BARACK OBAMA AND THE ARAB SPRING

A Successful Balancing Act of Foreign Policy and Diplomacy

AHMED Y. ZOHNY

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To my wife Patricia, daughter Josephine Dawlat,
and the memory of my mother Dawlat

Contents

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Chapter 1

Conceptual Framework

INTRODUCTION

On January 20, 2009, Barack Hussein Obama was elected the forty-fourth president of the United States. He was sworn into office as the first black president of the world's most powerful country. His middle name bore the name of his father, Hussein, a Muslim from Kenya—but his white American mother and her parents (who had roots in Kansas and Missouri) raised him in Indonesia (a Muslim country) and Hawaii. He was already an international and multicultural figure long before the day he entered the White House. On numerous occasions throughout his presidential campaign, much like on the domestic front, Obama's magical oratory skills symbolized his intensions to reorient U.S. foreign policy formerly guided by a unilateralist impulse to one governed by liberal internationalist traditions. Implicit in most of his foreign policy addresses was the need for hope and an accompanying word: optimism.[1]

Derek Chollet who served in senior positions during the Obama administration at the White House, State Department, and Pentagon, argued that "every president enters office surfing a wave of expectations and opportunity, but must grapple with the undertow of peril." That was particularly true for Barack Obama. Few presidents of the United States—since the time of Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, or John F. Kennedy—have been elected who carried such a mix of high hopes and excitement, combined with domestic crisis and global danger. Robert Gates, Obama's first secretary of defense, who is well placed in Washington's policymaking establishments, argued that it is hard to think of a president who entered office facing more challenges of historic magnitude as Barack Obama.

Obama entered the Oval Office at a time when the U.S. economy was sinking into the Great Recession. He and his foreign policy team had to wrestle with the worst global financial crises since the 1930s; a U.S. economy in freefall, with millions of Americans evicted out of their homes and losing their jobs; draining wars in the Middle East (Afghanistan and Iraq), with over 150,000 troops in harm's way; surging regional players like Iran and ISIS; rising powers like China; and urgent global issues like a warming climate.[2]

Despite the aforementioned multifaceted challenges, recent scholarship on "Great Power" foreign policy and diplomacy undermines President Obama's realist approach governed by liberal internationalists tradition compared to his predecessor President George W. Bush's neoconservative idealism to foreign policy and public diplomacy (PD)—particularly in the Middle East and the Islamic World. The findings of this research indicate that President Obama's foreign policy and PD toward the Arab Spring proved to be a successful balancing act, prudent and in the best national interests of the United States in the Middle East.

Given the complicated realities of the events, the purpose of this research is to evaluate President Barack Obama's approach to foreign policy and PD with regard to events in the Middle East, which have taken place as a result of the rising power of political Islam and the unexpected events of the Arab Spring, along with the challenge of democratization, the continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the rising power of Iran in the region.

This research will genealogically examine President Obama's foreign policy and PD in response to the chronology of the unfolding events of the 2011 Arab Spring in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain, and Yemen. President Obama and his top diplomats' performances in response to each country's events will be assessed, critically analyzed, and compared to the other in terms of the U.S. bilateral relations with each country, U.S. national interests, and her strategic goals in the Middle East region.

THE MEANING OF THE ARAB SPRING

The term "Arab Spring" was coined to suggest the beginning of a new era of awakening that would overwhelm the Arab World and serve as a harbinger of a new socioeconomic and political order.[3] It was a series of anti-government protests, uprisings, and armed rebellions that spread across the Middle East in late 2010 and early 2011. But the purpose, relative success, and outcome remain hotly disputed in Arab countries, among foreign observers, and between world powers looking to advance their national interests in the changing map of the Middle East.

WHY THE NAME "ARAB SPRING"?

The term "Arab Spring" was propagated by the Western media in early 2011 when the successful revolt in Tunisia against former leader Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was the springboard for similar anti-government protests in most Arab countries. The term "Arab Spring" is a reference to the revolutions of 1848, a year in which a wave of political upheavals occurred in many countries throughout Europe, many resulting in an overthrow of old monarchical structures and their replacement with a more representative form of government. The year 1848 is called, in some countries, the Spring of Nations, or People's Spring, Springtime of the Peoples, or the Year of Revolution; and the "Spring" connotation has since been applied to other periods in history when a chain of revolutions end in increased representation in government and democracy, such as the Prague Spring, a reform movement in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The "Autumn of Nations" refers to the uproar in Eastern Europe in 1989 when seemingly invulnerable Communist regimes began falling down under pressure from mass popular protests in a domino effect. In a short period of time, most countries in the former Communist bloc adopted democratic political systems with a market economy.[4]

But the events in the Middle East went in a less straightforward direction. Egypt, Tunisia, and Bahrain entered an uncertain transition period. Syria, Yemen, and Libya were drawn into a civil conflict. Meanwhile, the wealthy monarchies in the Persian Gulf remained largely unshaken by the events. The use of the term "Arab Spring" has since been criticized for being inaccurate and simplistic.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The premise of this book is*: Did President Barack Obama's foreign policy and diplomacy approach during and after the re-counting events of the Arab Spring serve the United States' national interests and reinforce its leading role in the world?* The following five conceptual themes will serve as parameters for navigating and evaluating President Obama's foreign policy and PD when he reacted to the Arab Spring. More specifically, we will examine whether President Obama exercised his presidential powers effectively when formulating foreign policy and PD toward the six Arab countries who witnessed the Arab Spring, in terms of realizing the U.S. national interests in the Middle East. The following notions will be utilized to guide the research and analysis:

First: Presidential powers and constraints in foreign policy and PD in the United States.

Second: The relationship among international relations (IR), foreign policy, and PD
Third: The historical development of the U.S. foreign policy and PD toward the Middle East
Fourth: The growing relationship between domestic and international environments—intermestic politics and its impact on the U.S. policymaking and PD toward the Middle East.
Fifth: The rise of political Islam on the World's stage;
Sixth: The challenge of democratization in the Middle East and the compatibility of Islam with democracy.

PRESIDENTIAL POWERS AND CONSTRAINTS

The underlying principle of the U.S. Constitution is to divide political power and authority among the three branches of government, according to the principle of separation of powers. This principle applies to the area of foreign policy as well as it does to other areas of governance. The president's authority in foreign affairs, as in all areas, is rooted in Article II of the Constitution. The charter grants the officeholder the powers to make treaties and appoint ambassadors with the advice and consent of the Senate (treaties require approval of two-thirds of senators present; appointments require consent of a simple majority).[5]

Presidents also rely on other clauses to support their foreign policy actions, particularly those that grant "executive power" and the role of "commander in chief of the army and navy" on the office. From this language springs a wide array of associated or "implied" powers. For instance, from the explicit power to appoint and receive ambassadors flows the implicit authority to recognize foreign governments and conduct both public and private diplomacy with other countries in general. From the commander-in-chief clause flows powers to use military force and collect foreign intelligence.[6]

Presidents also draw on congressional statutory authorities. Congress has passed legislation giving the executive additional authority to act on specific foreign policy issues. For instance, the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (1977) authorizes the president to impose economic sanctions on foreign entities. Presidents also cite case law to support their claims of authority. In particular, two U.S. Supreme Court decisions—*United States. v. Curtiss-Wright Export Corporation* (1936) and *Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company v. Sawyer* (1952)—are touchstones.

In the first, the court held that President Franklin D. Roosevelt acted within his constitutional authority when he brought charges against the Curtiss-Wright Export Corporation for selling arms to Paraguay and Bolivia in

violation of federal law. Executive branch attorneys often cite Justice George Sutherland's expansive interpretation of the president's foreign affairs powers in that case. The president is "the sole organ of the federal government in the field of international relations," he wrote on behalf of the court. "He, not Congress, has the better opportunity of knowing conditions which prevail in foreign countries and especially is this true in time of war," he wrote.[7]

In the second case, the court held that President Harry Truman ran afoul of the Constitution when he ordered the seizure of U.S. steel mills during the Korean War. Youngstown is often described by legal scholars as a bookend to Curtiss-Wright since the latter recognizes broad executive authority, whereas the former describes limits on it. Youngstown is cited regularly for Justice Robert Jackson's three-tiered framework for evaluating presidential power.[8]

In the memorable words of the late Edward Corwin, "The Constitution . . . is an invitation to struggle for the privilege of directing American foreign Policy. Both the executive and legislative branches are given independent sources of authority. The judicial branch's role, by constitutional provision and traditions, is limited to adjudicating differences between the branches rather than exercising an independent role in foreign policymaking. The result is that the operation of foreign policy on the basis of codetermination of both the president and Congress."

Over time, Snow and Haney observed, the pendulum of presidential or congressional primacy has swung back and forth. When foreign affairs were less frequent and less urgent, as they were during the first century and a half or so of the American republic, the Congress was more assertive, sometimes even dominant, as in the Senate's refusal to ratify the Versailles Treaty ending World War I. The Cold War (more recently after the 9/11/2001 terrorist attack on the United States) has swung the center of activity firmly toward the executive branch, a condition that is unlikely to change in the near future.[9]

This trend is reflected in the seminal work of presidential scholars such as Richard Neustadt's *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents* (1990), Arthur Schlesinger's *The Imperial Presidency* (1973), Michael Cairo's the "*Imperial Presidency Triumphant*" (2006), Thomas Cronin and Michael Cenovese's *The Paradoxes of the American Presidency (*1998), Craig Rimmerman's *The Rise of the Plebiscitary Presidency* (1993), and Gil Troy's *Leading from the Center* (2008).

President Obama's performance in foreign policy and PD during the events of the Arab Spring and its aftermath in his first and second terms in office will be assessed and critically analyzed in terms of how he exercised his constitutional powers including using executive orders, and how effective his public statements were, and other means of PD, and how he interacted with the Congress and other players in the foreign policymaking process, and with American allies.[10]

The Relationship among IR, Foreign Policy, and PD

Dougherty and Pfaltzgrahh argued that most political scientists and other students of IR, foreign policy, and diplomacy realize that their subject areas are unspeakably monumental and complex. They are aware also that despite the many cures developed for the world's ills and interstate relations issues, it is no less difficult to find a permanent solution for regional or international conflict or instability than a cure for cancer or HIV Efforts at theorizing about the nature of interstate relations, foreign policymaking, and PD are quite old. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the former secretary-general of the United Nations (1992–1996) documented the cultural achievement of the Egyptian civilization in the area of IR, foreign policy, and diplomacy. He argued that among the important assets of Egypt's treasury is a famous treaty entered into with the Hittite Empire in the year 1270 B.C. The treaty "was one of a kind which, under the international system then in force, was concluded between equals." The treaty provided for a non-aggression pact, an obligation of the contracting rulers to render assistance against rebel subjects, mutual guarantees regarding the succession to the throne and provisions concerning extraditions. Also, the ancient civilizations of India, China, and Greece contributed in their own way to the art and sciences of IR, foreign policymaking, and PD. Although Plato's and Aristotle's reflections on the aforementioned subjects are quite vague, the ancient Greek historian Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, is a classic treatise, from which any student of IR can still learn. Machiavelli's *The Prince*, an indication of modern analysis of power and the state system, emphasized a "value-free" science of foreign policymaking and diplomacy, Dante's De Monarchia's, according to Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, became one of the first and most powerful pleas in the Western political literature for an international organization capable of enforcing the peace. Other early supporters of a confederation or league of nation-states before President Woodrow Wilson were the French lawyer and political scientist Pierre Dubois of the late fourteen and early fifteenth centuries, Emeric Cruce, Duc de Sully, William Penn, Abbe de Saint Pierre (the French publicist and theoretical reformer of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries), Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Jeremy Bentham, and Immanuel.[11]

Yet, despite these aforementioned classical writings, no systematic development occurred in IR, foreign policymaking, and diplomacy theories compared to domestic or internal political theories of the state before World War I. Martin Wight, in his seminal work "Why Is There No International Theory" argued that "nearly all speculation about the international community including foreign policy and diplomacy fell under the heading of international law."[12]

How IR Scholarship Indulge Foreign Policy, and PD?

IR typically treats foreign policy and diplomacy as a taken-for-granted analytical concept, since the dawn of history. It assumes either that all historical polities have foreign policies and instruments of diplomacy or that foreign policy originates in the seventeenth-century Europe with the separation between the "inside" and "outside" of the state. It generally holds that foreign policy differs in essential ways from other kinds of policy because it carries with it a special need for secrecy. Halvard Leira argues that the difference between "foreign" and "domestic" policy results from specific political processes; and not only the needed secrecy which may characterize foreign policy and in some cases diplomacy.

Growing domestic differentiation between state and civil society in the eighteenth century in Western Europe and the United States—articulated through a relatively free press operating in the emerging public sphere—enabled the emergence of foreign policy as a practical concept. The concept served to demarcate the legitimate sphere of political dialogue from the executive sphere of king and cabinet.

In his research, he explores these processes in Britain and France as important cases with different routes, one of reform—the case of England, the other of revolution—the case of France. Perceiving foreign policy like this serves to denaturalize the separation between different forms of policy, as well as the necessity of secrecy. Doing so cautions against the uncritical application of abstract analytical terms across time and space according to Leira.[13]

The discipline of IR, Leira argued, offers two different takes on foreign policy. First, it sees foreign policy as carrying a self-evident meaning: as an abstract expression of relations between political entities: "Broadly interpreted, foreign policy is about the fundamental issue of how organized groups, at least in part strangers to each other, interrelate."[14] Such definitions render foreign policy as an analytic concept that transcends particular historical periods or kinds of political communities. It is always distinct, and essentially different, from other forms of policy. Second, critics of this view suggest that foreign policy provides one of the key ways in which the political Self is differentiated from the Other: "Foreign policy was not a bridge between two distinct realms, but something that both divided and joined the inside and the outside, the state and the interstate system."[15] In this understanding, foreign policy, according to this view, emerged sometime during the seventeenth century. It was produced, and the product, of the modern state and state system. The author disagrees with this view following Boutros Boutros-Ghali's documented opinion. It is unlikely that a well-crafted treaty between Egypt and the Hattit empire before BC could be produced without a

well-developed foreign policy and well-developed instruments of diplomacy used by the ancient Egyptians.

For the purpose of this research, we adopt Christopher Hill's definition of foreign policy "as the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually but not exclusively a state) in international relations."[16] The phrase "an independent actor" enables the inclusion of non-state entities such as U.S. multinational corporations who historically played an important role through their business diplomacy since World War II, the United Nations, the European Union, or the Arab League or the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Hence, external relations are the process that allows the inclusion of outputs from all parts of the governing mechanisms of the state or enterprise (that is, not just the foreign ministry). Also, maintaining coherence with respect to the vast number of international transactions now being conducted is necessary. Furthermore, policy (as opposed to decisions) is the "sum" of these official relations because actors usually seek some degree of coherence toward the outside world and are assumed by others to be following a reasonably coherent and predictable line. Last, the policy is "foreign" because the world is still more separated into distinctive communities than it is a single, homogenizing entity. These communities therefore need strategies for coping with foreigners (that is, those who are not part of their own polity) in their various aspects.[17]

HOW IR TREATS PD

Diplomacy

Scholars have provided a variety of definitions of diplomacy. For instance, Hans J. Morgenthau, in his seminal work *Politics Among Nations, The Structure for Power and Peace*, defines diplomacy as the "brains of national power, as national morale is its Soul." He argued that "if the nation's foreign policy's vision is blurred, its judgment defective, and its determination feeble, all the advantages of geographical location, of self-sufficiency in food, raw materials, industrial production, of military preparedness, of size and quality of population will in the long run benefit a nation little." In describing the organized instruments of diplomacy, Morgenthau argues that

> the organized instruments of diplomacy are two: the foreign offices in the capitals of the respective nations and the diplomatic representative (Ambassador) sent by the foreign offices(State Department) to the capitals of foreign nations. The Foreign office (the State Department) is the policy-forming agency, the brains of foreign policy where the impressions from the outside world are gathered and evaluated, where foreign policy is formulated, and where the impulses

emanate which the diplomatic representative transform into actual foreign policy. While the foreign office is the brain of foreign policy, the diplomatic representatives are its eyes, ears, and mouth, its fingertips, and, as it were, its itinerant incarnations. The diplomat fulfills three basic functions for his government-Symbolic, legal, and political.[18]

Defining PD and Its Scope

Research on PD serves as the intellectual meeting point of various academic disciplines, including IR, strategic studies, diplomatic studies, international public relations, and mass communication. Since Edmund Gullion, dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, coined the term *public diplomacy* in 1965, PD has become an essential subject for both practitioners of foreign policy and scholars of IR/world politics. The more the term achieves popularity and is used in policy papers, academic books, and articles, the greater the number of different definitions of the concept. Unfortunately, no universally agreed-upon definition exists.[19]

For this research's purpose, PD is defined *as the statements and actions of leaders that are intended to influence public opinion in other countries.* Its primary purpose is to explain, promote, and defend American principles to audiences abroad. PD is more than just public statements and actions. The scope of PD is developed by a set of institutions, programs, and practices in the American political process designed to accomplish four strategic objectives:[20]

1—Inform the World accurately, clearly, and promptly about U.S. policy.
2—Represent the values and beliefs of the American people.
3—Explain how democracy produces prosperity, stability, and opportunity.
4—Communicate U.S. support for education.

Alison Holmes and J. Simon Rofe in their work titled *Global Diplomacy, Theories, Types, and Models*, argued that public diplomacy or "PD" entails state and non-state engagement. The question here becomes, where does one tactic begin and the other end as PD consciously looks outward, beyond the state? The main goal of PD is to engage other publics through non-state actors and transitional civil society so they might look favorably on some aspect of a nation promoting the contact. This is done through a range of activities, some with only a very indirect relationship to the state seeking favor. The tools, or sub-tactical facets of PD, may include aspects of national culture such as arts or sports, or particular foods, or iconic industrial centers such as Hollywood in the United States.

PD, according to Nicholas Cull, entails "an international actor's attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with a foreign

public."[21] The Murrow Center of Public Diplomacy at the Fletcher School Tufts University, considers PD to move "beyond traditional diplomacy" as it deals with "the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies."[22] Jan Melissen describes PD more simply as "the relationship between diplomats and the foreign publics with whom they work."[23]

Paul D'Anieri, in his valuable work, *Power and Purpose in Global Affairs*, argues that PD is part of the constructivism theory of IR, and International Politics. While it may be appropriate to categorize PD as constructivist for norm-oriented reputation politics such as "naming and shaming," many realists working from the rationalist paradigm have recognized the importance of PD in IR. Recently, beyond discussions on definitions and scope of PD, many data-oriented, empirical studies have been published on the subject. For instance, tendencies have been made to rank which state can achieve the greatest level of soft power through the effective practice of PD. Moreover, quantitative text analysis (QTA) or content analysis frameworks have frequently been utilized to study how international media focuses on controversial diplomatic issues between states. Even tweets and social networks are being studied to reveal what types of international diplomatic communications are supported and opposed by third-party domestic audiences. Rapid developments continue to be made in the methodological sophistication of PD studies.[24]

PD during Wars

Propaganda wars by American and Soviet governments during the Cold War are typical forms of government-to-people information transmission, with the aim of influencing how foreign nationals think (positively in terms of their own country; negatively in terms of the opposing country). According to Cull, PD during the Cold War had five core components: listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, and international broadcasting. Cold War PD was largely characterized by a top-down process whereby governments distributed information to foreign publics using capital-intensive methods such as radio, exhibitions, and libraries. State-centric viewers of IR would consider this to be a traditional and authentic definition of PD.[25]

Since the end of the Cold War, however, some scholars have started to argue that PD has entered into a new phase. For instance, Bruce Gregory considers PD to be an "instrument used by states, associations of states, and some sub-state and non-state actors to understand cultures, attitudes, and behavior; build and manage relationship; and influence thoughts and mobilize actions to advance their interests and values."[26] This new definition came into being after the dynamic of PD shifted toward a more horizontal structure in which people began connecting with each other in international networks aided by

new technologies (i.e., social media). Therefore, a debate over definition of the concept has arisen between the traditional school, the name Cull gives to the traditional view of government-to-people contact, and the new school, which emphasizes the roles of emerging nongovernmental actors in PD.[27]

No matter which definition scholars use, the instruments of PD exist, according to Gilboa, and include advocacy, broadcasting, public relations, cultural diplomacy, exchange, and national branding. Advocacy and broadcasting can be categorized as immediate, reactive forms of PD—news management would be a typical example of these forms. Governments would send advocacy information through a statement issued by a press secretary and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. State media would air their political position in English, as the Japanese government under Prime Minister Abe funded public broadcasting (through Nippon Hoso Kyokai: NHK) to strengthen Japan's English programs abroad (through NHK World) and as Chinese state media Xinhua increased funding for a similar effort in their English broadcasting programs. Or as President Nasser of Egypt (1954–1970) established the radio program Voice of the Arab to defend his policies against what he called Western imperialism.[28]

Besides such direct and immediate management of information by the state, there are also longer, more time-consuming expressions of PD; Gilboa categorizes these as public relations and presents them as proactive, strategic forms of communication with the aim of increasing the favorable view of a nation. Foreign visits by state leaders can be used as an intermediate PD instrument. President Obama's visits to Egypt upon his election in 2009 to address the Islamic World to assure that the United States is not against Islam as a religion and likewise his visit to Vietnam and to Japan in May 2016 are excellent examples of PD. President Obama's visit to Egypt and Vietnam was hugely popular with the local people. A large crowd on the streets in Cairo, and in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City welcomed him. Positive comments about Obama embracing the local culture, food, and his open and relaxed style were all over the news media and Facebook postings. Moreover, President Obama's historic visit to Hiroshima, where he made a sort of "non-apology apology," generated both nationwide general public and Hiroshima-residing respondents overwhelming positive perception toward the United States and its president. Gilboa claims, however, that long-term instruments can be used to construct better relations with foreign nations. Mutual trust is the key mechanism, and as such, cultural diplomacy, the exchange of people, and national branding are forms of long-term PD.[29]

The Japan Exchange and Teaching Program, developed by the Japanese government, is a well-known long-term policy that promotes people-to-people exchange and fosters pro-Japan foreign citizens. And as a national branding policy, the UK conducted the "Cool Britannia" campaign during

Tony Blair's premiership. In making a distinction between PD from other similar concepts such as soft power, note that the famous definition by Nye suggests that soft power is the ability to shape the preferences of other states through appeal and attraction. It is determined by a country's policies, culture, or political values, and it is contrasted with hard power, which is based on material capability, coercion, and side payment. In relation to PD, Nye considers the credibility of information to be a crucial base for soft power, and thus propaganda would ruin it. By its nature, propaganda will harm the credibility of a state's information, at least in the long run.[30]

Therefore, soft power is not achieved through propaganda. Furthermore, Melissen suggests that PD is one of soft power's key instruments, as was recognized in diplomatic practice long before the contemporary debate on PD. For instance, toward the end of World War I in 1917–1918, the Soviet Union's leader Lenin and U.S. president Wilson had competed with each other over how old diplomacy had facilitated the onset of war and tried to obtain wider support from both the domestic and the international public on a soft power level. As long as it is an effort to change the hearts and minds of foreign nations and shape the preferences of their governments, an instrument of PD, including advocacy, broadcasting, public relations, cultural diplomacy, exchange, and national branding, would be crucial techniques for promoting soft power—but it should not be propaganda.[31]

The Intermestic Politics

Intermestic politics refers to the *growing interconnection between domestic and foreign policies particularly in the United States*. The clearest cases are where an action in one environment directly affects what goes on in the other.[32] Richard *Cottam's Competitive Interference and 20th Century Diplomacy,* introduced the theory of *Tolerance of Interference* when one state interferes in the internal affairs of the other state to influence the shape of foreign policy toward the later. Based on his experience as a political officer (undercover CIA operative officer) at the U.S. embassy in Tehran Iran in 1953 when Musadak then the prime minister of Iran nationalized the oil industry. With nuclear proliferation essentially eliminating full-scale warfare, governments have increasingly turned to what Richard W. Cottam calls competitive interference. This type of policy invokes counter-insurgency, political, economic, and psychological manipulations, and often involves looking deeply into the internal affairs of a country, often secretly. In his well-documented research, Cottam describes and defines competitive interference, explores the United States' institutional adjustment to it, and provides a theoretical framework for projection and evaluation of foreign policy in this changing diplomatic arena of the twentieth century. He uses case studies of international relationships

involving the United States, India, China, Vietnam, Iran, and the former USSR and East Germany to evaluate his theoretical stance, and proposes long-term institutionalization of policy, rather than covert operations.[33]

James Fearson's *Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy and Theories of International Relations*, argues that a significant amount of recent research in the IR field advances the suggestion that domestic politics is typically a crucial part of the explanation for states' foreign policies. A basic measure of the occurrence of such claims, arguments, and evidence is the part of International Organization article's abstracts that more or less explicitly elevate domestic politics or domestic-political factors in explanations for foreign policy choices. For the years 1987–1996, slightly more than a third of the 193 abstracts were coded which invoked domestic-political factors as independent or intervening variables.[34]

Given that a significant number of articles were not about explaining foreign policy, Fearson argued, that this percentage is notable. Many books on IR published in recent years have also argued the case for the importance of domestic politics in developing foreign policy. Some of the noteworthy examples are Bueno de Mesquita & Lalman on interstate war; Huth on territorial disputes; Peterson on crisis bargaining; Milner, O.Halloran, and Verdier on trade policy; Downs & Rocke on compliance and international cooperation; Evans et al. on two-level games; Russett on democracy and war; Snyder on great power expansionism; Stamm on war outcomes; Kier and Legro on military doctrine; and the contributors to Rosecrance & Stein on grand strategy. Also, scholars of comparative politics sometimes wonder what would explain foreign policy if not domestic politics. One might reasonably ask what kind of politics is there besides domestic politics? Foreign politics. But isn't that just the domestic politics of foreign countries, or the product of their domestic politics?

Students of IR theory may recognize this as the central reductionist's theory argument that Waltz developed in his *Theory of International Politics*. The perceived originality and interest of recent claims that domestic politics matters can be understood only against the backdrop of Waltzian structural (or neorealism).[35]

Rightly or wrongly, the recent literature according to Fearson interprets neorealism to hold that domestic politics is not very important or not necessary to explain significant foreign policy decisions or, at least, international political outcomes. Many of the articles in this new literature are essentially case studies plus the argument that a particular foreign policy choice or international outcome can be explained only by invoking some facet of a state's domestic politics. Others warn that this literature essentially takes this as given, and asks the more interesting question, how does domestic politics matter?

John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt's valuable research on *Israeli lobby* in the United States gives a creditable example of how foreign policy of the United States toward Israel in the Middle East is completely formulated or dictated by the very active Israeli Lobby and against the long-term interest of the United States.[36]

Snow and Patrick Haney, in their seminal work *U.S. Foreign Policy-back to the Water's Edge*, documented the growing interconnection between the domestic and international environment after the end of the Cold War and the rise of political Islam on the world's stage, and henceforth domestic and foreign policy and its instrument PD. They called it the *Intermestic Intersection*, which is presumably affiliated with intermestic diplomacy.[37] This phenomenon has a strong impact on the politicization of foreign policy. In earlier times, simpler times, they argued foreign policy rarely had any direct, discernable impact on the lives of most Americans, and so they were willing to deter to the foreign policy elite centered on Washington, DC to conduct it virtually outside the political system. As foreign policy decisions have become increasingly intermestic, however, that distinction is increasingly difficult to make.[38] Trade agreements affect the jobs and livelihoods of American workers, and decisions about U.S. Middle East policy potentially place individual Americans at risk from terrorist attacks at home and abroad. The ubiquity of the intermestic intersection as a prominent part of the foreign policy environment is largely an artifact of the twenty-first century according to Snow and Haney, Armacost, Michael, Casy, Steven, and Sides John.[39]

THE RISE OF POLITICAL ISLAM ON THE WORLD'S STAGE

Definition of Political Islam

The problem of understanding "political" Islam begins already at the level of definition: what is political Islam and hence how can it best be "defined"? Because of this problem, many authors dispense with a definition altogether, leaving it to the reader to infer the many meanings of political Islam.[40] This is also reflected in the common practice of "prefixing" Islam to create a mystifying conceptual plurality, which, to name but a few, includes radical Islam, militant Islam, extremist Islam, revolutionary Islam, and fundamentalist Islam. This diversity points both to the many aspects believed to characterize political Islam, as well as to the problem of finding an appropriate term.[41] The shortest (and most encompassing) definition of political Islam is that it denotes "Islam used to a political end." A general problem with the term political Islam is that it tends to imply "an illegitimate extension of the

Islamic tradition outside of the properly religious domain it has historically occupied." Another problem with the term political Islam is that Islam fuses religion and politics (*din wa dawla*), which is not captured by the term political Islam. A final point is that there is a tendency to condemn all forms of social protest as illegitimate and conflating legitimate protest and the use of militancy and violence.[42]

As Kari Karamé points out, because of the many shortcomings of the term political Islam there is increasing resort to the term "Islamism" (and Islamists), which also conforms to the common Arabic reference to the Islamic movement (al-haraka al-Islamiyya) and its adherents as Islamists (Islamiyyun). There is hence a shift from a more abstract approach to one that contemplates the broader goals of the Islamist movement and the Islamist awakening (al-sahwa al-Islamiyya).[43] A wide range of movements may fall within this general category but according to Bjørn Olav Utvik the Islamist movement can be delimited by the three following traits: first of all, they refer to themselves as the Islamic movement, second, they call for an Islamic state ruled in accordance with Sharia and finally they organize themselves for the purpose of achieving these goals.[44]

A defining feature of Islamists according to this approach, is that they embrace the concept *ijtehad*, that is, independent reasoning and reinterpretation of the Quran and Islamic traditions and the need to reinterpret the Holy Scriptures and apply them to today's world. In this sense, Islamism is a modernist project, although as Utvik has noted, Islamists are inclined to hold modernity (technological advances, industrialism, etc.) but reject modernism and its associated strong belief in science and reason.[45]

As Khan displays, the Islamist "project" is premised on three interrelated forms of critique: of modernity, of the West and the state. More importantly, the current Islamist movement finds that although Islam is a "complete system," it is not a ready-made design for a modern Islamic society.[46] Thus, they have adopted a rebuilt width based on reinterpreting the sacred texts (ijtehad) and a programmatic dimension that seeks to translate key Islamic concepts into practical policy. There is, Khan argues, a general move toward more democratic means among those he labels "second-generation Islamists."[47] Example of this democratic shift can be found among the Islamist parties (Turkey's Welfare Party) and political-cum-religious leaders (Iran's president Muhammad Khatemi).[48]

In general, the democratic transformation of political Islam, by some termed the "New Islamism," is still inadequately understood and as yet little studied. Views are divided as to whether this is caused by an ideological shift, or whether the lessons of the past decade have taught them that overthrowing secular governments is impossible and that this approach has weakened the movements and robbed them of their leaders.[49]

THE IMPACT OF THE 9/11 TERRORIST ATTACKS ON THE UNITED STATES

Asef Bayat's *Islam and Democracy: What Is the Real Question*? published 2007, argued that undoubtedly the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States and subsequent developments have greatly intensified Western anxieties over the "threat of 'Islamic fundamentalism,'" and thus have reinforced more than ever the notion of "peculiarity of Muslims." Of course, the construction of "unique" Muslims is not new, Bayat argued, it has been the stamp of the so-called the West colonial perception of the East generally including Middle Eastern, or the Orientalist outlook which Edward Said introduced in his book *Orientalism*.[50]

In his seminal work, Edward Said posed a ground-breaking critique of the West's historical, cultural, and political perceptions of the East. Said traces the origins of "orientalism" to the centuries-long period during which Europe dominated the Middle and Near East and, from its position of power, defined "the orient" simply as "other than" the occident. In his attempt to indicate the scope of thought and action covered by the term Orientalism, he used as privileged types the British and French experiences of and with the Near Orient, Islam, and the Arabs.[51] Those experiences were part of a much wider European or Western relationship with the Orient, but what seems to have influenced Orientalism most was a fairly constant sense of confrontation felt by Westerners dealing with the East. The boundary notion of East and West, the varying degrees of projected inferiority and strength, the range of work done, the kind of characteristics features ascribed to the Orient: all testified, Said argued, to a willed-unrealistic, and untrue imaginative and geographic division made between East and West, and lived through during many centuries about the Near Orient, Islam, and the Arabs.[52]

The aforementioned stereotyping of the Near Orient, Islam, and the Arabs by the West is reflected in Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations, Remaking of World Order*, which had received much attention since the terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001. Writing several years earlier, Huntington anticipates the vastly changed landscape of the world conflict after the collapse of Soviet Communism and after the end of the United States–Soviet Cold War. "Power is shifting from the long predominant West to non-western civilizations." Huntington writes. He explores the reasons why he believes this is happening, emphasizing the renewal of religion as central to the changes in power. Religious conflicts, especially between Islam and Christianity, are inevitable, the author believes.[53] Saad Eddin Ibrahim, the renowned political sociologist at the American University in Cairo, Egypt and the founder of Ibn Khaldun research center criticized Huntington's theory of the clash of civilization, published in the *Foreign Affairs Journal*. Ibrahim

argued that "Huntington's article borders on a quest for a search for a 'new enemy' for the West in the post-Cold War era."[54] The most damning part of Huntington's article is its "battle cry conclusion: 'the paramount axis of world politics will be the West and the Rest.' The central focus of conflict for the immediate future will be between the West and several Islamic-Confucian States." Then he goes on to delineate the ways and means of managing this conflict to subdue Muslims and Confucians—some 3 billion people—nearly half of the world population.[55]

The Challenge of Democratization and the Compatibility of Islam with Democracy

Democracy

The body of the literature on democracy contains writings promoting, criticizing, and analyzing the idea of democracy. This material ranges from the ancient Greeks to the present day. It begins with those writings in the context of the Greek city-state, where the solely male citizens met directly, without representatives, to make decisions on war and peace, life and death, down to contemporary theory, which venture on democracy in the framework of modern mass societies, with internet communications instantly linking individuals with millions of people worldwide.[56]

According to Ricardo Blaug and John Schwarzmantel, democracy is admired everywhere, yet realized nowhere. As an ideal, it has become the prevailing political ambition in the world today. As a practice, it remains blemished to new and serious challenges. Paradoxically it appears that democracy in the present contemporary stage of world's history is triumphant and in crises at the same time.[57]

Roskin, Cord, Medeiros, and Jones theorized that democracy is both contentious and contagious. It is not simple or easy. At the birth of the American Republic, many questioned if it would survive. They noted that Athenian and Roman democracy had both perished. In 1831–1832, French visitor Tocqueville took a close look and concluded U.S. democracy was commendable and workable.[58] The rest of the world moved only slowly and reluctantly toward democracy in the nineteenth century. Some countries tried democracy but slid backward. The debate between dictatorship and democracy will likely continue.[59]

Barriers to Political Development and Democracy

Samuel P. Huntington's seminal work *Political Order in Changing Societies* highlighted the most important political distinction among countries concerning, not their form of government, but their degree of government. The

differences between democracy and dictatorship are less than the differences between those countries whose politics embodies consensus, community, legitimacy, organization, effectiveness, stability, and those countries whose politics is deficient in these qualities. Communist totalitarian states and Western liberal states both belong generally in the category of effective, rather than debile, political systems. The United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union have different forms of government, but in all three systems the government governs.[60]

Political modernization involves the rationalization of authority, the differentiation of structures, and the expansion of political participation. In the West, political modernization was spread over many centuries. The sequence and extent of its three components varied significantly in different areas of Europe and North America. Most obviously, the expansion of political participation occurred earlier and far more extensively in America than in Europe. In the eighteenth century, political participation in the English colonies, in terms of the suffrage, was already widespread by English standards, not to mention Continental ones. The American Revolution removed the English Crown from the American scene.[61]

To cope successfully with modernization, a political system must be able to innovate policy—that is, to promote social and economic reform by state action. Reform in this context usually means the changing of traditional values and behavior patterns, the expansion of communications and education, the broadening of loyalties from family, village, and tribe to nation, the secularization of public life, the rationalization of authority structures, the promotion of functionally specific organizations, the substitution of achievement criteria for ascriptive ones, and the furthering of a more equitable distribution of wealth and symbolic resources.[62]

In describing political decay, Huntington argued that few aspects of political modernization are more striking or common than the intervention of the military in politics. Juntas and coups, military revolts and military regimes have been continuing phenomena in Latin American societies; they have been almost as prevalent in the Middle East. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, many societies in southern and Southeast Asia also came under military rule.[63]

In discussing the prevalence of violence and instability in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, Huntington argues that it was in large part the product of rapid social change and the rapid mobilization of new groups into politics coupled with the slow development of political institutions. More specifically, "the rates of social mobilization and the expansion of political participation are high; the rates of political organization and institutionalization are low." The result is political instability and disorder. The primary problem of politics is the lag in the development of political institutions behind social and economic change.[64]

The aforementioned characteristics of political decay can be observed in the six countries which witnessed the Arab Spring—Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Bahrain, which will be discussed in chapter 6.

