



***The New Arab Revolt: What Happened, What It Means, and What Comes Next, The Council on Foreign Relations, New York, USA, 2011, 496 pp.***

*The New Arab Revolt: What Happened, What It Means, and What Comes Next* brings together more than sixty articles, interviews, congressional testimony, and op-eds from experts and thought leaders, including Bernard Lewis, Fouad Ajami, Richard Haass, Lisa Anderson, Martin Indyk, Steven Cook, Aluf Benn, Dirk Vandewalle, and Nassim Nicholas Taleb. In addition, it includes articles from Foreign Affairs media, and primary source documents, and major public statements by the main players, including Barack Obama, Hillary Rodham Clinton, joined by Egyptian opposition

writings, such as statements by Hosni Mubarak, Muammar al-Qaddafi, and others are joined by Egyptian opposition writings and relevant primary source documents.

This 500 page volume is organized in six main chapters. The first section of the book, “*The Past as Prologue*,” offers an historical overview through contributions published in Foreign Affairs over the last decades. For instance, Fouad Ajami’s 1995 article “The Sorrows of Egypt” paints an indelible portrait of the Mubarak regime in all its Brezhnevite torpor, showing just what regional publics would rise up against a decade and a half later. Martin Indyk’s 2002 article “Back to the Bazaar” explains the cold-blooded calculation behind Washington’s acceptance and even support of such a state of affairs –because the existing regional order did a passable job at serving American interests, at least in the short to medium term. Bernard Lewis’s 2005 article “Freedom and Justice in the Modern Middle East,” written during a brief moment a few years ago when it seemed as if the authoritarian order was crumbling, debunks the notion that tyranny is somehow the natural state of affairs in the Arab world– a concept that brings to mind George W. Bush’s classic line about “the soft bigotry of low expectations.” And Steven A. Cook’s 2009 essay on Mubarak’s succession, together with his postscript a year later on Mohammed El Baradei’s presidential candidacy, shows an Egypt still trapped in political amber with no immediate prospects of release.

The second section, “The Ice Breaks Up,” explores the events in the first two critical upheavals. Michele Penner Angrist’s piece, written just after Ben Ali’s ouster in mid-January 2011, analyzes what happened in Tunisia and why. That is followed by a series of articles on Egypt, from an all-star lineup of regional experts, that look at every aspect of the situation there from the role of the military and the Muslim Brotherhood to the dynamics of constitutional reform and the implications for Cairo’s relations with Washington and Jerusalem. The section closes with a detailed analysis of the Egyptian case by Dina Shehata and a provocative comparison of two “black swans,” Egypt’s turmoil and the recent global financial crisis, by Nassim Nicholas Taleb and Mark Blyth.

The third section, “The Cracks Spread,” analyzes the Tunisian and the Egyptian revolutions’ consequences on

Algeria, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen, along with some region-wide discussions of food prices, demography, and women's rights. Geneive Abdo makes a parallel between Egypt and Iran. She explains the activists "want the international community to draw attention to Iran's human rights violations. Indeed, in the International Peace Institute poll, 55 percent of all respondents said that the West should speak out against the regime's human rights violations. This is an area in which the government is vulnerable. Iran has managed to convince at least a sizable portion of the population that the crackdown and repression after the 2009 movement have been necessary to preserve the country. If the United States makes clear that it condemns repression and supports the aspirations of the Iranian people, it could inspire young non-ideological Iranians—who have much in common with their Egyptian counterparts—to confront the security forces. One step further, which some U.S. senators have already backed, would be to establish an independent UN human rights monitor to track the situation in Iran and publicize violations."

The fourth section is dedicated to the decision to intervene in Libya and the early stages of the conflict. When the rebellion against Muammar al-Qaddafi's regime faltered and Qaddafi's forces regained momentum, the Obama administration decided to join France and Britain in a military operation to stave off a rebel defeat (and the massacres that some believed would follow). Sanctified by both the

United Nations and the Arab League, Operation Odyssey Dawn quickly (and perhaps unintentionally) became a test case for a new doctrine of humanitarian intervention, one that promised limited results for a limited investment.

In the fifth section, "What it Means and What Comes Next," Lisa Anderson explains what the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Libyan cases had in common and where they diverged. Jack Goldstone tries to define the type of revolution these uprisings actually were and asks about their future implications. Michael Doran looks to the demise of the British-sponsored regional order in the 1950s for contemporary lessons and argues that in the months and years ahead Iran might try to play Gamal Abdel Nasser's role and galvanize opposition to Washington and the West. And Shadi Hamid and Daniel Byman assess the impact of the upheavals on Islamist political parties and terrorism, respectively.

Finally, the last section presents a selection of some major public statements by President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to speeches from Hosni Mubarak, Muammar al-Qaddafi, and others.

This book pulls together what is needed to understand the origins and significance of the Arab awakening.

**Aude Jehan**