came about this way:

> [It] came in the nick of time. The Arab world had grown morose and menacing. Its populations loathed their rulers and those leaders' foreign patrons. Bands of jihadists, forged in the cruel prisons of dreadful regimes, were scattered about everywhere looking to kill and be killed. Mohamad Bouaziz summoned his fellows to a new history. (Ajami, 2012)

HIGHLIGHTS OF REPRINTED ARTICLES

William McCants (2011, September/October).
Al Qaeda's challenge. *Foreign Affairs, 90*(5).

Osama bin Laden is dead, but his dream of a revolution in the Arab world that would unseat pro-U.S. dictators has been realized, in whole or in part. Ironically, jihadists were not involved in upending the long-standing arrangements in the region.

Al-Qaeda rejected the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists who wanted to work within existing systems. This article questions the future of al-Qaeda and discusses other potent issues, such as the concept of Sharia law, Salafism, and Islamist parliamentarians.

Eric Trager (2011, September/October). The unbreakable
Muslim Brotherhood. *Foreign Affairs, 90*(5), 114–126.

The author bases his article on interviews with nearly 30 current and former members of the Muslim Brotherhood. The internal cohesiveness of the group is clearly linked to their strategy for recruiting new members.

While the first reprint argues that the Islamist leaders will need to continue their relationships with the United States for economic reasons, the author of this article believes that Egypt, and perhaps other countries, will move in an anti-Western direction.

Exploring Terrorism and the Arab Uprisings Further

It is not difficult to predict that much will have happened in the Arab world since this book was published. The avenues for future research are unlimited. Below are a few suggestions to pursue:

- What is the current status of the Syrian revolution?

- How are the Islamic parties that have come to political power in the Arab world handling their responsibilities? What is their relationship to the United States?

- Has Sharia law been implanted fully anywhere? If so, has the United States reacted against the harshest aspects of Sharia law?

- What has happened to the original al-Qaeda? What has happened to AQIM and AQAP?

- In what ways have the Arab revolutions influenced other areas of the world? Be specific.

- Do you believe that the Arab revolution will result in a decrease or increase in terrorism, both within the region and without? Explain your reasoning.

- Western governments and journalists called the protesters "rebels" or "reformers," not terrorists. How does this relate to the discussion in Chapter 1 of the role of ideology in definitions?

- Examine the Arab revolutions in terms of colonialism and de-colonialism, as discussed Chapter 3.

- Analyze the Arab revolutions in terms of the inner rot brought about by tyranny, as discussed by Kets de Vries in the second reprint of Chapter 2.

In regards to the reprint by William McCants, consider the following questions:

- What do you think of McCants' argument that the Islamist who come to power will desire to continue their financial relationships with the United States?

- How does he support his thesis that al-Qaeda has faltered and may be less relevant in the future? Do you agree?

In regards to the reprint by Eric Trager, consider the following questions:

- Explain the steps that a Muslim must take to become a member of the Muslim Brotherhood? How do these steps ensure internal cohesiveness?

- Was Trager correct when he predicted that the Islamist parliamentarians who came to power would not continue to accept financial aid from the United States?

❖

Al Qaeda's Challenge

William McCants

The Arab Spring and the death of Osama bin Laden represent a moment of both promise and peril for the global jihadist movement. On the one hand, the overthrow of secular rulers in the heartland of the Muslim world gives jihadists an unprecedented opportunity to establish the Islamic states that they have long sought. On the other hand, jihadists can no longer rally behind their most charismatic leader, bin Laden. And the jihadist flagship that he founded, al Qaeda, may lose its relevance in the Muslim world to rival Islamist groups that are prepared to run in elections and take power through politics.

The last time jihadists faced such a crossroads was at the end of the Cold War. The Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan and subsequent collapse emboldened jihadist strategists. Convinced that they had defeated a global superpower, they plotted to overthrow secular Arab governments and replace them with Islamic states, with the goal of eventually uniting them under a single caliphate. At the same time, however, the Soviet Union's demise opened up the Arab world to U.S. influence. Having been long constrained by the Soviet presence in the region, the United States quickly asserted itself by spearheading the coalition against the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, thus increasing its military presence in the Arab world. As a result, jihadists—and al Qaeda in particular—concluded that Washington now enjoyed virtually unchecked power in the Middle East and would use it to prevent the creation of the Islamic states they desired.

Several established Islamic organizations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, shared this belief with al Qaeda. But al Qaeda rejected the Brotherhood and like-minded groups because of their willingness to work within existing systems by voting for and participating in legislative bodies. Such tactics would fail to establish Islamic states, bin Laden and his comrades asserted, because they involved pragmatic political tradeoffs that would violate the principles of such future states and leave them susceptible to U.S. pressure. Only attacks on the United States, al Qaeda argued, could reduce Washington's regional power and inspire the masses to revolt.

Two decades later, bin Laden's long-sought revolutions in the Arab world are finally happening, and the upheaval would seem to give al Qaeda a rare opportunity to start building Islamic states. But so far at least, the revolutions have defied bin Laden's expectations by empowering not jihadists but Islamist parliamentarians—Islamists who refuse to violently oppose U.S. hegemony in the region and who are willing to engage in parliamentary politics. In Tunisia, the Islamist Renaissance Party leads in the polls ahead of legislative elections in October. In Egypt, the Freedom and Justice Party, the new faction created by the Muslim Brotherhood, is likely to gain a large number of seats in parliament in elections this fall. Should countries that have experienced more violent revolutions also hold elections, such as Libya, Syria, and Yemen, Islamist parliamentarians are well positioned to compete in those nations as well.

Al Qaeda and its allies will not support these Islamists unless they reject parliamentary politics and establish governments that strictly implement Islamic law and are hostile to the United States. The Islamist parliamentarians are unlikely to do either. Having suffered under one-party rule for decades and wary of rival Islamist parties, the Arab world's Islamist parliamentarians (like their secular counterparts) will be unwilling to support such a system in the future. And although they will certainly seek to implement more conservative social laws, the Islamist parliamentarians will likely come to accept that their countries require the economic and military aid of the United States or its allies.

