

# The Arab Spring & Terrorism

## Abstract:

A year has passed since the democratic protest movement dubbed “the Arab Spring” began its sweep across North Africa and the Middle East. Despite mass media coverage of the recent revolutions and countless analyses of US political interests in the region, little has been said about the effect that the Arab Spring will have on terrorist organizations and the viability of terrorism as a tactic. This paper attempts to fill that gap by analyzing evolving political environments in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, as well as terrorists’ reactions to the revolutions, to forecast the potential for terrorism in North Africa and the Middle East. The protestors’ success in ousting autocratic governments through widespread protest movements undermines terrorist recruitment rhetoric that identifies violent jihad as the only viable means of revolution. Domestic demands for equal economic opportunity and political participation do not fit with terrorist organizations’ anti-Western agenda. Finally, effective representative governments will force terrorist organizations participate in governance and face public accountability, or justify remaining outside of the popular movements. The former will moderate extremist groups; the latter will harm public legitimacy and recruitment. Terrorist organizations’ responses to the revolutions constitute strained attempts to remain relevant in a new hopeful atmosphere. Widespread political participation and continued reliance on protests as the primary tactic to voice discontent illustrate that terrorists’ influence is already in decline. This analysis concludes that barring specific country-specific setbacks, the Arab Spring will bring a sharp decline in terrorism throughout the Middle East and North Africa for the foreseeable future.

On December 17, 2010, the world was shocked by events that sparked a series of major uprisings throughout the Middle East, a region known for its instability, fiercely dictatorial governments, exotic imagery, violence, and oil. The subsequent revolutions of the following ten months have collectively been dubbed the “Arab Spring.”

This study will argue that the uprisings will undermine the power and efficacy of these terrorist groups in the foreseeable. As democracy takes hold and citizens of the Arab world have access to new methods of political expression and a spectrum of non-violent political ideologies. Further, those terrorist groups that currently share a portion of power and those that may come to power will try to promote policies in order to increase legitimacy, however, their participation in the international system and domestic governance responsibilities will ultimately temper their messages and tactics.

This paper will be divided into four sections. The first shall be a literature review analyzing the organizational behavior of terrorist groups and predictions regarding the effect of the Arab Spring. The second explains the revolutions in each country and gives a general forecast for the future of stability and terrorism. This section shall focus only on Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, as these are the only countries to have experienced successful revolutions. The third section shall describe how terrorist groups have reacted to the upheavals. The fourth and final section will consist of deductions and concluding remarks.

The term “Arab Spring” is elusive and intangible. It does not consist of one unified event, but rather “a series of civil wars, sectarian and tribal conflicts,” that reflect divisions within Arab societies that led to the recent revolutions; these rifts are not only

between the political elites and the general public, but also within certain regimes themselves.<sup>1</sup> The applicability of the term has been contested. Due to the variance in driving factors motivating the protests, some scholars have argued that applying a single label based merely on geographical proximity is inappropriate.<sup>2</sup> Others have argued that the revolutions are united in their hopes for democracy, fair economic opportunities, and reduction in corruption.<sup>3</sup> Despite the controversy of the label, there are some general deductions to discuss. For example, only terrorist groups have attempted to explain the Arab Spring revolutions as anti-Western phenomena.<sup>4</sup> Though Tunisia, Libya and Egypt are often accepted as core Arab Spring revolutions, there is controversy over whether to include other uprisings in the region, such as those in Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan.<sup>5</sup>

The events of the Arab Spring have alternatively been referred to as revolutions, uprisings, protests, and civil wars. Therefore it will be necessary to clarify what each of these terms means and the implications of these understandings.

A simple dictionary definition of the term “revolution” reveals two related concepts: the first is “a fundamental change in political organization, especially the overthrow or renunciation of one government or ruler and the substitution of another by the governed;” and the second, “a fundamental change in the way of thinking about or

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<sup>1</sup> Green, Alan M. "What Can We Predict About Libya and the Arab Spring from Statistical Studies?" *Statistics, Politics, and Policy* 2, no. 1 (2011); Smith, Lee. "Weakening Washington's Middle East Influence." *The Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2011: 3-10.

<sup>2</sup> Ghitis, Frida. "Don't Call It the 'Arab Spring' Just Yet." *World Politics Review*, 2011. Web.

<sup>3</sup> Green; Shelley, Fred M. "Orientalism, Idealism, and Realism: The United States and the 'Arab Spring'." *The Arab World Geographer* 12, no. 2 (2011): 169-173; Ramadan, Tariq, and Ayaan Hirsi Ali. "The Arab Spring After Osama." *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Green; Shelley

<sup>5</sup> There has been significant variance in the size and demands of protests. Therefore, defining the Arab Spring revolutions beyond the three successful revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya creates vague definitions with unclear delineations between what should and should not be included. For example, Syrian protests have turned violent and threaten civil war, whereas protests in Lebanon have been minor disruptions.

visualizing something; a change of paradigm”.<sup>6</sup> Hannah Arendt emphasizes the importance of revolutions as shifts in ideas, rather than violent upheavals. Arendt argues that the common acceptance of the term revolution in reference to *violent* revolutions is malevolent for mankind and instills acceptance of violence as a legitimate means of controlling power, which may culminate in totalitarianism.<sup>7</sup> Bernard Lewis specifically analyzes the relationship between Islam and political revolution. He posits that Islamist groups are often the sources of revolution in the Middle East and Northern Africa because Islam provides an emotionally familiar basis of group identity, an acceptable grounding for legitimacy and authority, a foundation to critique the present system and a program for the future; he adds that Muslim groups often have existing organized networks and the ability to meet under even the most oppressive Arab regimes.<sup>8</sup> Thus, if we are to accept that the Arab Spring protest movements are seeking to fundamentally overhaul the conception of relationships between government and citizen by enacting political change, the events fit both definitions of the term revolution and Lewis’s explanations may be applicable in understanding the emergent Islamist opposition groups.

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, an uprising is “a usually localized act of popular violence in defiance usually of an established government.” Violence is inherent in this definition. Though this definition is useful in establishing the existing government and those against it as the factions at odds, violence was not a cornerstone of the Arab Spring movements. Therefore, deeming the events of the Arab Spring “uprisings” is inaccurate.

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<sup>6</sup> Merriam-Webster

<sup>7</sup> Arendt, Hannah. *On Revolution*. New York: Viking, 1969.

<sup>8</sup> Lewis, Bernard. *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*. New York: Modern Library, 2003.

Finally, civil war is defined as “a war between opposing groups of citizens of the same country”.<sup>9</sup> Though the events of the Arab Spring clearly pitted citizen group against citizen group, this term is not entirely appropriate either. Most of the Arab Spring protests did not lead to full-blown wars, though the Libyan protests did and the Syrian case may. Additionally, this definition does not necessarily convey that one side is the incumbent government and while the other consists of opponents to the government in power. Thus, defining the Arab Spring as a series of civil wars is therefore fundamentally flawed.

For the purposes of this paper, the Arab Spring phenomena shall be referred to as “revolutions.”

Because the Arab Spring revolutions have taken many varying manifestations, there has been much speculation about what the future of the Middle East will look like. The major divide has been between optimistic scholars who predict a new wave of democracy taking hold in the region, and those who believe that the Arab Spring uprisings may prove transitory or unsettling.

Some scholars are ambitious about the “popular hope for democracy” and absence of explicitly anti-Western rhetoric.<sup>10</sup> As groups that had been labeled terrorist groups in the past are burdened with public accountability, it is possible that they will become less extremist due to the necessity of operating as legitimate actors within the international system and facing public desire for peace and stability.<sup>11</sup>

Others who have reflected on the Arab Spring have forecasted a bleaker future in the region. Some simply predict a reversion to autocratic regimes throughout the region,

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<sup>9</sup> Merriam-Webster

<sup>10</sup> Green; Shelley

<sup>11</sup> Byman, Daniel. "Israel's Pessimistic View of the Arab Spring." *The Washington Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (2011): 123-136.

but more likely military dictatorships than a single ruler.<sup>12</sup> Within this pessimistic school, there are scholars who envision a security spiral in the Middle East. The logic behind this school of thought is that as newly elected governments attempt to build legitimacy in a power vacuum, they will have to adhere to the opinions of the “Arab street.” Because popular opinion in the Arab World is generally more radical than the ousted regimes, democracy in the region could lead to the creation of radicalized states.<sup>13</sup> As Arab governments move away from the policies of the former regimes, there is a fear that Israel will become paranoid about its security and also veer from moderate policies. In this dystopian scenario, Israel, Egypt, and the Palestinians would enter into a security spiral that would benefit none, but that none could escape.<sup>14</sup>

In order to understand the effect that the Arab Spring uprisings will have on terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa, it will be useful to explain the theories of terrorism that my analysis will be based upon.

A significant source of debate within terrorism literature concerns defining terrorism. Most scholars agree that political, religious, or ideological motivation, as well as the creation of fear through violence or threat of violence, are principle tenets of terrorism.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, a particularly heated debate within the study of terrorism concerns the organization of terrorist groups. Bruce Hoffman argues that terrorist

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<sup>12</sup> Smith; Byman; Aaron, David. "Is the Arab World Changing for the Better?" *CQ Global Researcher*, 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Aaron

<sup>14</sup> Ibid; Byman; These prognostications falsely assume that foreign policy would be equally or more important than domestic reform in accruing legitimacy. Additionally, they underestimate the necessity of US foreign aid that surely would be cut after such inflammatory acts. The Libyan experience throughout the 1980s and '90s demonstrates the damage of international isolation.