Political Development Stages

Stanford political scientist Francis Fukuyama's valuable work *Political Order and Political Decay* advances an important theory as to why some countries are failed states. Fukuyama sees three stages that cannot be skipped over. The first is the establishment of the state by a strong ruler—a monarch who gathers tribes and regions under him by the sword. Like Hobbes, Fukuyama doesn't require this king to be "good," just powerful enough to control or crush obstreperous elements. Many developing countries never established strong states.[65] According to this theory, the monarch soon requires bureaucrats to run the kingdom. The better this bureaucracy—loyal, literate, and relatively uncorrupt—the stronger the state.[66] Next comes the more recent stage, the "rule of Law" that all must obey. Authoritarian system deliberately confuses rule of Law with "rule by Law" and "law of the ruler," hundreds of whimsical laws to punish opponents and dissidents. Once these two stages are firmly established, the system may be ready for the final stage, what Fukuyama calls "accountability" or more recently, democracy. Now, if Fukuyama's theory is right, what if you try to set up a democracy without a strong state or rule of law? It may try to look democratic for a while, with rigged elections and one-party rule, but it will collapse. The United States attempts to establish democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq failed, despite the best efforts and billions of dollars spent of U.S. tax payers' money.[67]

The Soft State

In 1968, Swedish economist and sociologist Karl Gunnar Myrda published his book *The Asian Drama: An Inquiry into Poverty of Nations*, and students of development consumed it with enthusiasm, comparing it with Adam Smith's An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations. Myrdal introduced the theory of the "soft state." In Myrdal's view, many Third World countries suffer under the bondage of what he calls the soft state. A soft state is a state that passes laws but does not enforce them. The elite can afford to ignore the law because their power protects them from it, while others pay bribes to work around it. Galal Amine.[68] Everything is up for sale, be it building permits for illegal construction, licenses to import illicit goods, or sneaky tax rebates and deferrals. The rules are made to be broken and to enrich those who break them, and taxes are often evaded. In the Soft State, then, corruption is generalized, and the payment of bribes is widespread; the

weakness of the state encourages corruption, and the spread of corruption further weakens the state. Corruption spreads from the executive branch to the legislative and from there to the judiciary. To be sure, some corruption exists in one form or another in all countries, but under the soft state it becomes a way of life.[69]

IS ISLAM COMPATIBLE WITH DEMOCRACY?

The prevailing media and intellectual circles in the West perceive Islam at the roots of authoritarian polity in the Muslim Middle East. To them, Islam is masculine and lacks any concept of citizenship and freedom, since its belief in God's sovereignty has diminished popular power. For instance, a number of influential academics in the United States such as Eliot Cohen of Johns Hopkins University and Kenneth Adelman of the Defense Department's Defense Policy Board have suggested that Islam is essentially intolerant, expansionist, and violent. Furthermore, Evangelical Protestants have declared Islam an "evil" religion.[70]

The same trend argues that the religion of Muhammad, instead of being a private matter, is essentially political. Bernard Lewis, in his work *The Roots of Muslim Rage* argues that Islam is a "world in which human life doesn't have the same value as it does in the West, in which freedom, democracy, openness and creativity are alien." With all the aforementioned defects Westerners are finding in Islam, is Islam compatible with democracy? Asef Bayat raised this question. He argued that this is the wrong question to pose in the first place. Why is that so? To begin with, the "Islam vs. Democracy" debate centers almost exclusively on one side of the equation, Islam—as if the other side, democracy, is free from all defects. What does the term democracy mean? After all, he argued, is "democracy" equal to Robert Dahl's "polyarchy"—which is a consensual government by competing elites representing different social interests in a pluralist framework? If so, where do the other domains of public life—economy, society, and culture—stand? To support his argument, he further stated that, the question is not whether Islam is or is not compatible with democracy, or by extension modernity (however understood), but rather under what conditions Muslims can make them compatible. Because there is nothing intrinsic in Islam, and for that matter any other religion, which makes them inherently democratic or undemocratic. To advance his argument, Bayat states that some fifty years ago, many social scientists believed that Christianity and democracy were incompatible. But today the most deep-rooted democracies are in the Christian Heartland, even though he added fascism also emerged, and was associated with the Church, in the heartland of Christianity.[71]

Bayat ends his well-documented analysis by stating Islamism or political Islam emerged as the language of self-assertion to mobilize those largely middle-class achievers who felt marginalized by dominant economic, political, or cultural processes in their societies, those for whom the perceived failure of both capitalist modernity and socialist utopia made the language of morality (found in the Islamic religion) a substitute for politics. In a sense, it was the Muslim middle-class way of rejecting what they considered as their excluders—their national elites, secular governments, and their governments' Western allies including the United States. Hence, they rejected "western culture domination," its political rational, morale sensibilities, normative symbols, and its institutions.[72]

RESEARCH APPROACH AND LIMITATION

The genealogical interdisciplinary examination, critical descriptions, explanations, and analyses of the United States' foreign policy and PD toward the Arab Spring during Obama's Administration is considered among one of the major recent challenges within the political science discipline, generally, and scholars of the Middle East politics, particularly. This is due to the unexpected events of the Arab Spring and the absence of theoretical foundation which would guide foreign policy decision-makers and diplomats to an appropriate response. Hence, a combination of historical, descriptive, developmental, and case study approaches will be used in this research. According to Stephen Isaac and William Michael, historical research design tends to reconstruct the past objectively and accurately, descriptive research tends to describe systematically a situation or area of interest factually and accurately, developmental research tends to investigate patterns and sequences of growth and/or change as a function of time. Finally, a case study tends to study intensively the background, current status, and environmental interactions of a given social unit: an individual, group, institution, community, or state.[73] Hopefully, the finding of this research will inject greater precision, or conceptual rigor, into the U.S. foreign policy and diplomacy toward the Middle East, and the Islamic World generally and to be a springboard for further identification and discussion of those important areas of IR, foreign policy and PD dealing with the Middle East needed for further research within the discipline of political science as related to the Middle East.

The researcher's firsthand experience while working with the USAID (2005) in a PD project in Egypt, knowledge of Middle East politics, mastery of the Arabic Language, field research in the region during 2011 and 2016, and following up the events on social media, hopefully, provide new

perceptual insights based on primary sources of data into the complicated realities of the Middle East's unfolding events of the Arab Spring.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

Chapter 2 will address the evolution of U.S. foreign policy and PD toward the Middle East. Chapter 3 will address the interrelationship between domestic and foreign policies—the intermestic politics in the United States and how it is impacting American foreign policy toward the Middle East. Chapter 4 will address the rise of political Islam at the world stage. Chapter 5 will address the challenge of democratization and the compatibility of Islam and democracy. Chapter 6 will address Barack Obama's response to the events that occurred in Tunisia, Egypt, and Bahrain during and after the Arab Spring. The aforementioned countries have secular governments or regimes and nationalist foundation since its independence. Chapter 7 will address the events that occurred in Libya, Syria, and Yemen during and after the Arab Spring. The aforementioned countries each one of them are essentially a collection of tribes living under a single state flag. That is because their populations constitute myriad tribes and sects that came to share national territory thanks to the arbitrary borders drawn by colonial powers. These particular characteristics may have led to civil wars in these countries following the Arab Spring. Chapter 8 will address how Obama used U.S. power and PD during and after the Arab Spring. Finally, chapter 9 will report the research findings and conclusions.

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Chapter 2

The Evolution of U.S. Foreign Policy and Diplomacy toward the Middle East

James Dougherty and Robert Pfaltzgraff argue that some impetus to the serious study of international relations and its two pillars—foreign policy and diplomacy—in the United States came when it emerged as a world power. But ambiguities in American foreign policy and diplomacy and the trend toward isolationism during the 1920s and 1930s stalled the development of international relations and its pillars, foreign policy and diplomacy, as an intellectual discipline.[1] A contrast developed between intellectual "idealists," who shared Woodrow Wilson's vision of the League of Nations, and politicians who, feeling pressures for a "return to normalcy," blocked the United States' entry into the world organization—the League of Nations.[2]

Since then *Idealism* (Idealist Approach) and *Realism* (Realist Approach) have been two competing traditional approaches, each of which wants recognition as the sound approach to the study of international relations, and the practice of foreign policy and diplomacy. Each promotes a particular view of the totality of international reality and believes that it can be adopted as the means for understanding and explaining all aspects of international relations.[3] Both of these represent the classical tradition of the study of international relations. Both *Idealism* and *Realism* are normative approaches in essence and content, or levels of analysis. Power, which is probably the concept that collects all the analysts in political science together as a discipline, will be used as an analytical tool to assess President Obama's projection and use of U.S. power while dealing with the Arab Spring.

The level of analysis for the Idealists' approach is the *Individual's* morals. These principles of individuals may translate into that of nations. The other is *form of government*—democratic governments are the preferred

means for transferring those moral principles of individuals into those of the international system. Democratic governments exist as moral examples for other nations still struggling on the path to Enlightenment. Idealists' scholars and practitioners are Immanuel Kant, Woodrow Wilson, and Neville Chamberlain.[4]

The level of analysis for the realists is the *State*. They argue that the power of state translates into the national interest of that state. States are viewed as "black boxes." Any politics within the state (i.e., the form of government) is irrelevant for understanding that states' interests in international society. States are assumed to be power-seeking entities that enter into competition with one another in the absence of a central power to overawe them. This situation is anarchy. Anarchy simply means lack of central power (says Hobbes' Leviathan) to which all states would pledge their obedience. Among the scholars and practitioners of the realists are Thucydides, Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, Martin Wight, Henry Kissinger, E. H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, George Kennan, Reinhold Nieburgh, and Pat Buchanan (who is also a mercantilist).[5]

The *Idealist Approach* holds that old, ineffective, and harmful styles of behavior, that is, war, use of force, and violence, should be abandoned in favor of new ways and means as determined by knowledge, reason, compassion, and self-restraint.[6]

The *Realist Approach* regards international politics as a *struggle for power* among nations and justifies the attempts of a nation to use national power for securing the goals of its national interest. It rejects the idealist approach as the best approach. In fact, both idealism and realism are opposed and competing approaches and each offers a particular view of international relations.[7]

Idealism stands for humanizing the course of international relations by eliminating war, hunger, inequality, tyranny, force, suppression, and violence from international relations. To remove these evils is the objective before humankind. Idealism accepts the possibility of creating a world free from these evils by depending upon reason, science, and education.[8] "Political idealism in international relations represents a set of ideas which together oppose war and advocate the reform of international community through dependence upon moral values and the development of international institutions and international law."[9]

"A world full of human happiness is not beyond human power to achieve."[10] Bertrand Russell's Idealist approach derives strength from the general idea of evolutionary progress in society and the spirit of liberal idealism, which was at the back of American policies, particularly during the interwar years. During the interwar years (1919–1939), the U.S. president Woodrow Wilson became its most forceful exponent.[11]

IDEALISM'S PERCEPTION OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Idealist perception advocates morality as the means for securing the desired objective of making the world an ideal world. It believes that by following ethics and moral values in their relations, nations can not only secure their own development, but also can help the world to eliminate war, inequality, dictatorship, tyranny, violence, and force. "For the idealists, politics is the art of good government and not the art of possible. Politics provides for the good life and respect for his fellow humans, both domestically and internationally."[12] Couloumbis and Wolfe argued that Idealism advocates the need for improving relations among nations by removing the evils present in the international environment.[13]

Main Features of Idealism[14]

1. Human nature is essentially good and capable of good conducts in international relations.
2. Human welfare and the advancement of civilization are the concerns of all.
3. Bad human behavior is the product of bad environment and bad institutions.
4. By reforming the environment, bad human behavior can be eliminated.
5. War represents the worst feature of relations.
6. By reforming international relations, war can be and should be eliminated.
7. Global efforts are needed to end war, violence, and tyranny from international relations.
8. The international community should work to eliminate such global instruments, features, and practices which lead to war.
9. International institutions committed to preserve international peace and international law and order should be developed for securing peace, prosperity, and development.

The main supporters of idealism have been Mahatma Gandhi, Bertrand Russell, Woodrow Wilson, Aldous Huxley, William Ladd, Richard Cobben, Margret Mead, and others. They strongly oppose the realist view of international politics as a struggle for power and national interest and advocate the use of reason, education, and science for securing reforms in relations and for eliminating war and other evils from international relations.

Realism's Perception of International Relations

Realist perception follows a power assessment of international relations.[15] Realism regards politics as a struggle for power and seeks to explain it with

the help of such factors as power, security, and national interest. Power is defined as a psychological relationship in which one actor is able to control the behavior of another actor. A political actor is one who always seeks to secure one's interests as defined in terms of power. Political realism further regards prudence as the guide in politics. Couloumbis and Wolfe explain the basic feature of Realism and observe, "to act rationally (that is, to act in one's interest) is to seek power, that is, to have ability and willingness to control others."[16]

Main Features of Political Realism[17]

1. History offers evidence that humans are by nature sinful and wicked.
2. Desire for power and dominance has been a major, all-important, and all-inescapable element of human nature.
3. Human disposition for power cannot be eliminated.
4. Struggle for power is the unquestionable and perpetual reality of international relations.
5. Each nation always seeks to secure the goals of national interest defined in terms of power.
6. Self-protection is the law that governs the behavior of all the states at all times.
7. Nations always seek power, demonstrate power, and use power.
8. Peace can be preserved only by management of power through such devices as Balance of Power, Collective Security, World Government, Diplomacy, Alliances, and the like.

Mohinder Kumar argues that the main assumption underlying the realist approach is that rivalry and strife among nations in some form or the other are natural and not a mere accident. A nation acts politically when it pursues its national interests. This behavior has its roots in human nature. To seek power in pursuit of one's interests is to follow the basic dictates of the "laws" of nature according to realists. Consequently, it is the highest ethical and legal belief. It is a realistic and valid principle that can help the understanding of the whole of international relations and the formulation and implementation of policies designed to secure society's national interest. Realism offers a realistic and all-inclusive view of total international reality. Hans Morgenthau has offered a realistic theory of international politics, which, according to him, can explain the whole matrix of politics among nations. He is the most popular of all the realists of our time. Other well-known scholars of realism are Reinhold Niebuhr, Nicholas Spykman, George Kennan, Arnold Wolfers, Henry Kissinger, Robert Strause Hupe, and Raymond Aron.[18]

With the aforementioned competing views of international relations, America demanded a moral and peaceful world order, but they were unwilling to pay the price. This contradiction between noble impulses and tenancies toward isolationism was clearly reflected in the Kellogg-Brand Treaty of 1928, which "outlawed" war by moralistic declaration but provided no adequate means of enforcement. Many educators considered it their mission to keep the younger generation from repeating the older one's mistakes.

For a decade or more after Versailles, the two most popular approaches to teaching world affairs in American universities included courses in current events and courses in international law and organization. Current events courses were designed more to promote international understanding than to apply social science methodologies to good advantage.[19] Courses in international law emphasized inconsistencies between the formal obligations of states (especially League members) and their actual conduct in an era of struggle between world powers—at this time Great Britain and France, anxious to preserve the international status quo and those determined to overturn it).[20]

An awareness that the study of international relations must go beyond the study of international law and organization was evident in the writings of scholars in England and the United States during the 1930s.[21] Among them are the "*causes*" of war or "*origins*" of the great conflict. Hayes, Kohn, and other diplomatic historians explored the emotional-ideological content of nationalism, and specialized writings appeared in a number of areas: on the problems of security, war, and disarmament—Baker, Shotwell, and Wheeler-Bennett; on imperialism—Moon and Priestly; on diplomacy and negotiation—Nicolson; on the balance of power—Friedrich and Vagts; on the geographical aspects of world power—Fairgrieve and Spykman; on the history of international relations theories—Russell; on economic factors in warfare, the strategic significance of raw materials, and the role of economics in international relations—Angell, Simonds, Emeny, Robbins, Einzig, and Staley.[22] During the interwar period, several textbooks on international relations, in describing the "states system" (as it was then called), tried to bring an interdisciplinary knowledge of political, historical, economic, demographic, and strategic factors to bear upon the effort to understand the actual evolution of foreign policies and public diplomacy among the great powers.[23]

In the United States, the twentieth century saw recurrent debate over the proper relationship between *democracy* and *secrecy* in foreign policy and diplomacy. Claims that politics should "stop at the water's edge," according to Donald Snow and Patrick Haney, were reignited during the controversy over Wikileaks' release of classified U.S. government cables.[24] On the one hand, activists and liberal intellectuals argue that secrecy undermines democracy and that more openness and debate will produce better foreign

policy and better instruments of diplomacy. Furthermore, many diplomats and realist intellectuals claim that a measure of secrecy is vital to the protection of national interests. Both sides share the assumption that, one way or another, foreign policy has always been essentially different from other kinds of policy.

American National Interest

Lacking sovereignty due to the absence of an effective centralized world government, Roskin, Cord, Medeiros, and Jones argued that international relations depend a lot on the notion of *power*. State A gets state B to do what state A wants. Hans J. Morgenthau held that power is the basic element of international politics, foreign policy, and its instrument diplomacy. The idealist's theories are ignored at their peril. Without sufficient power, a state cannot survive, let alone prevail. An unrestrained world power isn't necessarily evil or aggressive; it may be simply persuading an aggressor to "leave me alone." Morgenthau, more explicitly than other international relations, foreign policy, and diplomacy realists, linked the concept of national interest with national power, and in a direct way seems to be linking it to national security.[25] Morgenthau contends that statesman "think and act in terms of interest defined as power," and that historical evidence proves this assumption.[26] This concept of national interest, which is central to Morgenthau's realism according to Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, gives continuity and unity to the seemingly diverse foreign policies of the widely separated nation-states in the international system.[27]

Moreover, the concept "interest defined as power" and relating it to national security makes evaluating the actions of political leaders at different points in history possible. In Morgenthau's view, international politics is a process in which national interests—including national security—are adjusted. He argues:

> The concept of the national interest presupposes neither a naturally harmonious, peaceful world nor the inevitability of war as a consequence of the pursuit by all nations of their national interest. Quite to the contrary, it assumes continuous conflict and threat of war, to be minimized through the continuous adjustment of conflicting interest by diplomatic action.[28]

Another realist scholar of international relations, foreign policy, and diplomacy who has drawn from history is Henry Kissinger, former Harvard professor, later special assistant for National Security Affairs to President Richard Nixon, and secretary of state during President Gerald Ford's tenure. Kissinger played a very important role in developing foreign policy and

diplomacy to the Middle East particularly after the October war of 1973 (initiated by Egypt and Syria against Israel, supported by the Arab oil embargo against the United States and the West). Kissinger developed two models for the study of international relations and its interrelationship with foreign policy and diplomacy of a state: the first is that of a stable system; the second is that of a revolutionary system, according to Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff. Kissinger contends that stability has resulted not "from a quest for peace, but from generally accepted legitimacy."[29] By Kissinger's definition, legitimacy means no more than an international agreement among major powers about the nature of workable arrangements and about the permissible aims and methods of foreign policy and diplomacy. Agreement among major powers upon the framework of international order has not eliminated international conflict in Kissinger's view, but it has limited their scope. Conflict within the framework has been more limited than a conflict about the framework. Diplomacy, which Kissinger defines as the "adjustments of differences through negotiations,"[30] becomes possible only in international systems where "legitimacy obtains."[31]

During the Cold War era and the threat of nuclear attack from the Soviet Union, Kissinger argued that it is in the national interest of the United States to have a choice other than "the dread alternatives of surrender or suicide."[32] U.S. policymakers must adopt a national security doctrine of limited war to deter aggressor and prevent it from creating a fait accompli. If the United States is to avoid the stark alternative of suicide or surrender, it must have both large-scale conventional forces and tactical nuclear weapons coupled with diplomacy that succeeds in convincing the aggressor that all-out war is not the sole response to aggression and that there exists a willingness to negotiate a settlement short of unconditional surrender.[33]

Marc Lynch of George Washington University's Middle East Program ranks Henry Kissinger as among the top ten list of the most important *realists* in the history of international relations, foreign policy theory, and diplomacy practice. As national security adviser and secretary of state, and as an imaginative author, he became synonymous with convenient, immoral diplomacy. Lynch describes Kissinger as a heartless pragmatic who agreed only to the balance of power and the pursuit of American national interest.

Kissinger's description of U.S. national interest, foreign policy, and diplomacy now, according to Lynch, echoes Hans Morgenthau's perception of national interests as related to foreign policy.[34]

In Morgenthau's view, "the objective of foreign policy must be to defend in terms of the national interest, and must be supported with adequate power that today, short of a radical change in the atomic balance of power in favor of a particular nation, diplomacy, in order to make one nation secure from nuclear destruction, must make them all secure."[35]

To conclude his critique of Kissinger's Book on *World Order*, Lynch claimed that he (Kissinger) hasn't exactly gone soft, of course: "World Order" contains no apologies for a history of deception, violations of international law, or complicity in massive human rights abuses. He still sees the military balance of power as a crucial driving force, and advocates a subtle, amoral diplomacy designed to maximize the national interest.[36]

With the aforementioned frame of reference of the continued debate between *realist*, and *idealist* theories of international relations, their notions and assumptions, in the chapters to come, Obama's conduct of international relations via foreign policy and diplomacy toward the six countries of the Arab Spring will be assessed and evaluated within the context of the formal and informal political powers of the presidency, and the presidential constraints from the intermestic politics.

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND DIPLOMACY TOWARD THE MIDDLE EAST

For thousands of years, the region we now call the Middle East has been a cradle of civilizations, a crossroads of vast trading networks, a place for holiness and conflict. Linking Africa, Asia, and Europe, encircling half the Mediterranean Sea, the Middle East has for millennia played a crucial economic role on all three continents, dominating the trade in gold and slaves from Africa, spices and fabrics from Asia, and glass and other manufactured goods from Europe. In the twentieth century, it literally fueled globalization as the primary source of the oil that powers the ships, planes, trains, and trucks that make it possible for bananas from El Salvador or manufactured goods from China to reach the shelves of stores in Europe and the United States at astonishingly low costs.[37]

The dominant concern of American foreign policy in the post–World War II period was finding effective ways to prevent Soviet expansionism to the Middle Eastern region. When applied to the Middle East, this meant using all means available to prevent the Soviet Union from filling the power vacuum being created by the gradual withdrawal of old colonial powers—England and France. The interrelated objectives of containing Soviet attempts to gain the upper hand in the area and preserving access to the region's strategic facilities such as the Suez Canal in Egypt and oil resources available in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the Gulf States, Iraq Libya, and Bahrain required the development of effective foreign policies and public diplomacy directed to these countries to attain the designated goals—namely the *promotion of peace and stability* and the recruitment of regional partners to assist the United States in containing the Soviet Union. The first orientation consisted in guaranteeing

the territorial status quo and keeping the established political order in place as much as possible. Other major interests were to assure the survival and security of Israel and ending of the Arab-Israeli conflict.[38]

American determination reflected a definite conception of the importance of the Middle East itself to the United States' national interests and national security. The protection of the oil resources in the Middle East, and the respective lines of communication through public diplomacy, would remain a vital Western interest and would determine the U.S. strategy and military deployments throughout the subsequent decades.

By the 1950s, the emerging Arab nationalist movement became an additional (and most likely) danger to the United States' hold over the oil resources of the region. Local disputes and radical processes of change were considered to provide appropriate grounds for communist/Soviet-sponsored activity. U.S. policy was thus guided by the basic belief that radicalizing political tendencies of any sort would challenge Western-favored access to cheap and reliable supplies of oil, the very key to the economic growth of the industrialized world. U.S. opposition to the nationalist movement had an early manifestation in Iran, when in 1953 the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) executed a plan to overthrow the nationalist Prime Minister, Mohammed Mossadeq, to thwart the nationalization of the oil sector.[39]

According to Cottam, another perceptible display of this concern was U.S. policy to integrate the region in its global system of alliances and to preempt a possible shift by a regional state away from the American orbit. The U.S. support to "moderate," pro-Western regimes in the Middle East (Jordan, Lebanon), contemplating also the most important oil producers (Gulf kingdoms, Saudi Arabia, and Iran), was largely successful. However, the United States was not successful to develop a good working relationship with Egypt under Nasser due to his refusal to join any Western alliance and preferring to form a new alliance—international alliance which he called positive neutrality after the United States vetoed his Loan application to the World Bank to finance the High Dam at Aswan—the backbone of Egypt's national development plan.

In the wake of the Iranian revolution (1979), the rising political power of Muslim fundamentalism became a new prominent threat. It was only after the Iranian Revolution with its follow-up of fiery, revolutionary Islamist-sponsored turmoil, that political Islam's strength was properly considered. The Iranian revolution and the wave of Shiite radicalism that marked the 1980s contributed, in another important way, to the shaping in the West of a stereotyped image of political Islam: that of an anti-democratic, anti-Western force. With the demise of communism and the end of the Cold War in 1990, a current of thought emerged in the West particularly at the United States saying political Islam is the new threat that confronts the West. Many saw it as

aggressively anti-Semitic and anti-Western and charged Islamist movements of standing in direct competition to Western civilization and challenging it for global supremacy.

Growing American fears about political Islam are played into the hands of U.S. allies, such as in the case with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan. Political Islam's threat became a convenient way for a leader to justify oppressive measures against any opposition based on a country's economic, social, and political inequities. It was also an argument in favor of the continuation of U.S. support to regimes whose strategic value to the United States' national security weakened with the end of the Cold War. In the 1990s, an additional interest was added to the three core ones: reducing the threats posed by so-called *rogue states*, particularly those aiming to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, ATTACK ON THE UNITED STATES

The Bush administration's responses to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, expanded presidential power in matters of national security. Bush transformed from being a president with questionable legitimacy, who had been selected in a controversial election, to taking on immense presidential emergency powers, defining the threat, and attacking the enemy. His administration justified its actions by citing Article II of the U.S. Constitution that outlines the powers of the president as commander in chief as well as legal authorizations passed by Congress. Following 9/11, Bush's leadership became a rallying point for the nation. The American people were inclined to trust him because they believed in his ability to maintain their safety. In the weeks after the attack, Bush's approval rating rose to 90 percent—the highest recorded job-approval rating in U.S. presidential history.[40]

In response to the September 11 attacks, the Bush administration adopted three major policies to advance U.S. national security interests in the region: defeating terrorism, promoting democracy, and stopping the development of weapons of mass destruction.[41] The U.S. foreign policy changed in some very noticeable ways after the terrorist attacks on American soil on September 11, 2001, most noticeably by increasing the amount of intervention in foreign wars, the amount of defense spending, and the redefinition of a new enemy as terrorism. Yet, in other ways, foreign policy after 9/11 is a continuation of American policy since its beginnings.[42]

When George W. Bush assumed the presidency in January 2001, his major foreign policy initiative was the creation of a "missile shield" over parts of Europe. In theory, the shield would give added protection if North Korea or

Iran ever launched a missile strike. In fact, Condoleezza Rice, then the head of Bush's National Security Council, was slated to give a policy speech about the missile shield on September 11, 2001.[43]

Combating Terror as a First Priority

Nine days later, on September 20, 2001, in a speech before a joint session of Congress, Bush changed the direction of American foreign policy. He made terrorism its focus. "We will direct every resource at our command—every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence, and every necessary weapon of war—to the destruction and to the defeat of the global terror network." The speech is perhaps best remembered for this remark. "[W]e will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism," said Bush. "Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists."[44]

Preventive Warfare, Not Preemptive Strategy

The most noticeable immediate change in the U.S. foreign policy's strategy was its focus on preventive action, not just preemptive action. This is also known as the Bush Doctrine. Nations often use preemptive strikes in warfare when they know that an enemy action is eminent. During Truman's administration, for example, North Korea's attack on South Korea in 1950 stunned then-secretary of state Dean Acheson and others at the state department into urging Truman to retaliate, leading the United States into the Korean War and a major expansion of U.S. global policy.[45]

When the United States invaded Iraq in March 2003, however, it broadened its policy to include preventive warfare. The Bush administration told the public (erroneously) that Saddam Hussein's regime had nuclear material and would soon be able to produce atomic weapons. Bush vaguely tied Hussein to Al-Qaeda (again erroneously), and he said the invasion was, in part, to prevent Iraq from supplying terrorists with nuclear weapons. Thus, the Iraqi invasion was to prevent some perceived—but not clearly evident—event.[46]

More Demands for Humanitarian Assistance

Since 9/11, U.S. humanitarian assistance has become more subject to foreign policy demands, and in some cases it has become militarized. Independent nongovernment organization (NGOs) working through USAID (a branch of the U.S. State Department) have typically delivered worldwide humanitarian aid independently of American foreign policy. However, as

Elizabeth Ferris reported in a recent Brookings Institution article, U.S. military commands have begun their own humanitarian assistance programs in areas where they are conducting military operations. Therefore, army commanders can leverage humanitarian assistance to gain military advantages. NGOs have also increasingly fallen under closer federal scrutiny, to ensure that they comply with U.S. anti-terrorism policy. This requirement, says Ferris, "made it difficult, indeed impossible, for U.S. humanitarian NGOs to claim that they were independent of their government's policy." That, in turn, makes it more difficult for humanitarian missions to reach sensitive and dangerous locations.[47]

Provocative Allies

After 9/11, the United States continues its tendency to hearth questionable alliances. For instance, the United States had to secure Pakistan's support before invading neighboring Afghanistan to fight the Taliban, which intelligence said was an Al-Qaeda supporter. The resulting alliance with Pakistan and its president, Pervez Musharraf, was uncooperative. Musharraf's ties with the Taliban and Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden were questionable, and his commitment to the War on Terror seemed half-hearted.[48] Indeed, in early 2011, intelligence revealed that Bin Laden was hiding in a compound in Pakistan, and apparently had been for more than five years. American special operations troops killed Bin Laden in May, but his mere presence in Pakistan cast more doubt on that country's commitment to the war. Some members of Congress soon began calling for an end to Pakistani foreign aid. Those situations are indicative of American alliances during the Cold War. The United States supported such unpopular leaders as the Shah of Iran and Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam, simply because they were anti-Communist.[49]

War Tiredness

George W. Bush warned Americans in 2001 that the War on Terror would be long, and its results might be hard to recognize. Regardless, Bush failed to remember the lessons of the Vietnam War and to understand that Americans are results driven. Americans were encouraged to see the Taliban virtually driven from power by 2002, and could understand a brief period of occupation and state-building in Afghanistan. But when the invasion of Iraq pulled resources away from Afghanistan, allowing the Taliban to become resurgent, and the Iraqi war itself became one of seemingly unending occupation, Americans became war-weary. When voters briefly gave control of Congress to Democrats in 2006, they were in fact rejecting Bush's foreign policy. That public war weariness infected the Obama administration as the president

wrestled with withdrawing troops from Iraq and Afghanistan as well as allocating funds for other military ventures, such as America's limited involvement in the Libyan civil war. The Iraq war was concluded on December 18, 2011, when Obama withdrew the last of the U.S. forces.[50]

The Unique American Setting of Foreign Policy and Diplomacy

The president is certainly not an autonomous decision-maker on foreign policy issues even within the executive branch. Accordingly, in attempting to formulate and implement a grand foreign policy and public diplomacy strategy, he faces a number of opportunities and constraints at both the domestic and international environments. For instance, the most notable domestic influences on grand foreign policy strategy include: first, competition among the U.S. State Department, U.S. Defense Department, and other intelligence agencies such as the CIA, NSA, and the D.I.A, and the F.B.I. second, the state of the American economy, domestic public opinion, media, and the electoral process if he is seeking second term in office; and third, the state of the domestic economy. At the international level, the president faces a different set of challenges from the international environment such as sudden world events and crises; involvement in multilateral organizations; and the state of the global economy.[51]

In theory, the influence of the aforementioned forces, which can constitute both opportunities and constraints, remains consistent for all presidents. In reality, however, the pressure these forces exert varies from one presidency to the next, due to the president's personality, and whether the president's political party constitutes a majority in one chamber or two chambers. Furthermore, each president inherits a unique set of circumstances, events, and crises that have the potential to trigger different courses of action.[52]

To make an objective and fair assessment of President Barack Obama's foreign policy and diplomacy toward the six countries of the Arab Spring, it is important to describe the theater or the milieu in which he or any contemporary president has to operate in it while exercising the constitutional powers given to him as the president. In other words, *what are the foreign policy settings in the United States after the end of the cold war and the September 11, 2001 attack on American soil?*

One major challenge for the president of the United States when conducting foreign policy and diplomacy is that the countries of the world look to a single individual within each state with whom they deal as the authority representing the policies of that country and has the authority to conduct national business.[53] In the United States, the president—as chief executive and symbol of the presidency—fulfills that role. The fact that the president

is both head of government and of state sometimes complicates international dealings, particularly in a hyper-partisan environment. When foreign governments deal with the United States, the presumption is that the president's position is the official position of the country. This has never been entirely the case on controversial matters such as the Arab Spring—and current levels of hyper-partisanship virtually guarantee opposition to the president's position on almost any matter. The situation inevitably has the effect of weakening the authority of the head of the U.S. government with other countries. Snow and Haney argued that erosion works in various ways. Knowing there is opposition to the president's policies may cause foreign governments to try to enhance that opposition as a way to improve their negotiating position with the United States.

An example related to the events of the Arab Spring has been U.S. diversity toward the Libyan revolution's early stages. The position of the Obama administration was originally to offer limited support to the rebels, mainly to ensure that they were not victims of retaliatory atrocities. Some Republicans vocally supported much stronger, more overt support for the rebels; and one of them, Senator and 2008 GOP presidential nominee John McCain, traveled to rebel stronghold Benghazi, where he was greeted enthusiastically as a symbol of support far in excess of official U.S. policy. In this case, who were the Libyan rebels to believe?[54]

The Informal (Political) Powers of the Presidency

The formal, constitutional powers of the president are enlarged by a range of informal spirals of presidential power, some of which derive from the constitutional endowments that make the president such a prominent part of the American political setting. Five of these informal sources are presidential singularity, the role of public opinion, and media access, the president's position as a world leader, and the president's ability to issue formal policy proclamations known as presidential doctrines. The aforementioned range of informal sources of presidential power makes him more visible than the Congress, and hence more influential than his rivals in the U.S. Congress. However, in an age of hyper-partisanship, media access has had a flip side. The proliferation of media outlets such as websites and cable television channels has meant that presidents are scrutinized in more detail than before. In the case of the Obama Administration's foreign policy and diplomacy toward the Arab Spring, much of this media scrutiny has been directed by his political enemies at the Republican Party aims at undercutting the power and authority of the president, presumably with the intent to lessen the likelihood of his reelection in the 2012 election.[55]

Presidential Constraints

Donald Snow and Patrick Haney, in their research *American Foreign Policy in a New Era,* identified five main constraints on presidential powers in the conduct of foreign policy: 49

First: Presidents do not suggest or implement their policies including foreign policy starting from scratch, but they assume the responsibility of the office within a context of previous history. One of the limits included is the existence of past programs and policies signed by previous presidents in the form of executive orders or approved by the Congress. When the new president comes from the same party (and possibly even the same administration) as his or her predecessor, the new officeholder may support most, even all, of the existing policies and not find the existing reality too constraining. However, when the new president is a member of the opposite party, the existing policy network may represent a major obstacle to be overcome.

Second: New presidents, and particularly outsiders to the White House, typically enter office with a more extensive view of what they can achieve, and specifically what they can amend. To some point, this challenge arises from the network of policies and programs already in place for both domestic and foreign policies. In foreign policy, the limits of option are more risky than domestic policy because policies may be formalized in binding agreements dealing with the United States, national security, or alliances that are already approved by the Senate.

Third: Federal bureaucratic responsiveness can be a constraint on the presidential power in foreign policy and diplomacy. While it is factual that the entire federal bureaucracy is under the chief executive—the president—the actual degree to which the members of that bureaucracy relate to and devotedly support the policies of the president may vary considerably. This is because in the United States, interest groups (lobbying of the federal bureaucracy) are allowed, and the majority of officials in the federal agencies are career professionals (not political appointees) with expertise in their fields who are protected by the civil service law.