Unable to make progress in countries where Islamist parliamentarians hold sway, such as Egypt, al Qaeda will instead attempt to diminish Washington's clout by attacking the United States and focus on aiding rebels in Libya, Syria, and Yemen. But even in those countries, it will need to make compromises to work with existing rebel groups, and these groups, like their fellow Islamists elsewhere, may accept some level of U.S. support should they take power. What all this means is that despite the seemingly opportune moment, al Qaeda is unlikely to make much progress toward its ultimate goal of establishing Islamic states in the Arab world.

Islamism Rises

Both al Qaeda and today's Islamist parliamentarians are outgrowths of the Islamism that arose in the nineteenth century as a response to the colonial domination of Muslim lands. Islamists believed that Muslims' abandonment of their faith had made them vulnerable to foreign rule. In response, they advocated for independent Muslim rulers who would fully implement Islamic law, or sharia. A large number of these Islamists adhered to Salafism, a revivalist ideology that sought to purge Islam of Western influence and supposedly improper legal innovations by returning to the religious instruction of the first generations of Muslims, or *Salaf*. Pan-Islamic sentiment intensified after World War I, when France and the United Kingdom created colonies out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. Sunni Muslims were further outraged when the new secular government in Turkey abolished the caliphate, a largely symbolic institution that

nonetheless had represented the unity of the Muslim empire under a single leader (or caliph) in the religion's early days.

When nationalist movements succeeded in ending the direct rule of foreign powers in the Middle East, beginning when Egypt gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1922, Islamist activists sought to replace the secular laws and institutions governing the newly independent states with systems based on sharia. Perhaps the most famous of the Islamist organizations of this period was the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in the 1920s. Yet when it tried to compete in Egypt's parliamentary elections in 1942, the Egyptian government, under British pressure, forced it to withdraw. Although they failed to achieve their aims through parliamentary politics, some Brotherhood activists turned to peaceful social activism, whereas others, such as Sayyid Qutb, who was one of the group's most prominent members, developed an ideology of violent revolution. Qutb rejected the idea of man-made legislation and held that Muslim-led governments that made their own law, as opposed to adopting sharia, were not truly Muslim. Qutb encouraged pious Muslims to rebel against such regimes; his writings have inspired generations of Sunni militants, including the founders of al Qaeda.

Islamists continued to focus on domestic matters until the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979. In a burst of pan-Islamic spirit, thousands of young Arab men flooded into Pakistan hoping to battle the Soviets. Among them was bin Laden, who recruited men, procured equipment, and raised money for the cause. His training camps in Afghanistan, and others like it, gave jihadists of all backgrounds a shared identity and mission. In doing so, they served as early incubators of global jihadism. When the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan nearly a decade later, the jihadists believed that they had helped defeat a superpower.

Al Qaeda, which was created in 1988, grew out of those camps. Ayman al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian Islamist who merged his organization, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, with al Qaeda in 2001, explained al Qaeda's mission in 2010 as providing a "base for indoctrination, training, and incitement that gathered the capabilities of the *ummah* [universal Islamic community], trained them, raised their consciousness, improved their abilities, and gave them confidence in their religion and themselves." This base, Zawahiri

said, involved "large amounts of participation in jihad, bearing the worries of the *ummah,* and seizing the initiative in the most urgent calamities confronting the *ummah.*" In other words, al Qaeda envisioned itself as a revolutionary vanguard and special operations unit working to defend the Muslim world.

Bin Laden's Days of Promise

Al Qaeda's early years seemed full of possibility. The collapse of the Soviet Union created new opportunities for radicals in the empire's former client states. Islamists took control of Sudan in 1989, and Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 galvanized Islamist political protests in Algeria, culminating in an Islamist victory in the country's elections the following year. When the secular Algerian military nullified the results and retained power, it only underscored the perceived need for a committed Muslim vanguard.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait turned al Qaeda's attention to the United States. Bin Laden offered to send al Qaeda operatives to Saudi Arabia to help protect the country from attack by Saddam. But the Saudis rejected his proposal and instead invited the U.S. military to lead an assault on Iraq from their territory. The decision insulted bin Laden and raised his fears about the growth of unchecked U.S. power in the Middle East. Bin Laden's concerns grew the following year, when the United States deployed peacekeeping troops to Somalia soon after he had moved al Qaeda's headquarters to Sudan—although he celebrated the U.S. withdrawal following the infamous "Black Hawk down" ambush (in which al Qaeda operatives claim to have participated). By 1993, al Qaeda members began identifying U.S. targets in East Africa, and in 1994 they sent explosives to Saudi Arabia to attack an unspecified U.S. facility.

Bin Laden returned to Afghanistan in 1996 after Islamist-controlled Sudan expelled him at Washington's behest. He viewed his exile as further evidence that Arab Islamists could not build Islamic states until Western power in the region was diminished. In a public declaration that same year, he announced that he was turning his gaze from Africa to the Persian Gulf and urged Muslims to launch a guerrilla war against U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden not only resented the Saudis for refusing his help in the Gulf War and banning him from the kingdom but also could not tolerate the continued presence of U.S. forces in the country. If jihadists inflicted enough damage on the United States, he argued, the U.S. military would withdraw from Saudi soil, a move that would allow the Islamists to confront the deviant Saudi royal family directly. Although bin Laden did not have the resources to carry out his threat, his statement infuriated the Saudi government, which instructed its clients in Afghanistan, the ruling Taliban, to restrict his activities.

But bin Laden only escalated his rhetoric against the United States. In 1998, in a joint fatwa with the leaders of other militant organizations, he called on every Muslim to murder Americans. Soon thereafter, al Qaeda made good on this threat by bombing the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Bin Laden later described these attacks in his will and testament as the second of three "escalating strikes" against the United States—the first being Hezbollah's bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon in 1983 and the third being 9/11—all of which would "lead to the withdrawal [from the Middle East] of the United States and the infidel West, even if after dozens of years."