<sup>15</sup> Hoffman, Bruce. *Inside Terrorism*. New York: Columbia UP, 1998;  
Richardson, Louise. *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat*. New York: Random House, 2006;  
Sageman, Marc. *Leaderless Jihad: terror networks in the twenty-first century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

organizations are highly centralized and rely on charismatic leaders to guide recruiting and planning.<sup>16</sup> Marc Sageman, on the other hand, posits that terrorist groups are notable for their social cohesion and network structure, and therefore decentralization, a process already under way, will not yield the end of terrorist groups as long as the network structure is reserved.<sup>17</sup>

Bruce Hoffman asserts that there are three types of terrorism: ethno-nationalist, secular political, and religious.<sup>18</sup> The focus of this paper shall be on religious terrorist groups in the Middle East. Terrorism is a strategy adopted by religious extremists when they perceive their religious group as at war with another group or part of the world. Religious terrorism is considered the hardest to combat because the terrorists' beliefs are personal and intensely held religious convictions, rather than political goals. Additionally, radical terrorists perceive themselves to be fighters in a "cosmic war" that will continue to be fought until their religious sect prevails; therefore, they are more likely to engage in brutal violence and suicide attacks.<sup>19</sup>

Terrorism is a form of symbolic or performance violence. As Brian Michael Jenkins enunciated in a presentation to Congress, it is "more a matter of perceptions than of numbers."<sup>20</sup> Therefore media manipulation is immensely important to the success of terrorist groups. Obtaining publicity is a major goal of terrorist organizations – so much so that terrorist organizations attempt to control the media. The most notable example is Hezbollah's media empire, which includes a TV station, a radio station, several

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<sup>16</sup> Hoffman

<sup>17</sup> Sageman

<sup>18</sup> Hoffman

<sup>19</sup> Juergensmeyer, Mark. *Terror in the Mind of God: the Global Rise of Religious Violence*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

<sup>20</sup> Jenkins, Brian Michael. *The Tenth Year: A Briefing on Terrorism Issues to New Members of the 112th Congress*. Washington: RAND.

newspapers, websites in English, French, Spanish, Hebrew, and Arabic and publishing houses.<sup>21</sup> Without coverage of its violence, the terrorist group is denied the chance to convey its own worldview. This hampers recruitment, group morale, and the ultimate goal of affecting political change.

Terrorist groups function as rational actors. Terrorist organizations have two sets of goals – the first are lofty, overarching political ambitions that constitute the group's *raison d'être*; the second are the achievable goals of revenge, renown, and reaction.<sup>22</sup> These groups make undertake calculated actions in order to achieve these goals. Recent years have seen an increase in the use of suicide bombings, so the choice to rely on suicide terrorism merits examination. The increasing use of suicide bombings is seen as a rational determination that suicide attacks are the most effective means of violence. Suicide bombings are more efficient at maximizing damage, and therefore are more likely to evoke disproportionate government retaliation and the ensuing swell in popular sympathy.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, suicide attacks do not necessitate an escape plan. In the culture of terrorist organizations, suicide bombers are revered and promised their families will be taken care of, and thus volunteers are plentiful.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, terrorist attacks can adversely affect a terrorist group if they have political power or public support to lose.<sup>25</sup> The choice to use terrorism therefore depends upon the leaders' analysis of the situations in which each group operates.

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<sup>21</sup> Erlich, Reuven, and Yoram Kahati. "Hezbollah as a case study of the battle for hearts and minds." *Israel Intelligence Heritage and Commemoration Center*, 2007.

<sup>22</sup> Richardson.

<sup>23</sup> Rosendorff, B. Peter, and Todd Sandler. "Terrorism: The Dark Side of Social Entrepreneurship." *Defense and Peace Economics* 21, no. 5 (2010): 443-474.

<sup>24</sup> Pape, Robert A. "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism." *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 3 (2003)

<sup>25</sup> Zaeef, 'Abd Al-Salām. *My Life with the Taliban*. Edited by Alex Van Linschoten and Felix Kruehn. New York: Columbia UP, 2010.



The question of what causes terrorism is a debate that will be relevant to this paper and is worth considering.

Poverty and absence of economic opportunity are often cited as interrelated factors that contribute to radicalization. The overwhelmingly youthful citizenry in the Middle East consists of a huge population of frustrated, unemployed male college graduates who cannot start families or even leave their parents' homes because of the dire economic hopelessness.<sup>26</sup> Rosendorff and Sandler assert that as wages in the formal economy drop, the opportunity cost of terrorism also drops.<sup>27</sup> Bernard Lewis adds further nuance to this concept by referring to the frustration caused by a "failure of modernization" across the Arab World as a major contributing factor in terrorism.<sup>28</sup> Poverty may also help extremist indoctrination, as Wahabi-, Hamas-, or Hezbollah-funded schools are often the only form of free education available in impoverished areas.<sup>29</sup> This often means that members of the community do not have access to other forms of more moderate religious schooling. Though these arguments seem sound, studies have shown that most terrorists are not from impoverished backgrounds.<sup>30</sup> Alberto Adabie concludes that absence of political freedoms, rather than poverty, is a better indicator of terrorism.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Stern, Jessica. *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*. New York: HarperCollins, 2003.

<sup>27</sup> Rosendorff and Sandler

<sup>28</sup> Lewis

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Krueger, Alan B. *What Makes a Terrorist: Economics and the Roots of Terrorism*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007; Berrebi, Claude. "Evidence About the Link Between Education, Poverty, and Terrorism Among Palestinians." *Working Paper*. Princeton: Princeton University Industrial Relations Section, 2003; Krueger, Alan, and Jita Maleckova. "Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17, no. 4 (Fall 2003).

<sup>31</sup> Abadie, Alberto. "Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terrorism." *American Economic Review* 96, no. 2 (2006): 50-56.

Islamist terrorist groups often cite Western policies in the Middle East as the motivation for violence. The complaints assail a range of western policies from the presence of American troops in the Hijaz, to support for Israel and exploitation of Middle Eastern oil. Terrorist rhetoric often alludes to the Crusades and the history of Western colonialism (and modern assertions of imperialism). Terrorist groups capitalize on young, unemployed, unmarried Arab males' shame at their collective immobility and create a paradigm in which the meddling West is to blame for backwardness in the region.<sup>32</sup> Some scholars even go so far as to point to global warming as an exacerbating factor that magnifies other causes and thereby leads to terrorism.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, we must briefly examine the context in which the Arab Spring arose. Nine years into the "global war on terrorism," al-Qaeda, the quintessential Middle Eastern Islamist terrorist network, had been significantly weakened: Its communications had effectively been strained, or perhaps even severed, and its leader forced into hiding. As the central organization crumbled, splinter groups arose as franchises of the al-Qaeda brand, such as al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghrib. These smaller, less organized networks lacked the capacity to implement attacks on the scale of al-Qaeda in 2001 (or even 1998). The splinter groups focused particularly on regional issues, rather than overarching transnational complaints. Overall, Middle Eastern terrorism was operationally weaker as the Arab Spring arose than it had been in decades.

Hamas and Hezbollah pose the exception to this rule. Both groups operated within the government framework of the areas they operated in. Hamas was democratically

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<sup>32</sup> Stern.

<sup>33</sup> The basic premise is that climate change affects resource scarcity, which in turn creates unmeetable demand for food and water and exacerbates existing societal tensions. For a more detailed explanation of this argument, see: Johstone, Sarah, and Jeffrey Mazo. "Global Warming and the Arab Spring." *Survival* 53, no. 2 (2011): 11-17.

elected in Gaza in 2006. Hezbollah worked within the Lebanese parliamentary system with bases in southern Beirut and the Bekaa Valley until the bloodless 2010 coup. Both groups were struggling to accommodate mundane political realities as well as holding true to their terrorist foundations. Thus, these two groups were empowered as political entities, rather than as violent terrorist groups.

There has not yet been much scholarly analysis of what the effect of the recent revolutions will be on terrorist groups in the Middle East. This paper will aim to fill that gap by analyzing the prospects for terrorism in the newly emerging democracies of the Middle East.

## I. Country Profiles

### TUNISIA

Prior to December of 2010, Tunisia did not seem to many informed observers to be the best hope for Middle Eastern democracy. In fact, its incumbent dictator, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, seized power twenty-three years earlier and showed no signs of abdicating. A massive internal police force with a sizable political branch, laws repressing religion, and a vast chasm of inequalities between the elite and average Tunisians, stifled political expression.<sup>34</sup> However these apparent contraindications provided the bases for what would soon be called “the Jasmine Revolution.” For three months Tunisia was rocked by protests, which ignited a trend throughout the region that has jolted citizens and rulers alike. Tunisia’s Jasmine Revolution sparked the Arab Spring.

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<sup>34</sup> Arieff, Alexis. *Political Transition in Tunisia*. Washington: Congressional Research Service, 2011.