Fourth: The variety of national and international affairs problems that challenge the president are extreme to the capabilities of any human to deal with them all. Hence, presidents can direct their activity levels toward domestic or foreign policy stresses partially dependent on individual preferences based on the context of the time. Domestic issues for instance can make a president who is very interested in devoting time with international issues do the opposite.

Fifth: The intermestic characterization of American politics is another restraint on presidential power in foreign policy. Also, partisan politics may interfere with and even negate the bipartisan tradition of dealing with foreign

policy issues as in the case with the Arab-Israeli conflict, which will be explained further in chapter 3, due to the historically high level of tolerance of interference of the state of Israel in formulating U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East.[56]

BARACK OBAMA'S ELECTION

The campaign of Barack Hussein Obama in 2008 raised high domestic and international expectations of the American role in the Middle East. Domestic supporters viewed his generally internationalist views as an inspirational alternative to the brooding unilateralism of the Bush years, and Obama's election was viewed very highly by overseas publics and policymakers as a return of the United States to a more cooperative role in the international system. It created a new atmosphere in the Muslim world. Hussein, the middle name of Obama is a very common Muslim name—the name of the grandson of the Prophet Mohamed. Instant chemistry was created between the new elected president and the Muslim world, and globally—particularly because of his early childhood and adulthood living in a Muslim country, Indonesia. He projected an image and hope of potential redirection of U.S. foreign policy—an even-handed approach toward the Middle East's issues, particularly the Arab-Israeli conflict. During his campaign and election bid, he styled himself as a technocratic pragmatist, always interested in what "worked."

This domestic and global enthusiasm was reinforced by the appointment of Hillary Clinton as his secretary of state and by surrounding himself initially with an able cast of officials, including Secretary Gates, Admiral James Jones, and Vice President Joe Biden, a former senior member and chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In his inaugural address, President Barak Obama declared: "To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward," based on "mutual interest and mutual respect."[57] In his speech in Cairo University, Egypt, Obama demonstrated his personal knowledge and experience of Islam, as well as his appreciation of Islamic religion—the backbone of the Middle Eastern countries' culture and political systems. In a stark contrast with his predecessor George Bush, whose foreign policy seemed to be influenced by the belief and designs of the Christian right, as indicated by him using the phrase "Crusades," and later spoke of "*Islamofascism.*"[58]

Barack Obama according to Bruce Jentleson dramatically reflected a different kind of Christianity. He projected a compassionate understanding that paves the way for accepting Muslims in the United States as valued citizens who have fought in our wars, excelled in business, universities, and sports, who won Nobel prizes and lit the Olympic torch. Obama creatively noted that the first Muslim American recently elected to Congress took

his oath to defend our constitution using the Quran that Thomas Jefferson had kept in his personal library. Perhaps the most striking statement, one that would echo across the Middle East and the broader Muslim world, was Obama's strong statement of sympathy to the broader Muslim world, Obama's understanding of the dilemma of the Palestinian, the creation of a Palestinian state, and finalizing the status of Jerusalem, which is one of the great sacred cities of Islam and a major impediment in Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.[59]

With the aforementioned in mind, the next chapters focusing on Barack Obama's foreign policy and public diplomacy will be contextualized and evaluated in dealing with the Arab Spring within the formal constitutional powers granted to the presidency by the constitution, the informal (political) powers accumulated on the presidency since the United States emerged as a great power after World War II, during the Cold War, and after the 9/11/2001 attack. Also, Obama's foreign policy and public diplomacy will be assessed and analyzed within the context of the presidential constraints that have risen from both the domestic political environment. Characterized by hyper-partisanship, and the challenges of the international political environment (described as an intermestic), there have been complications. This is because of the inclusion of domestically based issues on foreign policymaking's considerations and its instrument of public diplomacy or intermestic diplomacy.

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Chapter 3

The Interrelationship between Domestic and Foreign Policy

The Intermestic Politics

President Obama pursued four tracks of foreign policy goals in the Middle East region that he believed would set him apart from the Bush's administration and ultimately work to the U.S. advantage[1]:

First, he would give first priority on solving the very difficult Israeli-Palestinian conflict that would bring about a general Arab-Israeli peace, finally removing this primary irritant in the region.

Second, he would follow a major outreach to the Muslim world to improve the U.S. image which had taken a criticism during the Bush years.

Third, he would withdraw the U.S. military forces from Iraq which had been a major source of anti-Americanism in the region.

Fourth, he would try to negotiate with Iran, labeled by Bush as one of the "axis-of-evil" countries in the Middle East region, to ensure that Tehran would not pursue nuclear weapons and to put the troubled U.S.-Iranian relationship on a different (and better) track.

The Obama administration devoted considerable time and energy to these policies in the first years of his first term, at least initially, and prior to the Arab Spring. The highly respected former U.S. senator, George Mitchell—credited for helping to bring about peace in Northern Ireland—was appointed special envoy for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and President Obama took a very tough and principled stand against Israeli settlement building in the West Bank. President Obama himself delivered a major speech in Cairo, Egypt in June 2009 in an effort to retune U.S. relations with the Muslim world and to dispel popular notions in the Middle East that the United States was somehow at war with Islam. He reduced the U.S. military presence in Iraq and applied diplomatic pressure to help bring Iraq's different political

groups together to form a government. And he sent messages to the Iranian leadership and the Iranian people to offer better relations while coordinating negotiating strategies with the other P5+1 (UN Security Council permanent members plus Germany) vis-a-vis Iran on the nuclear issue, a process that had already begun in the last year of the Bush administration.[2]

Apparently, Obama's Foreign policy and diplomacy strategies in the Middle East were moving forward with putting first priority on resolving the Palestinian Israeli conflict—the backbone of the United States' and the Arab and Muslim world problem—thus building bridges with the Muslim world and trying to negotiate with Iran to not pursue nuclear capability for non-peaceful purposes. Seemingly, this fair strategy antagonized the Israeli Government and the Pro-Israel Lobby in the United States.

Before we judge the suitability of President Obama's foreign policy and diplomacy strategy and actions toward these issues (especially when we consider that the events of the Arab Spring of 2010 and 2011 happened only two years into his term), it is important to shed light on the following issues:

First, how did the U.S. political system tolerate the interference of other countries in its domestic politics, and the tolerance levels of that interference? Second, what is the compatibility of U.S. national interest in the Middle East with the Israeli's national interest? Third, since when and how did the intermestic politics of the pro-Israeli lobbyist start to influence the formulation of U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1947?

TOLERANCE OF INTERFERENCE AND THE INTERMESTIC POLITICS

In his book *Competitive Interference and 20th Century Diplomacy*, during the Cold War, Richard W. Cottam (a formal CIA operating officer in the U.S. Embassy in Iran), in 1953,[3] argued that the technological revolution has resulted in communications improvements that are destroying world insularity. The growth in economic interdependence is producing a world economy that must be viewed in its entirety. And many of the new states in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East are so linguistically and ethnically diverse that they are not likely to develop within the European nation-state pattern. Finally, weapons systems have been developed that make interstate warfare on a shooting level increasingly risky and this leads to the increasing willingness to turn to intervention in an effort to win limited victories. The extensive interfering in the domestic affairs of other states by the governments of most states have become an important manifestation of the changed mode of world behavior. Cottam defines interference as any act by the government or

citizens of one state designed to influence the policy of the government of another state or to influence the internal developments of the state, whether they be political, economic, or social. Thus the definition of interference includes both acts of persuasion and acts of coercion. Similarly, acts that are tolerated by a target government and people, as well as those which are not, would be classed as interference.

Some degree of interference by the government and/or citizens of one state in the affairs of another state is expected and will be tolerated by the target government and people. But when the type and degree of interference exceed expectations, the interfering state can expect a hostile reaction, which may have the immediate result of altering relations significantly.

THE COMPATIBILITY OF U.S. AND ISRAEL NATIONAL INTEREST IN THE MIDDLE EAST

In his research *National Interests and Foreign Policy: A Conceptual Framework for Analysis and Decision-Making*, Donald E. Nuechterlein argued that

> The term "national interest" has been used by statesmen and scholars since the founding of nation-states to describe the aspirations and goals of sovereign entities in the international arena. Today foreign ministers, military strategists and academicians discuss the vital interests of their countries in ways suggesting that everyone understands precisely what they mean and will draw correct inferences from their use of the term. Nothing could be further from reality. In truth, the study of international politics as well as the art of diplomacy suffer from widespread ambiguity about the meaning of national interest, with the result that some scholars have proposed that the concept be abandoned and replaced by some other phrase. To my mind, this would be an abdication of the scholar's responsibility because, whether we like it or not, the term national interest is so deeply ingrained in the literature of international relations and diplomatic language that it is unlikely to be dismissed from our vocabulary simply because some scholars find it useless. Were we to attempt to substitute some new phrase, we would likely find even less consensus and could become engaged in yet another round of jargon-creation. A better alternative, I suggest, is to strive for a more precise definition of national interest and then provide a conceptual framework in which serious discussion of foreign policy and international politics can become more fruitful.[4]

Hans J. Morgenthau in his work *Politics Among Nations, the Structure for Power and Peace*, argued that "the objective of foreign policy must be

defined in terms of the nation's national interest, and must be supported with adequate power."[5] Without sufficient power and protecting its national interests, a country cannot survive, let alone prevail, in a tumultuous world.[6] Diplomacy is putting foreign policies into practice. It is also the way nations communicate with each other, feeling out their positions and defusing incidents before they get problematic. employed to capture the variety of practices of great powers in particular and of professional diplomats generally. The three concepts, Engelbrekt expanded, are diplomacy as *negotiation*, as *representation*, and last, as the *employment of leverage*. With regard to the latter dimension, which is closely associated with the narrower notion of great-power diplomacy, it is important to not fully accept the recurring claim of many scholar-practitioners that diplomacy is wholly divorced from the use of force.[7] A country's diplomats are its eyes, ears, mind, and mouth. Diplomacy is the operating tool of a nation's foreign policy according to Morgenthau. It has fourfold (1) Diplomacy must determine its objectives in the light of the power actually and potentially available for the pursuit of these objectives. (2) Diplomacy must assess the objectives of other nations and the power actually and potentially available for the pursuit of these objectives. (3) Diplomacy must determine to what extent these different objectives are compatible with each other. (4) Diplomacy must employ the means suited to the pursuit of its objectives. Failure in any one of these tasks may threaten or jeopardize a country's national interests and the success of foreign policy toward a particular geographic region and possibly, the peace in the world.[8]

New complicated realities of the relationship between foreign policy and domestic policy in the United States, resulting in the conception of "Intermestic politics," which influence the formulation of the U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy, are predicted by many scholars including Donald M. Snow and Patrick Haney in their valuable research *U.S. Foreign Policy Back to the Water's Edge*, Alison Holmes and Simon Rofe's *Global Diplomacy, Theories, Types, and Models*, Kjelle's *High-Table Diplomacy-The Reshaping of International Security Institutions*, Christopher Hill's *Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century*, and Guy Golan, Sung-Un Yang, and Kinsey's *International Public Relations and Public Diplomacy*. This reality places constraints on the presidential powers to act in foreign policy and diplomacy.[9]

H. Kissinger in his seminal work on *Diplomacy*, argued that "in the twentieth century, no country has influenced international relations and diplomacy as decisively and at the same time as ambivalently as the United States."[10] The contradiction in U.S. Foreign policy can be seen in its relationship with Israel. J. Mearsheimer; and S. Walt argues that since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1947, and especially since the Six-Day War in 1967, the centerpiece of U.S. Middle Eastern policy has been an unwavering support

for Israel. And then, after 9/11/2011, the Bush administration's foreign policy program was spread Democracy Western Style (known as Freedom Agenda) throughout the Middle East region without considering the Islamic-cultural issues rooted in these authoritarian regimes. These authoritarian regimes are the product of centuries of Ottoman hegemony, the British and French colonization, and the geopolitical rivalry between the United States and the former USSR during the Cold War.

Why has the United States been willing to set aside its own national interests and the security of many of its allies to advance the interests of another new state—one whose existence is questioned by all the Arab and Muslim countries—such as the country of Israel? Mearsheimer and Stephen (2015) presented well-researched, documented, and validated seven persuasive arguments on the U.S.-Israeli special relationship—*The Israel Lobby*.[11]

First: The incentive of U.S. foreign policy tilting Israel in the Middle East derives almost entirely from U.S. domestic politics and particularly the activities of the Israel Lobby during both the Presidential and Congressional elections, rather than the U.S. national interests.

Second: After the October War in 1973, Israel receives from the U.S. about $3 billion in direct assistance each year, unequally one fifth of the U.S. foreign aid budget, and worth about $500 of U.S. tax payers a year for every Israeli citizen. This open handedness is noticeable since Israel is now a wealthy industrial state with a per capita income is almost equal to that of South Korea.

Third: While other recipients of U.S. Foreign aid get their money four times a year installments, Israel receives its whole foreign aid at the beginning of each fiscal year and can thus earn interest on it. This is particularly irritating to Egypt, a country which took the risk of signing peace treaty with Israel. Furthermore, most recipients of aid given for military purposes (including Egypt) are required to spend all of it from the U.S's market. By contrast, Israel is allowed to use approximately 25 percent of its U.S. foreign aid to supports its own defense industry, and building settlements on the West Bank and East Jerusalem, or on the potential capital of the future Palestinian state.

Fourth*:* The U.S. favorable pro-Israeli bias included the following: granting Israel nearly $3 billion to improve weapons systems and giving it access to the best U.S. weaponry systems and technology. Furthermore, the U.S. provides Israel entrée to intelligence information it denies to its NATO allies.

Fifth: The U.S. double standard foreign policy in favor of Israel against the Arab countries during the 1973 war with Egypt and Syria caused an OPEC oil embargo by the Arabs that led to considerable damage to the U.S. and its Western allies' economies.

Sixth: During the Gulf war of 1991 the U.S. could not use Israeli bases without breaching the anti-Iraq coalition which was composed of 35 countries led by the U.S., worked under United Nations Security Council Resolution Number 678. The United States had to sidetrack resources (e.g., Patriot missiles batteries.) to avoid Tel Aviv's possible acts that might damage the coalition against Saddam Hussein.

Seventh: U.S. foreign policy support for Israel since 1990, and particularly after 9/11, has been justified by the assumption that both states are endangered by terrorist groups originating in the Arab and Muslim world, and by scoundrel states that incubate these extremist groups and seek weapons of mass destruction. Hence, Washington should give Israel a *carte blanche* in treating various Palestinian resistance groups which are perceived by Israel as terrorist groups.

Finally, Mearsheimer and Stephen argue that Israel is a liability on the United States in the war on terror and the broader effort to deal with rogue states. The terrorist organizations that threaten Israel do not necessarily constitute a threat to the United States.

In support of the aforementioned view, Dov Waxman, a Professor of Political Science, International Affairs, and Israel Studies, and the Stotsky Professor of Jewish Historical and Cultural Studies at Northeastern University, argues that

> Although Jews make up just 2 percent of the United States population, they have exercised a disproportionate influence on the relationship between the United States and Israel. The strength of the U.S.-Israeli alliance is driven by numerous strategic, political, cultural, and economic factors, but American Jews have played a key role in the promotion and defense of the U.S.-Israel alliance in large part through the work of the pro-Israel lobby (represented by powerful groups like the American Israel Public Affairs Committee). Today, however, American Jewish political support for Israel can no longer be taken for granted, as growing numbers of American Jews become increasingly critical of Israel. In contrast to the old attitude of "Israel, Right or Wrong," more and more American Jews, especially younger ones, are challenging the Israeli government's policies and actions, particularly those concerning Palestinians. In short, the age of unconditional American Jewish support for Israel is over. Largely, American Jews still fundamentally support the existence of Israel as a Jewish, democratic state and care about its welfare. However, many now feel conflicted between their emotional attachment to Israel and their discomfort with, or outright disapproval of, the actions and policies of its right-wing government. Consequently, they are no longer willing to provide blanket support for the Israeli government's policies and actions, and are becoming more willing to publicly criticize them. The argument concerning Israel, and particularly its conflict with the Palestinians,

> has ramifications not only for the American Jewish community but also for U.S.-Israeli relations. The Israeli government cannot count on American Jewish political support in the way that it once did. It faces growing pressure to change its policies, especially towards Palestinians, and American policymakers can no longer expect to hear a consensus from the American Jewish community. Instead, they have to contend with a more fractured community and a more varied, contentious definition of what it means to be pro-Israel. This allows American policymakers to adopt a broader range of policies vis-à-vis Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while still calling themselves pro-Israel.[12]

The author argues that to many Muslims—both Sunni or Shia—the sense of injustice in international relations and Western diplomacy is represented by the destiny of the Palestinian people, especially the perceived use of double standards by the West (led by the United States); firmly perpetuating resolutions and international law when it comes to Arab and Muslim countries, but not to Israel. Also, the Islamic-cultural issues rooted in these Arab and Muslim authoritarian regimes are not considered. These authoritarian regimes are the product of centuries of Ottoman hegemony, the British and French colonization, and the geopolitical rivalry between the United States and the former USSR during the Cold War. The reality of the creation of Israel from the Arab and Muslim point of view dates back to the famous British Foreign Minister Balfour's Declaration of 1917, which promised a national home for the Jews in Palestine. Mohamed Heikal (1973), documented the Arab and Muslim perception of this declaration as a result of the Zionist movement's pressure upon the triumphant British government after World War I. After this declaration, Heikal argued, the Zionist movement attempted to create a Jewish majority in Palestine or at least to establish a large enough percentage of the population which would legitimize the establishment of a Jewish state. The true picture of the Balfour Declaration from the Arab and Muslim point of view was, as President Nasser of Egypt eloquently presented it, "a fraud which any tribunal would condemn, it was a question of he who did not own giving to him who did not deserve."[13]

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF INTERMESTIC POLITICS IN FAVOR OF ISRAEL

Avi Shlaim's research, *The Super Powers, Central America, and the Middle East,* provides significant perceptual insights into the relationship between Israel and the United States. He argues that[14]:

> One of the distinguishing characteristics of a superpower is that its perspective, policy, and impact are global rather than merely regional. But there are

> four basic interests that make the Middle East an area of special importance and special responsibility for American policymakers. First and foremost is the need to contain Soviet influence, check Soviet expansion, and limit the number of Soviet clients in the area. Second, and of growing significance since 1973, has been the need to preserve Western access to the oil of the Gulf, an area containing two-thirds of the world's known petroleum reserves. A third American interest is to limit Arab radicalism and sustain the moderate and pro-Western regimes in the Middle East and the Gulf. Last, but not least, is the long-standing and deeply felt commitment to Israel's security and well-being.

There is a high degree of consensus within the American foreign policy establishment on the importance of the aforementioned first three interests, but there is much less agreement on how they relate to the fourth one. There is no clear understanding, let alone a consensus, on how to reconcile America's interests in relation to the Soviets, oil, and the Arabs with its commitment to Israel. Much of the ambiguity, unforeseen shifts, and outright contradictions that have marred American policy toward the Middle East stem from these contradictory interests.[15]

U.S. policymakers have found it immensely difficult, if not impossible, to devise a policy toward the Middle East that would serve the full range of U.S. interests. Since the first three interests are not only compatible but mutually reinforcing, it would be relatively easy to devise a strategy for furthering all of them simultaneously. The one interest that cannot be easily fit into an overall framework is the commitment to Israel. Ideological affinity with the Jewish state is reinforced by the argument, propounded by influential American Jews as well as non-Jews in domestic electoral politics for the congressional and presidential elections that Israel constitutes a strategic asset, a bulwark against Soviet penetration, and a cornerstone of regional order. Attempts have also been made to develop a comprehensive regional strategy for the United States with Israel as its linchpin. But none of these attempts has been successful in the long run since they were, in effect, attempts to square a circle. In view of the profound antagonism between Israel and the Arabs, America's identification with Israel was bound to arouse widespread Arab hostility toward the United States and drive some Arab regimes into the arms of Moscow.[16]

Since America's four basic interests cannot easily be reconciled and since close identification with Israel has adverse effects on America's standing in the region, one would have expected American policymakers to establish a definite ceiling beyond which they would not be prepared to go in support of their ally Israel. But in practice, it has been equally difficult to establish some sort of balance between the different components of American policy. The commitment to Israeli security, largely for domestic political reasons has all

too frequently outweighed the other considerations. The issue is essentially domestic-what it comes down to, in concrete terms, is that, owing to the unmatched influence of the Israeli lobby in American politics, Israeli security (or, more exactly, the conceptions of Israeli security held by incumbent Israeli governments) has been permitted to preempt other vital interests in American policy. This, rather than the undoubted complexity of the issues, or the strategic, economic, or moral stakes of one case as opposed to another, has been the root cause of a chronically unbalanced policy that, despite certain tactical successes, remains a strategic failure.

TRANSFORMING ISRAEL FROM LIABILITY TO STRATEGIC ASSET IN THE MIDDLE EAST

A brief survey of the evolution of the relationship between the United States and Israel since 1948 indicates that Israel gained influence and ability to interfere via the intermestic politics in the United States incrementally with relatively great tolerance of interference by American institutions, the media, and public opinion. President Truman and Eisenhower when planning their global strategy to contain the Soviet Union, perceived Israel as a liability or embarrassment.

The foreign policy of the Truman administration was a series of pendulum swings between the pro-Arab bureaucracy at the State Department and the pro-Zionist White House. On all the salient questions—partition, trusteeship, recognition of the state of Israel, arms embargo, and disposition of the Negev—Truman, laboring under strong Zionist pressures in a presidential election year, took a consistently pro-Zionist line. On all these questions, he either overruled or secretly undermined the position of the State Department. In the end, it was not only Truman's critics but even his loyal secretary of state, George Marshall, who charged that he had degraded the presidency by playing politics with foreign policy, that he had sacrificed American interests abroad for the sake of electoral advantage.[17]

During the Eisenhower's Administration and his secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, Israel was perceived as a problem and an obstacle to the development of a global U.S. strategy for the containment of communism. The intensification of the military confrontation between Israel and Egypt provided the Soviet Union with the opportunity to jump over the states of the Middle East and establish a foothold in the heart of the Arab world, which is Egypt. The Eisenhower administration withheld arms from Israel, used the bait of a security guarantee, and pressed for Israeli concessions in a number of attempts to mediate between the antagonists, but all to no avail. In 1956 Israel conspired with France and Britain, behind America's back, to attack

Egypt. One of Israel's war aims was territorial expansion. Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and the Israeli defense establishment were determined to keep the Sinai Peninsula, and particularly the Straits of Tiran, in Israeli hands. Eisenhower was no less determined to force Israel to disgorge her gains. By threatening to apply economic sanctions, Eisenhower secured Israel's withdrawal from Egyptian territory. For his forceful leadership, Eisenhower gained Arab respect and Arab cooperation within the framework of the doctrine that bore his name and offered U.S. assistance to any Middle Eastern state threatened by international communism. Israel was compelled to base her security not on territorial expansion but on deterrence. The result was ten years of relative stability on the Arab-Israeli front. The lesson to be drawn from the Suez affair of 1956 is that "a determined American President can use pressure to bring Israel to heel and that in doing so he can effectively protect American interests without compromising Israel's basic security. It was a lesson and a policy that George Ball later encapsulated in the motto, 'how to save Israel in spite of herself.'"[18]

The election of President Kennedy in 1960 steered in a new era of better American-Israeli understanding. Like Eisenhower, Kennedy saw accommodation between Israel and the Arabs as essential for the success of America's own efforts in containing the Soviet Union. But unlike his predecessor, Kennedy cultivated links with the nationalist and radical leaders in the Arab world, particularly President Nasser of Egypt, and he embraced Israel. In the past, Israel had been treated as an embarrassment and a liability. Kennedy accepted Israel as a positive force, consistent with American ideals and worthy of American support.[19]

During President Johnson's Administration, America moved closer to Israel and, simultaneously, away from Nasser (due to Nasser's public insult of Johnson—end note here) and closer to the conservative forces in the Arab world such as Saudi Arabia. Admiration by Johnson and other members of the presidential elite for Israel's democratic way of life, pioneering spirit, social and economic achievements, and self-reliance played an important part in bringing about this shift. During the May–June 1967 crisis, American diplomacy, paralyzed by cross purposes, was unable to take bold action to force Nasser to rescind his blockade of Israeli shipping. But after the war, American diplomacy swung firmly behind Israel's demands for direct negotiations and a formal peace agreement incorporating secure and recognized boundaries.[20]

Believing that Eisenhower had made a mistake in letting Nasser off the hook prematurely after Suez, Johnson insisted that the Egyptian president sign on the dotted line before exerting pressure on Israel to withdraw from the newly conquered territories. Johnson also authorized arms supplies to Israel on a steadily growing scale. This policy placed America in the

embarrassing position of appearing to support Israel's hold on the occupied territories.[21]

From L.B. Johnson's Presidency (1967 war), to the 1973 war (during Nixon's Administration) to President Ford, Carter (which witnessed signing the Peace treaty between Egypt and Israel), Reagan (which witnessed the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and the end of the Cold War with the Soviet Union), George H. Bush (which witnessed the U.S. Invasion of Iraq to liberate Kuwait), Clinton (which witnessed the Oslo accord between the PLO and Israel), and George W. Bush (which witnessed the 9/11/2001 attack on the United States, Israel was perceived as a strategic asset to the United States. However, the failure of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel during the Carter administration and the failure of the implementation of Oslo Accord between Israel and the PLO to generate a comprehensive peace plan (due to the Israeli government's territorial expansionist goals in the Arab Palestinian occupied territories after the 1967 war) is posing a debate in the foreign policy and public diplomacy circles in Washington DC.

Deadlock on the peace-making front has intensified the struggle in Washington between the proponents of two rival doctrines. The doctrine that American interests in the Middle East can be best protected by extending full support to Israel is in direct opposition to the doctrine that calls for an evenhanded approach. According to the proponents of the "Israel first" doctrine, the Arab world is so weak, so divided, and so endemically volatile as to preclude the possibility of a durable peace. In these circumstances, the best available option for the United States is to maintain Israel's superiority over its adversaries through regular infusions of money and arms so as to enable it not only to deal with threats to its own security but also to fend off challenges to U.S. interests from radical, Islamic, and Soviet-backed forces. Complaints from the moderate Arab countries about America's partiality toward Israel are dismissed as being of no practical consequence given the dependence of these countries on the United States for security against internal opposition and external aggression. These countries, so the argument goes, need America much more than America needs them.

The evenhanded school, in the words of one of its proponents, suggests that unstinting American support for Israel in its present form occupying the West Bank, eastern Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, and controlling a border zone in southern Lebanon does not serve America's many important interests in the Arab Middle East and the Islamic world. The frustration that this "Greater Israel" generates provides opportunities for the Soviet Union to make inroads as it encourages Arab regimes to look for a superpower counterweight to the United States. . . . Lavish and largely uncritical American support for an enlarged Israel tums Arab opinion against America and thus threatens the U.S. access to Arab oil and markets.[22]

The "Israel first" policy, according to the evenhanded school places great strains on Arab regimes such as Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, which rely on the United States for military and economic assistance. One of the main consequences of "Greater Israel" and United States support for "Greater Israel" has been the growth of radical Islamic fundamentalist movements that threaten even the personal security of Americans in the Middle East. From this perspective, American support for a just solution to the legitimate political grievances of the Palestinian people would improve decisively the position of the United States throughout the Arab world, the Islamic world, and the third world. Recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and American willingness to discuss the establishment of a Palestinian state would, in this view, provide genuine momentum for a peace process. The "evenhanded" school warns that continued American one-sidedness will eventually so alienate Arab public opinion that "moderate" regimes will fall, pro-American elites will be displaced, United States access to Arab resources and markets will be restricted, and Soviet influence will spread.[23]

Even if it is conceded for argument's sake that Israel is indeed a strategic asset as the "Israel first" school claims, it is still the case that America has to pay a heavy price for this asset in terms of strengthening the radical forces in the region and undermining the legitimacy of the conservative and pro-Western regimes. As Michael Hudson argued in his seminal book, the central problem of government in the Arab world is political legitimacy. A crucial element in the legitimacy, and hence stability, of Arab regimes is the extent to which they effectively promote a set of core concerns: social justice, Pan-Arabism, and the liberation of the entire Arab homeland, and especially Palestine, from foreign influence. Palestine, Hudson believes, is the foremost Arab core concern and the Palestine issue is, therefore, of immense importance for the politics of legitimacy in the Arab world. It imposes obligations on all Arab leaders that can either enhance or destroy their political legitimacy, depending on how successfully they are met.[24]

As the country that broke ranks and signed a separate peace treaty with Israel, Egypt is a particularly handy scapegoat for the frustrations generated by Israel's continuing occupation of the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. The argument that by getting back Sinai, Egypt forfeited the right to press for a solution to the Palestine problem has never enjoyed popular support in Egypt itself. Most Egyptians deeply resent the way in which Israel exploited the freedom afforded by the peace treaty with Egypt to assert itself against all its other neighbors. Continuing impotence on the part of the regime in dealing with the Palestinian problem can further erode its legitimacy to a point where its very ability to survive could be called into question. Revolutionary forces are unlikely to gather sufficient momentum to overthrow the regime by force. But an embattled and insecure regime in Cairo is only too likely to appease the domestic opposition by reverting to a militant anti-Israeli and anti-American posture.

Domestic opposition to the Saudi regime will similarly be magnified by continuing failure to resolve outstanding issues in the Arab-Israeli dispute. Like the other conservative monarchies in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia is under attack from popular Islam on the one hand and revolutionary Islam from Iran on the other. As long as Jerusalem, the third-most sacred shrine in Islam, remains under Jewish rule, the Saudi regime, as the defender of the holy places, is bound to put its weight behind the efforts to change the situation. If these efforts totally fail to change the status quo, the House of Saud may either suffer a relaxation of its grip over power or, more likely, itself move in a more radical direction. Israeli actions such as the annexation of the Golan Heights, the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, and the invasion of Lebanon have deepened the Saudi sense of being encircled by hostile forces and have contributed to the massive increase in Saudi military expenditure and Saudi firepower. The acquisition of AWACs in the face of fierce opposition from the Israeli lobby in the United States has turned Saudi Arabia, for the first time, into a frontline protagonist in the confrontation with Israel. It is sometimes argued by advocates of the "Israel first" policy that fear of the Soviet Union will keep the regime in Riyadh on the straight and narrow path of collaboration with the United States, regardless of Israeli actions on the West Bank or even beyond its borders. But the Saudis do not distinguish all that clearly between the Soviet threat and the threat emanating from Israel. They perceive Israel as a tacit ally in Moscow's attempt to weaken, subvert, and radicalize the Arab world. [40] Therefore, if faced with the choice of preserving their credibility or persisting in their pro-American orientation, it is not a foregone conclusion that the Saudi rulers will always choose the latter course.

Since the Palestinian problem is so central to the politics of legitimacy in the Arab world, it follows that the United States cannot acquiesce to permanent Israeli control over the occupied territories without running the risk of unwelcome political repercussions throughout the region. To reduce this risk and to safeguard her own diverse interests, the United States ought to modify its policy so as to induce Israel to relinquish the occupied territories in the context of a peace settlement. Many Israeli moderates, like former Foreign Minister Abba Eban, favor withdrawal from the West Bank, not as a favor to the Arabs or Palestinians, but as a measure for preserving the democratic and Jewish character of the state of Israel. Some Israeli moderates would actually welcome a bit of help from their American friends in the struggle to save Israel in spite of itself. But even if the United States cannot persuade Israel to give up the occupied territories, it can at least limit the damage to its own interests in the Middle East by creating a firm impression that it is really opposed to the absorption of the occupied territories into "Greater Israel" and that it is prepared to go beyond hollow verbal reprimands and take forceful steps to prevent it.[25]

Fears that American pressure on Israel might be ineffective, counterproductive, or illegitimate are all equally misplaced. As Nahum Goldmann, one of the most farsighted Zionist leaders, observed, America has not only the right but the duty to put pressure on Israel, he argued that:

> International politics are based on permanent interference and pressures. . . . America, by its reluctance to influence Israel and through having given in to too many Israeli demands . . . not only failed to help Israel but harmed it in the long run. With greater American interference, peace could have been brought about long ago. . . . Experience has shown that the Arabs and Israelis, left alone, will not achieve an agreement. The conflict is, in a certain way, a family affair between two Semitic peoples, who are characterized by stubbornness and lack of flexibility. The United States, which has intervened in many other conflicts and helped to bring about settlements, should not only have the right but the obligation to use all its influence in the Arab-Israeli issue, which has occupied the headlines of the world for thirty years.[26]

It is of course true, as the advocates of the "Israel first" policy never tire of pointing out, that a settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute, even if possible, will not be a panacea for all the ills of the region, nor will it guarantee the achievement of America's major objectives. It will not eliminate the threat of Soviet encroachment, it will not ensure the political stability of the Middle East and the Gulf, and it will not solve the energy problem nor prevent future Arab oil embargoes. Yet, a settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute will ameliorate all these problems even if it cannot solve them.[27] It will remove one important source of instability and a major factor in the polarization of the area that has always harmed the United States to the Soviets' benefit. Conflicts such as the Iran-Iraq war will not be ended by a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and new inter-Arab wars will erupt from time to time. Other sources of regional instability, whether social or economic, ethnic or religious, will not disappear overnight. But a solution to the Palestinian problem will ease the tensions, facilitate the management of related problems, and help to remove the basic contradiction that has so persistently plagued the American approach to the Middle East.[28]

OBAMA AND THE REALITIES OF THE SPECIAL U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS

Of the institutions involved in the formulation and conduct of U.S. policy toward the Middle East, Congress is the most vulnerable to the influence of

the Israeli lobby, while the bureaucracy is the least susceptible; but it is the presidency that holds the key to foreign policymaking and public diplomacy

When Barack Obama, the newly elected president entered the White House on January 20, 2009, the favorite status of Israel within the U.S. political institutions, organized interest groups, public opinion, and the media was already established as a strategic asset to the United States in the Middle East. The two political parties are not divided on this issue—thanks to the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), a powerful pro-Israeli Lobby. By contrast, the Arab and Muslim countries organizations in the United States such as Arab American Institute and CAIR do not match AIPAC in terms of resources or influence on the electoral political process at both congressional and presidential elections, the media, and public opinion. In fact, the Commission on America's National Interests, supported by powerful think tanks, defined the U.S. national interest in the Middle East as follows in the year of 2000.[29]

SUMMARY OF U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS AT STAKE

Vital Interests

- _ That Israel survive as a free state.
- _ That there be no major sustained curtailment in energy supplies to the world.
- _ That no state in the region hostile to the United States acquire new or additional weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities.

Extremely Important

- _ That there be no hostile regional hegemon in the Persian Gulf.
- _ That the Middle East peace process continues toward success.
- _ That the United States maintain good relations with the region's pro-Western Arab regimes and that these regimes survive domestically.
- _ That regional terrorism be held in check.

Important

- _ That the states of the region adopt or maintain moderate forms of governance and show growing respect for fundamental human rights.

The Commission on America's National Interests is staffed by renowned political scientists and international affairs specialist such as Robert Ellsworth, Andrew Goodpaster, Rita Hauser, Graham T. Allison, Dimitri

K. Simes, James Thomson, Graham T. Allison, Robert Blackwill, Jeffrey Eisenach, Robert Ellsworth, Richard Falkenrath, David Gergen, Andrew Goodpaster, Bob Graham, Jerrold Green, Arnold Kanter, Geoffrey Kemp, Paul Krugman, Senator John McCain, Sam Nunn, Condoleezza Rice—national security adviser to President George W. Bush, Pat Roberts, Dimitri K. Simes, Paul J. Saunders, Brent Scowcroft, and James Thomson, and supported by research centers such as Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, the Nixon Center, RAND Corporation, and the Hauser Foundation.

First Issue: The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process

There was underlying disagreement about the U.S. Israeli policies manifested in contrasting views about the Israeli-Palestinian peace process between Obama and Netanyahu, which became very public. The heart of the disagreement between the two allies has centered on the best way to create a durable peace between Israel and its neighboring Arab States. The major focus in that process has been the creation of a separate state for Palestine carved from part or all of the territories occupied by Israel after the 1967 war with its neighboring states—Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq, an initiative known as the two-state solution. The major stumbling block in defining a Palestinian state has been the existence and, more importantly, the continued construction of Israeli sentiments of the Jordan River that presumably would form the new Palestinian state and the suburbs of East Jerusalem. President Obama, Secretary of State Clinton, and the Special Envoy G. Mitcham sought to reinvigorate talks between the major antagonist parties which has been suspended in 2010.