In fact, 9/11 did not mark the logical culmination of the Lebanon and Africa bombings, as bin Laden suggested. Instead, it represented a subtle but significant shift in al Qaeda's strategy. Before 9/11, al Qaeda had targeted U.S. citizens and institutions abroad, never attacking U.S. soil. The idea behind a mass-casualty attack against the U.S. homeland arose only after the Africa bombings. Two months before 9/11, Zawahiri, who had become al Qaeda's second-in-command, published *Knights Under the Banner of the Prophet,* which offers insight into why al Qaeda decided to attack the United States within its borders. In it, he stated that al Qaeda aimed to establish an Islamic state in the Arab world:

Just as victory is not achieved for an army unless its foot soldiers occupy land, the mujahid Islamic movement will not achieve victory against the global infidel alliance unless it possesses a base in the heart of the Islamic world. Every plan and method we consider to rally and mobilize the *ummah* will be hanging in the air with no concrete result or tangible return unless it leads to the establishment of the caliphal state in the heart of the Islamic world.

Achieving this goal, Zawahiri explained elsewhere in the book, would require a global jihad:

It is not possible to incite a conflict for the establishment of a Muslim state if it is a regional

conflict. . . . The international Jewish-Crusader alliance, led by America, will not allow any Muslim force to obtain power in any of the Muslim lands. . . . It will impose sanctions on whomever helps it, even if it does not declare war against them altogether. Therefore, to adjust to this new reality, we must prepare ourselves for a battle that is not confined to a single region but rather includes the apostate domestic enemy and the Jewish-Crusader external enemy.

To confront this insidious alliance, Zawahiri argued, al Qaeda had to first root out U.S. influence in the region, which it could best accomplish by attacking targets on U.S. soil. Zawahiri predicted that the United States would react either by waging war against Muslims worldwide or by pulling back its forces from Muslim lands. In other words, the United States would either fight or flee. A successful direct strike against U.S. centers of power, he believed, would force this choice on the United States and allow al Qaeda to overcome the obstacles preventing it from rallying the Muslim masses and ending U.S. hegemony in the Middle East: a lack of leadership, the lack of a clear enemy, and a lack of confidence among Muslims. Al Qaeda would soon test that theory on 9/11.

Jihadist State Building

From an operational perspective, the 9/11 attacks succeeded far beyond bin Laden's imagination, killing more than 3,000 civilians and unexpectedly destroying the World Trade Center. But to al Qaeda's dismay, 9/11 did not rally Muslims to its cause. Indeed, the organization lost legitimacy when bin Laden, hoping to avoid angering his Taliban hosts, initially denied responsibility for the attacks. And when the United States retaliated against al Qaeda in Afghanistan, it did so without providing the group with the kind of clear enemy—a large "Crusader" army—the militant Islamists had hoped for. The United States kept its footprint small, using overwhelming airpower and deploying special operations forces and CIA agents to work with allied tribes to depose the Taliban and destroy al Qaeda's base of operations.

Although the U.S. military failed to capture bin Laden, it quickly overran the Taliban and toppled what many jihadists considered the only authentic Islamic state. Afghanistan's fall thus represented a huge blow to al Qaeda, whose professed goal, of course, was to establish such states. The majority of al Qaeda's Shura Council had reportedly counseled bin Laden against attacking the United States for fear of precisely this outcome.

Having failed to rally Muslims to his cause or bog down the U.S. military in a protracted ground war, bin Laden fled to Pakistan and refocused his efforts on the U.S. presence in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia had been at the forefront of bin Laden's thoughts since 1994, and he now had the resources to launch a major offensive against the U.S. presence in the kingdom. In early 2002, he sent hundreds of jihadists to Saudi Arabia to organize attacks on U.S. military and civilian personnel in the country. After a year of preparation, bin Laden and Zawahiri impatiently launched these attacks over objections from their Saudi branch that it was not ready. The campaign was a disaster. Although al Qaeda attempted to strike only U.S. targets, it killed many Arab Muslims in the process, turning the Saudi public against the group. In one particularly disastrous example, an al Qaeda attack on a residential compound in Riyadh in November 2003 killed mainly Arabs and Muslims, many of whom were children. After a two-year battle, Saudi forces had stamped out the organization's presence in the kingdom.

Yet al Qaeda's targeting miscalculations were not the only reason for its failure in Saudi Arabia. Despite a series of spectacular attacks, the organization could not compete for attention with the battle in Iraq. The U.S. invasion of that country in 2003 inflamed Muslim opinion worldwide and had finally given jihadists the clear battle they craved. Bin Laden and Zawahiri seized the opportunity to recover from their strategic blunders in Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia and to spark an all-consuming battle between the United States and the Islamic world. They hoped that this struggle would rally Muslims to al Qaeda's cause and, most important, bleed the United States of its resources. As U.S. casualties mounted in Iraq, al Qaeda strategists began citing the lessons of Vietnam and quoting the U.S. historian Paul Kennedy on the consequences of "imperial overstretch." By the end of 2004, bin Laden had begun publicly referring to al Qaeda's "war of attrition" against the United States.

Al Qaeda hoped that Iraq would be the first Islamic state to rise after the loss of Afghanistan.

In a 2005 letter to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a leader of the Iraqi insurgency who eventually joined al Qaeda and formed the subsidiary group al Qaeda in Iraq, Zawahiri asserted that victory would come when "a Muslim state is established in the manner of the Prophet in the heart of the Islamic world. . . . The center would be in the Levant and Egypt." Zawahiri argued that to expel the United States and establish an Islamic state, jihadists needed "popular support from the Muslim masses in Iraq, and the surrounding Muslim countries." Zawahiri told Zarqawi that gaining this support would be easier while U.S. forces continued to occupy Iraq. But to preserve their legitimacy after a U.S. retreat, Zawahiri said, jihadists would need to avoid alienating the public through sectarianism or gratuitous violence. They had to cooperate with Muslims of all ideological and theological stripes as long as they shared the desire for a state dedicated to sharia. Zawahiri warned Zarqawi that if he declared an Islamic state before al Qaeda had built an effective coalition of Muslim groups and garnered popular approval in Iraq, the state would fail and the jihadists' secular and Islamist opponents would take power.