December 10, 2010 began like any other day in the quiet North African country. By mid-morning, then-unknown vender Mohamed Bouazizi had walked to the grocery store to fill his vegetable cart with produce and began the long walk to the market where he peddled his goods to support his family in a town called Sidi Bouzid.<sup>35</sup> Unbeknownst to any of the actors involved, December 10<sup>th</sup> would soon become a momentous day in the country's history. As Bouazizi made his journey to the souk, a policewoman confiscated his vegetable cart, along with his scales and all of his goods. Bouazizi, accustomed to this type of harassment, offered to pay a ten-dinar fine, equivalent to about seven US dollars, or a day's wages. The policewoman responded to his offer by slapping Bouazizi and spitting in his face. Angered by the interaction, the merchant attempted to file a complaint with the municipal government, but was refused an audience with an official. The daily frustrations and humiliations overwhelmed the 26-year-old merchant, so he doused himself in paint fuel and set himself aflame in front of the municipal government office.<sup>36</sup>

Word of Bouazizi's story spread, leaving in its wake a tide of public outrage. Peaceful protests erupted in Sidi Bouzid, where friends and neighbors lamented their friend's treatment and knew well the humiliation he had suffered.<sup>37</sup> Through photos and videos on social media sites, the protests spread to nearby Kassarine and Thala by late December.<sup>38</sup> As the demonstrations grew, the government responded violently, firing into

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<sup>35</sup> Ryan, Yasmine. "The Tragic Life of a Street Vendor." *Al Jazeera English*. January 20, 2011. <<http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/features/2011/01/201111684242518839.html>>.

<sup>36</sup> Ryan, Yasmine. "How Tunisia's Revolution Began." *Al Jazeera English*. January 26, 2011. <<http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/features/2011/01/2011126121815985483.html>>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ryan, "The Tragic Life of a Street Vendor"

crowds and beating demonstrators. On January 10, protests erupted in the capital city of Tunis.<sup>39</sup>

On January 13, the President gave a national address offering political reform by 2014.<sup>40</sup> Despite his promises to step down at the end of his term and to initiate fair Parliamentary elections before then, the protestors continued to demand Ben Ali's resignation. As the protests grew in magnitude, police tactics to contain the demonstrations grew ever more harsh. There were reports of tear gas, shootings, political arrests, and beatings.<sup>41</sup> These harsh tactics could not quell the uprisings. The protests continued to spread. The following day, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali fled the country to seek refuge in Saudi Arabia. The interim government formed in the aftermath of Ben Ali's departure was almost identical to the preexisting cabinet; it was led by Prime Minister Ghannouchi and preserved the major ministers' appointments.<sup>42</sup> The interim government declared a national state of emergency, implemented a nation-wide curfew, and prohibited meetings of groups of more than three.<sup>43</sup>

Even after Ben Ali's exile, protests continued. Demonstrators called for the removal of politicians with ties to Ben Ali's political party, the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD). By late January a new set of protests began, with rural peasants taking to the streets of Tunis.<sup>44</sup> Labor union and opposition members of the new cabinet resigned in protest.<sup>45</sup> Despite a second reshuffling in late January, anti-RCD, anti-Ghannouchi protestors continued to occupy Tunis. On February 25, a 100,000-person march

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<sup>39</sup> Ayeb, Habibi. "Social and Political Geography of the Tunisian Revolution: the Alfa Grass Revolution." *Review of African Political Economy* 38, no. 129 (2011): 467-479. 474.

<sup>40</sup> Arieff, 6.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>42</sup> Ayeb, 475; Arieff, 28.

<sup>43</sup> Arieff, 6.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 1.

demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Ghannouchi.<sup>46</sup> Two days later on the 27<sup>th</sup>, Prime Minister Ghannouchi resigned. Interim Prime Minister Essebsi assumed leadership of the interim government and as of December 2011, retains this power.

Tunisian revolutionaries span the spectrum of Tunisian society. They included students, teachers, lawyers, vendors; they came from Tunisia's significant educated middle class, and from its impoverished lower class.<sup>47</sup> The poor rallied against the regional favoritism that allowed coastal regions to develop and prosper, while the country's interior stagnated in poverty.<sup>48</sup> All protested the mafia-style corruption of the Ben Ali regime, along with censorship, and absence of economic opportunities. They rose against the humiliations inflicted by the internal police, as well as the repression of the political police.<sup>49</sup>

On March 3, 2011, the interim government announced a "transition roadmap" which outlined the path to the country's first free and fair elections. According to this plan, a representative council would be elected to develop a new constitution, upon which the responsibilities of the government would be based – including limitations on the power of the president.<sup>50</sup> On April 12, a new electoral law was adopted as the basis for elections.<sup>51</sup> Constituent Assembly elections took place on October 23, 2011.

The recent elections provide insight into the Tunisian public's political leanings. Al-Nahda, a moderate Islamist political party, received the most support, with 40% of the vote. Al-Nahda ("The Renaissance") was banned by ex-President Ben Ali after garnering

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<sup>46</sup> Maddy-Weitzman, Bruce. "Middle Eastern Upheavals: Tunisia's Morning After." *Middle East Quarterly* XVIII, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 11-17. 13.

<sup>47</sup> Ryan, "How Tunisia's Revolution Began"; Ayeb, 468.

<sup>48</sup> Ryan, "How Tunisia's Revolution Began"

<sup>49</sup> Ayeb, 469

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Arief, 1.

support in the 1989 elections; Ben Ali perceived the party as a threat to his regime and cracked down on Islamist groups, imprisoning thousands of activists and causing al-Nahda's leader, Rashid al-Ghannushi, to flee to Europe.<sup>52</sup> Al-Nahda's leadership promotes the party as a moderate Islamist group and promises to work within a democratic framework without imposing fundamentalist Islam on the general public.<sup>53</sup> Skeptics point to al-Ghannushi's past extremist rhetoric to question al-Nahda's public stances.<sup>54</sup> The other five parties whose members were elected to the Constituent Assembly are secular parties based on a broad array of secular political ideologies.

President Ben Ali's government made counterterrorism efforts a policy priority. The most prominent manifestation of this priority is the 2003 anti-terrorism law, which redefined terrorism more broadly, allowed aggressive measures to combat terrorism in Tunisia, such as pretrial detention and denial of due process, and made evidence requirements in terrorism trials more lax.<sup>55</sup> The interim government has faced the challenging of separating political prisoners to be freed and legitimate terrorist suspects who must continue to be detained.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, the interim government must practice caution in crafting antiterrorism policies to avoid being accused of the same abuses as those of the Ben Ali regime.

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghrib (AQIM) has recruited and has had a presence in Tunisia as recently as 2008. AQIM is a predominantly Algerian group, though it has

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<sup>52</sup> Maddy-Weitzman, 16.; Arief, 4

<sup>53</sup> Maddy-Weitzman, 16.

<sup>54</sup> Kramer, Martin. "A U.S. Visa for an Islamic Extremist?" *Policy Watch*. no. 121. Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, June 29, 1994.

<sup>55</sup> Arief, 28.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 25.

spread over the border into western Tunisia.<sup>57</sup> Tunisian expatriates have been arrested in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Western Europe and the United States for ties to terrorism.<sup>58</sup>

### EGYPT

Egyptian citizens, similarly frustrated by opacity of government, oppressive internal police, rampant corruption, and unequal development were emboldened by the success of their Tunisian counterparts; Wael Ghonim and other prominent Egyptian opposition figures issued a call to protest via social media websites. The world watched as an 18-day uprising rejected Hosni Mubarak's government and ushered in a new era in Egyptian history.

Protests began in Egypt on January 25<sup>th</sup>, merely one week after the first Tunisian interim government was announced. Social activists created an event on Facebook called "The Day of the Revolution Against Torture, Poverty, Corruption and Unemployment," calling for Egyptians to occupy Tahrir Square on January 25 to take a stand against unjust conditions.<sup>59</sup> The police responded to the first round of protests violently, reportedly using of tear gas, live ammunition, and water cannons to force protestors to disperse.<sup>60</sup> The Egyptian government shut down the Internet early on January 28<sup>th</sup> to prevent organizers from arranging new protests, but the "Friday of Rage" protests had already been planned.<sup>61</sup> Egyptian protests grew and by the third day, hundreds of thousands of anti-Mubarak protestors flooded into Tahrir Square in downtown Cairo to call for

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>59</sup> Sutter, John D. "The Faces of Egypt's 'Revolution 2.0'." *CNN.com*. Cable News Network. February 21, 2011. <http://www.cnn.com/2011/TECH/innovation/02/21/egypt.internet.revolution/index.html>.

<sup>60</sup> El Azzazzi, Islam, and Mohammed Abouelleil Rashed. "The Egyptian Revolution: A Participant's Account from Tahrir Square." *Anthropology Today* 27, no. 2 (2011): 22-27.

<sup>61</sup> Cowie, James. *Egypt Leaves the Internet*. January 27, 2011.