Second Issue: Pursuing Negotiation with Iran to Limit Their Capability to Produce Nuclear Capability

Since entering office in 2009, the Obama administration has been a vocal champion via its public diplomacy of the "two states for two people" solution for the Israel/Palestine issue and opening negotiation with Iran to prevent her from acquiring non-peaceful nuclear technology. These issues are of concern to both the Sunni and Shia sects of Islam. As a result of the aforementioned efforts by the Obama administration to work on settling the Arab-Israeli conflict, the hyperpartisanship in favor of Israel emerged as reported below by Jake Miller of CBS News.[30]

> House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, on Wednesday invited Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to address the U.S. Congress on Feb. 11 about

> the threat posed by Islamic extremism in Gaza Strip, and Lebanon, and the negotiations over the Iranian nuclear program. During a news conference on Tuesday, the speaker said he did not consult with the White House before issuing the invitation—"*The Congress can make its decision on its own*"—but he also insisted, "I don't believe I'm poking anyone in the eye."

The Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives went on [to explain] his action to the media and general public:

> "Prime Minister Netanyahu is a great friend of our country, and this invitation carries with it our unwavering commitment to the security and well-being of his people," Boehner said in a statement on Wednesday. "In this time of challenge, I am asking the prime minister to address Congress on the grave threats radical Islam and Iran pose to our security and way of life. Americans and Israelis have always stood together in shared cause and common ideals, and now we must rise to the moment again."
>
> Prime Minister Netanyahu is [strongly opposed to] the negotiations with Iran, a longtime adversary of his country, and he's spoken out against a deal that could leave Iran with the "break-out" capacity to convert a nuclear energy program into a nuclear weapons program.
>
> [Iran has called for the destruction of Israel more than once. The U.S. and other Western countries believe that Iran is intent on trying to develop nuclear weapons. Tehran claims its nuclear program is peaceful and exists only to produce energy for civilian use.]

[Politico reported: White House spokesman Josh Earnest said it wasn't typical protocol for Congress to invite Netanyahu to speak without informing the White House or State Department first. Taking a somewhat softer tone, Secretary of State John Kerry later said Netanyahu is welcome to give a speech in the United States at "any time," though he conceded that it was a "little unusual" to hear the news from Boehner's office.]

The address would be Netanyahu's third to a joint session (joint meeting) of Congress. The Israeli leader previously spoke before lawmakers in 1996, during a previous stint as prime minister, and in 2011. No Arab or Muslim Leader enjoyed this special treatment. The invitation comes as Congress is gearing up for a debate over additional sanctions on Iran. Republican lawmakers, along with several key Democrats, hope that additional sanctions could apply pressure to Iran in the nuclear negotiations with the United States and its European partners. But the administration has warned that any new punitive action against Iran could end up jeopardizing the prospect of a deal. As he has before,

President Obama warned lawmakers during his State of the Union Address . . . to hold off on imposing any new sanctions until the negotiations conclude.

The author observed that to many Muslims—both Sunni or Shia—the sense of injustice in international relations and Western diplomacy is represented by the destiny of the Palestinian people, especially the perceived use of double standards by the West (led by the United States); firmly perpetuating resolutions and international law when it comes to Arab and Muslim countries, but not to Israel. Also, the Islamic-cultural issues rooted in these Arab and Muslim authoritarian regimes are not considered. These authoritarian regimes are the product of centuries of Ottoman hegemony, the British and French colonization, and the geopolitical rivalry between the United States and the former USSR during the Cold War.[31]

The reality of the creation of Israel from the Arab and Muslim point of view dates back to the famous British foreign minister Balfour's Declaration of 1917, which promised a national home for the Jews in Palestine. Mohamed Heikal, in his research, *The Cairo documents,* documented the Arab and Muslim perception of this declaration as a result of the Zionist movement's pressure upon the triumphant British government after World War I. After this declaration, Heikal argued, the Zionist movement attempted to create a Jewish majority in Palestine or at least to establish a large enough percentage of the population which would legitimize the establishment of a Jewish state. The true picture of the Balfour Declaration, from the Arab and Muslim point of view was, as President Nasser of Egypt eloquently presented it, "a fraud which any tribunal would condemn, it was a question of he who did not own giving to him who did not deserve."[32] But the aforementioned perception of Israel by the Arab and (the majority of) Muslim countries is gradually and steadily changing since Egypt signed the Peace Treaty with Israel in 1979, brokered by the United States.

As he has before, President Obama warned lawmakers during his State of the Union address of 2015 to hold off on imposing any new sanctions until the negotiations conclude.

> "New sanctions passed by this Congress, at this moment in time, will all but guarantee that diplomacy fails, alienating America from its allies and ensuring that Iran starts up its nuclear program again," Mr. Obama said. "It doesn't make sense. That is why I will veto any new sanctions bill that threatens to undo this progress."[33]

Snow and Haney argue that the aforementioned event shows that public diplomacy—the idea that foreign policy interactions should be open and transparent rather than conducted behind closed doors and reaching secret agreements—is not a new idea. Indeed, its most public advocate goes back, in the sense of the term being used here to the American President Woodrow

Wilson in the early twentieth century. Another meaning to the term public diplomacy connotes direct public involvement in the foreign policy process In this case, however, the whole process was a very public event mobilized by AIPAC, with the intent to influence public opinion in the United States as much as it was to conduct serious public diplomacy.[34]

During a House Republican Conference meeting, Boehner [addressed] the president's objections. "He expects us to stand idly by and do nothing while he cuts a bad deal with Iran," Boehner told his caucus. "Two words: 'Hell no!' We're going to do no such thing."

> "There is a serious threat that exists in the world, and the President last night kind of papered over it," Boehner said. "And the fact is that there needs to be a more serious conversation in America about how serious the threat is from radical Islamic jihadists and the threat posed by Iran."[35]

The incident also demonstrates the dynamics of four relatively new influences on the foreign policy process in the United States. The first is the high visibility of foreign policy in the national political agenda as related to Israel. Second is the changing audience and context within which foreign policy in the United States is conducted. Despite constitutional imperatives that empower the president with some constraints to conduct foreign affairs, it is clear that multiple new actors and influences exist within the system such as lobbying in favor of a foreign country—Israel—and the media. Netanyahu concluded his visit without meeting President Obama but granting person-to-person interviews with reporters from all the leading T.V. networks and cable outlets. Furthermore, the Congress got to play an unconventional role in public diplomacy by hosting a foreign leader whose views were in direct contradiction, even defiance, of a sitting American chief executive, and clapping his basic disagreements with their own government. At the same time, the power and influence of interest groups, in this case AIPAC, were on full display. Third, the interplay between domestic and international policies which some have called "intermestic" politics. The fourth factor is hyperpartisanship, which became one of the major and continuing influences on contemporary American politics particularly as related to the state of Israel which its security became the first vital U.S. national interest in the Middle East.

In describing and criticizing Netanyahu's speech before the United States Congress, Philip Seib, professor of Public Diplomacy, Journalism and International Relations at The Center of Public Diplomacy of the University of Southern California, stated:

> The Israeli campaign could be seen as classic public diplomacy—a government reaching out directly to a foreign public—or it could be seen as inappropriate

interference that could produce an anti-Israel backlash. This is a line public diplomats should be wary about crossing. Even in the world of hardboiled foreign affairs, subtlety and restraint have value. For Israel, the results of its political activity could prove damaging over the longer term. Numerous Western European countries have backed away from Israel due to that country's policies toward Palestinians, and jeopardizing broad-based American support could mean even greater isolation of Israel.

Of course, it can be argued that by definition public diplomacy involves interfering in another nation's internal affairs. It is, after all, direct outreach to a foreign population. This is more problematic when the two countries are allies and diplomatic etiquette calls for better behavior. When the stakes are high enough, however, as Israel considers them to be when related to the Iran agreement, the etiquette of public diplomacy might be set aside—the white gloves come off and the switchblades appear. That could have consequences far down the road.[36]

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Chapter 4

The Rise of Political Islam at the World Stage

When Barack Obama started his political campaign in 2007, he was part of the era of the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States and its subsequent developments which have greatly intensified Western anxieties of the threat of "Islamic fundamentalism" as a consequence of the rise of political Islam at the Middle East and globally. During his presidential campaign, Obama has stressed engagement as a key part of his efforts to strengthen and revitalize U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy worldwide generally and toward the Middle East and the Muslim world particularly differences were to be addressed rather than ignored.[1] America could talk tough, but America should talk.

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND DIPLOMACY DURING BUSH'S ADMINISTRATION

Zahama argues that since 9/11, U.S. public diplomacy has experienced a precipitous learning curve. With smoke still rising from the fallen Twin Towers in Manhattan, U.S. officials struggled to comprehend quite literally what hit them as well as how to reply. The realization that foreign perceptions of Islamists had domestic consequence, quickly made public diplomacy a national security issue. When the United States launched the war on terror, public diplomacy was second only to the military offensive and was the principal instrument in the battle for hearts and minds. As Lee Hamilton, co-chair of the influential 9/11 Commission described it, public diplomacy is "how we stop them from coming here to kill us."[2]

Against this emotional backdrop, getting America's message out became Washington's goal, while the Arab and Islamic world became Washington's

primary target audience. Not only were the hijackers from this area, but it was also where many believed the U.S. image was most distorted. The two-point goal of U.S. public diplomacy entailed promoting U.S. values of hope and freedom while marginalizing and isolating the extremist message of hate and fear. From the U.S. perspective, the battle lines were clearly drawn. Publics in the region seemed less sure, as they repeatedly voiced concerns that the war on terrorism appeared to be a war of civilizations pitting the West against Islam as described by Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations And The Remaking of World Order*.[3]

According to Zahama, in a rapid order, the Bush administration rolled out some of the most innovative public diplomacy initiatives in U.S. history. The first undersecretary of state for public diplomacy, Charlotte Beers, held out the promise of marking and selling America to the Islamic world through the first-ever international advertising campaign. The $12 million campaign incorporated radio, television, and print advertising with Internet publications, lecture tours, and other outreach programs. Hi Magazine, a glossy lifestyle magazine with accompanying website, sought to promote a dialogue with Arab youth. Radio Sawa eschewed the traditional news focus of Voice of America and sought to attract Arab youth through a mix of Arab and American pop music. In 2004, the United States launched an Arabic language, satellite television station—Al-Hurra (the Free One)—to go head-to-head against the popular Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya.

In 2005, analysts expected a new start when Karen Hughes, Bush's longtime communications adviser took the helm of U.S. public diplomacy. Hughes immediately embarked on a "listening tour" to demonstrate the United States' desire to reach out to people in the Arab and Islamic worlds. During the trip, Hughes was described as tenderly clueless about the cultures of the people and U.S. policies in the Middle East region. The tour was widely viewed as a disaster. Hughes' other initiatives also pushed the boundaries of traditional public diplomacy, and included "forward deploying SWAT teams" to counter misinformation, establishing regional media hubs, and building new public-private partnership initiatives and exchange programs. Under her helm, she spearheaded the first U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication. After Hughes' unexpected departure, James Glassman took over. Glassman's push to integrate social media tools such as YouTube video contests, vlogging, and Twitter helped usher in U.S. public diplomacy 2.0.[4]

Despite the impressive array of creative initiatives, U.S. public diplomacy under the Bush administration failed to break the code for how to effectively communicate with the Arab and Islamic worlds The lifecycle of some of the more innovative initiatives were unexpectedly short as the target audience ignored or angrily dismissed them. Viewed together, the initiatives suffered

on several accounts. Their distinct features and failings together offered a legacy of public diplomacy lessons to the Obama administration according to Shiby Telhamy of the Brookings Institute:[5]

First, U.S. public diplomacy was very much about fighting an information battle rather than communicating with other people. Given the directive to "get the U.S. message out," U.S. public diplomacy was essentially a one-way, message-driven information attack on the Arab and Islamic world. The public were negative hostages in a war of ideas, as U.S. public diplomacy sought to "out-communicate" the opponent. Domestic critics claimed that U.S. public diplomacy's aggressive approach was counterproductive. As early as 2003, observers presented the idea of "listening" as a way to stop perceptions of U.S. arrogance and not paying attention to the concerns of the international community. Although Hughes' listening tour failed, listening remained a high-priority tactic.

Second, U.S. public diplomacy appeared to have little understanding or obligation for the intended audiences. The Muslim world, along with Islam, was viewed as a broad, gigantic mass, unfamiliar, and undefined. By using religion as the lowest common denominator to identify its target audience, U.S. public diplomacy unintentionally united 1.3 billion people, who happened to be of a particular faith, in a shared fate and a renewed sense of identity. Similarly, and equally paradoxically, U.S. public diplomacy's drive to promote American culture and values may have unconsciously fueled an awakening across the Islamic world to protect and promote their own cultures and values. The "*brass-band*" approach of the initiatives—which relied heavily on arm's length, mass-media tools, and self-profile-raising strategies—alienated the very same publics that U.S. public diplomacy was seeking to encourage. Feeling neither understood nor respected, the audience repeatedly described the U.S. public diplomacy initiatives as "disparaging," "arrogant," or "abusive."

Finally, U.S. trustworthiness suffered from the disconnect between U.S. public diplomacy and U.S. foreign policy. U.S. public diplomacy initiatives were astoundingly apolitical. Public opinion polls repeatedly showed that discontent with U.S. policies, such as the war in Iraq and the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict was the principal stimulus behind the negative U.S. image. The Bush administration, however, appeared to take cautions to split policy discussions from the dialogue on U.S. public diplomacy. For the policymakers in Washington, the problem was not U.S. foreign policy, but rather how it was promoted. The result was an ever-growing collection of creative initiatives using new technologies and strategies, coupled with the ever-increasing doubt by the public that U.S. public diplomacy was little more than a trick, as a prominent Arab journalist called it. The Bush administration's failure in public diplomacy contributed to the renaissance of political Islam, as we will soon discuss.

THE RESURGENCE OF POLITICAL ISLAM

In his book, *The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State*, Harvard professor Noah Feldman argues that when empires fall, they tend to stay dead. The same is true of government systems. There are, however, two prominent examples of governing systems reemerging after they had ceased to exist. Feldman explicated—one is democracy; the second is political Islam. Democracy is a form of government that had some limited success in a small Greek city-state for a couple of hundred years, disappeared, and then was resurrected some two thousand years later. Its re-creators were non-Greeks, living under radically different conditions, for whom democracy was a word handed down in the philosophy books, to be embraced only fitfully and after some serious reinterpretations by British, French, and American revolutionary and reformers.[6]

The story of political Islam according to Noah Feldman is one of power, decline, and revival. Its founder Muhammed (570–632), was both prophet and warrior. For the faithful, his historic accomplishment was to receive the divine revelation which was sent down in the Qur'an and became the essential framework for Muslim life and Muslim Law. But Muhammed established not merely a religion and a code but a community "al-Umma al-Islamia"—the model for a "worldwide family of societies." The Prophet transformed the warring tribes of Arabia into a federation under his control. It was as a political and military force that the Arabians set out, under the banner of Islam, on the road of conquest. Under the caliphs who succeeded Muhammad, Islam took on two empires—the Byzantine and the Sasanian—and from them shaped its own. Little more than a century after the Prophet's death, the Islamic empire stretched from Spain to Samarkand. The Muslims established centers of power and culture in Damascus and Baghdad and eventually in Cairo, Fez, and Beyond. From the time the Prophet Muhammad and his followers withdrew from Mecca to form their own political community until just after World War I, Feldman argued—almost exactly thirteen hundred years—Islamic governments ruled states that ranged from fortified towns to transcontinental empires.

The Rise of Islamists as Power in the International System

In describing the world order during these thirteen hundred years, Henry Kissinger in his book, *World Order*, argues that the Islamic domination overturned the world's order during this era. Expansionist and in some respects radically egalitarian, Islam was unlike any other society in history. Its requirement of frequent daily prayer makes faith a way of life; its emphasis on the identity of religious and political power transformed the expansion of Islam from an imperial enterprise into a sacred obligation. Each of the territories

the advanced Muslims encountered was offered the same choice: conversion, adoption of protectorate status, or conquest. As an Arab Muslim envoy, sent to negotiate with the besieged Persian Empire, declared on the eve of climatic seventh-century battle, "If you embrace Islam, we will leave you alone, if you agree to pay the poll tax, we will protect you if you need our protection. Otherwise, it is war."[7] Arab cavalry, combining religious conviction, military skill, and a disdain for the luxuries they encountered in conquered lands, made the threat credible. Observing the dynamism and achievements of the Islamic enterprise and threatened with extinction, the people of the conquered territories chose to adopt the new religion and its vision.[8]

Islam's rapid advance across three continents, according to Kissinger, provided proof to the conquered territories and the faithful of its divine mission. Impelled by the conviction that its spread would unite and bring peace to all humanity, Islam was at once a religion, a multiethnic super state, and a new world order. The areas Islam had conquered or where it held sway over tribute-paying non-Muslims were perceived as a single political unite: *dar al Islam*, "House of Islam," or the realm of peace. It would be governed by the caliphate, an institution defined by rightful succession to the early political authority that the Prophet Mohamed had exercised. The lands beyond were *dar al-harb*, the realm of war; Islam's mission was to incorporate these regions into its own world order and thereby bring universal peace. The strategy to bring about this universal system according to Kissinger would be named jihad, an obligation binding on believers to expand their faith through struggle. "Jihad" encompassed warfare, but it was not limited to a military strategy, the term also included other means of exerting one's full power to redeem and spread the message of Islam, such as spiritual striving or great deeds glorifying the region's principles. Depending on the circumstances in the area which has been conquered—and in various eras and regions, the relative emphasis has differed widely—the believer might fulfill jihad "by his heart; his tongue; his hands; or by the sword."

The historical analysis of Kissinger reviled that these states—which were part of the new world Islamic order—separated in time, space, and size, were so Islamic that they did not need the adjective to describe themselves. A common constitutional theory, developing and changing over the course of centuries, obtained in all. A Muslim ruler governed according to God's Law expressed through principles and rules of the *Sharia* that were expounded by the Islamic scholars, *al-alamah,* and Islamic Jurisprudence, *al-fakh*. The ruler's satisfaction of the duty to command was based on what the Islamic law required and banned—what it prohibited made his authority lawful and legitimate.

John Hursh argues that "Islamic law offers a distinctive characteristic not found in other legal systems. While the sources of the law are considered

divine and reliable, and therefore impervious to the influences of culture, the application of the law creates diversity in locality not present in other legal systems."[9] Consequently, since the dawn of history, the application of Islamic law, and Jurisprudence is based on the following hierarchy: First, interpretations of Qur'an. Second, the sayings and doings of Mohammad the messenger of Allah, which is *Sunna*. Third, *Agmah,* or the consensus of Islamic scholars—*al-alamah*—at particular historical period on a particular verdict or issue facing the Islamic community. Fourth, *Qiyas* or analogical reasoning. Before employing the practice of *Qiyas,* an Islamic jurist would first need to attempt to resolve the legal question through the *Qur'an* or the *Sunna,* then, *Agmah*. If all the three sources don't provide explicit direction, a jurist could then apply *Qiyas* or analogize a parallel example based on the underlying principles within the *Qur'an* and the *Sunna.*[10]

Collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the Resurgence of Political Islam′s as a Unifying Force

The impact of the ideas developed and events taking place in the Middle East during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries deserve attention, StigJarle Hansen argues that many of the events and ideas continue to have an impact across the Islamic world. The growth of the philosophies of revivalist Islam, the growth of the financial power of Saudi Arabia and Qatar as the growth of pan-Islamic networks, as a consequence of the Cold War and the U.S. support of jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan, have had impacts from Scandinavia in the North, to Nigeria in the South, from the United States in the West to Indonesia in the Far East, all had in one way or another an impact on the ideological revival of Islamism. The revival that today still inspires many militant jihadist organizations.[11]

The ideas of philosophers such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838–1897), Muhammed Abduh (1849–1905), Rashid Rida (1865–1935), Abul Ala Maududi (1903–1979), Muhammed Ibn Abd-al-Wahhab (1703–1792), Hassan Al-Bana (1906–1949), and Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) constituted the foundation of the theories which formed the basis for the modern Islamists tradition also formed a loose ideological basis for many of the current day Salafi-jihadist organizations, including Al-Qaeda.

The resurgence of political Islam and the revival of Islamic principles started in the middle of the nineteenth century and continued to the twentieth century when the aforementioned group of thinkers and innovators projected across the time and world's space their ideas and believe that Islamic peoples were living in hardships because their governments were very weak and unable to protect them against foreign interference. And the best way to treat such desperate situations comes through a logical combination of science and

religion, and through comprehensive political, social, and economic reforms based on contemporary understandings and activating scientific and educational institutions.

This trend coincided with the gradual decline of the Ottoman Empire in the late eighteenth century and with increasing momentum, throughout the nineteenth century, when European states began to reverse the process which maintained the Islamic order intact. The Ottoman Empire had gradually become sclerotic when orthodox religious factions at the court resisted modernization. Russia pressed against the empire from the north, marching toward the Black Sea and into the Caucasus. Russia and Austria moved into the Balkans from east to west, while France and Britain competed for influence in Egypt—a crown jewel of the Ottoman Empire—which in the nineteenth century achieved various degrees of national autonomy under the role of the Mohamed Ali dynasty.[12]

Shuddered by internal disturbances, historian Goldschmidt argues that the Ottoman Empire was treated by the Western Powers as "the Sick Man of Europe." The fate of its vast holdings in the Balkans and the Middle East, among them significant Christian communities with historical links to the West, became "the Eastern Question" for the great powers of the time, and for much of the nineteenth century the major European powers tried to divide up the Ottoman possessions without upsetting the European balance of power. On their part, the Ottomans had the recourse of the weak; they tried to manipulate the rivalry forces to achieve a maximum of freedom of action.

World War I ended the wary maneuvering. Allied with the defeated Germany, the Ottomans were defeated. And following the war's end in 1918, the former Ottoman territories were drawn into the Westphalian international system controlled by the great powers of the time—Great Britain and France. Hence, the Ottomans' holdings in the Balkans and the Middle East were divided between Great Britain and France.

In the twentieth century, Henry Kissinger, Arthur, Goldschmidt Jr., Lawrence Davidson, Jillian Schwedler & Deborah J. Gerner, William L. Cleveland & Martin Bunton, and Noah Feldman agreed that, since the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, distinctively Islamic government began to falter after England and France, the winning powers, divided its lands. Its lands were divided into Western spheres of influence, guided, if not governed, by France and England. And in 1924 the Islamic state died when the new Turkish government that eventually established itself on the Ottoman Empire's Anatolian rump declared itself secular and abolished the caliphate. In the absence of the caliph—the Islamic ruler—the new governing arrangements championed by internal reformers and pressed by Western debt-holders resulted in institutional changes like a legislature and a legislative code

shook the foundations of the traditional, unwritten constitution-guided by the *Quran* that had prevailed under traditional Islamic rule.

One of the pioneers of the resurgence of political Islam, according to Kissinger in the first part of the twentieth century is Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood organization, which was created in 1928 in Ismailia Egypt. From its early days as an informal gathering of religious Muslims opposed to the British domination of Egypt's Sues Canal Zone, al-Bana's Brotherhood had grown to a nationwide network of social and political activity, with tens of thousands of members, cells in every Egyptian city and village, and an influential propaganda network distributing his comments on current events. Al-Banna asserted, according to Kissinger's interpretation of his writings and the statements he addressed to Egypt's Monarch, "the West was brilliant by virtue of its scientific perfection for long time . . . it is now bankrupt and in decline. Its foundations are crumbling, and its institutions and guiding principles are falling apart."[13]

The Western Powers had lost control of their own world order: "Their congresses are failures, their treaties are broken, and their covenants torn to pieces."[14] The League of Nations, intended to keep the peace, was "a phantasm." Though he did not use the terms, Kissinger argued, Al-Banna was arguing that the Westphalian world order had lost both its legitimacy and its power. It is time for Muslims to create a new world order based on Islam.

P. Vatikiotis argues that since its inception by Hassan al-Banna in 1928, the movement has not recognized the boundaries of the Egyptian state or felt obligated to respect the laws it has created, or those created and applied by foreign Western invaders and rulers. Al-Banna believed in his loyalty to *al-umma al Islamia* (the larger Islamic society) rather than to Egypt's known political boundaries. His charismatic leadership of his well-disciplined and obedient secretive organization made his followers follow his views blindly and without question. The aforementioned doctrine made the MB—following the 1952 revolution and Nasser's assuming the presidency—a threat to Egypt's national security; and gradually, institutional measures taken by Nasser started to securitize the Egyptian political system and police the political process.[15]

The Cold War as a Catalyst for Promoting Radical Jihadism and Political Islam

Perry Anderson, a UCLA history professor in his book titled *American Foreign Policy and Its Thinkers*, documented how the Carter Administration—based on the advice of Zbigniew Brzezinski (Carter's national security adviser)—armed and bankrolled the Islamist revolt against Afghan communism and subsequent war to drive the Red Army out of the country.[16] Also, in his

valuable book *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II,* published in 2004, William Blum provides a well-documented chapter titled: Afghanistan, 1979–1992 America's Jihad, how the United States helped to promote radical Islam. He argued that the United States supported Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the head of the Islamic party in Afghanistan.[13]

> His followers first gained attention by throwing acid in the faces of women who refused to wear the veil. CIA and State Department officials I have spoken with call him "scary," "vicious," "a fascist," "definite dictatorship material." This did not prevent the United States government from showering the man with large amounts of aid to fight against the Soviet-supported government of Afghanistan . . . Gulbuddin Hekmatyar . . . was the head of the Islamic Party and he hated the United States almost as much as he hated the Russians. His followers screamed "Death to America" along with "Death to the Soviet Union," only the Russians were not showering him with large amounts of aid.[17]

The United States began supporting Afghan Islamic fundamentalists in 1979 despite the fact that, in February of that year, some of them had kidnapped the American ambassador in the capital city of Kabul, leading to his death in the rescue attempt. The support continued even after their brother Islamic fundamentalists in next-door Iran seized the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in November and held fifty-five Americans hostage for over a year. Hekmatyar and his colleagues were, after all, in battle against the Soviet Evil Empire; he was thus an important member of those forces Ronald Reagan called "freedom fighters."[18]

In his book titled *Devil's Game,* Robert Dreyfuss documents how the United States helped unleash fundamentalist Islam during the Cold War, from 1945 to 1991. He argued that the enemy was not merely the USSR according to the Manichean rules of that era—the United States demonized leaders who did not wholeheartedly sign on to the U.S. agenda or who might challenge Western (and in particular United States' hegemony). Ideas and ideologies that could inspire such leaders were suspect: nationalism, humanism, secularism, socialism. But subversive ideas such as these were also the ones most feared by the nascent forces of Muslim fundamentalism. Throughout the Middle East, the Islamic right fought pitched battles against the bearers of these notions, not only in the realm of intellectual life—but also in the streets. During the decades-long struggle against Arab nationalism—along with Persian, Turkish, and Indian nationalism—the United States found it politic to make common cause with the Islamic right.[19]

Dreyfuss argues that the United States spent many years trying to construct a barrier against the Soviet Union along the Soviet's southern flank. The fact that all of the nations between Greece and China were Muslim gave rise to

the notion that Islam itself might reinforce that Maginot Line-style strategy. Gradually, the idea of a green belt along the arc of Islam took form. The idea was not just defensive. Adventurous policymakers imagined that restive Muslims inside the Soviet Union's own Central Asian republics might be the undoing of the USSR itself—and they took steps to encourage them. The United States played not with Islam—that is, the religion, the traditional, organized system of belief of hundreds of millions—but with Islamism. Unlike the faith, with fourteen centuries of history behind it, Islamism is of more recent vintage. It is a political creed with its origins in the late nineteenth century, a militant, all-encompassing philosophy whose tenets would appear foreign or heretical to most Muslims of earlier ages—and that still appear so to many educated Muslims today. Whether it is called pan-Islam, or Islamic fundamentalism, or political Islam, it is an altogether different creature from the spiritual interpretation of Muslim life as contained in the Five Pillars of Islam. The mutant ideology that the United States encouraged, supported, organized, or funded is, in fact, a perversion of that religious faith, he argued, it is the same one variously represented by the Muslim Brotherhood, by Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran, by Saudi Arabia's ultra-orthodox Wahhabism, by Hamas and Hezbollah, by the Afghan jihadis—and by Osama bin Laden. Long before the advent of the George W. Bush administration, the United States found political Islam to be a convenient partner during each stage of the U.S. empire-building project in the Middle East. This is true from its early entry into the region, to its gradual military encroachment, to its expansion into an on-the-ground military presence—and, finally, to the emergence of the United States as an army of occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan.

According to Richard Cottam, in the 1950s, the enemy was not only Moscow but the Third World's emerging nationalists—from Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt to Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran. The United States and Britain used the Muslim Brotherhood, a terrorist movement and the grandfather organization of the Islamic right, against Nasser—the up-and-coming leader of the Arab nationalists. In the CIA-sponsored coup d'etat in Iran in 1953, the United States secretly funded an *ayatollah* who had founded the Devotees of Islam, a fanatical Iranian ally of the Muslim Brotherhood. Later, in the same decade, the United States began to toy with the notion of an Islamic bloc led by Saudi Arabia as a counter point to the nationalist left.

In the 1960s, Cottam argues, despite U.S. efforts to contain it, left-wing nationalism and Arab socialism spread from Egypt to Algeria to Syria, Iraq, and Palestine. To counter this seeming threat, the United States forged a working alliance with Saudi Arabia, intent on using its foreign policy arm, Wahhabi fundamentalism. The United States joined with King Saud and Prince Faisal (later King Faisal) in pursuit of an Islamic bloc from North Africa to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia founded institutions to

mobilize the Wahhabi religious right and the Muslim Brotherhood. Saudi-backed activists founded the Islamic Center of Geneva (1961), the Muslim World League (1962), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (1969), and other organizations that formed the core of an international Islamist movement. Even after the Iranian revolution of 1979, the United States and its allies failed to learn the lesson that Islamism was a dangerous, uncontrollable force. The United States spent billions of dollars to support an Islamist jihad in Afghanistan, whose mujahedeen were led by Muslim Brotherhood-allied groups.

In the 1980s and 1990s according to Dreyfuss, the United States also looked on uncritically as Israel and Jordan covertly aided terrorists from the Muslim Brotherhood in a civil war in Syria. And it looked on as Israel encouraged the spread of Islamism among Palestinians in the occupied territories, helping to found Hamas. And in the United States itself, neoconservatives joined the CIA's Bill Casey in the 1980s in secret deals with Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini. By the 1990s, when the Cold War was over, the political utility of the Islamic right seemed questionable. Some strategists argued that political Islam was a new threat, the new "ism" replacing communism as America's global opponent. That, however, wildly exaggerated the power of a movement that was restricted to poor, undeveloped states. Still, from Morocco to Indonesia, political Islam was a force that the United States had to deal with. Washington's response was muddled and confused.

And then came 9/11. After 2001, Derfuss claims that the Bush administration appeared to sign on to the *neoconservative declaration* that the world was defined by a "clash of civilizations." It launched its global war on terrorism, targeting Al-Qaeda—the most virulent strain of the very virus that the United States had helped create. Still—before, during, and after the invasion of Iraq (a socialist, secular country that had long opposed Islamic fundamentalism)—the United States actively supported Iraq's Islamic right. It did so by overtly backing Iraqi Shiite Islamists, from Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani to radical Islamist parties such as the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq and the Islamic Call (Al-Dawa)—both of which are also supported by Tehran's Mullahs. We should be mindful of that troubling history. When we now fear all those Islamists, we do well to remember just who helped spawn them.

Islamic Revivalism and Modernism

To inject more clarity to the complicated realities of the rise of political Islam at the world's stage, it is important to distinguish between the two concepts of *Islamic Revivalism* and *Islamic Modernism.* Islamic Modernism is Islamic modernist ideas that promoted a re-interpretation of Islam that

would fit in with the modern world. They were formulated during the past decades of the nineteenth century and implied an acknowledgment that the Muslim world had lost its position in the world. For many modernists, the reason for this loss rested in the lack, in Muslim countries, of a modern and dynamic understanding of science. Ironically, they claimed, Islamic medieval knowledge with its transmission of classical science to the West was instrumental in the development of modern European science and technology. By contrast, Islamic revival (ihya') refers to the support for an increased influence of Islamic values on the modern world as a response to Western and secular trends. Accordingly, a return to Islam in its purest form is seen as the solution for the ills of Islamic societies and modern society as a whole. One expression of ihya' was the Salafiyah movement, especially in its Wahhabi form. Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1791) was concerned about the survival of religion and sought to rectify the dangerous innovations that had been introduced into Islam. By emphasizing the concept of tawhid(the unity and oneness of God), he rejected all forms of mediation between Allah and the believer. In particular, he aimed to eliminate Sufi ideas and practices, such as the veneration of holy persons and the ziyarah to their tombs, as well as condemning excessive veneration of the Prophet Muhammad. Wahhabi ideology shaped the religious character of the first Sa'udi-Wahhabi state, which was crushed by Egyptian forces in 1818. The second Sa'udi state, which was proclaimed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932, continues to be shaped and informed by Wahhabi ideology.