Zarqawi's followers did not heed Zawahiri's advice. Al Qaeda in Iraq declared the founding of an Islamic state soon after Zarqawi was killed in an air strike in 2006, and, as Zawahiri had warned, the group ended up alienating more moderate Sunnis through its brutal implementation of Islamic law and its relentless assault on Iraq's Shiites. It also lost many of its allies in the insurgency by demanding their obedience and then targeting them and their constituencies if they refused to cooperate. Additionally, the fact that al Qaeda in Iraq's so-called Islamic state controlled so little territory earned the scorn of fellow Sunni militants in Iraq and abroad. Al Qaeda had botched its first real attempt at state building. Even if it had followed Zawahiri's counsel, however, al Qaeda in Iraq, as well as the larger organization, would have faced a new threat on the horizon: Islamist parties with the desire and know-how to enter the political system.

The Islamists Who Vote

Whereas al Qaeda's brutal, sectarian tactics turned the Iraqi populace against it, the Sunni forces willing to engage in parliamentary politics gained the most power. Chief among them was the Muslim Brotherhood, whose Iraqi Islamic Party dominates Sunni politics in Iraq today and regularly supplies one of the country's two vice presidents.

The jihadists, of course, reject this success. Zawahiri has been particularly critical of Abdel Moneim Abou el-Fatouh, a one-time member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's leadership council who is now an independent candidate for president in Egypt. Abou el-Fatouh stated before the Arab revolutions that the Brotherhood would respect the results of any popular election in Egypt and remain in loyal opposition should its opponents win. This idea was anathema to Zawahiri, who argued that a government's legitimacy derives not from the ballot box but from its enforcement of Islamic law. "Any government established on the basis of a constitution that is secular, atheist, or contradictory to Islam cannot be a respected government because it is un-Islamic and not according to sharia," he wrote in a revision of *Knights* published in 2010. "It is unacceptable that a leader in the Brotherhood evinces respect for such a government, even if it comes about through fair elections."

To be clear, Zawahiri does not oppose all elections; for example, he supports elections for the rulers of Islamic states and for representatives on leadership councils, which would ensure that these governments implemented Islamic law properly. But he opposes any system in which elections empower legislators to make laws of their own choosing. In the second edition of *Knights,* Zawahiri outlined al Qaeda's vision for the proper Islamic state:

> We demand . . . the government of the rightly guiding caliphate, which is established on the basis of the sovereignty of sharia and not on the whims of the majority. Its *ummah* chooses its rulers. . . . If they deviate, the *ummah* brings them to account and removes them. The *ummah* participates in producing that government's decisions and determining its direction. . . . [The caliphal state] commands the right and forbids the wrong and engages in jihad to liberate Muslim lands and to free all humanity from all oppression and ignorance.

Bin Laden agreed with Zawahiri's take on elections, stating in January 2009 that once

foreign influence and local tyrants have been removed from Islamic countries, true Muslims can elect their own presidents. And like Zawahiri, bin Laden argued that elections should not create parliaments that allow Muslims and non-Muslims to collaborate on making laws.

Although al Qaeda's leaders concurred on elections, they differed on the utility of using nonviolent protest to achieve Islamist goals. In bin Laden's January 2009 remarks, he claimed that demonstrations without weapons are useless. This contradicted a statement made by Zawahiri a week earlier, in which he called on Egyptian Muslims to go on strike in protest of then Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's blockade of the Gaza Strip. Now that Zawahiri has replaced bin Laden as the leader of al Qaeda, his openness to nonviolent tactics may help the organization navigate the revolutions sweeping the Arab world. Even so, his hostility toward parliamentary politics cedes the real levers of power to the Islamist parliamentarians.

Springtime for the Parliamentarians

Al Qaeda now stands at a precipice. The Arab Spring and the success of Islamist parliamentarians throughout the Middle East have challenged its core vision just as the group has lost its founder. Al Qaeda has also lost access to bin Laden's personal connections in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Persian Gulf, which had long provided it with resources and protection. Bin Laden's death has deprived al Qaeda of its most media-savvy icon; and most important, al Qaeda has lost its commander in chief. The raid that killed bin Laden revealed that he had not been reduced to a figurehead, as many Western analysts had suspected; he had continued to direct the operations of al Qaeda and its franchises. Yet the documents seized from bin Laden's home in Abbottabad, Pakistan, reveal how weak al Qaeda had become even under his ongoing leadership. Correspondence found in the raid shows bin Laden and his lieutenants lamenting al Qaeda's lack of funds and the constant casualties from U.S. drone strikes. These papers have made the organization even more vulnerable by exposing its general command structure, putting al Qaeda's leadership at greater risk of extinction than ever before.

Al Qaeda has elected Zawahiri as its new chief, at least for now. But the transition will not be seamless. Some members of al Qaeda's old guard feel little loyalty to Zawahiri, whom they view as a relative newcomer. Al Qaeda's members from the Persian Gulf, for their part, may feel alienated by having an Egyptian at their helm, especially if Zawahiri chooses another Egyptian as his deputy.

Despite these potential sources of friction, al Qaeda is not likely to split under Zawahiri's reign. Its senior leadership will still want to unite jihadist groups under its banner, and its franchises will have little reason to relinquish the recognition and resources that come with al Qaeda affiliation. Yet those affiliates cannot offer al Qaeda's senior commanders shelter. Indeed, should Pakistan become too dangerous a refuge for the organization's leaders, they will find themselves with few other options. The Islamic governments that previously protected and assisted al Qaeda, such as those in Afghanistan and Sudan in the 1990s, either no longer exist or are inhospitable (although Somalia might become a candidate if the militant group al Shabab consolidates its hold there).

In the midst of grappling with all these challenges, al Qaeda must also decide how to respond to the uprisings in the Arab world. Thus far, its leaders have indicated that they want to support Islamist insurgents in unstable revolutionary countries and lay the groundwork for the creation of Islamic states once the existing regimes have fallen, similar to what they attempted in Iraq. But al Qaeda's true strategic dilemma lies in Egypt and Tunisia. In these countries, local tyrants have been ousted, but parliamentary elections will be held soon, and the United States remains influential.