<http://www.renesys.com/blog/2011/01/egypt-leaves-the-internet.shtml>; El Azzazzi and Rashed, 23.



democratic reform.<sup>62</sup> Clashes between pro- and anti-Mubarak supporters quickly turned violent.<sup>63</sup>

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, President Mubarak issued his first major speech in response to the protest movement. Mubarak explained that he would retain the role of President to protect the nation, but appointed a Vice President and a Prime Minister for the first time in his tenure and dissolved the current government.<sup>64</sup> However, the Vice President appointed, Omar Suleiman, served as the Director of the General Intelligence Directorate for 18 years and therefore was widely opposed by the Egyptian public.<sup>65</sup>

In the face of ongoing protests, the Mubarak regime offered limited political reform to placate protestors, beginning with a new cabinet that was announced on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Although many ministers were retained or shifted among ministries, the Interior Minister, a symbol of the repressive internal security system, was notably replaced.<sup>66</sup> Additionally, Vice President Suleiman called for redo Parliamentary elections in districts where appeals had been made prior to the outbreak of unrest and called for the beginning of reform processes.<sup>67</sup>

On the same day, Major General Ima'il Othman, issued a statement on behalf of the army recognizing the legitimacy of the protests and assuring protestors that the army would not use force against Egyptians.<sup>68</sup> This comment served two tacitly expressed purposes: the first was distancing the army from the Mubarak regime and security apparatus; the second was military assertion of control and a desire to preserve key

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<sup>62</sup> El Azzazzi and Rashed, 23; Sharp, Jeremy M. *Egypt: The January 25 Revolution and Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy*. Washington: Congressional Research Service, 2011.

<sup>63</sup> El Azzazzi and Rashed, 23.

<sup>64</sup> Sharp, Jeremy. *Egypt in Transition*. Washington: Congressional Research Service, 1-18. 3.

<sup>65</sup> Mayer, Jane. "Who Is Omar Suleiman?" *The New Yorker* 29 Jan. 2011.

<sup>66</sup> Sharp, *Egypt: The January 25 Revolution and Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy*, 5.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>68</sup> The Associated Press. "Egypt military promises no force against protests." *USA Today*, January 31, 2011.

elements of the status quo. The army remained neutral throughout the duration of the revolution.<sup>69</sup>

Despite these limited reforms, protests continued to grow and spread into additional Egyptian cities.<sup>70</sup> Hosni Mubarak gave another major address in which he promised not to run in the upcoming September presidential elections and to facilitate the peaceful transfer of power. However he reiterated that he would not ever leave Egypt.<sup>71</sup>

From February 2 to 3, the “Battle of Tahrir Square,” sometimes called “the Battle of the Camel,” raged in Tahrir Square, the center of the protests. Pro-Mubarak activists rode into Tahrir Square on camels and horses to launch an offensive on anti-Mubarak demonstrators wielding metal rods, sticks, and stones.<sup>72</sup> The following days saw continued expansion of revolutionary demonstrations, labor strikes, and opposition demands. The protests migrated from Tahrir Square to the Parliament’s front lawn.<sup>73</sup> As tension climbed, President Mubarak once again offered to step down at the end of his term in September 2011.<sup>74</sup>

On February 11, 2011, Vice President Suleiman announced that President Mubarak had resigned after twenty-nine years in power. The Supreme Council of Armed Forces assumed control of the government, and retains power in Egypt as of November

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<sup>69</sup> Khatab, Sayed. "Egyptian Revolution and Its Impact on the Stability in the Middle East." *IACM 24th Annual Conference Paper*. Istanbul: International Association for Conflict Management, 2011. 1-17. 5. Available at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1872581>.

<sup>70</sup> Sharp, *Egypt: The January 25 Revolution and Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy*, 6.

<sup>71</sup> "Transcript: Mubarak Tells Egyptians He Won't Seek Re-election." *CNN.com*. Cable News Network, 01 Feb. 2011. Web. [http://articles.cnn.com/2011-02-01/world/egypt.mubarak.text\\_1\\_egyptian-men-and-women-chaos-and-stability-young-people?\\_s=PM:WORLD](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-02-01/world/egypt.mubarak.text_1_egyptian-men-and-women-chaos-and-stability-young-people?_s=PM:WORLD).

<sup>72</sup> El Azzazzi and Rashed, 25.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>74</sup> "Transcript: Hosni Mubarak TV Address to Egypt." Address. *CBC World News*. CBC, 10 Feb. 2011. Web. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2011/02/10/f-egypt-mubarak-transcript.html>.

2011.<sup>75</sup> Mubarak was arrested for his role in the deaths of 840 protestors between January 25 and February 11, 2011. The trial is set to begin on December 28, 2011.<sup>76</sup>

On March 19, Egyptians voted via national referendum to pass several constitutional amendments, establishing Presidential term limits, authorizing judicial oversight of elections, and easing eligibility requirements to run for President.<sup>77</sup> Parliamentary elections are scheduled to take place in three batches between November 2011 and January 2012. Presidential elections are set to follow in March or April of 2012.

As with the Tunisian revolution, the Egyptian protestors were not merely the impoverished, but rather constituted a “broad ... cross-section of Egyptian society.”<sup>78</sup> Though most of the protestors were young men, women, children, and older Egyptians were integral members of the movement with increasing presence as the movement carried on.<sup>79</sup> Prominent, wealthy opposition leaders took to the streets alongside hundreds of thousands of average Egyptians. Even government workers called for sit-ins and civil disobedience to challenge the Mubarak regime.<sup>80</sup>

The protests were an amalgamation of complaints against the quality of life under the Mubarak regime—demonstrators were united in their calls to end Mubarak’s reign and institute a more representative government with free and fair elections.<sup>81</sup> The January 25 revolution was a reaction to corruption and cronyism in Egyptian politics, and unchecked police brutality, which had been the cause of public outrage since October

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<sup>75</sup> Kandeel, Amal A. "Egypt at a Crossroads." *Middle East Policy* 18, no. 2 (2011): 37-45.

<sup>76</sup> "Hosni Mubarak Trial Postponed until End of the Year." *BBC News Middle East*. October 30, 2011. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-15513248>; Associated Press. "Egyptian court rejects request to change judges in Mubarak trial, trial to resume Dec. 28." *The Washington Post*. December 07, 2011.

<sup>77</sup> Sharp, Jeremy M. *Egypt in Transition*, 3-4.

<sup>78</sup> Sharp, *Egypt: The January 25 Revolution and Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy*, 4.

<sup>79</sup> El Azzazzi and Rashed, 25.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*; Khatab, 5.

2010, with the infamous death of Khaled Said.<sup>82</sup> Political complaints were augmented by oppressive economic marginalization. Economic development was concentrated among the Egyptian elite. Unaddressed labor grievances, high levels of unemployment, and vast social inequalities added to a perception of helplessness.<sup>83</sup> The government's corrupt practices propagated poverty among the non-elites.<sup>84</sup>

Egypt is currently run by the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF), a twenty man military council that makes decisions by decree in consultation with political forces.<sup>85</sup> The SCAF favors stability over rapid transition to democracy; it has undertaken trials against corrupt Mubarak-era officials, drafted new electoral laws, and overseen election planning.<sup>86</sup> The members of the SCAF have enunciated since the body took control that their role is solely transitional.<sup>87</sup> However there are suspicions that the head of the SCAF, Mohamed Tantawi, is considering running for President.<sup>88</sup> Protests calling for an immediate transition to civilian rule continue in downtown Cairo, as the military council has shown mixed reactions—both cracking down on protestors and resigning its influence on the impending constitutional assembly.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Said was publicly beaten to death by two police officers in an internet café for possessing an incriminating video of the officers with illegal substances. The young man's jaw was broken and his body and face were beaten almost beyond recognition. Said's brother leaked photos of the corpse, which went viral as a symbol of police brutality in Egypt. The Facebook page "We Are All Khaled Said," run by Wael Ghonim, brought the incident to national attention. The officers were subsequently arrested for "illegal arrest, using physical torture and brutality." For more information, see: L. Gordon Crovitz's *Egypt's Revolution by Social Media*; and Brian Ross and Matthew Cole's *Egypt: The Face That Launched A Revolution*.

<sup>83</sup> El Azzazzi and Rashed, 23.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Sharp, *Egypt in Transition*, 2.

<sup>86</sup> Kandeel; Ottaway, Marina. "The Emerging Political Spectrum in Egypt." *Guide to Egypt's Transition*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. October 10, 2011. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/10/10/emerging-political-spectrum-in-egypt/5u7l>.

<sup>87</sup> Ottaway; Khatab, 5-6.

<sup>88</sup> Ottaway

<sup>89</sup> Kirkpatrick, David. "Egypt's Military Retracts Plan to Extend Influence Over Constitution." *The New York Times*. 12 09, 2011. [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/10/world/middleeast/egypt-military-scales-back-influence-on-new-constitution.html?\\_r=1&scp=6&sq=egypt&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/10/world/middleeast/egypt-military-scales-back-influence-on-new-constitution.html?_r=1&scp=6&sq=egypt&st=cse;);

Post-Mubarak Egypt has seen the proliferation of upwards of forty political parties. The first round of parliamentary elections in November 2011 had huge turnout and Islamist groups (predominantly the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party and Salafi groups) appear to have gained two-thirds of the seats in the legislature (though official results will not be announced until January).<sup>90</sup> Though Muslim Brotherhood representatives indicated during and following the revolution that the FJP would not run a Presidential candidate, skeptics indicate that the Muslim Brotherhood will use their majority in Parliament and the Shura (the upper house of the Egyptian bicameral legislative body) to challenge the SCAF.<sup>91</sup> The FJP shocked onlookers when it entered into a coalition with the nationalist Wafd Party, a longtime rival of the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>92</sup> The FJP is not the only Islamist party chartered following Mubarak's resignation; others include the Center Party, the Renaissance Party, the Development Party, and several Salafi groups. However all Egyptian Islamist parties have espoused centrist political ideologies to navigate uncertainty regarding voter preference.<sup>93</sup>

Political parties representing the protestors, including al-Ghad, al-Karama, and Tagammu', have banded together to form a loose coalition called the Revolutionary

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Bradley, Matt, and Tamer El-Ghobashy. "Egypt's Rulers Step Up Battle." *The Wall Street Journal*. November 21, 2011.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204443404577050062118911598.html>.