Other formulations stemming from the Salafiyah include jihad movements such as the Mahdiyah of Sudan and activist Sufi orders like the Sanusiyah of North Africa, both of them revival movements spurred by the struggle against Western control. A twentieth-century development of revivalist ideas is the so-called "Islamic fundamentalism," or radical Islamism. Fundamentalism in fact originated in the 1920s among conservative protestant circles in America, and is the militant statement of the infallibility of Scripture and of ethical absolutism.[20]

However, the prevailing view is that the Islamic renaissance movement in the 1970s and 1980s, which under its umbrella or framework both Islamic Modernism and Islamic revival, came as a reaction to the failure of a group of national as well as socialist Arab leaders attempts after the liberation from foreign monopoly. Nasserism in Egypt (which led to the Arab Defeat in the 1967 war with Israel), Baathist ideology in Syria and Iraq, Islamic socialism in Libya and Algeria, and the Marxist socialism in South Yemen all failed. At the political level, the secular contemporary movements failed in the Islamic world. Neither the liberal nationalists nor the Communists were able to keep their promises or commitments to their people. The governments in Islamic states were not interested in establishing a legal political stand for them. On

the contrary, they were authoritarian type of government led by dictators and military leaders and the army. Political parties were banned or with just limited activities. Elections were not just and fair. Moreover, financial and administrative corruption became a common phenomenon, in addition to malpractice and mal-distribution of wealth among the rich and the poor. The Islamic movements rejected the Marxist model and refused to adopt it since it was a purely secular atheist type of doctrine. Moreover, capitalism produced a new group of elites and a consuming capitalist society. So the Islamists succeeded in gaining the support of the mainstream by focusing on issues such as unemployment, poverty, and unfair distribution of wealth, in addition to authoritarian systems of dictatorship.[21]

Nasser Momayezi in his research *Islamic Revivalism and the Quest for Political Power,* argues that since the 1979 Iranian Islamic revolution, the Middle East has witnessed the rising involvement and influence of Islamic movements (which is referred to as Islamic revivalism) in regional and domestic politics. Islamic revivalism is a distinct interpretive reading of Islam. It refers to those individuals and movements that want to strengthen Islamic influence in political, economic, and social life.[22] This movement, according to Lawrence G. Potter, appears to be a part of a broader worldwide movement in which people dissatisfied with their government, and feeling threatened by the erosion of traditional values, turn to religion as a source of identity. [Recently], conservative religious parties in the Middle East have scored significant electoral victories, raising questions about the changing social nature of these countries and presenting the United States with new diplomatic challenges. Johnston argues that "it is clear there is a return to religion . . . when secular governments fail to meet the needs of their populous, religious messages fill the vacuum."[23]

In general, Islamic revivalism in Momayezi's views is viewed as a revolutionary force whose aim is to topple the established order in the Muslim world, be that authoritarian or democratic. The usual response to Islamic challenges to the ruling elite has been the policy of inclusion or exclusion. Such policies have met with varying success. But, socioeconomic circumstances that are conducive to the growth of Islamic revivalism in the Middle East persist. The roots of the Islamic revivalism movements have some common roots in almost all Islamic countries. These movements in different Muslim countries are partly a reaction against indigenous corruption, the politics of tyranny and repression which—in the minds of many citizens—have reached intolerable level in their societies. Despite great economic gains in many oil-rich Middle Eastern countries, the benefits have been unevenly distributed, making material inequities and social imbalances greater and more visible than ever before. The governments of the oil-rich countries are often run by small cliques of insiders, such as the military regime of Algeria

or the family regimes of the Arabian Peninsula, which benefit only a handful of people. In fact, the vast majority of the people in the Muslim countries are among the most impoverished people in the world. Growing economic difficulties, including rising expectations, increased unemployment, and lack of educational and occupational opportunities, have embittered large numbers of people, particularly the young who constitute the vast majority of the population. Major cities like Algiers are currently flooded with unemployed youth. In fact, about 59 percent of its population is less than twenty-five years old, and 58 percent of this category is currently unemployed. Meriem Verges notes that the "young adult who is barred from the productive sector and excluded from global society has become a generic feature of Algerian urban space and is the primary target of the Islamist campaign."[24]

The current Islamic revival in Momayezi' perception is also the result of failed secular ideologies. A generation of Muslims have been numbed by a series of successive ideologies—founded on Marxism and nationalism—which inspired them to dream of unity, and strong and prosperous societies that never were realized. Experiments in Arab socialism were utter failures. Arab socialism produced state classes whose relatively privileged positions set them apart from the masses. The turning point for many was the Arabs' crushing defeat in 1967 at the hands of Israel—a nation that was perceived by many Muslims to have been victorious because it had not lost touch with its religious roots, in addition to the complete support of the United States. As a result, Islamic reformists began to embark upon a new direction hewing closer to the religious norms and values of their societies to renovate the sociopolitical structure. Muslims participating in revivalist movements intend to reform the old sociopolitical system according to their understanding of the tenets of Islam. As John Esposito observes, "the distressed and alienated have chosen Islam as a means to express their disenchantment with political leadership and the ideological alternatives over the past few decades." As the editors of the Middle East Report wrote in a recent special issue on democracy in the Middle East: "The high profile of Islamist groups owes more to the character of state repression in the past than to the exceptional religiosity of Muslim societies. The heart of the revivalist movements lies the quest for authenticity, identity and tradition."[25]

Despite the frequent comment that Islamic revivalism is a reaction to the technological advancement of the West and negative pressure of modernity, it is a mistake to call these movements reactionary. The prime sources of support for the Islamist movements are students, college graduates, teachers, intellectuals, and young men and women from rural areas. As Olivier Roy contends, "Rather than a reaction against modernization of Muslim societies, Islamism is a product of it." In nearly all Middle Eastern countries, a process of modernization has occurred that brings with it both secularization and

religious revivalism. However, despite the change introduced by transformations in productive forces, the step from traditional society to modern societies verified only in the most superficial layers of Middle Eastern cultural diversity, and primarily in the culture of the elite and of dominant groups.[26]

OBAMA'S FOREIGN POLICY SHIFTS FROM THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

Bruce Jentleson argues that more than any other region, the Obama administration sought to separate from Bush policies in the Middle East. This did not mean a total break from the past. American foreign policy has always been a mix of change and continuity. But both generally and on specific key issues, the Obama administration set out early to establish its distinctiveness via the following shifts:[27]

First Shift

One main shift was in tone. To the Muslim world, President Obama stated in his inaugural address, "we seek a new forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect."[28] He reinforced and elaborated on this message in his speech to the Turkish Parliament in a little more than two months later: "we will bridge misunderstandings, and seek common ground. We will be respectful, even when we do not agree. We will convey our deep appreciation for the Islamic faith"[29]—and, with the most emphasis—"[t]he United States is not, and never will be, at war with Islam."[30] President Bush made disclaimers of his own, but they had not stuck. Foreign Policy is about the music as well as the words, and the Obama team's assessment was that a new tone had to be struck.

The new tone came through especially in President Obama's June 2009 speech in Cairo, Egypt. He called for "a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the World."[31] For much of U.S. history, this relationship had been defined more by differences than by what was shared or what could be shared. "America and Islam are not exclusive, and need not be in competition," Obama stressed. "Instead, they overlap, and share common principles."[32]

Second Shift

A second major shift was from seeking to isolate adversaries to engaging them. During his presidential campaign, Obama had stressed engagement as a key part of his effort to strengthen and revitalize U.S. diplomacy. The Middle

East was not the exclusive focus for this foreign policy and public diplomacy strategy, but it was the principle one, particularly with regard to countries like Iran and the six countries who witnessed the Arab Spring, as we will discuss in the next chapters.

OBAMA'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SHIFT FROM THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

R.S. Zahama observes that when Barack Obama became the new U.S. president, one of the main concerns for many analysts was restoring America's image in the eyes of the world. During the eight years of the Bush administration, the favorability ratings of the United States had declined dramatically. Nowhere was the U.S. image more negatively viewed than among the publics in Muslim-majority countries. Anti-Americanism had intensified in the Arab world, and spread from Nigeria in West Africa to Indonesia in the Far East. Despite the administration's energetic efforts to win Muslim hearts and minds through innovative public diplomacy, when former President Bush left office, U.S. favorability ratings were at all-time lows.[33]

President Obama by his very person and style according to Zahama, represents a game changer for U.S. public diplomacy in the Islamic world. He is the son of a Muslim father from Kenya, carries the distinctly Muslim middle name of Hussein, and attended school in Indonesia, the most populous Islamic country (64). During his first week in office, he made a point of granting his first television interview in the White House with an Arab satellite channel and appointed two special envoys—one to handle the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and another for the Afghanistan and Pakistan area. His new secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, included Indonesia on her first international trip. Shortly after her return from Asia, she headed back out to the Middle East and the politics of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

However, Zahama concludes her observation by arguing that "All of it appears refreshingly dynamic, but is the Obama administration's public diplomacy really a game changer? Or is it a matter of new players with different styles playing the same game? If it is just more of the same, what would a real game changer for U.S. public diplomacy in the Islamic world actually look like?"

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Chapter 5

The Challenge of Democratization and the Compatibility of Islam and Democracy

Before Samuel P. Huntington published his book *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, he wrote an article summarizing his analysis on the issue of democratization in the Middle East in the spring 1991 issue of the *Journal of Democracy*. Reflecting on the unprecedented number of democratic transitions that happened after the collapse of authoritarian regimes and the breakdown of communism in the former Soviet Union, he raised critical questions about the nature of these changes and their consequences for the future. He argues that, between 1974 and 1990, at least thirty countries made transitions to democracy, just about doubling the number of democratic governments in the world. Were these democratizations part of a continuing and ever expanding "global democratic revolution" that will reach practically every country in the world? Or did they represent a limited increase of democracy, involving for the most part its reintroduction into countries that had experienced it in the past? The current era of democratic transitions institutes the third wave of democratization in the history of the modern world. The first "long" wave of democratization began in the 1820s, with the widening of the suffrage to a large proportion of the male population in the United States, and continued for almost a century until 1926, bringing into being some twenty-nine democracies. In 1922, however, the coming to power of Mussolini in Italy marked the beginning of a first "reverse wave" that by 1942 had reduced the number of democratic states in the world to twelve. The triumph of the Allies in World War II initiated a second wave of democratization that reached its peak in 1962 with thirty-six countries governed democratically, only to be followed by a second reverse wave (1960–1975) that brought the number of democracies back down to thirty. The one region bypassed almost entirely by these three successive waves of democratization, with built-in mechanisms of popular participation

to connect the voices of the people to the political leaders of the regime, were the Arab countries.[1]

Up until the Arab Spring, not a single Arab regime could be said to be fully democratic. In which stage are these Arab countries? Within the third wave? Early in a long wave, or at or near the end of a short one? And if the third wave comes to a halt, will it be followed by a significant third reverse wave eliminating many of democracy's gains in the 1970s and 1980s? Social science cannot provide reliable answers to these questions, Huntington argued, nor can any social scientist. It may be possible, however, to identify some of the factors that will affect the future expansion or contraction of democracy in the world and to pose the questions that seem most relevant for the future of democratization.

BARACK OBAMA AND THE CHALLENGE OF DEMOCRATIZATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

The aforementioned questions raised by Samuel Huntington in 1991 seemed to be facing President Obama upon his election. Brian Katulis of the Century Foundation's Project on *Democracy and U.S. Foreign Policy*, argues that, when President Barack Obama entered office in 2009, his administration confronted an overwhelming set of challenges in the Middle East, including bringing an end to the Iraq war, addressing multiple uncertain tracks of the Arab-Israeli protracted conflict, developing an effective response to Iran's nuclear program and regional ambitions, neutralizing continued threats posed by terrorist groups, confronting Islamist political extremism, and dealing with internal destabilizing conflicts in several key countries. At the same time, rising security threats in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India may divert U.S. attention and resources from the Middle East to South Asia.[2]

Katulis argues that this intricate blend of issues explicably could allure President Obama to retract the Bush administration's entire approach to the Middle East and the world, including its controversial so-called *freedom agenda* aimed at spreading democracy in the region. Disappointment with the inadequate results of the Bush freedom agenda, the negative reactions to it in the region, and the destabilizing impact it has had on the Middle East might prompt the Obama administration to shift away from condemned efforts to promote democracy. The enticement to embrace counsels to foreign policy realism and a realpolitik balance of power strategy that would focus more on ensuring stability and less on governments' democratic performance and human rights practices may be strong. But abandoning attempts to advance democracy, freedom, and decent governance in the Middle East would be a mistake for the United States, according to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. It also would represent a retrenchment from the progressive values and vision

for national and international security articulated by candidate Obama during the 2008 presidential election campaign.[3]

Resistance to Democratization in the Middle East

The literature on resistance to democratization in the Middle East ranges from the conventional scholarship privileging the idea of "*persistent authoritarianism*," and the robust authoritarian regimes of the Arab world and their formidable state security as the reasons for restricting political participation, the development of civil society, and freedom of the press—the needed ingredients of any democratic system. Following in the lines of scholars of Arab authoritarianism, analysts have long insisted that the Arab world's military establishment is beholden to the government and its patron–client networks and largesse; that political party opposition is either weak, discredited, or nonexisting, and that civil society is divided and repressed by the coercive apparatus of the state. These are the factors that bound the following scholars Bellin, Cook, Hertog, Heydeman, Hinnebusch, and Ross, to predict the durability of authoritarian rule in the Arab world.[4]

Eva Bellin, explored the following question: why have the Middle East and North Africa proven exceptionally resistant to democratic transition, in a marked contrast to other regions in the world? The answer she argues, lies not in culture or socioeconomic factors but rather in the character of the Middle Eastern state and, most important, the exceptional strength and will of its coercive institutions which repress political participation. She delineated four factors which explain the exceptional coercive capacity and will of the Middle Eastern state: the region's access to rent, the persistent support of international patrons, the patrimonial character of state institutions, and the limited degree of popular mobilization for democratic reform. While the number of electoral democracies around the world has nearly doubled since 1972, the number in the Middle East region which include the Arab countries, Iran, Turkey, and Israel has registered an absolute decline over the same period. Israel and Turkey meet the standards of electoral democracy today defined as a regime that chooses its government through regular, free, competitive election. In 1972, Lebanon did as well according to the Freedom House.[5]

Addressing the following issues may provide some perceptual insights into the negative consequences of the democracy project initiated by George Bush, targeting the Middle Eastern Islamic countries, which include the six Arab countries who witnessed the Arab Spring chosen in this study. Also, it will help make an assessment of Obama's foreign policy and public diplomacy regarding democracy promotion in the Middle East. First issue, why is political participation difficult and risky in the Arab countries? Second issue, who caused this difficulty*?* Third issue*,* within the context of political Islam,

can countries of the Arab Spring transform their political structures to serve as a springboard toward a civil society?

Political Participation in the Arab Muslim Countries

Holger Albrecht argues that it is difficult task to identify and explore political participation in an authoritarian environment such as in the Arab/Muslims countries. This is because political participation is a concept primarily used to analyze activism within democracies. Initially, he claims that it may seem that the idea of political participation does not travel easily to authoritarian grounds. In most classical literature, political participation is somehow "naturally" linked to the nation of democratic rule.

Samuel Huntington and Joan Nelson, define political participation as an "activity." There are several implications to this approach: first, the term activity implies that personal attitudes and orientations, be they political or not, are not sufficient to be defined as political participation. Rather, according to this approach, participation implies either direct political actions (e.g., to cast a vote at election, join politically relevant organization, or attend a demonstration) or, in most simple form, the *public formulation* of political opinion. Regarding the Arab and Muslim countries, Nazih Ayubi has made the important observation that activism often takes on a decisively: "defensive" nature: " Urban collective action in the traditional Middle East was usually distinctively reactive. Its purpose according to Ayubi was not to advance new claims, but to resist the perceived or real new claims of others: the state, foreign powers or members of the religious minority."[6]

Deepa Kumar defended the lack of participation in the Arab and Muslim countries to the notion of "Oriental Despotism" which was developed in the eighteenth century by writers like Montesquieu, who argued that the hot climate of the East made Orientals supine and submissive and thus unable to resist tyranny. The Orientalist scholars gave this theory academic credibility by stating that despotism was one of the core values of "Islamic Civilizations." And modernization theory would make it even more scientific by suggesting that Islamic "traditional" societies were characterized by hierarchical systems of power. Since, these theorists argued, change would never come from within, it was the burden of the West to civilize, modernize, and democratize the East. Arthur James Balfour, who was the British Foreign Secretary during World War I (and famously penned the Balfour Declaration recognizing Zionists' claim for a state in Palestine), put it this way in 1910:

> First of all, look at the facts of the case. Western nations as soon as they emerge into history show the beginnings of those capacities for self-government . . .

> having merits of their own. . . . You may look through the whole history of the Orientals in what is called, broadly speaking, the East, and you never find traces of self-government. All their great centuries—and they have been very great—have been passed under despotisms, under absolute governments. All their great contributions to civilizations—and they have been great—have been made under that form of government. Conquest has succeeded conquest; one domination has followed another; but never in all revolutions of fate and fortune have you seen one of those nations of its own motivation establish what we, from the Western point of view, call self-government.[7]

Balfour went on to justify Britain occupation of Egypt since 1882, not only for the sake of the Egyptians, but "for the sake of Europe at large." This was the burden of the great British Empire, he concluded, and they must bear it with grace and dignity. When the Egyptian movement for national liberation choose independence from the British occupation, the British ruler of Egypt, Lord Cromer, argued that the leaders of this movement were misguided agitators who could not understand what was in their best interests. The real future of Egypt lies not in the direction of a narrow nationalism, which will only embrace native Egyptians . . . but rather in that of an enlarged cosmopolitanism. In other words, the subjected people should shut up and realize that they are better off as members of the global British Empire. Hence, Egypt's independence of 1922 from the British was not complete. A usual British formula of democracy was applied to Egypt, and later on to all former British colonies or protectorates in the Arab Islamic countries (including the Gulf States): Appointing or confirming the appointment of a head of state (King or Amir who belong to a foreign or minority group), and establishing political institutions with the ultimate goal of serving the British and the ruling family interests rather than articulating the majority of the people's demands, and expectations. The British and the French imperial powers allowed some form of political participation in the newly semi-independent state in the Middle East under one condition of not questioning the legitimacy of the ruling family to rule and the foreign power to dominate the political process, the economy, and natural resources of the country.[8]

In describing Egypt's political development, Arthur Goldschmidt argues, during the period from 1922 when Egypt became semi-independent from the British to the 1952 Egyptian military coup, the emerging pattern in Egypt's politics was that of a power triangle made up of the King, the Wafd Party, and the British. King Fuad (1922–1936), and after him his son King Farouk (1936–1952) wanted to rule autocratically. They used their vast landholdings and their ability to make appointments to the army, the police, the civil service, and the *ulama* to expand their claque of loyal followers. The Wafd Party, which enjoyed the support of the overwhelming majority of Egyptian voters,

forced peasants to vote *en masse* for themselves or their favorite candidates under duress from landowners. The British used the absence of a treaty with Egypt to preserve their influence. They often invoked the 1922 Declaration's Four Reserved Points; (security of British communications, defense against foreign interference, protection of foreign interests and minorities, and the Sudan issue) to block any policy or appointment that seemed likely to harm their interests in Egypt.[9] The aforementioned pattern of Egypt's political development is very much followed in all other Arab countries in one way or another, and whether the ruler is King or president.

In democratic regimes, the government acts on behalf of the people. It is a creature of the society, responding to social forces and groups and, ultimately, is responsible to the source from which it derived its power: the people. The government of all the Arab countries including those of the Arab Spring (Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria) were the creation of their former colonial powers. They were created to perpetuate the existence, and control of the former colonizers over the wealth and natural resources of these countries (the cotton crop and the tourism industry in Egypt's case), and the oil and other valuable minerals (in the other Arab countries). Also, these governments existed to protect the foreign or minority rulers, their associated pro-western elite, and to establish legitimacy to their rule. Exercising freedoms of speech, assembly, press, and association, were restricted by not criticizing the status quo created by the former colonizers. The democratic concept, which presupposes that the people organize in one form or another (as interest groups, professional associations and/or syndicates, and social movements) to exert their influence over the command structure of the political system was not allowed, likewise, a separation of powers among the three branches of government, the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary. The executive branch headed by the King or the Amir, or a president dominated and controlled the other branches of government. In fact, before the 1952 Revolution, the British tyranny in Egypt reached its peak when they created a special judiciary staffed by foreign national judges, parallel to the regular judiciary to adjudicate cases where non-Egyptian citizens were parties or affected. The tyranny of the military dictatorship in Egypt reached its peak under Nasser, when he established another branch of the judiciary in 1966, under the military with jurisdiction over civilian persons or groups who were opposing his regime. Maye Kassem noted that the dependence on emergency law in the Arab countries has seen the power of the police expand considerably as they are granted a virtual *carte blanche* to arrest and detain suspected political activists regardless of whether or not they fit the description of a *terrorist.*[10]

The notion of *pluralism,* known to democratic political systems of the West, which suggests that "multiple, competing elites (including interest

groups, professional associations, trade unions and social movements) determine public policy through bargaining and compromise," was not allowed by the minority or foreign ruling elite and their former masters—the British or the French. The United States, the new world power who succeeded the former ones after World War II and the champion of globalization since the 1990s to date, continued to support dictatorships in the Middle East under the notion of stability to secure the flow of oil to its markets, and the Protection of Israel.

Governments of the Arab countries are usually not interested in encouraging individual political participation from the public—at least not much free individual participation. The government does not want people to participate- it wants them to obey laws, to pay taxes, to come to political rallies (organized by the ruling or military elite), to cheer at parades, and so on—but it doesn't want them doing so on their own or without government sanction.

Gregory S. Mahler provides framework, which seems to be applicable to the complicated political realities of the Arab regimes. According to Mahler's perceptual model, Arab countries make political structures that roughly approximate structures in democratic settings, including elections, political parties, interest groups, trade unions, media conglomerates, professional associations, and social movements, but these structures are controlled by the government, and spontaneous behavior or political expression is not encouraged and mostly even prevented. The power in these political systems is controlled by a small group (members of a royal family in all countries of the Gulf States Cooperative Council, Jordan, and Morocco), or the military, as in Egypt, Sudan, and Yemen, or minority groups such as in Lebanon and Syria. These small groups exercise power without being accountable to the public. All leaders of these regimes came to power through a military, palace, or reform coup, and among their primary concerns are staying in power.[11]

Why Is Participation Difficult even After Independence?

Eva Bellin provides answer to the above question. She argued that the Arab difficulty in participation lies not in cultural or socioeconomic factors but rather in the character of the Middle Eastern state which was established by the former colonizers, and most important, the exceptional strength and will of these regimes' coercive institutions to repress all domestic initiatives to politically participate or to mobilize representative organizations to realize a civil society.

Charles Vandyck defines civil society as the capacity and capability of organized and loosely formed citizens associations and groupings to continuously respond to national and international public policy variations, governance deficits, and legal and regulatory policies through coherent

and deliberate strategies of mobilizing and effectively utilizing diversified resources, strengthening operations and leadership, promoting transparency and accountability, and fostering the scalability and replicability of initiatives and interventions. Civil society includes traditional interest groups, as well as social movements and nongovernmental organizations. Civil society is distinct from the government institutions. It refers to organizations that citizens form on their own, without governmental guidance or regulation. Civil society is a key ingredient of a democratic political culture, providing some of the networks and support mechanisms that permit democratic political behavior.[12]

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All countries which witnessed the Arab Spring are controlled by regimes which do not allow an environment conducive to the development of a civil society. These regimes have institutionalized the role of coercive institutions in the policy process. In the western context, institutions are the building block of a political system or state. They organize power relationships in ways that do not require sustained interventions by individuals or groups. In fact, the structures and functions are self-sustained beyond the choices of their participants. Institutions organize, discipline, and distribute power through written laws, quotidian practices, and public spectacles. Samuel Huntington argued that the aforementioned characteristics are particularly essential for political order in the context of developing countries. He pointed out that developed societies are more likely governed by organizations/institutions. Much like Weber, Huntington connected political development to the presence of impersonal institutions which will contribute to social stability.[14]

The Neosultanistic Regimes of the Arab Countries

Juan Linz introduced the contemporary concept of the *neosultanistic* regime in the Arab and Islamic countries. Sultanistic regimes, as Juan Linz describes them, are authoritarian regimes based on personal ideology and personal favor to maintain the autocrat in power; there is little ideological basis for the rule except personal power. A form of personal rule where the underlying structure is that: loyalty to the ruler is motivated not by his embodying or articulating an ideology, nor by a unique personal mission, nor by any charismatic qualities, but by a mixture of fear and rewards to his collaborators. Arab and Muslim Kings and presidents exercise their powers without restraint or accountability, at their own discretion, unencumbered by rules

and without any commitment to an ideology or value system. Their political systems of government became a system where, "persons take precedence over rules, where the officeholder is not effectively bound by his office and is able to change its authority and powers to suit his personal and political needs."[15] In such a system of personal rule, according to Linz the rulers and other leaders take precedence over the formal rules of the political game. The rules do not effectively regulate political behavior, and people therefore, cannot predict or anticipate conduct from knowledge of the rules. To put this in comparative government terms, the state is a government of men and not of laws. As a result, since their independent or semi-independent from the British or the French empires have become the most resilient personal authoritarian systems in the world.[16]

Representative Organizations

Political parties and organized interest groups are important organizations because their establishment and effectiveness help, among other things, to structure the participation of new groups in politics. There is no doubt that the political systems in contemporary Arab countries are characterized by the prevalence of weak institutions and organizations. Certain tactics and policies adopted by the state over the years have been aimed largely at ensuring that this weakness is preserved, especially within the realm of potentially challenging civil groupings and organizations.[17]

Transformation to a Civil Society.

The development of representative organizations such as political parties and an extensive network of interest groups and public participation in these organizations created civil societies in western democracies. In western democracies, community groups, voluntary associations, and even religious groups—as well as access to free communication and information through the mass media and the Internet—are important parts of a civil society. It is a society in which people are involved in social and political interactions free of state control or regulation. Participation in civil society organizations in the United States and western democracies have socialized individuals into the political skills and cooperative relations that are part of a well-functioning society. Participants can learn how to organize, express their interest and work with others to achieve common goals. They also learn that the political process itself is as important as the immediate results. By contrast, all the twenty-one Arab and Muslim countries (with the exception of Lebanon) are confronting the challenge of building a rich associational group life in their societies where the government had suppressed and controlled politics.

Controlled interest group systems were created in the Arab countries. They follow the following pattern: (a) there is a single group for each social sector, (b) membership is often compulsory, (c) each group is normally hierarchically organized, (d) groups are controlled by the government or its security agents to mobilize support for government policy.[18]

The Informal Realm of Participation

Laila Alhamad, a social development specialist with the World Bank, argues that the most ubiquitous forms of participation in the Middle East region are those of the informal realm, many of which are perpetuated by the rigidity of the formal political sphere. When the state, through its institutions, represses, excludes, or fails to listen or respond to people's needs, people resort to the informal realm. From the Jmaas in Morocco to neighborhood networks in Cairo, Egypt, the informal sphere has existed in the region throughout the ages, facilitated by a strong family ethos and a feeling of community, solidarity, and kinship. While the decades following independence saw the rise of formal institutions and organizations, none has been able to challenge the strength and pervasiveness of these informal channels in Middle Eastern life. To bolster her argument, Alhamad stated that many of the formal organizations of the Middle East governments have been suffused by patterns characteristic of the informal realm.[19]

The Arab's Perception of George Bush's Program of Democracy Promotion

Janine Clark and Lina Khatib in their research on "*Actors, Public Opinion, and Participation*" in the Arab countries, which is based on Arab Barometer polls, argued that there are variety of political attitudes structure patterns of political participation in the Arab world. Sixteen percent of Arab citizens believe that curbing foreign interference—particularly U.S. interference—in their countries' internal affairs should have high priority. Rather than promoting positive change, large numbers of Arab citizens view foreign interference as hindering it. When the 2012–2014 Arab Barometer polls asked citizens the extend they agreed with the statement that foreign interference is an obstacle to reform in their country, 41 percent of Arab citizen agreed with the statement to a great deal and 33 percent agreed with it to some extent.

Furthermore, Clark and Khatib pointed that when asked what the most positive policy that the United States can follow in the region is, Arab citizens appeared skeptical of American policies, particularly those related to democracy promotion program initiated by President George W. Bush in the region as part of his foreign policy in the Middle East region after 9/11/2001 attack on the United States 45 percent of Arab citizens responded that the United

States shouldn't interfere. In total, 20 percent stated the United States should solve the Arab-Israeli conflict and stop siding Israel, 12 percent promote economic development and only a mere eight percent of Arab citizens stated the United States should promote democracy. It is by clear and convincing evidence that the United States is obviously not seen as an honest democracy broker in the Arab world.

On the issue of democracy, 72 percent of respondents believe that while a democratic system may have its problems, it is still better than other systems. Arab citizens link their understanding of democracy to two overarching concepts; political representation and freedoms. In total, 48 percent of respondents understand democracy in terms of political representation and freedoms and cited the most important feature of democracy either as opportunity to change the government through elections, the freedom to criticize the government or as the equality of political rights between citizens. In total, 39 percent cited political representation and freedoms as the second most important feature of democracy.

Arab citizens also, according to the above research understand democracy in terms of economic conditions. In total, 36 and 33 percent of Arab citizens stated that the most important and the second-most important features of democracy, respectively, are both the narrowing of the gap between rich and poor or the provision of human basic needs such as food, housing, health care and employment opportunity. Similarly, 27 and 16 percent of respondents pointed to the elimination of corruption as the most and the second most important feature of democracy, respectively. These results mirror the very same concepts that formed the backbone of Arab citizens' demands during the Arab Spring. When asked about the main reasons that led to the Arab Spring, 44 percent stated civil and political freedoms and emancipation from oppression as their first response while 38 percent cited better economic conditions.[20]

With the aforementioned characteristics of the Arab countries political systems and societies attitudes toward political participation and democracy the issue of the compatibility of Islam with democracy will be discussed.

The Compatibility of Islam with Democracy!

Moataz Fattah of the American University in Cairo in his research *Democratic Values in the Muslim World*, argues that in 1975, predominantly Muslim countries were among the 25 percent of the world's nondemocratic regimes, and by 2005, this number had grown to 55 percent. Moreover, no one single Muslim country qualifies today as a consolidated democracy by a commonly accepted measure. One study shows that predominantly Muslim countries "are markedly more authoritarian than non-Muslim societies, even when one controls for other potentially influential factors."

Ian Burma according to Fattah puts it this way: "Islamic democracy has no track record, since it barely exists as yet." Even worse, "while the countries of Latin America, Africa, East Central Europe and South and East Asia experienced significance gains for democracy and freedoms over the last 20 years, the Islamic world experienced an equally significant increase in the number of repressive regimes."[21]

After tracing the evolution of and describing the four main schools of thought on Islam and democracy as the Traditional Islamists, Modern Islamists, Pluralist Secularists and Secularists Muslims , Fattah's research findings indicates that:

> At the individual level: Muslim society in the Arab world, no matter how democratic or undemocratic, includes representatives of each of the aforementioned schools of thought. This finding also reminds us that not all secular Muslims are pluralists, since some are traditionalists, and not all Islamists are antidemocratic traditionalists, since some are moderates.
>
> At the society level: A Muslim Society would score highest on the democratic institutions and norms scales and thus have democratic potential if several conditions are in place such as: Traditionalists Muslims who reject democracy are in the minority and modernists Islamists and pluralist secularists are in the majority. There is a majority of Muslims who have negative attitudes toward the undemocratically elected incumbents, there is a majority of Muslims who do not harbor utopian ideas about what government can or should be and thus who accept a democratic system of government.[22]

There is a majority of Muslims who are ready to publically demand and sacrifice for their political rights.

The aforementioned empirical research was based on empirical quantitative research to measure values and attitudes of Muslims toward democracy in the Arab countries, using primary sources of collecting data (survey administered by e-mail, face-to-face survey, focus group discussions, elite interviews).[23]

Olivier Roy of the Wilson's Center argued that the long-standing debate about Islam and democracy has reached a stunning turning point. Since the Arab uprisings began in late 2010, political Islam and democracy have become increasingly interdependent. The debate over whether they are compatible is now virtually obsolete. Neither can now survive without the other. The debate over Islam and democracy used to be a chicken-and-egg issue: Which came first? Democracy has certainly not been at the core of Islamist ideology. Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood has historically been strictly centralized and obedient to a supreme leader who rules for life. And Islam has certainly not been factored into promotion of secular democracy. Indeed, skeptics have long argued that the two forces were allegoric or even anathema to each other.

Oliver pointed out that the outside world wrongly assumed that Islam would first have to experience a religious reformation before its followers could embark on political democratization—replicating the Christian experience when the Reformation gave birth to the Enlightenment and then to modern democracy. In fact, however, liberal Muslim intellectuals had little influence in either inspiring or directing the Arab uprisings. The original protesters in Cairo's Tahrir Square referred to democracy as a universal concept—and not to any sort of Islamic democracy. The development of both political Islam and democracy now appear to go hand in hand, albeit not at the same pace. The new political scene is transforming the Islamists as much as the Islamists are transforming the political scene. Today, the compatibility between Islam and democracy does not center on theological issues, but rather on the concrete way in which believers recast their faith in a rapidly changing political environment. Whether liberal or fundamentalist, the new forms of religiosity are individualistic and more in tune with the democratic ethos.[24]

Jonine Clark and Lina Khatip argue that many in the West believe that the religious orientations and attachments of Muslim citizens create a normative climate that is hostile to democracy, particularly to the democratic rights of women and non-Muslim minorities. Yet, survey data demonstrates that this is not the case. When asked about the importance of a constitution in insuring equal rights between men and women, an overwhelming number of respondents stated that it was important: 84 percent ranked it as very important or as somewhat important, compared to 15 percent who ranked it either as not that important or not important at all. When asked of the importance of a constitution in ensuring equal rights between Muslims and non-Muslims, the results were similar: 77 percent of respondents stated that it is either very important or somewhat important.

Clark and Khatip Observed that in the Arab world it appears that neither Arab intellectuals nor ordinary citizens accept the view that Islam and democracy are incompatible. Large number of Arabs and other Muslims contend that the tenets of Islam are inherently democratic based on the *Shoura* practice where the ruler has to consult with variety of stakeholders of his society prior to making the final decision on important issue. In total, 64 percent of respondents in the 2012–2014 Arab Barometer (conducted after the Arab Spring) somewhat or strongly disagreed with the statement that democracy is a system that contradicts the teaching of Islam; only 27 percent somewhat or strongly agreed with the statement.[25]

Obama's Position from this Debate

Jentleson argues that Obama's foreign policy and public diplomacy avoided taking position from the issue of the compatibility of Islam to democracy or

relating Islam with the terrorism committed by Al-Qaeda, or *jihadism.* The term "global war on terrorism" would no longer be used. "The Administration has stopped using the phrase, and I think that speaks for itself,"[26] Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated. This was in part a matter of public diplomacy political communication to the Muslim world. given the negatives that "global war on terrorism" provoked. Many in the United States and abroad associated it with the Iraq war, the Guantanamo Bay detention camps, torture, and other Bush policies. Dropping this term reflected substantive foreign policy and public diplomacy changes from the Bush's administration.

Jentleson points that the Bush administration had leaned heavily in developing its foreign policy and public diplomacy directed toward the Muslim world toward the "*clash of civilizations*" view of Samuel Huntington. Although Huntington posed the conflict as between "*the West and the Rest*," the emphasis came to be especially on the Arab and Islamic world. Apparently, Obama's Administration did not follow the Bush approach—particularly one of the main criticisms of the Huntington theses, that the actual clash is less one *of* civilizations than the one *within* the Arab-Islamic world. Al-Qaeda embodied a jihadism targeted not only against the West but also toward transforming the Arab and Islamic world.[27]

The benefits of Obama not taking position in his public diplomacy in favor of the incompatibility of Islam to democracy was a wise one due to the complicated realities of the Arab and Muslim Countries political systems and Islamic culture. Obama brought changes in U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy toward the Muslim and Arab World, but also a degree of continuity. Military force remained a core component of his foreign policy, with greater efforts to adapt military strategy better to fit counterterrorism missions. For example, the first Obama defense budget made substantial shifts in resources toward counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and other irregular methods of warfare.[28] The initial dismissal strategy of deterrence by the Bush administration and others is being reassessed to meet the new realities in the Middle East ground. As we will be discussing in detail during chapter 6, the Obama administration sought to do more to integrate diplomatic, political, economic, and other instruments of power and influence the United States has to deal with the challenges in the Muslim and Arab world which are threatening the American national interests in the region.

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Chapter 6

Obama's Response to Secular Arab Spring's States

Tunisia, Egypt, and Bahrain

Daniel Morey, Clayton Thyne, Sarah Hayden, and Michael Senters in their quantitative research *Leader, Follower, or Spectator? The Role of President Obama in the Arab Spring* argue that President Obama has faced an over-abundance of challenges both at home and abroad during his first term. While some challenges were inherited from the Bush's administration, the Arab Spring uprisings provided a new opportunity for him to strengthen America's role as a global leader. Much debate has raged over the way in which Obama dealt with the uprisings. Supporters, mostly *realists* analysts view Obama's foreign policy as a selling point as he moves toward the 2012 elections, while opponents mostly *idealists* analysts have condemned him as a follower "leading from behind." Absent in this debate is an objective attempt to both articulate Obama's foreign policy agenda in both a historical and cross-national context, and an effort to analyze Obama's reaction to the Arab Spring uprisings vis-a-vis other state leaders. This chapter attempts to remedy these problems to better understand whether Obama was a leader or a follower during the events of the Arab Spring.

Another issue, Morey, Thyne, Hayden, and Senters, raises is the necessity of understanding if Obama leadership in world politics ought to be rooted in the necessity of American global leadership. Given the economic and military power of the United States, most global problems are best resolved if America plays a central role. If Obama is not a leader, it is questionable if any other state could fill the void and bring the world together to address important issues, such as climate change, or grip major events, such as the Arab Spring. The importance of American leadership has been on display for over a century. At the close of World War I, Woodrow Wilson brought the world together to establish the League of Nations; however, once the United States refused to join, the League became ineffective and dissolved with

disastrous consequences which led to World War II. After World War II, the United States was central in rebuilding Europe via the Marshall Plan and creating a new economic and political system. American leadership was also central to the postwar security environment, with the creation of NATO and leading the fight against communist expansion. This role has carried over to the post–Cold War era as the United States leads in the promotion of human rights, supporting democracy, and, recently, the War on Terror.[1]

A quick glance at the U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East since World War II demonstrates the need for change in the face of the region's different realties. During 1945–1989, U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East region promoted stability, the preservation of the status quo, and reinforcing repressive rule in the Arab world, rather than promoting democracy. The period of 1990–2001, however, saw the end of the Cold War, shifting the balance in favor of expanding civil society and democracy and political openings in some parts of the Middle East region, particularly the countries who are receiving U.S. military and economic aid such as Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, and Bahrain.