The outcome in Egypt is particularly personal for Zawahiri, who began his fight to depose the Egyptian government as a teenager. Zawahiri also understands that Egypt, given its geostrategic importance and its status as the leading Arab nation, is the grand prize in the contest between al Qaeda and the United States. In his recent six-part message to the Egyptian people and in his eulogy for bin Laden, Zawahiri suggested that absent outside interference, the Egyptians and the Tunisians would establish Islamic states that would be hostile to Western interests. But the United States, he said, will likely work to ensure that friendly political forces, including secularists and moderate Islamists, win Egypt's upcoming

elections. And even if the Islamists succeed in establishing an Islamic state there, Zawahiri argued, the United States will retain enough leverage to keep it in line. To prevent such an outcome, Zawahiri called on Islamist activists in Egypt and Tunisia to start a popular (presumably nonviolent) campaign to implement sharia as the sole source of legislation and to pressure the transitional governments to end their cooperation with Washington.

Yet Zawahiri's attempt to sway local Islamists is unlikely to succeed. Although some Islamists in the two countries rhetorically support al Qaeda, many, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, are now organizing for their countries' upcoming elections—that is, they are becoming Islamist parliamentarians. Even Egyptian Salafists, who share Zawahiri's distaste for parliamentary politics, are forming their own political parties. Most ominous for Zawahiri's agenda, the Egyptian Islamist organization al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Group), parts of which were once allied with al Qaeda, has forsworn violence and recently announced that it was creating a political party to compete in Egypt's parliamentary elections. Al Qaeda, then, is losing sway even among its natural allies.

This dynamic limits Zawahiri's options. For fear of alienating the Egyptian people, he is not likely to end his efforts to reach out to Egypt's Islamist parliamentarians or to break with them by calling for attacks in the country before the elections. Instead, he will continue urging the Islamists to advocate for sharia and to try to limit U.S. influence.

In the meantime, Zawahiri will continue trying to attack the United States and continue exploiting less stable postrevolutionary countries, such as Libya, Syria, and Yemen, which may prove more susceptible to al Qaeda's influence. Yet to operate in these countries, al Qaeda will need to subordinate its political agenda to those of the insurgents there or risk destroying itself, as Zarqawi's group did in Iraq. If those insurgents take power, they will likely refuse to offer al Qaeda safe haven for fear of alienating the United States or its allies in the region.

Thanks to the continued predominance of the United States and the growing appeal of Islamist parliamentarians in the Muslim world, even supporters of al Qaeda now doubt that it will be able to replace existing regimes with Islamic states anytime soon. In a recent joint statement, several jihadist online forums expressed concern that if Muammar al-Qaddafi is defeated in Libya, the Islamists there will participate in U.S.-backed elections, ending any chance of establishing a true Islamic state.

As a result of all these forces, al Qaeda is no longer the vanguard of the Islamist movement in the Arab world. Having defined the terms of Islamist politics for the last decade by raising fears about Islamic political parties and giving Arab rulers a pretext to limit their activity or shut them down, al Qaeda's goal of removing those rulers is now being fulfilled by others who are unlikely to share its political vision. Should these revolutions fail and al Qaeda survives, it will be ready to reclaim the mantle of Islamist resistance. But for now, the forces best positioned to capitalize on the Arab Spring are the Islamist parliamentarians, who, unlike al Qaeda, are willing and able to engage in the messy business of politics.

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The Unbreakable Muslim Brotherhood

Grim Prospects for a Liberal Egypt

Eric Trager

The protesters who led Egypt's revolt last January were young, liberal, and linked-in. They were the bloggers who first proposed the demonstrations against Hosni Mubarak on Twitter; the Facebook-based activists who invited their "friends" to protest; and Wael Ghonim, the 30-year-old Google executive who, after Egypt's state security agency detained him for 12 days, rallied the crowds to hold Tahrir Square. Far from emulating Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, they channeled Thomas Paine, calling for civil liberties, religious equality, and an end to Mubarak's dictatorship. Their determination, punctuated by the speed of their triumph, fueled optimism that the long-awaited Arab Spring had finally sprung—that the Middle East would no longer be an autocratic exception in an increasingly democratic world.

The political transition following their revolt, however, has dulled this optimism. The iconic youths of Tahrir Square are now deeply divided among nearly a dozen, often indistinguishable political parties, almost all of which are either too new to be known or too discredited by their cooperation with the previous regime. Concentrated within the small percentage of Internet-using, politically literate Egyptians, their numbers are surprisingly small.

Meanwhile, the Muslim Brotherhood, which largely avoided the limelight during the revolt, is seizing the political momentum. The Brotherhood is Egypt's most cohesive political movement, with an unparalleled ability to mobilize its followers, who will serve it extremely well in a country still unaccustomed to voting. To understand the sources of the Brotherhood's political strength, and the reasons why it is unlikely to temper its ideology, it helps to take a close look at its organizational structure and the nature of its membership. From January through March of this year, I interviewed nearly 30 current and former Muslim Brothers in an attempt to do just that. Whereas Egypt's liberal and leftist political parties are nearly as easy to join as parties in the West, becoming a full-fledged Muslim Brother is a five- to eight-year process, during which aspiring members are closely watched for their loyalty to the cause and are indoctrinated in the Brotherhood's curriculum. This intricate system for recruitment and internal promotion produces members who are strongly committed to the organization's purpose, enabling its leaders it to mobilize its followers as they see fit.

The Muslim Brotherhood is relying on this system to build a single political party, the Freedom and Justice Party, to which it will direct its millions of members and admirers. And when it emerges from Egypt's parliamentary elections this fall with significantly increased electoral power, if not an outright plurality of the vote, it will use its enhanced position to move Egypt in a decidedly theocratic, anti-Western direction.

The Brotherhood's recruitment system produces a membership strongly committed to the organization's purpose.