<sup>90</sup> Associated Press. "Islamists dominate latest Egypt election results." *MSNBC News*. December 04, 2011. [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/45540682/ns/world\\_news-mideast\\_n\\_africa/t/islamists-dominate-latest-egypt-election-results/#.TuqkOyP-\\_40](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/45540682/ns/world_news-mideast_n_africa/t/islamists-dominate-latest-egypt-election-results/#.TuqkOyP-_40).

<sup>91</sup> Kirkpatrick, David. "After Second Day of Voting in Egypt, Islamists Offer Challenge to Generals." *The New York Times*. November 29, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/30/world/middleeast/voting-in-historic-egyptian-elections-enters-second-day.html?scp=10&sq=egypt&st=cse>.

<sup>92</sup> Sharp, *Egypt in Transition*, 4.

<sup>93</sup> Ottaway; Khatab, 10.

Youth Council; the absence of hierarchical organization or well-defined leadership roles limit the functionality of the group.<sup>94</sup>

Egypt has produced two famous Islamist terrorist icons: Sayyid Qutb and Ayman al-Zawahiri. Sayyid Qutb, a famous extremist Muslim theologian who had and continues to have a major role in advocating jihad in Egypt and across the Middle East, lived in Egypt until his execution in 1967.<sup>95</sup> He is cited as a source of inspiration for al-Qaeda leaders. Ayman al-Zawahiri, the former leader of the Islamic Egyptian Jihad, and current prominent leader in al-Qaeda, also grew up and radicalized in Egypt.<sup>96</sup> It is worth noting that both Zawahiri and Qutb were active in the Muslim Brotherhood.

#### **LIBYA**

Unrest broke out in Libya in February 2011. Yet unlike the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, protests in Libya evolved into a full-blown civil war, which raged for eight months. Muammar Qaddafi never resigned from his leadership; in fact, he never held an official position within the government other than the ironic title, “leader of the revolution”.<sup>97</sup> The war ended and the revolution completed on October 20, 2011, when Muammar Qaddafi was captured and killed by rebels in Sirte. However, as with Tunisia and Egypt, the process of reconstruction has proven just as fragile and important as the period of revolution.

Libya is a young nation with a long history of foreign involvement. Libya was under foreign control for hundreds of years under the Ottomans, until Italy established a

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<sup>94</sup> Ottaway

<sup>95</sup> Wright, Lawrence. *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*. New York: Knopf, 2006.

<sup>96</sup> Al-Zayyat, Montasser. *The Road to al-Qaeda: the story of Bin Lāden's right-hand man*. London: Pluto Press, 2004.

<sup>97</sup> Paoletti, Emanuela. "Libya: Roots of a Civil Conflict." *Mediterranean Politics* 16, no. 2 (2011): 313-319. 316.

colony in Libya in 1911. An indigenous Libyan religious group, the Sanusiyyah, established de facto control over the eastern province of present-day Libya, which Italian colonists tolerated until the rise of the Fascist party in Italy. After nine years of brutal repression to break the Libyan resistance, the execution of Libyan rebel leader Omar al-Mukhtar, proved to be a turning point in the ongoing struggle against Italian rule, as the local rebellion was greatly demoralized.<sup>98</sup> Britain and France took control of the Libyan colony following Italian defeat in World War II, but then turned control over to the United Nations. Libya was granted independence via a UN General Assembly Resolution on November 21, 1949.<sup>99</sup> The Sanusi Kingdom was established. Just months before the kingdom's twentieth Independence Day, Muammar Qaddafi orchestrated a military coup and seized power on September 1, 1969.<sup>100</sup>

Libya's colonial history has had lasting effects on its politics. All political parties, regardless of affiliation or creed, rely on rhetoric that glorifies sovereignty and resistance to foreign domination.<sup>101</sup> In this context, Qaddafi's attempts to frame the rebels as puppets of foreign imperialists and rebel rhetoric alluding to Omar al-Mukhtar and the opposition of the early 1900's convey a relevant battle of messages.<sup>102</sup> The absence of a consistent, centralized authority fostered the development of a tribal system of power; that is, tribal hierarchies were used as tools to consolidate and retain political authority

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 314.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 315.

<sup>100</sup> Blanchard, Christopher M. *Libya: Unrest and U.S. Policy*. Washington: Congressional Research Service, 2011, 1-39. 1; "Muammar Qaddafi." *The Economist*. October 22, 2011.

<sup>101</sup> Blanchard, 25.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 25; Economist, "Muammar Qaddafi."

under both King Idris of the Sanusi Kingdom and Muammar Qaddafi.<sup>103</sup> An indigenous civil society never developed.<sup>104</sup>

Under Qaddafi, law number seventy-one of 1972 banned all political parties and opposition groups. Dissent was punishable by death, and in fact political opponents were assassinated both domestically and abroad.<sup>105</sup> There was no political expression, nor rule of law. Power was derived from one's tribe and especially from his or her connection to Qaddafi. Economic benefits, particularly oil revenues, were concentrated among the Qaddafa clan and other powerful elites.<sup>106</sup>

Muammar Qaddafi made an appearance on Libyan TV on January 16, merely two days after Zine al Abedine Ben Ali fled Tunisia, to publicly condemn the Tunisian uprising.<sup>107</sup> However the Libyan people did not take the message to heart. Almost exactly one month later, on February 15, 2011, riots erupted in Benghazi following the arrest of a human rights activist.<sup>108</sup> The protests calling for the activist's release continued into the following day, and the Libyan police responded violently, killing several demonstrators.<sup>109</sup> On February 17, a pre-planned "day of rage" to protest police violence five years prior, evoked an even more severe police response; dozens of civilian protestors were killed.<sup>110</sup> The protests spread throughout the country and reached the capital by the 20<sup>th</sup>. With the recent resignations of Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak fresh in

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<sup>103</sup> Paoletti, 317.

<sup>104</sup> Coleman, Isobel. "Why Libya Has a Real Shot at Democracy and Stability." *CNN.com*. October 21, 2011. <<http://www.cnn.com/2011/10/21/opinion/coleman-libya-future-odds/index.html>>.

<sup>105</sup> Economist, "Muammar Qaddafi."

<sup>106</sup> Coleman

<sup>107</sup> Weaver, Matthew. "Muammar Gaddafi Condemns Tunisia Uprising." *The Guardian*, January 16, 2011.

<sup>108</sup> Blanchard, 2; "The Birth of Free Libya." *The Economist*. August 27, 2011.

<sup>109</sup> Blanchard, 2.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid; Rosenthal, John. "The Libyan Revolution: Democracy or 'Purity of Islam'?" *National Review Online*. November 15, 2011. [www.nationalreview.com/articles/283176/libyan-revolution-democracy-or-purity-islam-john-rosenthal](http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/283176/libyan-revolution-democracy-or-purity-islam-john-rosenthal)>.



public memory, Qaddafi delivered a speech on Libyan television urging loyalists to fight back and promising to die a martyr rather than step down.<sup>111</sup> By the 24<sup>th</sup>, rebel militias had seized control of Misrata, the third-largest city in Libya, after Tripoli and Benghazi.<sup>112</sup> In late February and early March, anti-Qaddafi leaders based in Benghazi announced the creation of a Transitional National Council (TNC) and declared it the sole legitimate representative of Libya.<sup>113</sup> Momentum turned against the rebels when on March 16, loyalist forces threatened rebel-held Benghazi.<sup>114</sup> Outgunned, the rebels could not continue to fight off pro-Qaddafi forces without international support.<sup>115</sup>

As the situation escalated into a full civil war, the international community watched with concern. The UN Security Council imposed sanctions, including an arms embargo, on the Qaddafi government on February 26.<sup>116</sup> When the Council of the League of Arab States called for further UN involvement, the Security Council responded by passing Resolution 1973 (2011). Resolution 1973 called for an immediate cease-fire and dialogue among warring parties, authorized “all necessary measures ... to protect civilians and civilian populated areas,” including declaring a no-fly zone in Libyan airspace, and permitted robust enforcement measures for the arms embargo.<sup>117</sup>

NATO airstrikes in Libya began on March 19 to the rebels’ euphoria. International assistance halted the loyalist advance on Benghazi and inertia favored the

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<sup>111</sup> Hemming, John, and Dominic Evans. "Defiant Gaddafi Vows to Die as Martyr, Fight Revolt." *Reuters.com*. February 22, 2011. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/22/us-libya-protests-idUSTRE71G0A620110222>>.

<sup>112</sup> "The Birth of Free Libya."

<sup>113</sup> Ibid; Blanchard; Pippan, Christopher. "The 2011 Libyan Uprising, Foreign Military Intervention, and International Law." *Juridikum*, 2011: 159-169.

<sup>114</sup> "The Birth of Free Libya."

<sup>115</sup> Blanchard, 3-4.