With the 9/11/2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, however, U.S. foreign policy reverted back to supporting repressive regimes in a bid to secure their cooperation in the global war on terror. But, in 2006, the United States—under President Bush's "*freedom agenda*" (which was the road map for democratic reforms Western Style—with no consideration to the Islamic culture which the state and the Mosque are intertwined), put the United States in an uncomfortable position when Hamas won election in the Palestinian territories. Fear that radical, militant, or overly Islamist regimes might come to replace the secular, Western-friendly predecessors, was powerful. A series of public opinion polls according to Bruce Jentleson conducted in mid-2008 in a number of Arab and other Islamic countries provided interesting data. Views of the United States were quite negative. Only 12 percent on average said, "the United States shows respect to the Islamic world."[2] Asked to rank how well the United States fulfills its world role on a 0 (very poorly) to 10 (very well) scale, ratings were as low as 1.4 (Egypt) and not higher than 4.2 (Indonesia and Pakistan). Opposition to U.S. military presence in Muslim countries was very high. Belief that the United States is genuinely pursuing democracy was low. So too was confidence that the United States was committed to a Palestinian state. But when asked whether they approved, disapproved, or had mixed feelings about attacks on civilians in the United States, majorities as high as 84 percent and no lower than 59 percent said no. Additionally, "Bombings and assassinations that are carried out to achieve political or religious goals are rejected as "not justified at all" by large majorities ranging from 67 to 89 percent.[3]

These unfavorable poll results of the United States' foreign policy and public diplomacy toward the Arab and Islamic world may conform to Hans Morgenthau's theory that "whenever American foreign policy has operated, political thought has been divorced from political action," even when George Bush (after the events of September 11, 2001) was, at that time, within the parameter of the American national interests.[4] Commenting on the aforementioned issues, Anne-Marie Slaughter argues that President George W. Bush's successor should acknowledge that the United States government had "made serious, even tragic, mistakes in the aftermath of September 11."[5] Slaughter recommended this acknowledgment to reveal U.S. political humility, self-criticism, and a desire to transform its approach toward the international community. Admission of wrongdoing and the qualitative transformation associated with such a public admission was theorized to positively influence international public opinion of the United States following nearly a decade of contentious U.S. foreign policy enacted under the guidance of the global war on terrorism's foreign policy. From this perspective, the 2009 inauguration of Barack Obama as U.S. president presented an opportunity for a meaningful alteration of U.S. behavior and, in turn, its international standing toward the Muslim and Arab Communities.

Ronald Gordner argues that the tendency for change was initially anticipated by Muslims, since Obama was rhetorically softer while articulating his approach to Middle East–United States relations in comparison to his predecessor according to Feste; Totman and Hardy. For instance, during a speech to U.S. Marines in 2009, Obama asserted that the United States and Iraq "can build a lasting relationship founded upon mutual interests and mutual respect."[6] A similar conciliatory reference to macro-level relations was made to an audience in Cairo, Egypt in June 2009, where Obama acknowledged that the "cycle of suspicion and discord [between Arab/Muslims and the United States] must end."[7] To circumvent the trends of dissonance and suspicion signified by the Bush administration, Obama proposed "a sustained effort to listen to each other; to learn from each other; to respect one another; and to seek common ground."[8]

The author argues that the aforementioned quotes make it clear that Obama recognized the need for altering U.S. behavior and perceptions, and understood how a balanced relationship with Muslim majority countries throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia could be advanced. Muslims in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) welcomed Obama's message of conciliation.[9] Anticipation was further bolstered in Jakarta, Indonesia, in November 2010 (just one month before the Arab Spring), when Obama repeated his resolve to modify the manner in which his administration interacted with the international Muslim community.[10] Seemingly demonstrating his commitment to policy and behavioral change, Obama's 2010 National

Security Strategy (NSS) likewise emphasized a nonconfrontational and accommodating methodology and tone.[11]

In particular, the 2010 NSS emphasized the importance of wielding "soft power" when pursuing U.S. national interests.[12] For instance, it mentions "Strategic Communication," which is conceptualized as public diplomacy which promotes dialogue, direct interaction, and taking into consideration local opinions and grievances when drafting foreign policy, as a methodological standard. The strategy likewise recommends paralleling these soft power tools with an alignment of U.S. actions and words, "to convey credible, consistent messages and to develop effective plans, while better understanding how our actions will be perceived."[13] In short, as expressed in the quote, the Obama administration recognized: (a) the importance of accommodating indigenous grievances, needs, and opinions when interacting with Muslim majority countries; and (b) the importance of transforming how the United States pursued bilateral relations by engaging other countries in an equal partnership.[14]

Since the U.S. president is the chief diplomat and a visual representative of the country among the international community,[15] he/she is ultimately accountable for the actions and perceptions of their administration. Thus, when Barack Obama entered the presidency speaking about transforming the quality of United States–Muslim relations, his international audience expected him to realize this end. Hence, this chapter will evaluate Barack Obama's foreign policy and public diplomacy's efforts to resolve the issues that hinder good relations with the Muslim/Arab community to determine which changes were expected, which policies and practices were implemented, and whether his promises were honored. During our examination, we will highlight observable complexities which affected implementation because of the sudden, unexpected occurrence of the Arab Spring. Sudden events which surprised observers of Middle East politics, who had been researching robust authoritarianism for over a decade.[16]

OBAMA'S REPAIRING THE DAMAGE

In dealing with the critical emotional issue of *Islam*, John Esposito argues that the election of Barack H. Obama in 2008 created a new atmosphere in the Muslim world and globally, and hope of potential redirection of U.S. foreign policy. During his campaign and election, he styled himself as a *technocratic pragmatist,* always interested in what "*worked*."[17] In his speech in Cairo University, Egypt, Obama demonstrated his personal knowledge and experience of Islam, as well as his appreciation of Islamic religion—the pillar of the Middle Eastern countries' culture and political systems. He projected

a compassionate understanding that paves the way for accepting Muslims in the United States as valued citizens who have fought in our wars, excelled in business, universities, and sports, who won Nobel prizes and lit the Olympic torch. In dealing with the *Palestinian-Israeli conflict*, Obama made the most striking statement, one that would echo across the Middle East and the broader Muslim world. It was his strong testimonial of sympathy and understanding for the dilemma of the Palestinian, the need to create a Palestinian state, and the need to finalize the status of Jerusalem, one of the great sacred cities of Islam and a major impediment in Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.[18]

In dealing with the *democracy promotion program in the Middle East,* President Obama came into office deeply skeptical about the foreign policy and diplomacy of his predecessor, George W. Bush, to make democracy promotion a key, if not central, aspect of American policy toward the Middle East.[19] Shortly before his own inauguration in January 2009, Obama stated that while he did not markdown "the sincerity and worthiness of President Bush's concerns about democracy and human rights,"[20] he was critical of what he said was Bush's push for, and reliance on, elections in the Middle East as an indicator for democratic development. Implicit in this criticism was that Bush's policies also angered long-standing U.S. allies in the region with few positive results to show for it. When authoritarian leaders like Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak resisted U.S. pressure to democratize in late 2005 to early 2006 period (after initially making some political reforms earlier in 2005 in response to this pressure), there was no "Plan B" for Bush administration's grand strategy.[21] The Bush administration ultimately backed down, and U.S. policy was left with the worst of all outcomes—a disappointed group of democratic activists in the Arab world (whose hopes were raised and then dashed) and an angry group of authoritarian leaders who believed that U.S. officials were unappreciative for the stances that they had taken to support unpopular U.S. policies in the region such as supporting Israel against the Palestinians, and invading Iraq. For not following his predecessor policies, Obama was a *realist*.

THE UNEXPECTED EVENTS OF THE ARAB SPRING

Martin Indyk, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institute described President Obama's and the U.S. position in dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict the core of instability in the Middle East as problematic.[22] They argue that by the end of 2010 and after almost two years in office, the president inability to make progress on the Palestinian issue and his loss of popularity on both sides of the Arab-Israeli gap had combined with a sluggish U.S. economy and a burgeoning debt problem to leave the United States

poorly positioned for dealing with the unexpected problems or opportunities bound to arise in the unpredictable Middle East.[23]

Nothing could have been more unpredictable than the uprisings that swept the Arab world beginning in January 2011, with the overthrow of the regime of Zin al Abedine Ben Ali in Tunisia, then Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, and then serious challenge to the King Hamad Bin Isa al-khalifa of Bahrain by the Shia'a majority. North Africa-the Magherb had never featured conspicuously in American policy and strategy for the Middle East except when king Hassan of Morocco had taken the lead in efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and when colonel Qaddafi of Libya had sponsored terrorism activities on U.S. citizens or developed and then abandoned a nuclear weapon program. North Africa- the Maghreb tended to be a sideshow/ low priority for U.S. interests compared to Egypt which has 100 million population, controls the Swiss Canal, and the first Arab country to sign peace treaty with Israel, and Bahrain which has the headquarter of the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet. Bahrain's despite its small population of less than a million, it is significant to the U.S. national interests. It is geographically located next door to Saudi Arabia-one of the largest oil producer in the world. Also, Bahrain has majority Shia'a population who live few miles across from Iran at the Persian Gulf—a Shi'a country with regional ambition in the sunny Muslim Countries of the Middle East. Then, like a domino effect the Arab Spring awakening spread to Libya, Syria, and Yemen.

The Arab Spring unexpected occurrence in six countries caught the intelligence community and U.S. foreign policymakers by surprise. Scholars seeking to explain the dynamics of this period were immediately torn between literature on domestic transitions and durable authoritarianism. Initial outcomes were more diverse than the political transformations in Southern Europe and Latin America begun in the mid-1970s.[24] They were also distinct from the more recent "fourth wave" of democratization in postcommunist states and subsequent "electoral revolutions." Postcommunist democracies and hybrid regimes emerged from the balance of power between old elites and new activists, often in the context of an uneven electoral playing field.[25]

Popular revolutionary waves started in Tunisia, followed by Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain, and Yemen. Obama's response to each one was driven by the size of the country, its strategic importance in the geopolitics of the Middle East region, and to the United States, and the unwavering support for Israel influenced by the Zionist Jewish lobby, and the regional rivalry between the *Sunn*i countries of the Gulf States and the *Shia'a* (supported by Iran).

Michael Cooper and Gregory Aftandilian describe the aforementioned events of the Arab Spring as the most significant governments and political events which will impact the region for many years to come. Consequently, outside countries' relationships, including other global powers such as

Russia, European Union, China, and the United States with Arab states, have changed and will continue to develop in new, previously unforeseeable ways.[26]

Alon Ben-Meir in his seminal work, *Spring or Cruel Winter, The Evolution of the Arab Spring*, argues that the Arab uprising must be seen as an integral part of a world in transformation. Technological and informational revolutions have increased globalization and interconnectedness between cultures. He further stated that the internal conditions in each of the Arab Spring countries have significantly impacted the development of their respective uprisings, and the same unique conditions of each country will influence each country's post-dictator environment. Each nation which was part of the Arab Spring also has its own specific characteristics and individual grievances that will shape its future, including history and culture; demographic composition; the role of the military, resources; geostrategic situation and the "Legacy of its Leader." Geopolitics and resources of each country will determine the extent of outside interference in each country. To make a fair assessment of President Obama's performance and reaction to each country's event, the aforementioned issues must be taken into consideration. Consequently, Obama's foreign policy and public diplomacy responses to the relatively secular countries of Tunisia, Egypt, and Bahrain will be studied in this chapter, followed by studying President Obama's foreign policy and public diplomacy toward Libya, Syria, and Yemen in chapter 7 due to the fact that the aforementioned countries are a collection of tribes living under a single state flag, but they have never been a unified citizenry, and the disunity was maintained by military dictators.[27]

To provide better understanding of the dynamics of the unexpected events of the Arab Spring, and how President Obama reacted to it, a kaleidoscopic systematic analysis will be applied in the following sequence on all the six case studies: First the chronology of events in each country will be presented, second followed by the U.S. responses to the events, third, followed by the opinion of two broad categories of analysts and observers of Obama's performance in foreign policy and diplomacy toward these countries. Hopefully, this approach will provide a fair judgment about Obama's foreign policy and diplomacy toward the Arab Spring.

Michael Cooper, Greg Aftandilian, and Fawaz A. Gerges argue that each of the countries witnessed the Arab Spring is the only one of its kind in its own way, but the most obviously unique aspect about Tunisia's revolution was that it was the first. Although protests occurred in a number of other Arab countries, these countries saw the largest protests, which resulted in regime change or sustained and ongoing conflict.[28] Analysts evaluation of Obama administration's response to each country of the Arab Spring are grouped into two categories; the first group are likely to support the *idealists* approach to

international relations; and the second group are likely to support the *realists* approach to international relations.

Case One: Tunisia Starts the Arab Spring

Tunisia has a secular and nationalist foundation since the independence from the French in 1956. The military in Tunisia is purposely marginalized from political life, and is relatively professional, keeping strong relationships with Western countries. Ben Ali's presidency has been characterized by oppressing Islamic political parties, pushing for secularism, and significantly investing in education.[29] The uprising in Tunisia occurred and grew geologically at the Middle East theater from the West to the East.

Chronology of Events

- December 17, 2010: Tunisian vegetable vendor, Muhammad Bouazizi, sets himself on fire, marking the official beginning of the Arab Spring. Protests spread.
- January 4, 2011: Bouazizi dies. Protests increase, as do violent government crackdowns.
- January 5, 2011: U.S. State Department issues travel warnings to Tunisia
- January 7, 2011: State Dept. declares support for protesters' freedom to assemble
- January 14, 2011: Tunisian President Ben Ali flees to Saudi Arabia, ending his 23-year reign.
- October 23, 2011: Tunisia holds a successful democratic election. Center-right party, Ennhada, emerges victorious.

The first unique trait about Tunisia revolution is that no outside forces of instability and revolutionary momentum did affect her, but Tunisia's successful revolution would inspire and impact the rest of the Arab world. The second unique attribute about Tunisia's revolution was its effectiveness. A mere ten days after street vendor Muhammad Bouazizi died after setting himself on fire, and local protests in Sidi Bouzid, a small city 190 km south of Tunis, spread across the country, the head of government, President Zine Ben Ali, was gone. And while protesters were met with state repression, there were relatively few casualties and injuries in comparison to Arab uprisings to follow.

The cleanliness of the Tunisia revolution might have been the result of the government being caught unaware, President Ben Ali not wanting more of his citizens to die or be injured, or a nationwide feeling that pervaded into the state apparatus that government corruption, repression, and unsatisfactory

economic performance demanded a change. The Tunisian sociopolitical movement gathered sufficient pace and scope to force long-reigning ruler to step down according to Mehran Kamrava. In describing the protests in Tunisia, Secretary of State Clinton stated that the protests in Tunisia proved to be transmittable. Thanks to satellite television and social media, young people across the Middle East and North Africa had a front-row seat to the popular uprising that toppled Ben Ali. Inspired, they began turning private criticisms of their governments into public calls for change. After all, many of the same conditions that drove frustration in Tunisia were present across the Middle Eastern region, especially with regard to corruption and repression.[30]

CRITICISM OF U.S. DIPLOMATIC REACTION

First Group of Analysts

Cooper, Aftandilian, Gerges, Morey, Thyne, Hayden, and Senters argue that the United States was slow to react to Tunisia uprising, like Tunisia's government, major media, and other countries around the world. Few predicted sweeping democratic revolutions across the Arab world and therefore the seeding of the unprecedented movements was hard to identify. The United States maintained a good relationship with President Ben Ali, who was in many ways the "model U.S. client," secular, stable, and strong. However, U.S. strategic interests were not so great in Tunisia that the United States was unwilling to support a strong declaration for liberty from the Tunisian people.[31]

President Obama's 2011 State of the Union Address according to the aforementioned views, demonstrates how the U.S. government saw the Tunisia revolution as an isolated incident that was unlikely to spread—or perhaps just hopeful that it wouldn't—to neighboring countries. But the American ethos makes the U.S. reaction to Tunisia and the start of the Arab Spring slightly more complicated. On the one hand, the liberal foundation and ideals of America are strong, and Obama was presumably genuine in his praise for the Tunisian people and in his statement that the "United States supports the democratic aspirations for all people."[32] However, while this script read fine in Tunisia, the United States would not have wished Tunisia's neighbors in Egypt and Libya—crucial for regional stability and counterterrorism, respectively—to topple. As for the prospects of democracy taking root in Tunisia, it seems that the U.S. government is aware and reasonably comfortable with the fact that "political parties influenced by Islam are inevitable in their prospective democracy. With that as a baseline, the worry is about more extremist Islamic groups, but the calculation is that those groups are more likely to

gain traction if the system is perceived as unfavorable to any and all political Islam." Thus far, U.S. diplomacy was supportive and worked closely with the center-right *Ennhada* Party that won a plurality of the seats in parliament by garnering 37 percent of the popular vote in the October 2011 election.

Second Group of Analysts

Maria do cen de Pinho Ferreiro Pinto, George Friedman, Martin Indyk, Kenneth Liberthal, and Michael O' Hanlon argue that, in the first months of the uprisings, Obama's cautious response to the popular uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa drew frequent criticism. It wasn't until May that Obama firmly put the United States on the side of Arab reform during his speech delivered at the State Department. However, the first clear instance was Tunisia, where Obama immediately clearly chose to back away from support for Ben Ali. Obama expressed his support for the Tunisian pro-democracy movement saying: "the United States of America stands with the people of Tunisia, and supports the democratic aspirations of all people."[33] However, in the following weeks, the administration voiced its concern via John Kerry-the Secretary of State for the transition process in that country: "But there's a long way to go. But, there's no experience. There's no institutional muscle memory about how you do this."[34]

Alexis Arieff and Carla Humud analysts at the Congressional Research Services' analysts argue that U.S. policymakers have praised Tunisia's transition, and President Obama invited newly elected President Béji Caïd Essebsi to visit Washington. Congress shaped U.S. transitional support to Tunisia and new defense cooperation. The administration, in consultation with Congress, allocated over $610 million in aid since 2011—much of which was reprogrammed from appropriations made for other intended purposes—and proposed to double the annual aid appropriation for Tunisia in FY2016. U.S. engagement and aid nonetheless remain modest compared to states such as Egypt and Jordan, which are regarded as more intertwined with U.S. national security interests. The FY2015 Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act (P.L. 113–235) allowed additional funding for loan guarantees and for the Tunisian-American Enterprise Fund, which seeks to strengthen Tunisia's private sector.

The FY2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 113–176) also provided funding for these purposes but prohibited a planned Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) "threshold" grant because Tunisia's income level is too high to qualify for a full MCC compact.[35]

In February 2014, Secretary of State John Kerry traveled to Tunisia, where he pledged "our commitment to stand with Tunisia . . . to help move down this road to democracy."[36] Kerry also announced a new U.S.-Tunisia Strategy

Dialogue, the first session of which was held in Washington in April 2014. Then-Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa, who led Tunisia's delegation, met with President Obama at the White House. A joint statement emphasized support for "Tunisia's historic democratic transition" and cooperation on economic development, educational and cultural affairs, and security and counterterrorism.[37]

Case Two: Egypt

Egypt has a largely homogeneous population with a Sunni Muslim majority and a Christian Orthodox Copt minority. The Copts are not ethnically different from the Sunnis and their peaceful coexistence has been long cited as a model despite the clashes in the past few years. The military is relatively professional institution but heavily involved in politics since the 1952 revolution led by Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser. But after the 1967 military defeat, and the 1973 war with Israel followed by the 1979 peace agreement with Israel, they (the Egyptian military) curved for their corps a national service developmental role in the Egyptian economy. President Mubarak, albeit an authoritarian ruler, led his country by a method of political moderation and secularism.[38] He continued to stabilizes his role by relaying on the three pillars of the deep state institutions initially erected by Nasser—the military, the police, and the intelligence service(the later its officers are drawn from the military and the police). The deep state institutions are maintained by Nasser's successors Sadat and Mubarak. All Egyptian presidents in one way or another used coup-proofing strategy and played each one of the deep state's institutions against the other to maintain stability in the country by centralizing the decision-making process in his hand over the polity economic and society.[39]

According to Jeremy M. Sharp of the Congressional Research Service, U.S. policy toward Egypt has long been framed as an investment in regional stability, built primarily on long-running military cooperation between the United States and the Egyptian militaries and sustaining the March 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.[40]

On January 25, 2011, after sixty years of enduring a military regime, Egypt (the most populous Arab country with 100 million people) seemed to be finally witnessing a transition. Independence from British occupation gave birth to a militarized autocracy that survived through military and police repression for decades, led by a succession of four presidents coming from the military. Derek Chollet who served in senior positions in the White House during the Obama's administration has described Obama state when dealing with Egyptian revolt *as* he was facing a difficult balancing act: how to continue to encourage and shape Egypt's internal evolution toward greater political freedom and economic opportunities while, at the same time, upholding out core security interests.[41]

Chronology of Events

- January 25, 2011: "Day of Anger" millions of protesters all over Egypt gathered in a peaceful demonstrations in all public squares—the largest in Tahrir Square, Cairo. In his State of the Union Address, President Obama mentions Tunisia's "desire for to be free" and states, "The United States of America supports the democratic aspirations of all people." No mention of Egypt is made. Secretary of State Clinton calls Egypt "stable." This, I believe, was misreading and wrong analysis of the U.S. ambassador to Egypt, Ann Paterson, detailing of events in the Egyptian political theater.
- January 28, 2011: Internet access in Egypt is cut and restricted. A number of protesters in Tahrir Square starts to grow to hundreds of thousands as the army imposes a curfew to minimal effect. Violent clashes between protesters and police increase.
- January 30, 2011: Secretary Clinton brings "orderly transition" into the U.S. message for the first time.
- January 31, 2011: Obama dispatches Frank Wisner, a former U.S. ambassador to Egypt, to tell President Mubarak he must prepare for an "orderly transition" of power.
- February 1, 2011: Mubarak pledges not to seek reelection in September elections.
- February 1, 2011: U.S. officials in the state department publicly condemn attacks on protesters and journalists and increase calls for an "orderly, meaningful, and peaceful transition of power" to begin. Followed by a Senate Resolution calls on Mubarak to transfer power and Senator McCain suggests suspending aid to Egypt's military. State Department disavows Ambassador Wisner's comments that Mubarak must stay in power to manage the transition of power.
- February 10, 2011: In a much-anticipated television address, Mubarak says he will hand overpower to Vice President Omar Suleiman, but refuses to step down. Obama calls the statement, "not enough to meet the demands of protesters clamoring for democratic change."
- February 11, 2011: Mubarak resigns, transferring power to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces(SCAF), ending a thirty-year reign.

U.S. Diplomatic Reaction to Egypt's Events, and the Limits of Leverage

Chollet documents with firsthand information as a participant in the decision-making process in the White House that Obama's response to the uproar in Egypt is a case study in how the administration struggled to address a different set of challenges testing America's leverage and influence in how it

uses its military and economic assistance in a country that for decades has been a regional ally and a recipient of $1.3 billion of American taxpayer dollars. The sudden departure of President Hosni Mubarak in February 2011 set off a trembling both in the Middle East region and Washington D.C. Signing the peace treaty with Israel in 1979 was followed by decades of diplomatic and military cooperation between the two countries, and United States–Egypt relationship had been a cornerstone of American Middle East policy. There was tension between Obama's twin foreign policy goals of continuing to encourage and shape Egypt's internal political development toward greater political freedom and economic and social opportunity while, at the same time, endurance of U.S. core national security interests. Yet, the tensions between these foreign policy objectives proved very difficult to reconcile.[42]

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during Obama's first term confirms Obama's difficult situation in dealing with Egypt during and after the Arab Spring. She argued that for the Obama's administration, the protests in Egypt presented a delicate situation. Mubarak had been a key strategic ally for decades, yet America's ideals were more naturally aligned with the young people in Egypt calling for "*bread, freedom, and dignity*." She documents that on January 28, 2011, President Obama joined a meeting of the National Security Council in the White House Situation Room and asked us for recommendations about how to respond to the events in Egypt. The debate around the long table went back and forth. We probed once more into questions that had bedeviled U.S. policymakers for generations! Can we successfully influence the internal politics of other nations and nurture democracy where it has never bloomed before, without incurring negative unintended consequences? What does it mean to be on the right side of history?[43]

The aforementioned questions dominated the debates of Obama's national security team according to Clinton, and it were the same debates they would have throughout the so-called Arab Spring.[44] Like many other young people around the world, Clinton argued, some of President Obama's aides in the White House were brushed up in the drama and idealism of the moment as they watched the pictures from Tahrir Square on T.V. Members of Obama's foreign policy team were identified with the democratic yearnings and technologically savvy of the young Egyptian protests. Indeed, Americans of all ages and political affiliations were enthused by the sight of people so long repressed finally demanding their universal human right, and revolted by the excessive force the authoritarian regime used in response to their legitimate needs. Clinton argued that she shared that feeling, and it was an electrifying moment of history. But along with Vice President Biden, Secretary of Defense Bob Gates, and national security Adviser Suzan Rice, she was concerned that Americans not be seen as pushing a longtime partner-Hosni

Mubarak out the door, leaving Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and the region to an ambiguous dangerous future.[45]

The arguments for tossing the United States' weight behind the protesters went beyond idealism. Championing democracy and human rights had been at the heart of American global leadership for more than fifty years. Yes, Clinton argued we had from time to time compromised those values in the sake of strategic and security interests, including by supporting disgusting anti-Communist dictators during the Cold War, with mixed results. To reinforce her argument, she claimed that such compromises were harder to endure in the face of the Egyptian people demanding the very same rights and opportunities we had always said they and all peoples deserved. While before it had been possible to focus on the Mubarak who supported peace and cooperation with Israel and hunted terrorists, now it was impossible to ignore the reality that he was also a heavy-handed dictator who presided over a corrupt and fossilized military government.[46]

CRITICISM TO U.S. DIPLOMATIC REACTION

First Group of Analysts

Cooper, Aftandilian, Gerges, Morey, Thyne, Hayden, and Senters argue that Egypt's revolution began on January 25, the "Day of Revolt," when tens of thousands of marchers occupied Cairo's Tahrir Square to protest against President Mubarak and his government. Most probably, not enough information was available to high-level policymakers by late January 2011 to move the Obama administration to seriously examine the possibility of profound instability for the one-man government in Egypt. To be true, the administration's concern with the evolving revolt was uttered by Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, during a speech at the Forum for the Future conference in Doha, on January 13, 2011. The secretary of state's speech actually marked a pronounced contrast with the tone of the Obama administration so far.[47] In point of fact, President Obama had been criticized by democracy activists for not pushing leaders in the Arab and Muslim world more aggressively to pursue political openness. Secretary Clinton warned Arab governments that they risked "sinking into the sand" if they did not meet the needs of their people in terms of democratization and development. That reaction signaled the U.S. frustration with the lack of political change, undermining efforts to create stable Arab governments that can effectively combat terrorism.[48]

Egypt presented a different case to U.S. policymakers from Tunisia. It is the most populous country in the Arab world, strategically situated in the heart of the Middle East, bordering Israel and one which maintained a cold

but steady peace treaty with the Jewish state.[49] The author observes that Egypt, since the late 1970s, had close military relations with the United States and had granted to the U.S. fly-over rights and expedited transit through the Suez Canal, for U.S. military aircraft and naval ships, respectively. Moreover, as the leading intellectual center of the Arab world—with its well-known secular and religious institutions such as Cairo University and Al-Azhar University—what happened in Egypt was watched closely in other parts of the Arab world. In addition, Egyptian President Mubarak, since coming to power in 1981, generally supported U.S. policy initiatives in the region and was seen as a key U.S. ally in the Middle East region.

Soon after the toppling of the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia, young democracy activists in Egypt took their demands to the streets by using the new social media tools. Trying to understand the protesters but not wishing to anger long-standing ally, Mubarak, Secretary of State Clinton stated publicly on January 24, 2011: "Our assessment is that the Egyptian government is stable and is looking for ways to respond to the legitimate needs and interests of the Egyptian people."[50] Clinton's comments were not well-received by the protesters who demanded the resignation of Mubarak and pressed on with their protests in the face of increased repression by the Egyptian government's security forces. As the demonstrations increased in late January 2011, the Obama administration tried to chart a middle course—hoping to work with the Mubarak government to accommodate some of the protesters' demands but not calling for a change of government. For example, on January 28, 2011, after several days of protests and police violence against the demonstrators, President Obama stated publicly that the Egyptian government should respect the people's universal rights but indicated that he wanted to work with the Mubarak government for a more just and more free Egypt. Kenneth Eliasberg described Hilary's performance as a Secretary of State, the nation's top diplomat, and foreign policy Czar of President Obama during the Arab Spring as a national security disaster.[51]

Likewise, during the Arab Spring, the performance of the U.S. Ambassador to Egypt Ann Paterson was criticized. Mark Landler, reporting from Egypt argued that "Ms. Patterson's problems started on June 18 when she was invited, at a time of mushrooming demonstrations against Mr. Morsi's government, to speak to an audience in Cairo about the United States' relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood. It was, she said, a welcome chance to 'set the record straight.'"[52] While the United States supported Egypt's democratic development, it still had to deal with those in power. Ms. Patterson said, adding, "I don't think the elected nature of this government is seriously in doubt."[53] Moreover, she said, she was "deeply skeptical"[54] that "street action will produce better results than elections."[55] The United States was over Egypt, once a crucial strategic ally in the Middle East but lately just another

headache. Even as Ms. Patterson sought to distance the United States from the Muslim Brotherhood, those words marked her as an enemy of the crowds in Tahrir Square, reviving memories of Mr. Obama's early reluctance to cut loose Mr. Mubarak, a longtime ally of the United States.

Mona Mohammed, fifty-two, an Egyptian bank employee said the following about the U.S. Ambassador at an antigovernment rally: "She manipulates people and secretly governs the country."[56] "The ambassador is part of a conspiracy against Egypt and its people," Ms. Mohammed added, clutching a poster with a caricature of Ms. Patterson and the slogan "Hayzaboon, Go Home." (Hayzaboon is Arabic for tyrant).[57] At a pro-Morsi demonstration across town, Mohammed Amr-Alla, a professor at Al-Azhar University, said: "The ambassador meets with the opposition and supports them. She should not interfere; she needs to watch from a distance."[58] Both perspectives disprove the reality that the United States has far less influence in Egypt than it did a generation ago.[59]

In any case, the aforementioned group of analysts pointed that the outbreak of the revolution caught Washington by surprise and constituted a significant intelligence failure. This event was similar, to a certain extent, to Washington's unpreparedness toward the 1979 revolution in Iran. Back then, not only did the administration fail to prevent the traumatic collapse of Pahlavi rule, which damaged the power and credibility of the United States in this critical part of the world, but, perhaps more importantly, undermined the prospects of constructive U.S.-Iranian relations up to the present time.

Second Group of Analysts

Maria Ferreira Pinto, George Friedman, Martin Indyk, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Michael O'Hanlon argue that in the early weeks of the crisis, the majority of Washington's political establishment believed in Mubarak's resilience, as no one in the bureaucracy wished to be the first to "make the call" that the *Rais* (the Arabic slang for all Egyptian presidents) was on his way out. As with the Iranian revolution, as a consequence, each individual and each organizational element procrastinated, waiting for incontrovertible evidence before pronouncing such a fateful judgment. In the aftermath of the "Day of Rage," the first crucial day of the protests in Egypt, Clinton offered a flimsy reaction of the Mubarak's government hold on power. She gauged it was "stable" and was responding to "the legitimate needs and interests of the Egyptian people."[60] Hours later, riot police attacked the thousands of demonstrators who had gathered in Tahrir Square. Drawing a parallel to the Carter administration failure regarding the Iranian revolution, Michael Curtis explains that Washington's inactivity and inability to draw the proper conclusions from revolutionary events has to do with "the paralysis of bureaucratic

structures in high-risk situations."[61] He argues that if the revolutionary events had taken place in an area of the world with less strategic importance, there would have been "little reluctance to speculate about a range of possible outcomes, including revolutionary overthrow of the existing power structure."[62] From the "Day of Rage" on, the administration frantically tried to catch up with events, and at last began to adjust its policy to the fast-changing events. On January 26, Hillary Clinton urged all parties "to exercise restraint," while also appealing to the Egyptian authorities to allow peaceful protests and the use of the social media.[63] By the end of January, Obama sent former U.S. Ambassador to Egypt, Frank Wisner, to convince Mubarak not to seek another term and to help Egyptian officials plan elections for autumn. On February 1, in a televised address, Mubarak defied demonstrators who wanted him to leave immediately, by announcing he would not seek reelection, but would serve out the rest of his term until September. The statement forced Obama into a difficult position. The official policy of support for Mubarak was bent on the assumption that he was capable of acting vigorously and decisively and that events would not get out of hand: that was an expectation that proved to be unfounded and short-lived. Obama's reaction was that "an orderly transition must be meaningful, it must be peaceful, and it must begin now."[64] Obama's statement entered a new phase with Obama's carefully nuanced public statements signaling a desire for Mubarak to step aside. The announcement went a long way to meeting pressures for him to make clear his support for the protesters and preparing the way for easing Mubarak out of the way as painlessly as possible while beefing up the position of the moderate opposition. On behest of the administration, Admiral Michael Mullen, the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, quietly pressed the newly designated Egyptian Vice President, Omar Suleiman, to urge Mubarak to step aside so that he could begin negotiating a transition to a new government with a coalition of opposition figures, including the Muslim Brotherhood.[65]

Based on the aforementioned views, apparently the White House had clearly decided that the *Rais*'(the Arabic term for the Egyptian President) departure would enhance the chances that other figures in the regime, such as Gen. Omar Suleiman, could negotiate a smooth transition. The administration apparently concluded that stability could only be restored quickly in Egypt if it entered a smooth transition period. U.S. officials feared that protests rocking Egypt could change the political landscape of the entire Arab world and beyond. Possible outcomes could range all the way from pro-democracy forces taking charge in Cairo to, in a worst-case scenario, regional war, and instability, involving Israel and Iran. In between, there could be a long period of instability that could breed economic chaos across the region, prolonging the economic plight in the United States and Europe and concerns about mass migration to Europe. Days of watching the protests spread on the streets of

Egyptian cities convinced administration officials that Mubarak probably would not weather the political storm and that this was compromising the transition to a new political order.

The remaining inherent contradictions, according to Ferreira Pinto, the Obama's administration was trying to simultaneously encourage and contain the forces of revolution in Egypt broke into the open on February 5, 2011 when Wisner called Mubarak an "old friend" of the United States, and said he "must stay in office in order to steer those changes through."[66] It seems that part of the confusion also stemmed from the government's own conflicting message and to the fact that the State Department diverged from the White House line. Contrary to the Iranian revolution, when the State Department had enough information "to seriously examine the possibility of profound instability for the one-man government in Iran," this time around it raised doubts as to the wisdom of Mubarak's ouster. The Obama administration's awkward reaction reflects all too clearly the dilemma it faced between balancing its support for the democracy protesters' aspirations with its desire for an orderly political transition in a strategic ally. The mixed message reflected a policy seemingly wrong-footed by the speed with which the revolt mounted, and that, inevitably, was made up on the fly. Obama wanted to position the United States on the side of the protesters. Simultaneously, he feared that the uprising could spin out of control and unsettle the region. He was also hard pressed to assure other autocratic allies that the United States did not hastily abandon its friends. The Saudis and other "moderate" pro-U.S. Arab states were dismayed at the manner in which the Americans had responded to a faithful ally. The U.S. decision to forsake Mubarak shook the Saudi trust in the American hegemony. They undoubtedly did not harbor illusions about the reliability of American support under the Obama administration.