Starting Young

The Muslim Brotherhood's internal cohesiveness and ideological rigidity derives from its highly selective membership process. Local members scout for recruits at virtually every Egyptian university. These recruiters begin by approaching students who show strong signs of piety. "Certain members of the Muslim Brotherhood are supposed to meet and befriend new students and engage them in very normal, nonpolitical activities—football, tutoring—stuff that appeals to everyone," Amr Magdi, a former Brother, told me. Magdi was recruited during his freshman year at Cairo University's medical school but ultimately left the group due to ideological reservations. At first, recruiters do not identify themselves as Muslim Brothers and simply try to build relationships with their targets in order to scrutinize their religiosity. "This is what makes us different from political parties," said Khaled Hamza, who edits the Muslim Brotherhood's English-language Web site. "We are an ideological grass-roots group, and we use our faith to pick members." According to Hamza, the process of recruitment can last a full year. Brothers frequently cite these early interactions as the reason they ultimately joined the group.

The Brotherhood also targets children for recruitment, starting around age nine. "It focuses on Muslim Brothers' kids in particular," said Mosab Ragab, 23, a leading Muslim Brotherhood youth activist whose father and uncles belong to the group. "The focus of my house was for me to follow my father, and sometimes he advised me to sit with certain people." Like other Muslim Brothers, Ragab was won over by this early exposure to the organization, and he officially enrolled when he turned 16.

In some circumstances, aspirants seek out the organization on their own. Typically, these Brothers-to-be were raised in religious families and came across the organization in the course of their study. Even in these cases, however, prospective members are carefully vetted before being admitted. "I was in [religious] Azhari schools since kindergarten. I demanded to join the Muslim Brotherhood," said the youth activist Anas al-Qasas, 28. "I went to my uncle [a Muslim Brother], and . . . he took me to another man, a teacher, who was a sheik. . . . When someone wants to join the [Muslim Brotherhood], a man comes to guide him."

This careful recruitment procedure helps the organization ensure that it invests only in young men who are already inclined toward its Islamist ideology. But recruitment is just the beginning of a much longer, multistage process that turns a hopeful new member into a Muslim Brother.

Becoming a Brother

When an aspirant is first admitted into the Muslim Brotherhood, he becomes a *muhib,* "lover" or "follower." During this period, which typically lasts six months but can last as long as four years, the *muhib* enters a local *usra,* or "family," a regular meeting group where his piety and ideology are closely monitored. "At the *muhib* level, they try to educate you and improve your morals," Islam Lotfy, 33, another leading Muslim Brotherhood youth activist, told me. "If there is no improvement, they won't take you."

The *usra,* which consists of four to five people and is headed by a *naqib,* or "captain," is the most basic, but arguably most essential, unit of the Muslim Brotherhood's hierarchy. *Usra*s meet at least once a week and spend much of their time discussing members' personal lives and activities. This allows the Muslim Brothers to monitor their young colleagues' adherence to the organization's rigorous religious standards and to build group unity. "The main concept for [the organization] is the brotherhood of Islam," said Mohamed Abbas, 26, a Muslim Brotherhood youth leader active during the revolt. "The *usra* is about solidarity."

After the leader of an *usra* confirms, through observations or written exams, that a muhib prays regularly and possesses basic knowledge of the major Islamic texts, the muhib becomes a *muayyad,* or "supporter." This stage can last for one to three years. The *muayyad* is a nonvoting member of the organization and must fulfill certain duties set by his superiors, such as preaching, recruiting, or teaching in mosques. He also completes a more rigorous curriculum of study, memorizing major sections of the

Koran and studying the writings of the group's founder, Hasan al-Banna.

In the next phase, an aspirant becomes *muntasib,* or "affiliated." The process lasts a year and is considered the first step toward full membership. A *muntasib* "is a member, but his name is written in pencil," says Lotfy. *Muntasib*s can work in one of the official Muslim Brotherhood divisions, such as those that run programs for professionals, laborers, university students, or children. *Muntasib*s also study the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and Koranic commentary and start giving a portion of their earnings, typically five to eight percent, to the organization.

The Brotherhood will move Egypt in a theocratic, anti-Western direction.

Once a *muntasib* satisfies his monitors, he is promoted to *muntazim,* or "organizer." This stage typically lasts for another two years, during which time the *muntazim* must memorize the Koran and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and can assume a lower-level leadership role, such as forming an *usra* or heading a chapter of multiple usras. Before he can advance to the final level—*ach 'amal,* or "working brother"—the loyalty of the *muntazim* is closely probed. "They might test you by acting like state security and giving you wrong information, to see whether you talk," said Ragab, who is not yet a *muntazim* but has had the process described to him by more senior colleagues. Advancement to the final level also requires superiors' confidence that the *muntazim* will follow the directives of the Muslim Brotherhood's leadership. "It is about your knowledge, thinking, commitment to do duties, and how much ability you have to execute the orders given to you, like participating in demonstrations or conferences," said Mohammed Habib, the Brotherhood's former second-in-command.

After he becomes an *ach 'amal,* a Muslim Brother can vote in all internal elections, participate in all of the Brotherhood's working bodies, and compete for higher office within the group's hierarchy. He continues to meet weekly in his *usra* and is tasked with fulfilling dawa, the "call" to a more Islamic way of life, which is often done through the provision of social services, especially to communities in need.

The rudiments of this recruitment system date back to the Muslim Brotherhood's founding in 1928. But my conversations with members suggested that the process started to be formalized only in the late 1970s, when it became an important tool for ensuring that the state security services could not infiltrate the organization, which is precisely what happened to most other opposition groups and parties under President Anwar al-Sadat and Mubarak. (Under President Gamal Abdel Nasser, who ruled from 1956 to 1970, domestic opposition groups were decimated and Brotherhood leaders were incarcerated for decades.) "It's possible for a [state security] agent to become a *muhib,* but he won't move up," Ali Abdelfattah, a leader of the group in Alexandria, told me. "You have to be patient to become a *muayyad.* And if you're an agent, you won't be patient enough."

Even if Mubarak's fall yields a more democratic political environment, the Muslim Brotherhood is not likely to scrap this vetting system, which the organization's leaders view as essential to ensuring its members' purity of purpose. "The Muslim Brotherhood recruits people by convincing them and [incorporating them into] the structure," said Mohamed Saad el-Katatny, the former head of the organization's parliamentary bloc, who recently left his position in the group's leadership to lead the Brotherhood's new party, the Freedom and Justice Party. "They do not have any business interests. They just want to serve the religion. Our structure is so strong. When you start, you are active—you do not run after authority. You just work for the religion and work until Judgment Day."