<sup>116</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1970 (2011)

<sup>117</sup> Pippan, 159-160; UN Security Council Resolution 1973 (2011).

rebels, who continued gaining ground.<sup>118</sup> Qaddafi's forces lost control of much of the country due to the no fly zone and senior Qaddafi officials defected to the opposition.<sup>119</sup>

The fighting reached a stalemate in the late spring. As US officials called for the Libyan government to step down, on June 7 Qaddafi took to TV to deliver a defiant speech vowing to fight to the end and to never surrender.<sup>120</sup> On July 15, 2011, the United States government recognized the National Transitional Council as the legitimate government of Libya.<sup>121</sup> In mid-August, rebel militias claimed Zawiya, therein breaking the supply route between Tunisia and Tripoli.<sup>122</sup> Rebel militias seized control of the capital in late August. Once Tripoli fell to the rebels, other cities followed. Loyalists were squeezed into Qaddafi's hometown, Sirte, and Sebha in the south.<sup>123</sup>

The war ended on October 20, the day Qaddafi was captured and killed by rebel militiamen outside Sirte.<sup>124</sup> Though the Libyan populace celebrated, the incident raised questions regarding the National Transitional Council's ability to maintain control over vengeance and retaliation.<sup>125</sup> The NTC officially declared Libya liberated on October

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<sup>118</sup> "The Birth of Free Libya."

<sup>119</sup> Ibid; Blanchard; "'Libya: Foreign Minister Moussa Koussa 'defects to UK'." *BBC News Africa*. British Broadcasting Company. March 31, 2011. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12915959>>.

<sup>120</sup> "Defiant Gaddafi Vows to Defeat NATO." *Al Jazeera English*. June 18, 2011. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/06/2011617144617963688.html>.

<sup>121</sup> Karadeniz, Tulay. "United States Recognizes Libya Rebels." *Reuters.com*. July 15, 2011. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/07/15/us-libya-idUSTRE76E0M720110715>.

<sup>122</sup> Chulov, Martin. "Libya: the importance of Zawiya to the rebels." *The Guardian*. August 18, 2011. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/aug/18/libya-rebels-zawiya-tripoli-assault>.

<sup>123</sup> "The Birth of Free Libya."

<sup>124</sup> Sheridan, Mary Beth. "Moammar Gaddafi Is Captured, Killed as Last Loyalist Holdout in Libya Falls." *The Washington Post*, October 20, 2011.

<sup>125</sup> Alessi, Christopher. "Challenges Ahead for Libya." *Council on Foreign Relations*. October 21, 2011. <http://www.cfr.org/libya/challenges-ahead-libya/p26258>.

23<sup>rd</sup>.<sup>126</sup> The NTC elected Abdelrahim el-Keeb, a vocal Qaddafi critic from Tripoli who spent most of his career abroad, Prime Minister on October 31.<sup>127</sup>

On November 19, rebels in Zintan captured Seif al-Islam al-Qaddafi, Qaddafi's presumed heir. The NTC has offered to turn over the young Qaddafi to the ICC, but the Zintan rebels refuse to release him from their custody until a national court system is developed in Libya.<sup>128</sup>

Libyan rebels fought against the corrupt and illiberal conditions described above that prevailed under Qaddafi's regime. They banded together in regional militias, which were generally untrained, unorganized, and poorly supplied.<sup>129</sup>

The NTC is now the internationally recognized representative of the Libyan people. It presents a clear vision for Libya's future. The Council calls to establish a representative, constitutional civil state based on rule of law, respect for human rights, justice, free expression, minorities' rights, and full political participation for all citizens.<sup>130</sup> These plans include holding elections within a year, after which the NTC would step down. To limit the influence of the interim government, no council officials will be eligible to run for office.<sup>131</sup> The UN has cautioned that the interim government should not adhere to a strict calendar, but rather must allow "political preconditions," such as public security and civil society, to develop prior to elections.<sup>132</sup> The NTC has

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<sup>126</sup> "Libya's New Rulers Declare Country Liberated." *BBC News Africa*. October 23, 2011. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15422262>.

<sup>127</sup> Kirkpatrick, David. "Libya Names an Engineer as Premier." *The New York Times*. October 31, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/01/world/africa/libya-names-abdel-rahim-el-keeb-as-premier.html>.

<sup>128</sup> Blanchard, 27.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>131</sup> Coleman; Blanchard, 29-30.

<sup>132</sup> Alessi.

promised to honor all international agreements during the interim period.<sup>133</sup> Though the US, China, UN, EU, and Arab League, as well as some expatriate groups recognize the NTC, it is unclear how much domestic support the Council has.<sup>134</sup>

Exiled opponents to Qaddafi's regime will also influence Libya's political future. The National Conference for Libyan Opposition (NCLO) called for Qaddafi's removal in 2005 and helped plan and publicize the first "day of rage".<sup>135</sup> Though the NCLO consistently called for Qaddafi's removal for years, it has not presented an alternative model of governance. The other significant exile opposition group is the London-based Royalist movement. Royalists propose that legitimate leadership lays with Mohammed al Rida al Sanusi, the son of the former crown prince of the Sanusi Kingdom, and call for a return to a constitutional monarchy in Libya. Al Sanusi stated that the Libyan people must choose the system of government.<sup>136</sup>

The Libyan Muslim Brotherhood had a long and contentious history of conflict with Qaddafi's government. Crackdowns in 1973 and again in 1998 led to hundreds of arrests, with more than seventy men sentenced to life in prison and two leaders even sentenced to death. The Brotherhood supports the NTC, but calls for a future, non-tribal government led by those who fought in the revolution. The Brotherhood has specified that the future government should exclude any officials with ties to Qaddafi's government or to his 1969 coup, which would ostentatiously exclude defectors who are active in the NTC.<sup>137</sup> According to the group's leader, Suleiman Abdel Qadir, the

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<sup>133</sup> Blanchard, 29.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 28; LaFranchi, Howard. "A UN Success Story: Libya's Seat Turned Over to Interim Government." *The Christian Science Monitor*. September 16, 2011. <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Foreign-Policy/2011/0916/A-UN-success-story-Libya-s-seat-turned-over-to-interim-government>.

<sup>135</sup> Blanchard, 30-32.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 34.

Muslim Brotherhood in Libya wants to work within a peaceful, policy-focused government that would not restrict political rights.<sup>138</sup>

The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) is a US-designated terrorist organization that operated in Libya under Qaddafi.<sup>139</sup> From its foundation in the early 1990's, the LIFG orchestrated four failed assassination attempts on Muammar Qaddafi.<sup>140</sup> The group merged with Al Qaeda in November 2007 (according to statements by Al Qaeda leaders Ayman Al Zawahiri and Abu Laith al-Libi), though not all LIFG members recognized the merger.<sup>141</sup> Hundreds of members were imprisoned throughout the 2000's, until a major reconciliation with Qaddafi's government in recent years. Since 2008, over 200 members of the LIFG have been released from prison after renouncing violence against the Libyan and recanting views on religion and violence.<sup>142</sup>

The LIFG reinvented itself during the civil war under the name the Libyan Islamic Movement (LIM). LIM members were active in the revolution, reportedly providing security in opposition-held areas and fighting in battles with pro-Qaddafi forces.<sup>143</sup> LIM officials submitted to NTC authority and renounced the use of violence to enact regime change and all ties to Al Qaeda.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> "Current List of Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations." *Foreign Terrorist Organizations*. National Counterterrorism Center. 2011. <<http://www.nctc.gov/site/other/fto.html>>.

<sup>140</sup> Blanchard, 34.

<sup>141</sup> "Libyan Islamists 'join Al-Qaeda'." *BBC News Africa*. November 3, 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7076604.stm>.

<sup>142</sup> "Libya Releases Scores of Prisoners." *Al Jazeera English*. April 09, 2008. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2008/04/200861502740131239.html>.

<sup>143</sup> Blanchard, 35.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid; Maclean, William. "RPT-Senior Islamist Rebel Is Veteran Gaddafi Foe." *Reuters.com*. August 27, 2011. <http://af.reuters.com/article/libyaNews/idAFL5E7JQ21420110827>.

## UNIFYING THEMES

As the wind of revolution swept from Tunisia through Egypt and Libya, certain common characteristics prevailed across the distinct societal movements. All three revolutions began as non-violent protest movements. The oppositions constituted pan-societal groups, including old and young, rich and poor, men and women, though young men predominantly led them. Most significant to this study, the revolutions were reactions to illiberal domestic policies and the dictators responsible for stunting political expression and economic opportunity. Each citizenry embraced international support rather than renouncing the west. Though Islamist groups were involved in the revolutions, they were not the primary organizers, nor the lynchpin of success. The revolutions were united in their hope for a free and prosperous representative alternative to autocratic police states.

## II. Terrorist Reactions

For almost exactly a month after the start of demonstrations, and twelve silent days after President Ben Ali's flight, terrorist leaders, confused and caught off guard by the revolutions, did not know what to make of the pro-democracy protestors that flooded the Tunisian streets. The first terrorist reaction to the Arab Spring was an AQIM statement released on January 26, 2011. Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, did not comment until February 7, thirteen days into the Egyptian revolution and merely four days prior to Hosni Mubarak's resignation. Al Qaeda central broke its silence with a series of statements by Ayman al-Zawahiri beginning on February 18.