The strategic calculations behind the flip-flops of the administration are obvious: Egypt is a lynchpin of the American security architecture for the greater Middle East. As the world's largest Arab nation, Egypt is critically important to U.S. foreign policy and to major goals the Obama administration pursued in the Middle East: the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, containment of Iran's influence and nuclear ambitions, and counterterrorism. Egypt's role is at the heart of normalizing Arab relations with Israel. Mubarak has also helped guarantee Israel's interests and the stability of its border with Gaza. After Washington's rapprochement with Egypt, under Anwar Sadat, every U.S. administration has invested heavily to maintain the status quo. Fear that Egypt's uprising would develop into an Islamist revolution along the lines of that of Iran in 1979 would constitute the worst possible scenario for Washington and Tel Aviv. American policymakers were initially tied by the fear that Egypt's move toward democracy might be hijacked by the Muslim Brotherhood or another group unfriendly to American interests. But now that

a generalized political upheaval swept throughout the Arab world, sticking to a status quo would have been unrealistic and, political expediency wise, negative. Eventually, the administration managed to sharpen the message and to try to place itself on the right side of history.[67]

Case Three: Bahrain

According to the Congressional Research Services, the Al Khalifa family, which is Sunni Muslim and generally secular not as religiously conservative as the leaders of neighboring Saudi Arabia, has ruled Bahrain since 1783. That year, the family, a branch of the Bani Utbah tribe, arrived from the Saudi peninsula and succeeded in capturing a Persian garrison controlling the island.[68] In 1830, the ruling family signed a treaty establishing Bahrain as a protectorate of Britain, which was the dominant power in the Persian Gulf until the early 1970s. In the 1930s, Reza Shah Pahlavi of Iran unsuccessfully sought to deny Bahrain the right to grant oil concessions to the United States and Britain. As Britain began reducing its responsibilities in the Gulf in 1968, Bahrain and other Persian Gulf emirates (principalities) began deciding on their permanent status. A 1970 UN survey (some refer to it as a "referendum") determined that Bahrain's inhabitants did not want to join with Iran. Those findings were endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 278, which was ratified by Iran's parliament. Bahrain negotiated with eight other Persian Gulf emirates during 1970–1971 to try to form a broad federation, but Bahrain and Qatar each decided to become independent. The seven other emirates formed a federation called the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Bahrain declared itself independent on August 15, 1971, and a U.S. Embassy opened in Manama, Bahrain's capital, immediately thereafter.[69]

2011 Uprising: Origin, Developments, and Prognosis

Shiite aspirations were demonstrated to have remained unsatisfied when a major uprising began on February 14, 2011, in the aftermath of the toppling of Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak. After a few days of minor confrontations with security forces, mostly Shiite demonstrators converged on the interior of a major traffic circle, "Pearl Roundabout," named after a statue there depicting Bahrain's pearl-diving past. The protesters demanded—and Shiite opposition leaders continue to demand—altering the constitution to create a constitutional monarchy in which the prime minister and cabinet are selected by the fully elected parliament; ending gerrymandering of election districts to favor Sunnis; and providing more jobs and economic opportunities.[70]

The unrest escalated on February 17–18, 2011, when security forces using rubber bullets and tear gas to clear Pearl Roundabout killed four

demonstrators. Wifaq pulled all eighteen deputies out of the Council of Elected Representatives. In part at the reported urging of the United States, on February 19, 2011, the government pulled security forces back, and on February 22 and 25, 2011, large demonstrations were held.[71]

Crown Prince Salman's "Seven Principles" Reform Plan

The government, with Crown Prince Salman leading the effort, invited the representatives of the protesters to begin a formal dialogue. That effort was supported by gestures by King Hamad to release or pardon 308 Bahrainis, including Al Haq leader Mushaima, and to drop two Al Khalifa family members from cabinet posts. On March 13, 2011, the Crown Prince articulated "seven principles" that would guide a national dialogue, including a "parliament with full authority;" a "government that meets the will of the people"; fair voting districts; and several other measures. However, the Crown Prince's principles fell short of calling for a constitutional monarchy, as demanded by the opposition. Still, the articulation of the seven principles gave Wifaq and other moderate oppositionists hope that many of their demands could be met through dialogue. Yet, the use of force against protesters appeared to shift some demonstrators toward hardline groups demanding the monarchy end.[72]

Cooper and Aftandilian observed that the Bahrain case is only one of its kind because of the country's demographics and its international relationships. The small island country has a population of roughly 1.2 million, of whom 54 percent are foreign nationals. Of the 570,000 Bahrainis, around 70 percent are *Shia*, yet King Hamad is *Sunni*. Bahrain is in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and is a close political ally of Saudi Arabia. However, with Shias being the predominant Muslim denomination, ties also exist to Saudi Arabia's rival, Iran.[73]

Chronology of Events

- February 17, 2011: "Bloody Thursday" After four days of protests, Bahraini forces attack sleeping protesters at Pearl Roundabout with live ammunition killing 74 and injuring 600.
- February 18, 2011: The United States condemns the attack. Jennifer Stride, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Fifth Fleet, says there is no "indication the protests will cause significant disruption" for the Fifth Fleet, which is, "not being targeted."
- February 22, 2011: 200,000 Bahrainis, about 35 percent of the national population, participated in a Martyr's March to honor the protesters who died.
- March 14, 2011: At the request of Bahrain's government, the GCC sends in troops of the Peninsula Shield Force, 4,000 soldiers from Saudi Arabia and

500 policemen from UAE. The United States calls for restraint but did not signal opposition to the troop deployment.
- March 18, 2011: Government demolishes Pearl Roundabout Monument and increases repression to stem the uprising
- June 29, 2011: King Hamad, thirteen years in power, establishes Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry to look into human rights abuses in February and March. The report, released on November 23, criticizes security forces for using excessive force, blames the government and opposition, and admits to the use of torture. The United States and governments abroad welcomed the report's release.

U.S. Diplomatic Reaction

Secretary of State Clinton reports firsthand information on Obama's most delicate balancing act in the Middle East in the beginning of the Arab Spring- that with Bahrain and with American partners in the Persian Gulf-Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. The United States had developed deep economic and strategic ties to these wealthy, conservative monarchies, as Americans made no secret of our concerns about human rights abuses, especially the treatment of women and minorities, and the export of extremist ideology. Every U.S. administration wrestled with the contradictions of our policy toward the Gulf States Clinton argued. The wave of popular protests that started in Tunisia and crashed into Egypt did not stop there. The call for political reform and economic opportunity spread across the entire Middle East.[74]

Different from the Obama's reaction to the Egyptian protesters, the administration has not at any time called for the Al Khalifa regime to step down, asserting that Bahrain's use of force against demonstrators has been limited and that the Bahrain government has undertaken reform—both prior to and since the unrest began. The administration has repeatedly urged Bahraini authorities against using force against protesters, it opposed the GCC intervention, and it has called on all parties to engage in sustained dialogue. Bahrain, as the home base for the U.S. Navy in the Persian Gulf, was an exceptionally complicated case for Obama's foreign policy team, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton argued. The delicate balance of our relationships in the Gulf threatened to unravel.[75]

Indyk, Lieberthal, and O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institute reported that by Friday, March 4, 2011, the crowd in Bahrain had grown to some 200,000, and their demands had escalated, they now called for the overthrow of the king. On March 11, 2011, Obama dispatched Secretary of Defense Robert gates to Bahrain to consult with the king.[76]

The sheiks of Bahrain had developed a special friendship with the U.S. Armed Forces-seeing in them, like their Saudi big brothers, the ultimate

source of their protection.[77] They had provided a base for the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet in 1995. Secretary of Defense Gates, was therefore well positioned to have a heart-to-heart conversation with King Hamad and Crown Prince Salman. According to Gates's account of the two-hour meeting, he told them that "baby steps" toward reform would be inadequate to meet the political and economic grievances of their people. Gates also, cautioned them that prolonging the reform process would provide an opportunity for Iran to become involved, creating more chaos and triggering civil war. He warned them, "Time is not our friend."[78]

Secretary of State Clinton documents her firsthand information that "on Sunday, March 13, our defense attaché` at the embassy in Riyadh reported unusual troops movement in South Arabia that might be heading toward Bahrain."[79] When she called the UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan inquiring about the news, he confirmed that a military intervention was about to be launched. Bahrain's government invited its neighbors in to help provide security. Bahrain had not seen the need to inform the United States, as they did not intent to ask the U.S. permission.[80]

Apparently, Saudi Arabia according to Clinton did not see the situation in Bahrain the way the United States saw it as the need for political reforms and economic opportunity. The Saudi king saw the uprising in Bahrain as a threat to his regime. If the Iranians were about to exploit the turmoil in Bahrain, the only remedy was to extinguish out the revolt, not to encourage the Shia demonstrators by offering them major reforms. The Saudi king was already making contingency plans to that effect, mobilizing his troops and those of the UAE. He (the Saudi king) conveyed to Obama directly a very clear message of warning: if the United States tries to push the king of Bahrain from power it will cause a break in United States–Saudi relations. Clinton reported that on March 14, 2011, thousands of Saudi troops crossed the border into Bahrain with some 150 armored vehicles, and about five hundred police from the UAE followed.[81]

In a September 21, 2011, speech to the UN General Assembly, President Obama said: In Bahrain, steps have been taken toward reform and accountability. We're pleased with that, but more is required. America is a close friend of Bahrain, and we will continue to call on the government and the main opposition bloc—the Wifaq—to pursue a meaningful dialogue that brings peaceful change that is responsive to the people. We believe the patriotism that binds Bahrainis together must be more powerful than the sectarian forces that would tear them apart. It will be hard, but it is possible.[82] After the release of the BICI report, then-Secretary of State Clinton said that the United States is deeply concerned about the abuses identified in the report . . . and believe[s] that the BICI report offers a historic opportunity for all Bahrainis to participate in a healing process that will address long-standing

grievances and move the nation onto a path of genuine, sustained, reform.[83] The conclusion of the 2013 State Department report on the BICI recommendations, referenced above, states: King Hamad deserves credit for initiating the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, for accepting the recommendations put forward in the report, and for committing to implement the reforms. While the Government of Bahrain has made progress in implementing recommended reforms put forward in the BICI report, there is still work to be done.[84]

With the combination of praise and criticism of Bahrain's response to unrest and addressing opposition grievances, It is observed that the administration continued to engage the Bahrain government at high levels. The United States has not banned travel to the United States or imposed economic penalties on Bahraini officials that might have committed or authorized human rights abuses. As discussed later, the administration had withheld some arms sales to Bahrain, but in late June 2015, it lifted that hold. The U.S.-funded expansion of the large naval facility that the United States uses in Bahrain has continued without interruption since the uprising began in 2011.[85] In June 2015, the State Department publicly expressed it was "deeply concerned" by the conviction of Shaykh Ali Salman, who is discussed above, and that opposition parties play a vital role in "inclusive, pluralistic states and societies."[86] As far as high-level engagement, in May 2012, Crown Prince Salman visited Washington, DC, and met with senior U.S. officials including Secretary of State John Kerry and Vice President Biden.[87] In December 2013, then-secretary of defense Chuck Hagel visited Bahrain to speak before the Manama Dialogue international security conference—the first U.S. Cabinet member to visit Bahrain since the uprising began.[88] Secretary of State John Kerry met with King Hamad in March 2015 on the sidelines of an economic conference in Egypt.[89] The Crown Prince represented Bahrain at the May 13–14, U.S.-GCC summit at Camp David, organized in large part to reassure the Gulf states about U.S. commitment to Gulf security in light.[90]

CRITICISM TO U.S. DIPLOMATIC REACTION

First Group of Analysts

According to Aftandilian, Cooper, the upheaval in Bahrain, which hosts a major U.S. military base and borders the world's primary oil producer, Saudi Arabia, is mostly rooted in discontent among the majority Shia Muslim community toward the Sunni monarchy, although instigators are also among pro-government Sunnis, and conservative factions of the ruling family (especially

the Royal Court and Defense Ministers). The country is strategically located across the Persian Gulf from Iran and hosts the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet. Moreover, Manama is a critical link to the decades-old U.S. effort to protect the Western world's access to Gulf oil. In Bahrain, where the uprisings turned violent, Obama did not even utter a word in support of armed intervention, instead pressing the regime to embrace reform on its own. Washington has moderated its regime reform pressures in Bahrain also for fear of Iranian meddling in that vital Gulf country and fear that protracted political turmoil could provide an opening for additional influence by Tehran in Bahrain's neighbor, Saudi Arabia. The intensified wrangling across the Persian Gulf between the Sunni and Shia powers has reinforced Washington's wariness about Iran's regional ambitions, strained relations between the United States and important Arab allies, and tempered the former's initial support for the democracy movements in the Arab world.

Maintaining stable foreign relations proved more important than promoting human rights in the American response to the uprising in Bahrain according to Cooper's critical analysis. The harsh crackdown on protesters initially drew a strong response from the United States. Fearing an all-out assault on the protesters, President Obama and Secretary Clinton expressed concern and urged restraint. A month later, Washington was biting their fingernails again when Saudi troops were called in to quell the uprising. U.S. diplomacy had to walk a fine line of ensuring a humanitarian crisis did not occur, while at the same time not upsetting a key strategic alliance with Bahrain, home to the U.S. Fifth Fleet, and Saudi Arabia. Attempts by Secretary Clinton and Robert Gates to talk to the Saudis about respecting human rights in controlling the Bahraini uprising were rebuffed.

Second Group of Analysts

Ferreira Pinto, George Friedman, Martin Indyk, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Michael O'Hanlon argue that U.S. officials were suspicious that Bahraini Shia are susceptible to outside influences, such as attempted subversion from neighboring Iran. At the invitation of the Bahraini royal family, Saudi Arabia sent troops into Bahrain to suppress the protests, a move that drove a wedge between Riyadh and Washington. Saudi Arabia fears that, if the protesters prevail, Iran—Saudi Arabia's regional rival—could expand its influence and inspire unrest elsewhere.[91]

While the Obama administration became ever more outspoken against repression in Syria and Yemen—not to mention Libya, where Obama eventually put in practice a policy of regime change—it remained remarkably restrained about the escalating crackdown in Bahrain. The strongest criticism came from Secretary of State Clinton in April 12, 2011, at the U.S.-Islamic World Forum

when she appealed for a "political process that advances the rights and aspirations of all the citizens of Bahrain" and asserted that "security alone cannot resolve the challenges" facing the government. She also said the administration had raised its concerns publicly and directly with Bahraini officials.[92]

Apparently, according to Clinton, the administration threw its weight behind attempts of Bahrain's royal family to survive, although protesters say their demands have not been met. It believes Bahrain is "an important force for political stability and economic progress in the Middle East."[93] That is why the Defense Department announced it intends to sell US $53 million worth of military equipment and support to the Gulf state, including armored vehicles.

With the United States voicing concern over human rights violations in Bahrain and elsewhere—half-hearted as they may be—the Saudis appear to have decided that their traditional American allies cannot be fully counted on. The effective manner in which Bahrain and its Gulf partners squashed the uprising eased the delicate position adopted by the United States. Apart from Bloody Thursday, relatively few deaths occurred with authorities instead using extremely high rates of arrest and torture. While these tactics prompted criticisms from human rights organizations, the lack of violent images as well as sustained protests with numbers in the hundreds of thousands, that marked the Arab Spring in other countries, meant the Bahraini uprising received very little mainstream media coverage. Saudi Arabia's eagerness to assist Bahrain was in part motivated by their alliance in the GCC, but also to send a message to Iran. At the outset of the uprising, the United States and Iran found themselves in a strange position taking positions not unlike one another; Iran strongly supported the uprising, and the United States was on the verge of doing so, as well. However, once it became clear that an ethnic cleansing of the mostly Shia protesters would not occur, the United States returned to its familiar position alongside Saudi Arabia. Like Yemen, Bahrain was a case in which the costs to the United States of upsetting a crucial relationship with Saudi Arabia did not merit support for the protest movement. Protesters did gain economic concessions, the release of political prisoners, small governmental changes, and the symbolic gesture of the state admitting its role in the humanitarian crisis, yet public dissatisfaction ensues, as protests are ongoing.

The Congressional Research Services' team of analysts stated, on May 23, 2019, that the Bahrain government's repression of majority Shia has presented a policy dilemma for the United States because Bahrain is a longtime ally that is pivotal to maintaining Persian Gulf security. Bahrain has hosted a U.S. naval command headquarters for the Gulf region since 1948; the United States and Bahrain have had a formal Defense Cooperation Agreement since 1991; and Bahrain was designated by the United States as a "major non-NATO ally" in 2002. There are over 7,000 U.S. forces,

mostly Navy, in Bahrain. Bahrain relies on U.S.-made arms, but, because of the government's use of force against protesters, the Obama administration held up some new weapons sales to Bahrain and curtailed U.S. assistance to Bahrain's internal security organizations. However, the Obama's administration changed the aforementioned policy in 2014 when Bahrain joined the U.S.-led coalition against the Islamic State and flew strikes against the group's fighters in Syria that year. In addition, Bahrain supports a U.S.-backed concept for a broad Arab coalition to counter Iran, the "Middle East Strategic Alliance."[94]

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Chapter 7

Libya, Syria, and Yemen and Their Unique Characteristics

Libya, Syria, and Yemen's populations, according to Alon Ben-Meir, are essentially a collection of tribes living under a single state flag. That is because their populations constitute numerous tribes and cliques that came to share national territory and demarcated borders designated to them by colonial powers. But they have never been a unified citizenry, and the disunity was maintained by military dictators. To remain in power, each dictator has relied on an exclusionary political system that depends upon the support of his own tribe and family members. The tribe-led countries contained a similar governmental structure, but there were differences in the ruling style of each leader. Consequently, the unique characteristics of each country have defined their Arab Spring uprising. Also, as it will be explained here, it will influence their respective transitions to democracy, and raise the differences between them and other potential uprisings elsewhere in the Arab world.[1]

CASE FOUR: LIBYA

In Libya, Ben-Meir argues that Qaddafi drew the ruling elite from his own tribe, al-Qaddafia, and his sons. He used the state internal security forces against his own people, and denied them any aspect of participatory governance. He also wasted the country's oil resources on pet projects, on buying an image of leadership in the Arab world and Africa, and his attempts to develop weapons of mass destruction. Timing, momentum, geography, oil, and a dictator overplaying his hand, all aligned in Libya to prompt the strongest international reaction during the Arab Spring. Nine days after Ben Ali left Tunisia protesters gathered in Tahrir Square in Egypt, and four days after

Mubarak resigned, Libya became the next country swept up by the revolutionary fervor.

Colonel Qaddafi attempted to crush the opposition early, before sustained mass protests could even materialize. The result was that various rebel groups quickly came together under the National Liberation Army, which grew to only 17,000 troops, but had broad support from across the country, especially in the East. Libya's proximity to Europe, just across the Mediterranean Sea, made responding to Qaddafi's crackdown an ethical issue, and the EU's dependence on Libyan oil was a strategic issue. Geography also was important because of the ease with which a potential intervention could be conducted. Therefore, France and the UK pressured the United States to join a NATO Coalition to respond with an international military intervention to the Libyan Civil War.

Chronology of Events

- February 15, 2011: Violent protests in the eastern city of Benghazi rapidly spread to other cities. Authorities use aircraft to attack protesters.
- February 26, 2011: UN freezes Qaddafi's assets and restricts travel
- Early March: Qaddafi's forces push back National Liberation Army
- March 17, 2011: UN Resolution 1973 establishes no-fly zone in Libya and forms legal basis for an international military intervention
- March 23, 2011: NATO enforces naval blockade
- April–August: Intensified NATO air strikes help turn the tide against Qaddafi's forces
- July 18, 2011: United States recognizes National Transition Council as legitimate authority
- August 20–28, 2011: Rebels take control of capital after the Battle of Tripoli. Loyalist forces
- retreat to Sirte.
- October 20, 2011: Qaddafi is killed and Sirte is captured, marking the end of the war and forty-year reign.

U.S. Diplomatic Reaction

Clinton, and Chollet document a firsthand knowledge of Obama administration's response to the uprising in Libya. Clinton argued that President Obama has chosen to deal with the Libyan uprising through consultation and coordination with U.S. Allies and Russia, and Arab leaders, and through forming international coalition. President Obama dispatched her (Secretary of State Clinton) on March 15, 2011, to meet Foreign Ministers of the Group of 8 leading industrialized countries—France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the

United Kingdom, Canada, Russia, and the United States—to discuss ways to stop Qadafi from slaughtering his own people (Russia was expelled from the group in 2014, after the invasion of Crimea).[2]

Derek Chollet has confirmed the aforementioned approach of Obama's foreign policy and diplomacy toward Libya in response to the uprising of the Arab Spring. He argues that "the Administration had been deliberating what to do about Libya for weeks, and had come under greater pressure to intervene to prevent what many feared would be genocide."[3] By March 2015, key American partners—especially the British and the French, and even the Arab League—were calling for military intervention. The National Security Council (NSC) meeting of March 15, 2011, opened with a customary review of the latest intelligence, and the picture was ugly, Chollet argued. Our intelligence showed Qaddafi's forces on the move to crush the civilians. The British and the French were ready to offer a UN Security Council resolution authorizing the establishment of a no-fly zone, and were seeking American support. There was growing pressure from home as well: two weeks earlier, the Senate had unanimously passed a resolution urging the UN to protect civilians from attack, including through a no-fly zone. But no member of the NSC believed a no-fly zone would actually solve the problem. Obama said of the aforementioned idea "it's just a show to protect backsides, politically,"[4] Qaddafi's threat to the civilian uprising came mainly from tanks and troops on the ground, not from his aircrafts in the skies.

After the end of the NSC's meeting of March 15, 2011, White House team came up with the following three options as a response to the Libyan uprising: first do nothing and let the Europeans proceed on their own; join the British and French in a symbolic no-fly zone; third or enlarge the military objective to protect civilians by attacking Libyan forces on the ground, which would require a more robust intervention and therefore more risk (Footnote 3). The president and his cabinet members considered these three options and it became clear that the United States could not stand aside. The circumstances were the inverse of those that had led to the intervention in Iraq nearly a decade earlier: the threat was imminent, the intelligence undoubted, and the world was demanding for America to do something. In fact, American European allies had made it clear that they would move with or without us, Chollet reports.[5]

Under the aforementioned circumstances, Chollet argues, Obama said, the United States could not sim-play act like Russia and China, hanging back and avoiding responsibility. Obama feared that if the United States stood aside and watched her allied flounder-or worse, a massive humanitarian catastrophe unfold—it would do grave damage to American leadership. But Obama choosing to act did not mean that the United States should go "all-in." Despite

his sense of urgency, Obama did not believe that Libya was a vital national interest for the United States in the Middle East. Obama sympathized with the argument of Defense Secretary Gates, who warned that getting involved would be a diversion from more important commitments in the Middle East and not worth the costs and trade-offs.

Given the aforementioned prudent concerns of the secretary of Defense, President Obama proposed an innovative *hybrid approach* to the Libyan crises—widening the goals but tightly scoping America's involvement. Instead of a no-fly zone, the United States would take on a broader mission of protecting civilians by attacking Qaddafi's forces on the ground (some called it a "no-drive zone"). Hence, the U.S. military would lead at the beginning of the intervention, rolling back the immediate threat to Bengazi and taking down Libya's air defenses, which would set the conditions for the allies, led by NATO, to act. Then, American forces would continue to help NATO partners by providing "unique capabilities" such as intelligence assets, refueling, or precision-strike munitions. But U.S. forces would not seek to dominate the strike missions, and would not put American troops on the ground.

Finally, Chollet reported that Obama came up with the aforementioned idea himself in response to the Libyan situation, He(Obama), later observed that he was not entirely surprised that his advisers had failed to come up with this option; bureaucracies tend to drive toward either-or choices. "What the process is going to do is try to lead you to a twofold decision," Obama said. "Here are the pros and cons of going in. Here are the pros and cons of not going in. The process pushed towards black or white answers; it's less good with shades of gray."[6] Apparently, Obama sought to develop a new model that differed from the typical post–Cold War military intervention—as in the Balkans during the Clinton administration or Iraq during the Bush administration—in which America's NATO allies often seemed like little more than window-lint on a U.S.-dominated operation. Now, the NATO allies wanted to step up, and President Obama was happy to let them. Obama said, "we need to get the international community invested in this to do something meaningful in Libya."[7] Obama saw this crisis as an opportunity to show how he believed countries could work together, relying more on America's uniqueness than on its dominance.

The joint operation proved to be successful-the Libyan humanitarian nightmare was prevented, in August 2011, rebel forces stormed Tripoli and overthrew Qaddafi's regime, and that October of 2011, Qaddafi found hiding in a sewer pipe, and was killed by rebel forces. The joint operation was viewed as a resounding victory for the NATO Alliance. As the analyst Gideon Rose later put it, it was an "immaculate intervention."

CRITICISM OF U.S. DIPLOMATIC REACTION

First Group of Analysts

Gregory Aftandilian and Cooper argue that relations between the United States and Libya had been improving since 2003 when Gaddafi gave up weapons of mass destruction, became party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and cooperated with the International Atomic Energy Association. The United States lifted sanctions in 2004 and removed Libya from the list of state sponsors of terrorism in 2006. Given the positive recent trend in relations, it is surprising how quickly the U.S. position changed.

There is some dispute about the nature of the Libyan government's crackdown and whether state forces or rebel forces were the initiators of violence. It is also disputed whether armed international intervention ameliorated or exacerbated government versus rebel fighting.

Despite criticisms of mission based off the mandate of UN Resolution 1973, and the United States shouldering a disproportionate load in NATO, the air-strike campaign that aided the Free Syria Army was hailed as a great victory by major media and a majority in the West, NATO, and Middle East. NATO's perceived initial success in Libya was the reason a "seductive precedent" was set to advocate for intervention into Syria.[8]

Second Group of Analysts

Maria Ferreiro Pinto, and Martin Indyk, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Michael O'Hanlon, Bending argue that when then the revolution caught up to Libya, on February 15, Obama initially resisted intervening militarily until he felt he had no choice. He preferred at first to use diplomatic means and economic sanctions to signal that Gadhafi's use of force would not help keep him in power. In the first days of the revolts, a popular criticism of the Obama administration was that its response to the Libyan crisis was sluggish, the government perceived as idling while Col. Gadhafi threatened and committed violence against his own people. Gadhafi ignored both his own pledge of a ceasefire and the West's warning of military intervention to launch a combined air and land assault on the rebel self-declared capital of "Free Libya," Benghazi. The rebel-held city had been clinging to the hope that the Security Council-backed resolution authorizing a no-fly zone would halt his advance eastward.[9]

Pinto, argues that the decision to intervene militarily came when Gadhafi's forces were closing in on Benghazi. On March 17, the Security Council approved resolution 1973 demanding an immediate ceasefire in Libya, including an end to the attacks against civilians, imposing a no-fly zone,

and tightening sanctions on the Gadhafi regime. Military intervention in Libya began on March 19, as Obama, who was on an official visit to Brazil, announced the beginning of the strikes, arguing: "We cannot stand idly by when a tyrant tells his people there will be no mercy."[10] The rationale for the military intervention was provided by his statement to the press: "This is the greatest opportunity to realign our interests and our values."[11]

The president was referring to the broader change going on in the Middle East and the need to rebalance U.S. foreign policy to accommodate a greater focus on democracy and human rights. He felt that, had the international community not acted when it did, thousands of Libyans would have been slaughtered as the world watched idly. As Marc Lynch noted, not acting would have been a powerful message, which would have haunted America's standing in the region.

In the run up to the passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 on March 14, which sought to protect the population of Benghazi from being massacred after Gaddafi declared his intention to chase down the dissenters house to house, regime, and revolutionary forces engaged in a tit-for-tat battle; both sides gained and lost territory as the battle continued. This was in fact a process that favored the regime. The rebels, poorly armed and unorganized, were unable to keep hold of territory, consolidate and build on their gains. The regime, on the other hand, had the benefit of superior weaponry, organized forces, and training, thus having the advantage over the rag-tag army it was facing.[12]

Other factors concurred to make the intervention possible. Obama emphasized that his decision on Libya was based on what has become his foreign policy doctrine: relying on international consensus and multilateral action to bring about military intervention with a limited American role. In a short timeframe, Obama and Clinton managed to accomplish the following policy acts: a resolution of support for the intervention from the UN Security Council; a statement from the African Union supporting democracy in Libya; and turning over the leadership of the coalition air campaign to the NATO command in Europe so as to share the costs and dangers of the operation with allies. Equally important, the administration garnered the support from the Arab League for a no-fly zone. Among Arabs, the decision enjoyed a broad consensus, among both leaders and the street.

Christopher Blanchard, the Middle East analyst at the Congressional Research Services stated that Libya's political transition has been disrupted by armed non-state groups and threatened by the indecision and infighting of interim leaders. After an armed uprising ended the forty-plus-year rule of Muammar al Qadhafi in 2011, interim authorities proved unable to form a stable government, address pressing security issues, reshape the country's public finances, or create a viable framework for post-conflict justice and

reconciliation. Qadhafi left state institutions weak and deprived Libyans of experience in self-government, compounding stabilization challenges. Elections for legislative bodies and a constitutional drafting assembly held in 2012 and 2014 were administered transparently but were marred by declining rates of participation, threats to candidates and voters, and zero-sum political competition. Insecurity became prevalent in Libya following the 2011 conflict and deepened in 2014, driven by overlapping ideological, personal, financial, and transnational rivalries. Issues of dispute have included governance, military command, national finances, and control of oil infrastructure. At present, armed militia groups and locally organized political leaders remain the most powerful arbiters of public affairs. An atmosphere of persistent lawlessness has enabled militias, criminals, and Islamist terrorist groups to operate with impunity, further endangering civilians' rights and safety. U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) emphasizes the importance of a political solution for stability, and in March 2018, told Congress that, in light of prevailing turmoil, "the risk of a full-scale civil war remains real."[13] U.S. officials and other international actors have worked since 2014 to convince Libyan factions and their various external supporters that inclusive, representative government and negotiation are preferable to competing attempts to achieve dominance through force of arms. The UN Security Council has authorized financial and travel sanctions on individuals and entities responsible for threatening "the peace, stability or security of Libya,"[14] obstructing or undermining "the successful completion of its political transition,"[15] or supporting others who do so. A UN arms embargo is in place, and U.S. executive orders provide for sanctions on figures that undermine the transition. In December 2015, some Libyan leaders endorsed a UN-brokered political agreement to create a Government of National Accord (GNA) to oversee the completion of the transition. GNA Prime Minister-designate Fayez al Sarraj and members of a GNA Presidency Council have attempted to implement the agreement and have competed for influence with political figures and armed forces based in eastern Libya, including Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar's "Libyan National Army" (LNA) movement. A UN-sponsored Action Plan launched in 2017 seeks to complete Libya's transition during the coming year, and Libyans and outsiders are debating terms for its implementation. Previous mediation efforts struggled to gain traction, and outsiders have at times pursued their own agendas through ties with Libyan factions. Such competition by proxy raises the stakes of Libya's internal rivalries and complicates negotiations. The State Department suspended operations at the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli in July of 2014. U.S. diplomats engage with Libyans and monitor U.S. programs in Libya via the Libya External Office at the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia. Periodic U.S. military strikes target IS members and other terrorists. U.S. officials judge that the threats posed by

IS members and Al-Qaeda have been degraded, but note that these groups remain dangerous and could resurge if conditions deteriorate. Congress has conditionally appropriated funding for limited U.S. transition support and security assistance programs for Libya since 2011 and is reviewing the Trump administration's FY2019 requests for assistance funds. In 2017, the administration imposed conditional restrictions on the entry of Libyan nationals to the United States, with some exceptions. Political consensus among Libyans remains elusive, and security conditions may create lasting challenges for the return to Libya of U.S. diplomats and the full development of bilateral relations.[16]

Case Five: Syria

Syria's Alawite minority is ruling over a Sunni majority who views them unfavorably. Ruthless crushing of protests is Al-Assad family tradition, Alon Ben-Meir[17] argues that in 1982 Rifaat Assad, Bashar's uncle quelled a revolt in the city of Hama by killing nearly 20,00 of its residents, and the regime of his brother and Bashar's father, Hafez, survived. Hillary Clinton describes Syria's Arab Spring Uprising as a "Wicked Problem" for Obama administration's foreign policy team. Alawites a Shiite sect closely aligned with Iran that had ruled over the Sunni majority for decades, going back to the French mandate after World War I. Alawites made up 12 percent of the country. The rebels who were part of the Arab Spring uprising constituted 70 percent of the population, while the Kurds made up 9 percent. Another 10 percent of Syrian are Christian, and approximately 3 percent are Druse, a sect originating from Shiite Islam with elements of Christianity, Judaism, and other beliefs.[18]

Chronology of Events

- March 27, 2011: Protests in the city of Daraa are met with strong government repression
- April 5, 2011: State of Emergency—in force since 1963 is lifted
- May 12, 2011: Army tanks enter several cities to quell uprisings
- June 7, 2011: President Assad pledges to begin "national dialogue" on reform
- July 29, 2011: Disparate opposition forces unify under the Free Syria Army
- August 18, 2011: Obama calls on Assad to step down
- August 23, 2011: Syrian National Council formed, eventually recognized by seventeen UN member states, and officially supported by eight states, including the United States as of December 5.
- November 16, 2011: Arab League suspends Syria.

- December–May 2012: UN fails to pass resolution amid growing violence and unrest. The United States and EU increase sanctions against Syria. A nonbinding UN peace plan gains support despite skepticism and both sides breaking the cease is "on track."

U.S. Diplomatic Reaction:

In Syria, according to Clinton, Obama administration worked through the United Nations and the Arab Leagues due to the fact that new players entered into the already complicated situation. The Russians who maintained for decades a Naval Base were implacably opposed to anything that might constitute pressure on Assad. The Russian naval facility in Tartus is a leased military installation of the Russian Navy located on the northern edge of the sea port of the Syrian city of Tartus. Also, Iranian forces from the Revolutionary Guard and its elite paramilitary unit, the Quds Force, were already in Syria supporting Assad and the Syrian military. The Iranians were playing in Syria a key advisory role, accompanying Syrian forces to the field and helping the regime organize its own paramilitary forces. Furthermore, militants from Hezbollah, Iran's proxies in Lebanon, also joined the fight against the popular uprising on behalf of the Syrian regime. The combined Iranian-Hezbollah presence was critical to the regime's grasp on power.

Derek Chollet's observation as a witness and participant of Obama's foreign policy team validated Secretary of State Clinton's description of the Syrian situation as a "wicked problem" it defies easy solution, and all the choices were bad. Do nothing, and a humanitarian disaster envelops the region. Intervene militarily, and risk opening Pandora's Box and wading into another Quagmire, like Iraq. Send aid to the rebels, and watch it end up in the hands of extremists. Continue with diplomacy, and watch it run headfirst into a Russian and Chinese veto. None of the aforementioned approaches tried by Obama administration offered much hope of success. And over time, the choices only became worse. Again, Obama was in a delicate position. "Managed Transition." Best describes the Obama approach to Syria's future. The United States wanted Assad out, but it wanted the leadership transition to proceed in a way that would not lead to even greater chaos and bloodshed. The policy debates inside the administration(as well as in the public debate about Syria) resided in the fundamental, and uncomfortable, tension between the two words" managed" and "transition."[19]

In 2014, the Obama administration requested authority and funding from Congress to provide lethal support to vetted Syrians for select purposes. The original request sought authority to support vetted Syrians in "defending the Syrian people from attacks by the Syrian regime,"[20] but the subsequent advance of the Islamic State organization from Syria across Iraq refocused

executive and legislative deliberations onto counterterrorism. Congress authorized a Department of Defense-led train and equip program to combat terrorist groups active in Syria, defend the United States and its partners from Syria-based terrorist threats, and "promote[e] the conditions for a negotiated settlement to end the conflict in Syria."[21]

In September 2014, the United States began air strikes in Syria, with the stated goal of preventing the Islamic State from using Syria as a base for its operations in neighboring Iraq. In October 2014, the Defense Department established Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) to "formalize ongoing military actions against the rising threat posed by ISIS in Iraq and Syria."[22] CJTF-OIR came to encompass more than seventy countries, and has bolstered the efforts of local Syrian partner forces against the Islamic State. The United States also gradually increased the number of U.S. personnel in Syria, which reached roughly 2,000 by late 2017. President Trump in early 2018 called for an expedited withdrawal of U.S. forces from Syria,1 while other administration officials have stated that a continued U.S. presence is key to preventing the reemergence of the Islamic State.

According to Aftandilian and Cooper, after the international joyousness at the effective multilateral intervention into Libya, there was a strong sentiment that NATO success would prompt a second intervention into Syria. The Libya mission had relatively low economic and human costs to NATO, and the situation in Syria began to worsen soon after the Libya operation's conclusion. From the start of protests in March 2011 to December, roughly 5,000 people had died. As the opposition unified and organized, Syrian forces increased the scale of their attacks, flouting the international community. Since December, the casualty rate doubled, instability spread to Damascus and Aleppo, and Syrian citizens ran for their lives to Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon. The Kofi Annan Peace Plan had a minimal effect on the growing violence.[23]

CRITICISM TO U.S. DIPLOMATIC REACTION

First Group of Analysts

Aftandilian and Cooper argue that the United States has come out strongly against the Assad regime only in rhetoric. There are many differences between the intervention in Libya and a potential operation in Syria. Libya's proximity to the U.S. Sixth Fleet made air strikes feasible, and Libya's oil reserves held a strategic interest that does not exist in Syria. Furthermore, Syria's support from Iran and Hezbollah, Russia and China in the Security Council, and its proximity to Israel are important factors working against intervention.