Deploying the Soldiers

The Brotherhood's recruitment system virtually guarantees that only those who are deeply committed to its cause become full members. Meanwhile, its pyramid-shaped hierarchy ensures that these members dutifully execute the aims of its national leadership at the local level.

At the top of the hierarchy is the Guidance Office (Maktab al-Irshad), which is comprised of approximately 15 longtime Muslim Brothers and headed by the supreme guide (*murshid*). Each member of the Guidance Office oversees a different portfolio, such as university recruitment, education, or politics. Guidance Office

members are elected by the Shura Council, which is comprised of roughly 100 Muslim Brothers. Important decisions, such as whether to participate in elections, are debated and voted on within the Shura Council and then executed by the Guidance Office. Orders are passed down through a chain of command: the Guidance Office calls its deputies in each regional sector, who call their deputies in each subsidiary area, who call their deputies in each subsidiary populace, who call the heads of each local usra, who then transmit the order to their members. The chain also works in reverse: *usra*s can pass requests and concerns up to the Shura Council and the Guidance Office.

This type of transmission system enabled the Muslim Brotherhood to communicate reliably and discreetly despite intense police scrutiny under the previous regime. And in the post-Mubarak political environment, the Brotherhood's unique organizational capacity is allowing its leaders to communicate with its members nationwide—with reasonable certainty that orders will be obeyed, given the immense commitment that becoming a Muslim Brother entails. No other Egyptian opposition group can count on the type of breadth or depth of the Muslim Brotherhood's networks.

The efficiency of this system proved pivotal during the anti-Mubarak revolt. The Muslim Brotherhood initially avoided direct involvement in the demonstrations, which began on January 25, because the state security agency had threatened to arrest Mohammed Badie, the Brotherhood's supreme guide, if its members participated. But the following day, the Guidance Office yielded to the demands of its younger members and decided to make it "obligatory" for Brothers to join the protests on January 28—dubbed "Friday of Rage" by organizers—and sent the message through the hierarchy. "My *usra* leader called me and told me pretty early," said the Muslim Brotherhood youth activist Amr el-Beltagi. "Most of the people found out through the telephone. All emergencies go by phone because it is faster."

Although the overwhelming majority of the Egyptian demonstrators were not affiliated with any political movement, this order from the Muslim Brotherhood seems to have helped catalyze the revolt's early triumph over the Central Security Forces, which Mubarak reportedly removed from the streets after the successful protests of January 28. As noontime prayers ended at mosques across the country that day, a handful of activists gathered at each entrance, and their numbers gave ordinary worshipers the confidence to confront Mubarak's police forces. Many of those activists were reportedly Muslim Brothers.

The Brotherhood Bloc

In the months since Mubarak's resignation, the Muslim Brotherhood has continued to demonstrate its unique capacity to mobilize supporters. Protests continue to be held in Tahrir Square on most Fridays, and those protests that are endorsed by the Muslim Brotherhood draw substantially larger crowds than those that are not. The Muslim Brotherhood displayed its influence during the March 19 referendum on Egypt's proposed constitutional amendments, which set up earlier elections: it broke with most other opposition groups in supporting the amendments, which passed with a whopping 77 percent of the vote. The outcome all but ensured that parliamentary elections would be held this fall, thereby benefiting the Brotherhood over still-forming liberal and leftist parties.

As the parliamentary elections approach this fall, leaders of the Brotherhood are therefore highly confident about their chances. Although the group initially promised to run in only 30 to 40 percent of Egypt's electoral districts, in May it announced that it would run candidates in just under half of all constituencies. Three prominent former Guidance Office members—Mohamed Morsi, Essam el-Erian, and Katatny—are running the Freedom and Justice Party and will serve as important links between the nominally independent party and the Brotherhood proper. And the Brotherhood will use its hierarchic network to choose candidates on a district-by-district basis, as it has done in the past.

Unless the Mubarak regime's National Democratic Party is resurrected under a different name (it was officially outlawed in April, and there have been proposals to ban its former parliamentarians from running), no other party will have anything close to the network of committed supporters that the Muslim Brotherhood has. The Brotherhood thus stands to win the vast majority of the seats that it contests, making a parliamentary plurality highly likely. But the organization is not stopping there: in recent months, it has encouraged certain independents

to run for parliament as well, promising them the Muslim Brotherhood's support. "They say, 'We want to offer our services without any agenda,'" said one activist approached by the Muslim Brotherhood. It is not known how many independents have been encouraged to run this way, but the phenomenon demonstrates the Brotherhood's determination to win decisively.

The Brotherhood's establishment of a legalized party (under Mubarak, the Brotherhood's members ran for, and served in, parliament as independents) has not occurred without major bumps. Some of its most prominent members view the organization's insistence on supporting only the Freedom and Justice Party, rather than allowing Muslim Brothers to choose any Islamic party, as too limiting. "Any Muslim Brother who wants to compete in politics is fine," Abdel Moneim Abou el-Fatouh, a former Guidance Office member who may be forming his own Islamic party and is running for president, told me in March. "Back in al-Banna's time, this is what was allowed: people could be in the Saadist Party, the Wafd Party, or others. . . . [The Muslim Brotherhood] should be a civil Islamic organization, as it was since al-Banna in 1928."

Others see the formation of a political party as a distraction from the organization's greater priority: the long-term Islamization of Egyptian society through the provision of social services. This view seems particularly pronounced among Muslim Brotherhood youth activists, who held a conference without the Guidance Office's approval to publicize this position in late March. "We want the Muslim Brotherhood to be a religious group, and not to be in policy," said Ahmed Hassan, a physician who attended the conference.

These internal tensions have led a number of analysts to argue that in due time, the Muslim Brotherhood will split into several political factions. These pundits predict that prominent older leaders, such as Abou el-Fatouh, will draw away significant numbers of supporters, while disaffected youth activists will reject the Guidance Office's orders on how to vote. These tensions, they argue, could undercut the Muslim Brotherhood's ability to mobilize support.