The propaganda that followed slathered praise upon the North African revolutions while attempting to manipulate the protestors' message to fit with their preexisting narrative. Terrorist organizations loathed the Mubarak, Ben Ali, and Qaddafi regimes for their continued cooperation with the West on anti-terrorism initiatives; President Mubarak was particularly disfavored for signing a peace treaty with Israel. Therefore the theme of decrying the ousted despots while pledging solidarity with the revolutionary movements was, in fact, a genuine continuation of policy.

Terrorist spokesmen reprobated the ousted dictators for acting as puppets of the west, and accused the west of attempting to hijack and distort the revolutions. Zawahiri asserted that the "true, practical ruler" of Egypt has long been from foreign governments, first Britain, and more recently, America.<sup>145</sup> An AQIM spokesman blamed the West for the corrupt, authoritarian regimes, explaining "those crusaders are the root and head of the disaster, because they are the ones who posted those tyrants in our countries."<sup>146</sup> Usama bin Laden framed the revolutions as "a great, rare and historic opportunity to raise the Ummah and be liberated from enslavement to ... the Western domination."<sup>147</sup> Hassan Nasrallah condemned the Mubarak government for "protecting America's interests," and accused the US of "trying to contain the revolution and improve its own ugly image in the Middle East and Islamic world ... after years of backing the worst dictatorships our region has ever seen".<sup>148</sup> Abu Yahya al-Libi, a high-ranking Al Qaeda member and alleged member of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, warned Arabs not to trust the

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<sup>145</sup> Al-Zawahiri, Ayman, "Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt, Episode 1." February 18, 2011. As-Sahab Media Foundation. Translated by Flashpoint Partners.

<sup>146</sup> Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghrib, "To Our People in Tunisia." Al-Andalus Foundation for Media Production. January 26, 2011. Translated by the NEFA Foundation.

<sup>147</sup> Bin Laden, Usama, "Message to His Ummah." May 18, 2011. As-Sahab Media Foundation. Translated by Flashpoint Partners.

<sup>148</sup> "Hezbollah Backs Egypt Protests." *Al Jazeera English*. February 07, 2011. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/02/20112716455777942.html%3E>.

United States because it had backed the ousted regimes that had stolen “the most basic rights ... [and] freedom.”<sup>149</sup> Arabs see eighteenth colonialism as a continuation of the western imperialism that began with the Crusades; therefore the ubiquitous allusions to colonialism and the Crusades embody and exploit this moral anti-imperialist sentiment to frame modern western involvement in the region as ongoing continuations of Christian, western attempt to dominate the Middle East.<sup>150</sup>

Terrorist statements accused the old regimes of being un-Islamic, or even anti-Islamic. The first AQIM statement accused Ben Ali of conducting a “war on religion...its pillars, rituals, sanctities, dress and appearance.”<sup>151</sup> Zawahiri chastised Egypt’s “state... of deviation from Islam including...corruption, immorality, injustice, oppression and dependency” and elaborated extensively on the evils and moral bankruptcy of secularism.<sup>152</sup>

Any comments beyond simple praise of the protestors or castigation of the former governments posed a greater challenge in cohering with the preexisting terrorist narrative. Thus, in talking of the future or relating the uprisings to the extremist Islamist terrorist narrative, speakers resorted to logical and rhetorical acrobatics. For example, in attempting to relate the motivations of protestors to terrorist account of politics, terrorist leaders drew the parallel that like them, the protestors sought to overthrow the status quo. Nasrallah was particularly adamant, stating: “we in these Lebanese parties have a history of legitimate resistance against the Zionist American project in Lebanon and in the region. We cannot stand isolated, cannot stand as if we have nothing to do with what is

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<sup>149</sup> Al-Libi, Abu Yahya, “To Our People in Libya.” March 12, 2011. As-Sahab Media Foundation. Translated by Flashpoint Partners.

<sup>150</sup> Hillenbrand, Carole. *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2000. 590-604.

<sup>151</sup> AQIM

<sup>152</sup> al-Zawahiri, 2/18/11



going on when the battle is between good and evil.”<sup>153</sup> Usama bin Laden dubbed it “a revolution of glory and defiance.”<sup>154</sup> Ayman al-Zawahiri went as far as to claim that the revolutions were the “direct result of the blessed battles in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.”<sup>155</sup> Hamas poses a unique circumstance because it justified forming a unity government with Fatah through strained logic, explaining that although its relationship with Israel is “entirely different from that of Fatah” which believes in the viability of negotiations for peace, the unity government would entail “responsible governing, as well as making the government’s resources available to the resistance” and would not have anything to do with negotiations.<sup>156</sup>

Overall, terrorist reaction statements to the North African protests indicated that overthrowing the governments were a positive step, but the revolutions were not yet finished. Anwar al-Awlaki explicitly expressed in Inspire Magazine that “The outcome [of the revolution] doesn’t have to be an Islamic government for us to consider what is occurring to be a step in the right direction.”<sup>157</sup> Abu Yahya al-Libi called the revolutions “one step” toward the ultimate goal.<sup>158</sup> Looking toward the future, terrorists’ guarded tone is best summed up in an AQIM statement, urging the revolutionaries to “remain cautious and awake, because all the gains ... achieved in this popular revolution ... now

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<sup>153</sup> "Hezbollah Backs Egypt Protests"

<sup>154</sup> Bin Laden.

<sup>155</sup> Al-Zawahiri, Ayman, “Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt, Episode 6.” May 21, 2011. Translated by Flashpoint Partners.

<sup>156</sup> Marquardt-Bigman, Petra. *The Arab Spring: How not to cope with political climate change in the Middle East*. December 16, 2011.

[http://www.thecommentator.com/article/127/the\\_arab\\_spring\\_how\\_not\\_to\\_cope\\_with\\_political\\_climate\\_change\\_in\\_the\\_middle\\_east](http://www.thecommentator.com/article/127/the_arab_spring_how_not_to_cope_with_political_climate_change_in_the_middle_east).

<sup>157</sup> "Al-Qaeda Hails "Tsunami of Change" in Middle East." *Al Arabiya News*. March 30, 2011.

<sup>158</sup> Stern, Gilad, and Yoram Schweitzer. *In Their Own Words: Al Qaeda's View of the Arab Spring*. Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2011.

and in the future [will be] exposed to thievery, robbery and manipulation.”<sup>159</sup> They warned against democracy, the “road to hell,”<sup>160</sup> and proposed optimistic theories about the decline of American influence.<sup>161</sup> This tempered rhetoric hints that terrorist leaders understand the need to support the popular revolutions to remain relevant but will remain militarized and will not participate in emerging representative political systems.

Unlike the other Middle Eastern religious terrorist organizations, the Taliban issued a statement criticizing the Arab Spring revolutions for proffering a false alternative to violent jihad. The September 19 article released on the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan website calls the protestors “gangs of falsehood” and asserted that the worldly goals of “a morsel of bread and eliminating unemployment” could not bring about a legitimate Islamist state nor shari’a law, but rather elevate these physical concerns above Islam.<sup>162</sup>

### III. What Next? Potential for Terrorism in the New North Africa

#### OVERVIEW

The Arab Spring revolutions will diminish but not entirely eliminate the potential for terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa. Terrorism as a tactic will no longer be a prudent choice. Prior to December 2010 terrorist groups in the region portrayed violent jihad as the only viable means of overthrowing the dictatorial regimes that monopolized power. The 2011 revolutions undermined the most powerful recruiting message that terrorist organizations had by proving that nonviolent political protest could overpower

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<sup>159</sup> AQIM.

<sup>160</sup> Stern and Schweitzer.

<sup>161</sup> Al-Zawahiri, Ayman, “Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt, Episode 4.” March 05, 2011. As-Sahab Media Foundation. Translated by Flashpoint Partners.

<sup>162</sup> Bawadi, Ahmad. *Revolutions Are No Substitute For Jihad*. September 19, 2011. [http://www.shahamat-english.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=11012:revolutions-are-no-substitute-for-jihad&catid=3:articles&Itemid=5](http://www.shahamat-english.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=11012:revolutions-are-no-substitute-for-jihad&catid=3:articles&Itemid=5).

even the most repressive security states.<sup>163</sup> They have led to the emergence of a new mentality among Arab citizens: hope. In a region where government institutions are disregarded as corrupt and ineffective, the possibility of a genuinely representative government poses the greatest threat to Islamist extremist groups. No longer the sole means of organization or opposition, Islamist extremist groups will be forced to compete with political ideological factions. They will have to outline political platforms to address the issues that sparked the revolutions: wealth distribution, unemployment, political freedoms, police brutality, corruption, and access to education, to name a few. The merger of Hamas with Fatah to form a Palestinian unity government demonstrates how the recent revolutions promote accountability and moderation of terrorist organizations in power.

It is certainly irrefutable that security has become more lax under the interim governments than the police states that strangled political expression. As frustration mounts with the slow process of political reform, violence may seem the only appropriate response. But this has not been the case so far. Egyptian citizens discouraged by the continuation of military rule returned to Tahrir Square with posters and slogans calling for the SCAF to step down.<sup>164</sup> Almost a year after the revolutions began, there is yet to be a major terrorist attack in any of the countries described above. Even the less direct implications of democratic reform will harm the potential for terrorism. The rise of independent media in the newly-democratic nations, for example, will introduce a wide scope of new ideologies to the public, most likely including terrorist organizations' political violence; however, independent media will incorporate moderate Islamists and

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<sup>163</sup> Stern and Schweitzer

<sup>164</sup> Levinson, Charles, Tamer El-Ghobashy, and Matt Bradl. "Egypt's Activists Unite Against Military." *The Wall Street Journal*, November 26, 2011.

fresh political ideologies, creating a competition of ideas that did not exist in the region prior to the revolutions. As democratic reforms take hold, the environment for terrorism is eroding.

As the historical descriptions above clearly demonstrate, each Arab Spring country has a unique security and political context; therefore, the following section will discuss the future for terrorism within Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya individually.

### **TUNISIA**

Though the interim government has made significant progress in opening the political system, Tunisia may still be susceptible to terrorism. Lack of economic opportunity is unlikely to be alleviated in the near future, as economic growth projections predict that the rate of economic growth will slow in the next year.<sup>165</sup> The United States and many European countries have pledged assistance to the fledgling republic, but massive economic reform will be necessary to amend the economic infrastructure. The Tunisian economy is over reliant on agriculture and unfinished goods. Additionally, the international economic climate will make it difficult for developing countries' economies to grow, and unemployment is thus likely to persist. Tunisia has a negative balance of trade with many countries in the EU. However, the EU is the primary export market for Tunisian agriculture, minerals, and textiles. Therefore, as Europe's stagnates the Tunisian economy will continue to suffer, as the prices for exports to Europe will decline.<sup>166</sup>

Additionally, social issues within Tunisian society and politics may still foster extremism. For example, from its creation, relative to other Arab countries Tunisia has granted significant socioeconomic freedom to women. It is the only Arab Muslim country

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<sup>165</sup> Maddy-Weitzman, 15.

<sup>166</sup> CIA (2011). "Tunisia." World Factbook.

to ban polygamy.<sup>167</sup> Women may serve in the military and the police force and have equal access to higher education. The April 12 election law sets aside fifty percent of the slots on party lists for women.<sup>168</sup> Terrorist groups may take advantage of disillusioned, frustrated young men by claiming that women should be veiled and belong in the “harim,” or sacred space of the home.

Finally, though elections and demonstrations have provided most Tunisians with a means of expressing discontent, extremist Islamist groups have been barred from registering as political parties. By denying these groups a legitimate means of expressing their ideas, they may resort to violence to convey their message.

#### EGYPT

The impact of political reform remains to be seen in Egypt, as elections are still in early phases. In fact, frustration with this slow pace of reform may introduce the potential for terrorism, if violence is seen as a more productive demonstration than political channels.<sup>169</sup> Popular mistrust of the army and expectation of military dictatorship may potentially lead to terrorist violence if the revolution remains “incomplete.”<sup>170</sup> This may be especially relevant as long as the SCAF retains political control despite ongoing protests. In practice, almost universal participation in Parliamentary elections and continued protests seem to indicate that political participation is the preferred method of expression.

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<sup>167</sup> Arieff, 22.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>169</sup> Leyne, Jon. "Egypt after Mubarak: Slow pace of Reform Fuels Anger." *BBC News Middle East*. July 24, 2011. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14269166>.

<sup>170</sup> Foukara, Abderrahim. "The Arab Revolts of 2011: Perspectives from Al-Jazeera." American University, Washington. November 09, 2011;  
MacFarquhar, Neil. "Ahead of Vote, Egypt's Parties and Skepticism Are Growing." *The New York Times*, November 09, 2011.

Economic development has stagnated since January and is unlikely to improve. The tourism industry is damaged, both as potential tourists have been frightened out of visiting and as historical sites were damaged during the protests.<sup>171</sup> Foreign investment has been scared away.<sup>172</sup> As the Arab Spring spreads throughout the region, millions of Egyptian migrant workers are forced to return to Egypt as turmoil in their host nations rises, thereby simultaneously depleting foreign remittances and increasing unemployment.<sup>173</sup> Finally, public nostalgia for Nasser era glory romanticizes socialist and protectionist policies and demonizes economic liberalization that is associated with Mubarak's corrupt regime.<sup>174</sup>

Democracy in Egypt threatens to unhinge the cold but stable peace between Egypt and Israel. As politicians become accountable to the general population, their policies must align with public opinion, or risk losing legitimacy. As outlined in the literature review section of this paper, democratic accountability may lead to more extremist policies and spark a security spiral between Israel and Egypt. The interim government has promised to preserve the peace treaty, but the seeds of this dystopian scenario have been planted with the opening of the Rafah crossing between Egypt and Gaza in June.<sup>175</sup>

### **LIBYA**

It is impossible to account for how reform demands are being met, as the militias that comprised the opposition movement did not espouse a larger program aside from deposing Muammar Qaddafi. However, there are numerous potential security issues worth noting.

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<sup>171</sup> Sharp, *Egypt in Transition*, 6.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>173</sup> Kandeel, 41.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid, 41-42.

<sup>175</sup> Khatab, 14-15.

Libya's history of foreign occupation and regional tribal power structures has stunted the development of a functioning civil society or effective political institutions.<sup>176</sup> There are countless fault lines of tension: between Islamists and secularists, external opposition and rebels who fought in the war, and tribal/regional enmities, all of which threaten the legitimacy of a centralized, unified government, and its ability to create an acceptable and coherent narrative for reform.<sup>177</sup>

Throughout the war, as loyalist forces retreated they left behind government arms depots, which fell into public hands. There is no control over who benefitted from weapons raids and a popular fear is that Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghrib (AQIM) received arms from the military stockpiles.<sup>178</sup> In fact, an AQIM spokesperson confirmed that Al Qaeda was in possession of weaponry from the Libyan military, though AQIM later denied the validity of the claim.<sup>179</sup> Some large arms caches remain unaccounted for. Militias have not yet disbanded or integrated into a national army, and as the November 19 and 20 captures illustrate, militias have inordinate control over the NTC's policies.<sup>180</sup>

As discussed above, the LIFG was a domestic terrorist group, and has officially renounced political violence. Its ambiguous ties to Al Qaeda remain unnerving, especially in the current security vacuum in Libya. As arms spread across the country and border security is weakened, there is a wider opening for criminal and terrorist networks to move freely and attain military weapons.<sup>181</sup> Former LIFG members fought alongside Al Qaeda and the Iraqi insurgency, creating working relationships between Libyan

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<sup>176</sup> Coleman; Paoletti, 317.

<sup>177</sup> Alessi; Coleman.

<sup>178</sup> Blanchard, 37.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Coleman.

<sup>181</sup> Blanchard, 37.

Islamists and AQIM.<sup>182</sup> A notable example is Abdelhakim Al Hasadi, a former LIFG leader responsible for security in the eastern city of Darnah, the home of “several dozen” Libyans who fought against coalition forces in Iraq.<sup>183</sup> Al Hasadi denies any affiliation to Al Qaeda, but the concentration of suspected terrorist operatives led by an opposition official is certainly alarming.<sup>184</sup> In the same interview alleging AQIM possession of Libyan weapons, an AQIM spokesperson claimed to be working in cooperation with Al Hasadi, among others.<sup>185</sup>

The interim government issued a string of public statements in March denouncing terrorist groups and extremists. The NTC iterated its support for the Security Council’s anti-al Qaeda and anti-Taliban resolution and proposed a moderate form of Islam as the official state religion.<sup>186</sup>

Libya’s small, well-educated population is generally supportive of the revolution and is grateful for NATO’s involvement, which may generate positive sentiment toward the West among the population and undermine terrorist recruitment.<sup>187</sup>

The relationships among actors are a confusing web, many of which are still forming. Former anti-government terrorists and government defectors ostensibly support the NTC, but the uneasy alliances threaten to undermine the NTC’s legitimacy.

## CONCLUSION

The Arab Spring revolutions have fundamentally altered the political atmosphere throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Despite the potential factors in each

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Again, this claim has been disputed but the allegation is worth noting for its potential illumination of emerging terrorist networks in post-revolution Libya.

<sup>186</sup> Blanchard, 29.

<sup>187</sup> Coleman



country discussed that could encourage renewed terrorist assaults, the prevailing attitude of hope undercuts terrorist recruitment messages and political inclusion will continue to moderate extremist actors. Terrorist organizations are attempting to remain relevant by manipulating their ideologies to seem supportive of the popular revolutions. However, past insistence on violence and radical Islamism as the only path to a better way of life is inadaptable to the liberal political movements taking hold across the region. Demands for democracy and economic equality drown out calls for Shari'a and Shura. Terrorism will remain a useful tactic to powerless groups attempting to make a radical statement; however, as religious extremism wanes in public popularity the recent phenomenon of extremist Islamist terrorism in the Middle East will decline, though not completely disappear.

As the Arab Spring stretches into winter, political processes are not perfected, but they continue to evolve. Elections in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya are forging ahead, though slightly delayed. Terrorist groups have been remarkably inactive. The potential for chaos or autocracy still exists in each country, but each passing day removes the probability of insecurity.

The revolutions described above did not occur in a vacuum; there are inevitably other factors that continue to influence terrorist behavior. However, the Arab Spring overwhelmingly changed the political landscape of the region in a way that has incapacitated the future of Islamist extremist terrorism.

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