My discussions with a dozen attendees of the March youth conference suggested that such a split is unlikely. Although some prominent Muslim Brotherhood youth activists, particularly the leaders of the revolt, vowed not to support the organization's official party, most conceded that they would ultimately obey the Guidance Office. "I'm going to support Freedom and Justice, because it's the official party of the group," Mohamed el-Gabaly, 31, told me. In fact, disagreements over the Muslim Brotherhood's political future appear to be isolated, affecting only a relatively small group of individuals. The youth conference, although noteworthy for the fact that it was held without the Guidance Office's permission, attracted only a few hundred attendees. "This is just a small group," said Mohamed Abdul Quddus, a prominent Muslim Brotherhood journalist. "Thousands of youth support the Guidance Office and the Muslim Brotherhood."

The Muslim Brotherhood youth activists who split from the organization to form Hizb al-Tayyar al-Masry (the Egyptian Current Party) in late June should be viewed in this light. According to its leaders, the new party is "not a Brotherhood party or a party of the Brotherhood youth," and most Muslim Brothers are therefore unlikely to see it as a realistic alternative to the Freedom and Justice Party. The ability of Hizb al-Tayyar al-Masry to have a long-term impact will depend on its members' ability to draw from, or replicate, the Brotherhood's nationwide networks. But that cannot happen immediately.

Winning the 81 Million

Washington should view the recent rise of the Muslim Brotherhood with concern. Despite the Brothers' insistence that their goals are "moderate," they seem to define this word differently from how one would in the West. To Muslim Brothers, the word, as Hamza, the editor of the group's English-language Web site, put it, simply means "not using violence, denouncing terrorism, and not working with jihadists."

Yet the Muslim Brothers that I interviewed invariably carved out important exceptions to this vow of nonviolence. "We believe that Zionism, the United States, and England are gangs that kill children and women and men and destroy houses and fields," former Supreme Guide Mohammed Mahdi Akef told me. "Zionism is a gang, not a country. So we will resist them until they don't have a country." Muslim Brothers added the conflicts in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, and Iraq to the list of those in which violence is permissible. And true to this principle, when U.S. Navy SEALs killed Osama bin Laden, the Muslim

Brotherhood called the action unjust and referred to the al Qaeda leader with the honorific "sheik."

Meanwhile, the Brotherhood's recent alignment with several anti-Western political parties suggests that Egyptian policy will become more hostile to the United States. In June, the Brotherhood formed the National Democratic Alliance for Egypt with over a dozen other political parties, including the Salafist Nour Party, the Nasserist Karama Party, and the liberal Wafd Party. The extreme diversity of the coalition makes its survival doubtful. Yet its parties have managed to agree on one thing: that Egypt should assume a foreign policy that is often inimical to U.S. interests. Following the alliance's June 21 meeting, for example, it released a statement announcing that it wanted to "open a strategic dialogue with Iran and Turkey . . . and review the settlement process with Israel, on the basis that it is not a real peace in light of the unjust aggression and violation of the Palestinian right to self-determination." Sentiments like this indicate that in post-Mubarak Egypt, the Brotherhood hopes to improve relations with the United States' greatest regional nemesis, Iran, and denigrate the Camp David accords with Israel, one of the United States' greatest diplomatic achievements.

The rise of the Muslim Brotherhood will also likely mean that the next Egyptian government will be less ready to cooperate with the United States. It will also likely draw closer to the Iranian-led bloc that resists U.S. influence and will reduce cooperation on security matters with Israel. Indeed, these shifts are already materializing, as the ruling Supreme Military Council, apparently unnerved by the rising power of the Brotherhood and popular discontent with Mubarak's foreign policy, has renewed relations with Tehran, a regime that once named a street after Sadat's assassin. It is also why the government has reopened the border with Gaza, which had been closed since Israel's August 2005 disengagement. Although even a Muslim Brotherhood–ruled Egypt would not likely declare war on Israel, the Brotherhood's leaders have made clear that the organization intends to support the "resistance" in Gaza. This support will likely translate into greater funding for Hamas, leading to a likely uptick in Israeli-Palestinian hostilities.

Precisely because the Muslim Brotherhood's success in the elections this fall is likely to push Egyptian foreign policy further away from U.S. interests, the Obama administration needs to combat the Brotherhood's influence on two fronts. Prior to the elections, it must communicate clear "redlines" to Egypt's current military leaders and relevant political parties about the kinds of behavior that it is unwilling to accept. Specifically, it should promise to recognize the outcome of any Egyptian election, but only if those elected commit to not participating in conflicts beyond Egypt's borders. Such a statement would blunt the Brotherhood's accusations that the United States is interfering in Egyptian affairs, as Washington would be exchanging noninterference in Egyptian affairs for the Brotherhood's noninterference in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Meanwhile, even after the elections, Washington should continue to aid liberal groups through various nongovernmental organizations, focusing in particular on training leaders outside Cairo. A great deal of the Muslim Brotherhood's strength lies in its near monopoly of influence in many countryside areas. The United States and progressive Egyptian groups can only combat this influence by introducing liberal ideas and teaching people how to organize politically. Moreover, at every opportunity, the United States should declare its hope that Egypt will become the religiously open country for which the protesters in Tahrir Square fought. It must speak up whenever Egypt's Christians are attacked, as they have been several times in recent months. Such attacks are a harbinger of more intolerance and violence.

Washington will have no choice but to work with whoever comes to power in Cairo. The United States must therefore ensure that the Muslim Brotherhood's rise is a temporary setback and that clear limits are set on the amount of damage the organization can do to U.S. interests. And it must simultaneously seek to make Egypt's domestic political scene more competitive. To do all this, the United States will need to be clear about the nature of the Brotherhood as an organization. The estimated 600,000 people who fill the Brotherhood's ranks are deeply committed to the organization and not likely to moderate their views. U.S. policy must therefore focus on the other 81 million Egyptians, who are largely unmobilized and uneducated. They are political free agents, and given the religiosity of Egyptian society, the Brotherhood can easily win their allegiance if the United States fails to act quickly to support the alternative—the liberal vision for which the youths of Tahrir Square fought so valiantly.