Some 56 percent of those surveyed said the United States should not intervene in Syria, while only 19 percent supported action, the online poll found. Some 25 percent said they did not know what course of action the United States should take.[24]

American public support for the opposition is matched by official U.S. policy, which is supporting the Free Syria Army with nonlethal weapons. In his 2012 State of the Union, President Obama said, "I have no doubt that the Assad regime will soon discover that the forces of change can't be reversed, and that human dignity can't be denied." Verbal attacks were the only kind President Obama ever launched at Assad.

In Syria and Yemen, Aftandilian and Cooper point that the Obama administration took a cautious, incremental approach refraining initially from calling for a regime change. In the case of Damascus, the administration vainly held out hope for a "managed transition" before coming out and declaring Assad's rule illegitimate. Initially, Washington was skeptical that the uprising would overthrow the regime. It also believed it lacked the leverage to affect the situation in the country. There were other strategic calculi, as well, affecting the administration's appraisal: for one, Syria is critical to Obama's attempt to end Iran's nuclear program and to promote Arab-Israeli peace. Ever since he took office, Obama had been trying to engage Syria—Tehran's greatest ally in the region—to persuade Iran's leaders to end its nuclear program and its support of anti-Israeli terrorism, if not even end its alliance with the Ayatollah's regime. Finally, there was little support in the United States for another military adventure in the Middle East. Reaction was also slow to condemn Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad's violent repression of peaceful demonstrators, muting its criticism of Assad's repression. Strangely enough, only by mid-August did Obama call on Assad to resign due to the deadly crackdown on peaceful protesters. Public demonstrations across Syria began on January 26, 2011, but escalated in March. The administration's caution with Syria is certainly due in part to the uncertainty that what follows Assad's demise might be worst. There are constraints on the United States' will to intervene. Assad's alliances with Iran, Hezbollah, and Hamas certainly undermine important U.S. strategic interests in the zone, but, on the other hand, he has kept the border with Israel quiet. Another factor is the absence of the strong regional support that crystallized around Libya. Finally, there is little support in the United States for another military adventure in the Middle East.

Second Group of Analysts

Ferreiro Pinto, Martin Indyk, Kenneth, and Michael O'Hanlon argue that the United States slapped sanctions on Syria at the very beginning of its

crackdown. Pressure to place Assad under sanctions had been building for weeks as his government continued a brutal crackdown on protesters. Until then, Obama had adopted a much more measured and cautious approach in the hope that the Syrian president would respond to international pressure. However, this approach did not work. President Obama imposed sanctions again on May 18 against Assad himself and six top aides to "increase pressure on the government of Syria to end its use of violence and begin transitioning to a democratic system that ensures the universal rights of the Syrian people."[25] In imposing the sanctions, the Obama administration stopped short of saying Assad had lost his legitimacy to rule, but demanded a stop to the regime's policies of repression and initiating a political transition. Publicly calling on Assad to resign momentarily released pressure from an administration that had ruled out more risky policy options, like those pursued in Libya. For one thing, the United States wanted to make sure it was acting in coordination with allies: internationally coordinated pressure, by many capitals at once, would have far more effect than one emanating from a single nation, even if that nation is the United States. Obama's call for Bashar Al-Assad to "step down" was a long time coming. The president, who had spoken in public on Syria only twice, had declined to say that Assad should leave office. The Obama administration's cautious stance on the Syrian revolution put the credibility of the United States on the line, especially when it became clear, five months into the start of the uprising, that Assad's opportunity to institute real reform was not real. The other reason for dragging its feet was that Obama and Clinton had been relying on their counterparts in Turkey for advice and mediation with the Syrian regime. They expected Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's personal relationship with Assad might help in convincing him to pursue a reform program.

Obama's willingness, Ferreiro points to consider all options, to especially, to cling to a "lead from behind" policy did not enhance American leadership. Eventually, the Turkish leverage over Damascus bore no fruit. In May, Turkey called on Assad to enact reforms and rein in the violent crackdown on the anti-regime protests. Assad reiterated a commitment to start a national dialogue to review new legislation, including laws on parliamentary elections, the media, and allowing political parties other than the Baath Party, as well as possible changes to the constitution. However, he did not deliver on his promises or implement the reforms.

After months of stepping cautiously around urgings that Assad declaredly renounce the rule, Obama demanded that Assad step down. The president's ultimatum marked a significant ratcheting up of pressure. He was accompanied by the European Union (EU) and the leaders of Britain, France, and Germany, also calling on Assad to leave. It was a dramatic sharpening of international rhetoric since Obama, as well as other major states, had

urged Assad to reform rather than resign. Relying on sanctions rather than military force, Obama has stacked a variety of sanctions against the Syrian government.

Case Six: Yemen

According to Ben-Meir, Yemen like Libya and Syria is essentially a collection of tribes living under a single state flag. Saleh's lieutenants are recruited mainly from his trip, Hashed, and other northern tribes, excluding the South and the Shiites of the country. Yemen, the Arab world's poorest country, has been in an ongoing civil war ever since the forced unification of 1990, and state weakness allowed the emergence of safe havens for Al-Qaeda operatives directing attacks against the United States. Within this background, the militaries in Yemen have been serving as the personal instrument of the ruler, with elite units led by their immediate family members.[26]

The Congressional Research Services report that before the Arab Spring, and for over a decade, the Republic of Yemen Government has been torn apart by multiple armed conflicts to which several internal militant groups and foreign nations are parties. Collectively, these conflicts have eroded central governance in Yemen, and have fragmented the nation into various local centers of power. Though until 1990, Yemen was largely devoid of a single government, the gradual dissolution of Yemen's territorial integrity has alarmed the international community and the United States. Policymakers are concerned that state failure may empower Yemen-based transnational terrorist groups; destabilize vital international shipping lanes near the Bab al Mandab strait (alt. sp. Bab al Mandeb, Bab el Mendeb); and provide opportunities for Iran to threaten Saudi Arabia's borders. Beyond geo-strategic concerns, the collapse of Yemeni institutions during wartime has exacerbated poor living conditions in what has long been the most impoverished Arab country, leading to what is now considered the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Aftandilian and Cooper argue that the absence of *jihadism* and *Al-Qaeda* in the early Arab Spring has been well documented. The one place it did have a role, even if not apparently visible, was in Yemen. In the war against terrorism that has greatly diminished *Al-Qaeda* and affiliated terrorist organizations' size, strength, funding, and operational capacity, *Al-Qaeda* in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has emerged as the primary threat to carry out attacks on American soil. Yemeni President Saleh became a close friend to Washington by giving the U.S. military free rein to conduct drone strikes and overnight raids in his country. That Yemenis viewed Saleh as too friendly with the United States was one of a number of grievances; lack of job opportunities, extremely underwhelming economic performance and quality of life, and a failure to address increasingly scarce resources (namely water),

were far more immediate concerns for the average citizen. Harsh government crackdowns and repeatedly undelivered promises by the ruling regime fueled the popular discontent.

Chronology of Events

- January 27, 2011: 16,000 people protest in Yemen's capital Sana'a and the port city of Aden
- February 25, 2011: 180,000 protest across the nation
- March 18, 2011: President Saleh declares a State of Emergency as state forces open fire on protesters. Numerous government official resign or join the opposition.
- March 24, 2011: Saleh accepts the five points submitted by the opposition Joint Meeting Parties (JMP), including "formation of a government of national unity and a national committee to draft a new constitution, drafting a new electoral law, and holding a constitutional referendum, parliamentary elections and a presidential vote by the end of the year." The JMP reject the plan, demanding Saleh's removal from power.
- April 3, 2011: The GCC drafts several proposals for the orderly transition of power, granting immunity to Saleh and his family in exchange for allowing the opposition a shared role with the current regime in governing Yemen. The opposition agrees but Saleh stalls.
- May 23, 2011: Battle of Sana'a commences after Saleh refuses to sign the transition agreement for the third time. Two weeks of open fighting ensues.
- June 3, 2011: President Saleh is injured in an attack on the presidential palace. He receives treatment in Saudi Arabia. Vice President Hadi becomes acting president.
- September 23, 2011: Saleh returns to Yemen amid increased turmoil
- November 23, 2011: Saleh signs GCC transition plan that he previously spurned, transferring power to Vice President Hadi, and establishes elections on February 21, 2012. Hadi runs as the only candidate on the ballot. The next elections are to be held in 2014.
- November 24, 2011: Saleh leaves for the United States, ending a thirty-three-year rule.
- May 1, 2015: Saleh openly allied with the Houthis (Ansar Allah) during the Yemeni Civil War, in which a protest movement and subsequent insurgency succeeded in capturing Yemen's capital, Sana'a, causing President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi to resign and flee the country.

December 1, 2017: he declared his withdrawal from his coalition with the Houthis and instead sided with his former enemies—Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and President Hadi.

December 4, 2017: during a battle between Houthi and Saleh supporters in Sana'a, Houthis accused Saleh of treason and he was killed by a Houthi sniper. Reports were that Saleh was killed while trying to flee his compound in a car; however, this was denied by his party officials who said he was executed at his house.

U.S. Diplomatic Response

Clinton a participant and member of the U.S. foreign policy team argued that America's relationship with President Saleh was emblematic of the dilemma at the heart of our Middle East Policy.[27] He was corrupt and autocratic, but he was also committed to fighting Al-Qaeda and keeping his fractious country together. The Obama administration decided to hold American noses, increase our military and development aid to Yemen, and expand our counterterrorism cooperation. After Tunisia and Egypt Jeremy Bowen argues that Yemen started their own uprising against Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had been president since 1978. Following the demonstrations, parts of the army defected to protect the protesters, but many people died before Saleh agreed to a deal where he would leave, in return for immunity for prosecution. For a while, a Saleh solution was seen as prudent for an exit from Syria of Bashar Al-Assad. However, the mistake in the Yemeni deal, which also made it possible, was that it left Saleh's sons and nephews entrenched in power, controlling elite units in the military. AQAP started to carry out terrorists attacks to destabilize the rule of Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, the former field marshal who had replaced Saleh as president. Hadi was struggling to establish control of the capital city, let alone the mountains and deserts where Al-Qaeda had its strongholds. Since then the irreversible change was happening in Yemen, where jihadist gunmen continued to kill their fellow Muslims.[28]

CRITICISM OF U.S. DIPLOMATIC RESPONSE

First Group of Analysts

Cooper and Aftandilian describe the U.S. diplomatic response to the Yemeni uprising was quiet and the most supportive of the ruling regime in the entire Arab Spring. While the United States did not declare outright support for the Saleh government, neither did it call for Saleh to step down, nor did the United States ever condemn the regime.[29] The furthest the Obama administration was willing to go was to urge Saleh to sign the GCC-sponsored political agreement to allow for an orderly transition of power, which was in Saleh's own interest, given that he ultimately had only two options: one, cede power and gain immunity, or two, refuse to relinquish power and be killed. After

initially choosing the second option and consequently risking death, Saleh changed course, and sought refuge in the United States after finally signing the transition plan. Although Yemen's role Arab Spring indeed produced a "regime change," the revolt was not a success, as the election was not democratic and important social issues such as poverty and joblessness remained unaddressed. From the U.S. perspective, Yemen was a case where *realism* took precedence over *idealism.*

Given the presence of AQAP in the country, the United States was unwilling to allow a de facto change of relations. "While AQAP has not been driving the unrest, it is opportunistically seeking to exploit it."[30] Any diversion from targeting terrorist units in Yemen would allow them to think and plot . . . more creative attacks that have become the hallmark of the most lethal Al-Qaeda affiliate."[31] In spite of clear U.S. security interests trumping the advancement of political freedom, the United States tried to appear somewhat balanced, with the White House releasing information of a phone call of Deputy National Security Adviser John Brennan urging Saleh to resolve the crisis, and Obama publicly supporting Hadi before and after the sham elections. Depending on the success of American operations against AQAP in the next two years, Yemen's 2014 elections had the potential to produce meaningful reform; however, resource and demographic challenges posed huge obstacles to overcome, even in the unlikely event of political liberalization.

Jeremy Sharp, analyst for the Congressional Research Services, argues that the U.S policy toward Yemen continued to seek a stable, unified Yemen that is no longer home to transnational terrorist groups targeting Western or Saudi interests. However, whether or not the United States and the broader international community have the will or means to achieve this goal, is an open question. A modern, politically unified Yemen has only been in existence for twenty-four years, and in many respects unity has been more aspirational than functional. The United States government has committed itself to furthering Yemen's unity while supporting the devolution of some power from the capital to the provinces. The convening of the 2013–2014 National Dialogue Conference, which the United States supported, was an attempt to foster reform through a Yemeni-driven process that addressed issues such as federalism, resource sharing, and restructuring of the armed forces. In September 2014, a State Department spokesperson said: "We call on all parties, to participate peacefully in Yemen's transition process, which offers a historic opportunity to build an inclusive system of governance that ensures a stable and prosperous future for all Yemenis. The United States remains firmly committed to supporting President Hadi and all Yemenis in this endeavor and to our enduring partnership with the Yemeni government to counter the shared threat from al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula."[32]

However, as regional revolts have recently jostled the country's political order, U.S. and international efforts to support an orderly transition of power are unraveling. At a time when the constitutional drafting process remains incomplete following the 2011–2012 political transition, Yemen is trending toward dissolution, not unity, a pattern that raises questions about the overall focus of U.S. policy. Houthi rebels and southern separatists almost certainly do not consider the transition process to serve their interests, but rather those of traditional northern Yemeni elites. The U.S. State Department has called on the Houthis to "cease efforts to take territory by force,"[33] to turn over "all medium and heavy weapons to the State,"[34] and to abide by a September 21, partially U.S.-brokered cease-fire. However, despite U.S. condemnations of Houthi unilateralism, at this juncture, the actions of separatist movements—rather than the international community—appear to be driving the terms of Yemen's delicate transition.

As a result of the aforementioned situation in Yemen, according to Sharp, President Obama issued Executive Order 13611 which sanctions individuals who threaten the "peace, security, or stability of Yemen,"[35] and those who threaten to disrupt Yemen's political transition. From May 2012 to November 2014, the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) had not sanctioned any Yemeni under E.O. 13611.90. However, on November 10, 2014, two days after the issuing of targeted UN sanctions under UNSCR 2140 (see below), OFAC designated three individuals, including former President Saleh and two Houthi leaders, as specially designated nationals.

In general, it is uncertain what kind of impact U.S. sanctions will have in deterring individuals from disrupting Yemen's transition. In most cases, possible targets of U.S. sanctions are unlikely to have substantial assets under U.S. jurisdiction. Broader international sanctions, such as those created under UNSCR 2140, may have a greater impact. But Ben Lowings of Brussels International Center (BIC) criticizes the UNCR 2140 on the following Grounds.

Congress does not typically earmark aid to Yemen, but the administration makes country-specific requests for congressional consideration. After the passage of a foreign operations appropriations bill, federal agencies allocate funds to Yemen across multiple aid accounts. They then submit a country allocation report to Congress for review. Unlike countries or entities (such as Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians) that generally receive much larger amounts of U.S. assistance from two or three main accounts, Yemen receives U.S. aid in any given fiscal year from as many as seventeen different aid programs managed by multiple agencies, including the Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Defense. The State Department reports that the United States committed more than $142 million in assistance to Yemen

in FY2014, in addition to $256 million in FY2013 and more than $356 million in FY2012. CRS can account for most but not all of these allocations. Program details are available in congressional aid obligation notification documents provided to the authorizing and appropriating committees of jurisdiction.

Second Group of Analysts

Maria Ferreiro Pinto, Martin Indyk, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Michael O'Hanlon argue that as for Yemen, President Ali Abdullah Saleh's ouster posed questions about stability in a nation seen by the Obama administration as a key ally in its fight against Al-Qaeda militants. As with the uprisings in Egypt and Syria, Obama initially failed to side with pro-democracy forces, wishfully choosing instead to hope for reformers among the very forces of the regime. Only much later did the tone change in regard to Yemen. The Obama administration withdrew its support two months into the uprising, after concluding that Saleh's government could not survive the revolts, and that U.S. interests were better served by getting a new government in place that might pursue the fight against Al-Qaeda. That issue became more urgent as Al-Qaeda has been able to exploit the turmoil that has resulted from Saleh's lengthy demise, taking control of the country's lawless southern region.

Initially, Ferreiro Pinto points that the administration limited White House critiques of the regime, even after that government opened fire on demonstrators for months in a row. Tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets of the Yemeni capital in late January 2011 to demand the end of the three-decade rule of President Saleh. His departure would likely undermine, at least temporarily, U.S. counterterrorism efforts. He was an important ally in the fight against AQAP, the Yemen-based group responsible for sending two parcel bombs to U.S. synagogues in October 2010 and the attempted bombing of a Detroit-bound plane on Christmas Day 2009. Because of Saleh's cooperation, the Obama administration had been reluctant to be too critical in its comments, at least officially, or to consider publicly scenarios for his ouster. Yemen's fragile stability increasingly became a concern to the United States as pro-democracy protests exploded into violence in mid-March. The violence, which drew condemnation from Obama and Secretary of State Clinton, may well have been the tipping point. In May, Hillary Clinton accused Saleh of turning his back on his commitments after he rejected a deal to step down. Clinton urged him to sign the U.S.-backed agreement to prevent further chaos. The agreement was brokered by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) under which he would hand over power within thirty days in exchange for a promise of immunity from prosecution. Despite strong Western pressure, Saleh repeatedly refused to sign the plan. Amid rising violence, the United

States urged Saleh not to return home from Saudi Arabia, where he recovered from injuries suffered in an assassination attempt during a popular uprising in early June. Yemen fell deeper into turmoil, since the withdrawal of security forces from some provinces left a power vacuum that Al-Qaeda tried to fill. Islamic militants took advantage of the chaos to seize control of several cities and towns in a southern province. On jihadist websites, the region started being referred to as the "Islamic Emirate of Abyan." That raised American fears that the militants may establish a firmer foothold in that Arabian Peninsula country, which is close to the Saudi oil fields and overlooks key oil shipping routes. On October 21, the United States co-sponsored UNSC Resolution 2014 calling for an end to violence, acceptance of the GCC peace plan, and the orderly transfer of power. The United States said the transfer of power in Yemen must begin "immediately." In November 2011, Saleh signed the GCC agreement, paving the way for his vice president to become acting president until new elections were held.[36]

From the above review of the cases of the American response to Tunisia and Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, Syria, and Yemen, Morey, Thyne, Hayden, and Senters researched whether Obama in responding to the Arab Spring's events was a leader, Follower, or Spectator? The goal of their research was to better understand Obama's role as a leader in the Arab Spring. The researchers focused their efforts on factors that are commonly understood to capture leadership, including *quick*, *clear*, and *consistent* signals, and evidence that other states were following Obama's signals. Regardless of the measure, their quantitative analyses based on comparing the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt provided little evidence that Obama played a leading role in the international response to these two uprisings. The researchers remain unsure as to whether the lack of U.S. leadership during these uprisings is good or bad for two main reasons. First, it is possible that the researchers' focus on only two states missed evidence of strong U.S. leadership as the protests spread beyond Tunisia and Egypt. A more thorough analysis of all events during the Arab Spring would allow examining this possibility, and more data would allow for more sophisticated empirical investigation. Second, the aforementioned conceptualization of leadership is perhaps quite inconsistent with what many may expect from their current president. After almost a decade of involvement in two major conflicts, U.S. citizens might welcome a president who is willing to observe as world events unfold rather than react quickly. Based on the data analyzed here and the criteria they used for strong leadership, however, they are forced to conclude that, at best, Obama showed weak leadership during the Arab Spring uprisings.[37] Apparently, Obama chose to rebalance the American stance, gradually backing away from support for Mubarak and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and allowing the popular movements to run their course. In Dereck Chollet's words, Obama was in a delicate balancing act of

rebalancing, resetting, and resurging U.S. Foreign policy generally after the Bush administration, while confronting the unpredicted events of the Arab Spring starting with Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, Syria, and Yemen.

Clinton in her documentary book, *Hard Choices* with a firsthand knowledge and participant of Obama administration's foreign policy team, refuted the argument that Obama's was leading from behind while responding to the unexpected events of the Arab Spring. She stated that

> President Obama was unfairly criticized as—leading from behind. That is a silly phrase. It took a great deal of leading from the front, the side, and every other direction, to authorize, and accomplish the foreign policies and diplomatic initiatives toward each country which witnessed the Arab Spring to prevent what might have been the loss of tens of thousands of lives. No one else could have played the role we did, both in terms of the military capability, and diplomatic capacity to build and hold together a broad coalition with NATO allies or via the United Nations.[38]

> There appears to have been three periods of UNSC consensus on the Yemen crisis. From 2011–2014, there was a clear consensus against the Salah regime, and the implementation of the GCC dialogue mechanism. During this period, the UNSC used more traditional language of national and international responsibility, including R2P, and accountability. They also had a strategy of nominating more varied and specific actors. Whether these UNSCRs were successful is debatable due to the event that followed, but for a while at least it appeared that this strategy was working to implement the GCC mechanism.
>
> From 2015, the strategy shifted to blaming the Houthis for being disruptive towards the dialogue process. The sheer spike in blame and request towards the Houthis was very noticeable and represented a sharp change in strategy as they were effectively isolated as the primary reason for the deterioration in the Yemen crisis. Following this, from 2016 onwards the strategy became much more general with a lack of specified actors, and a repetition of language and approach for many years. This appears to represent the time in which the Yemen crisis became politicized with members of the UNSC involved in a political capacity.
>
> Neither of these latter strategies appeared to significantly alter the Yemen crisis. As we saw, the UNSC spent large periods of time debating the language of press statements and presidential texts, in addition to the more powerful UNSCRs-proper, and Members from all sides consistently vetoed, abstained or broke silence agreements to block certain passages of text.[39]

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Chapter 8

Obama's Use of U.S. Power and Diplomacy

Alison Holmes and Simon Rofe in their book titled *Global Diplomacy, Theories, Types, and Models* argue that, in his memoirs, former U.S. secretary of state (1982–1988) George P. Schultz stated, "power and diplomacy work together." While that may be the ideal case, even an underlying look at the way power is understood or operationalized in the world suggests that many consider this mixture unevenly corresponding for international politics, power is commonly thought of as being "over" a territory and/or a people. Hans Morgenthau, a strong realist, long argued for the centrality of power and plainly argued that "International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power."[1]

On the use of force as a projection of U.S. power in the international order, Obama declared in his first inaugural address that America's "power grows through its prudent use. Our security emanates from the justness of our cause; the force of our example; [and] the tempering qualities of humility and restraint." He also indicated his approach to diplomacy as an outreach and negotiation: "To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history, but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist."[2] On both themes, he has embroidered often while in office. While he never proclaimed an *Obama Doctrine* officially, he did, in his role as professor-in-chief, proclaim guidelines that frame his decision-making on the projection of the United States' power abroad.

Susan Rice, Obama's national security adviser, affirmed that the administration will use "all elements of our power, including military force, to secure our core interests all over the world and the Middle East region."[3]

Rice on the 2015 National Security Strategy, February 6, 2015, stated that

Our strategy is guided by the same four enduring national interests we laid out in the 2010 National Security Strategy—security, prosperity, values, and a rules-based international order. Our interests are enduring, but in many respects, 2015 is a whole new ballgame. Much has changed in the last five years.

As a nation, we are stronger than we've been in a long time. Since President Obama took office, we arrested the worst financial crisis and repaired the biggest collapse in world trade since the Great Depression. In 2010, unemployment in the United States was almost 10 percent. Today, businesses have added more than 11 million new jobs, and unemployment is down to 5.7 percent. In 2010, our deficit topped $1 trillion; today, we've cut that in half, to less than $500 billion. Our kids are graduating at higher rates, and millions more Americans have healthcare. We've unlocked a domestic energy boom that has made us the world's number one producer of oil and gas, strengthening our energy security—with huge ripple effects for global oil markets and geopolitics. We've brought home almost 170,000 American troops, responsibly ending two long and costly ground wars and re-purposing our military strength so we can better respond to emerging threats and crises. The diversity and creativity of the American people continue to be a wellspring of American power—driving innovations that are revolutionizing everything from the way we hail a cab to the way we treat disease. By fortifying our foundational strengths, America is in a better position to confront current crises and seize the opportunities of this new century.

Yet, few know better than we the complexity of the challenges that America faces. Every day, I start my morning with a briefing that covers the most sobering threats and the difficult problems we confront around the world. These include the fall-out from the Arab uprisings, Russian aggression, Ebola, cyber attacks, and a more diffuse terrorist threat.[4]

In such circumstances, the United States should not go it alone. Instead, we must mobilize allies and partners to take collective action. We must broaden our tools to include diplomacy and development; sanctions and isolation; appeals to international law and—if just, necessary, and effective—multilateral military action. We must do so because collective action in these circumstances is more likely to succeed, more likely to be sustained, and less likely to lead to costly mistakes.[5]

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION OF PRESIDENTIAL POWERS

Any assessment of President Obama's performance in foreign policy and diplomacy in dealing with the Arab Spring, and projecting the United States' power via the four political, military, cultural, and economics types of

diplomacy, should be within the constitutional provisions of the formal and informal powers and constraints of the president. Likewise, the results of the three key activities of diplomacy are communication, representation, and negotiation in the Middle East.

Donna Starr-Deelen, in her research *Presidential Policies on Terrorism, From Ronald Reagan to Barack Obama* argues that a discussion of the president's authority of the four types of diplomacy, particularly the use of military force, should begin with the system of checks and balances famously devised by the framers of the U.S. Constitution to keep each branch of government under control. The theory for the government they created was based on a separation of powers, with one branch of government limiting another branch. At least on paper, Congress's war-making powers are as great as the president's according to Article I, section 8 of the Constitution. In addition, Congress controls the appropriations process to fund wars and may pass laws that are "necessary and proper" to fulfill its duties. The reality is that war-making powers, like other powers, are separate but often shared and the executive branch has more power than a casual reading of the Constitution would indicate. Presidential power, which is based on unspecified, but significant inherent powers in constitutional text, tends to expand. The United States has declared "war" pursuant to Congress passing a declaration eleven times since its founding: the last time was during World War II. The modern trend is for the president to ask Congress for its "support" (but not necessarily permission) through an authorization for the use of force.[6]

THE ARAB SPRING

The sudden occurrence of the Arab Spring, starting from December 2010, has resulted in a momentousness of an evolving and synergetic mixture of domestic, regional, and international challenges which affected the implementation of Obama's foreign policy and public diplomacy toward the Middle East and the Muslim World as outlined and prioritized in chapter 6. The objective of this chapter is to evaluate Obama's foreign policy and public diplomacy toward the Middle East taking into accounts the spill-over effects of the Arab Spring on the implementation of each specific policy. Below, we will start with the Arab Spring as an intervening variable; then managing the Israel-Palestine conflict; then we'll examine troop withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan, followed by examining the promotion of democracy, combating ISIS, using drones to counterterrorism, the closing of Guantanamo Bay detention facility and finally, the negotiation with Iran.

THE ARAB SPRING AND ITS CONTROVERSIES

When the Arab Spring popular uprising began in 2011 in Tunisia and Egypt Maria Ferreiro Pinto argues that Obama should have assisted the movements. Instead, however, he detached himself from the movements and made only modest reference to the necessity for political and social reforms. As the Arab revolutions spread and intensified, scholars speculated that Obama feared events might bring anti-American leaders to power throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Consequently, the president inconsistently responded. For instance, he initially endorsed Tunisia's and Egypt's sitting leaders, only later encouraging democratic transitions. During times when there was a change in the political status quo, Obama was hesitant to advocate democratic principles. For example, he later rejected the democratically elected Islamist governments in Egypt and Palestine out of fear they would hinder U.S. interests or destabilize the region. At the same time, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) also fluctuated its response to the Arab Spring. Sometimes the GCC embraced reform, at other times it remained silent as governments deployed military suppression to undermine the revolts. It is likely that domestic and international opinion leveraged his nonresponse. On the one hand, U.S. domestic public opinion, which Brancati argues is essential to bringing U.S. resources to bear for promoting democracy abroad, was absent. In late 2012, while the Arab Spring was underway, Pew Research found 60 percent felt the United States should not become directly involved in the uprising and a slightly greater percentage opposed arming anti-government militias in Syria. The trend remained relatively stable when polling was conducted again in early 2013.[7]

There are several explanations for U.S. public reluctance. First, U.S. analysts did not believe that any political changes made by the Arab Spring would be beneficial in the long term. Moreover, a slight majority agreed that stable, undemocratic regimes were more preferred than regional instability. These findings lend credence to the hypotheses that the U.S. public is reluctant to support democracy promotion internationally when costs are high, and the probability of success is perceived as limited. Thus, it is reasonable to deduce that domestic public opinion may have influenced Barack Obama's hands-off approach to the Arab Spring. On the other hand, observers from European and MENA countries were equally reluctant to support Western intervention in the Arab Spring uprisings.

Obama eventually intervened in Syria and Libya in a limited fashion. In hindsight, the relative utility of U.S. involvement in both theaters was minimal, while its value likely only protracted internal violent conflicts rather than hasten the democratic transition. In Libya, the administration provided

limited assistance with other North Atlantic Treaty Organization members operating in the country and then quickly exited.[8]

In Syria, Obama was slow to respond and was criticized by the U.S Congress for no follow-up after threatening Syria's President Bashar al-Assad's for his use of chemical weapons. Obama never followed up after several chemical attacks. However, Law makers' criticism is not based on democratic principles, ethics, or interest for the well-being of citizens of Syria. On the contrary, his critique is that Obama's policy gave the perception of U.S. weakness. While this appraisal may appeal to U.S. constituents, it has less resonance with Muslims. Unquestionably, Obama should have ensured that his rhetorical promotion of democracy was supported by policy. His inconsistencies risked undermining regional trust and U.S. legitimacy as an arbiter for democracy. It also underscores that U.S. geopolitical interests continued to trump principles when tough choices had to be made.[9]

ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

Throughout his presidency, according to Gerges, Barack Obama advocated a two-state solution to the protracted Israel-Palestine conflict. He established a peace envoy early, verbally encouraged the relevant parties to engage in negotiations, condemned Israel's settlement building, and implored Israel to adhere to the 1967 borders. During his 2009 Cairo speech, Obama openly expressed his position on the matter. He referenced the weightiness of the issue for Muslims, the illegitimacy of Israel's expanding settlements, and the importance of finding a viable resolution for regional stability. In his message, summarizes that Obama's rhetoric was sympathetic to Palestinians. However, Obama's preliminary efforts to broker peace faltered in the middle of his first term in office, due to an impasse between Barack Obama and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, evidenced by sharp rhetorical and policy disparities. With tensions between the two heads of state increasing, Obama became more passive on the issue. He never directly pressured Israel to engage Palestine in negotiations and seldom made reference to Israel's violation of human rights norms in the occupied territories.[10]

Ronald Gardner in his attitudinal research, *Actions Not words: Obama's Opportunity to transform U.S. Muslim Relations* documented that in 2013, Obama again tried to revive negotiations. They faltered the following year. At this point, the president was criticized for heavily relying on his secretary of state instead of being more personally involved.

Considering the quality of his relationship with Israel's prime minister, it is doubtful that Obama's direct involvement would have altered the outcome. Although the president outspokenly advocated a settlement, and made

several attempts to advance the process, there were numerous inconsistencies under his administration. In fact, critics argue that aside from his message, Obama's policy replicated the pro-Israel approach of his predecessors. To illustrate, Israel continued to receive large amounts of military aid from the United States during Obama's tenure. Similarly, according to Gardner, in early 2011, the United States vetoed a United Nations Security Council draft resolution that condemned settlement construction. The Obama administration likewise blocked Palestine's effort to obtain recognition as a state at the United Nations. These acts, among others, contradicted the president's stance on settlement construction and a two-state solution. It also gave the impression of U.S. bias toward Israel.

However, there were a few instances where the administration acted on its rhetoric. One example occurred during the last month of Obama's presidency. At this time, the administration refused to veto a December 2016 Security Council Resolution that condemned Israel's settlement building. The act overturned an established trend of the United States' protection of Israel in this venue—an act which was applauded by some and condemned by others. While symbolic and more agreed to his message, the definitive value of the action was marginal at best and came too late in his tenure. Overall, Barack Obama's actions regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict simulated longstanding U.S. policy toward Israel, although in many instances his message echoed Muslim interests. The duplicity in his approach, nevertheless, cannot be overlooked. As examined above, such practices are recognized for promoting anti-American sentiment among Muslims, and therefore likely conceded confidence.[11]

To be fair to President Obama, it is observed that the administration faced several international and domestic challenges while pursuing negotiations in this protracted conflict. On the one hand, Israel's leadership and citizens became more politically conservative during this time. This reduced their willingness to negotiate on settlement building and the status of Jerusalem. Simultaneously, the Arab Spring uprisings throughout the MENA captured the attention of U.S. and regional actors, as did the territorial gains of ISIS. The increasing effects of these events weakened the political will of the local, regional, and international stakeholders. On the other hand, the president, due to the influence of the intermestic politics in the United States, has a limited capacity to dictate a peace process due to the weight of domestic public opinion and partisan politics in the United States.[12]

Marsden argues that contemporary U.S. favoritism of Israel is rooted in Christian Conservative constituents who largely affiliate with the Republican Party. A late 2015 survey, for example, found that a majority of U.S. citizens wanted their government to play a neutral role in brokering a peace settlement between Israel and Palestine. Moreover, domestic partiality toward Israel is

evident in government. United States representatives vocally commit themselves to ensuring Israel's security. Its unconditional support places the U.S. government and its citizens on a collision course with Muslims.[13]

As observed, the United States generally sides with Israel, and does not, for instance, use its immense leverage to alter Israel's policy in the occupied territories. Some observers attribute this bias to the power and influence of the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) lobby on the U.S. government. Regardless of its roots, social and political partiality undermines U.S. legitimacy as a neutral peace broker and sours Muslim opinion of the United States.

TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM IRAQ

Barack Obama promised to continue U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq. The plan was initiated under George W. Bush and was supported by the U.S. public. Similarly, surveying throughout MENA shows the act was desired by most Muslims. Nevertheless, critics argued that complete military withdrawal from Iraq was premature because it allowed social-political tensions to fester. Analysts go on to associate the early withdrawal with increasing sectarian violence inside

Iraq, conditions which allowed the radical Sunni organization named the ISIS to strengthen and spread throughout the country. However, the governments of the United States and Iraq, and most citizens of Iraq, had agreed that U.S. military withdrawal should take place. As we saw in the previous section, this policy was also widely welcomed by Muslims. Consequently, Obama kept his promise to withdraw troops from Iraq, although some suggest reducing the U.S. military footprint in Iraq and the Middle East may have resulted from shifting U.S. foreign interests toward Asia as opposed to addressing Muslims grievances

COMBATING ISLAMIC STATE

ISIS was created as a result of the U.S. occupation of Iraq (2003–2011) and the subsequent rebellion. Feeding upon the religious tensions between Shia and Sunni Muslims, the group was able to root itself and survive. As the Arab Spring spread throughout the MENA in 2010, ISIS expanded into Syria. After significant territorial gains in Syria, it returned its attention to Iraq, taking vast swathes of northern Iraq in early 2014. By July of that same year, ISIS leader Abu Bakral-Baghdadi declared the captured territory in Iraq and Syria a caliphate. Thereafter, ISIS continued to expand its territory and grow its

cadre into mid-2015, while the international community slowly fashioned a concerted effort to contain the group.[14]

Barack Obama has been criticized for his delayed and limited response to ISIS. Williams, for instance, argues the administration improperly softened the threat it posed to avoid becoming pulled into a protracted military conflict in the Middle East. However, Obama had to sideline his goal of reducing the U.S. military presence in the Middle East and North Africa as ISIS expanded its control. Once he decided to combat ISIS, Obama selected to work "by, with, and through" local actors as opposed to taking a leading role or committing a large contingent of U.S. forces.[15]

In mid-2014, a small group of military personnel, acting as advisers, were sent to Iraq.

These were supplemented by U.S. Special Operations Forces, air strikes, and direct military aid to Iraq's Security Forces. To combat ISIS in Syria, Obama echoed the type of assistance he offered to Iraq on a limited scale. Internal and external factors unique to Syria constrained U.S. commitment. In particular, Russia and Iran's direct military involvement in Syria on the side of Syria's longtime president, Bashar al-Assad, increased the potential risks incurred if the U.S. armed anti-government militias or placed U.S. troops on the ground. Determined not to be drawn into a protracted conflict in Syria, Obama encouraged other Middle Eastern countries to take a more direct role to combat ISIS. The latter's involvement only further muddled sectarianism and geopolitical rivalry in an already complex theater. Consequently, Obama's policy against ISIS has been described as one of *containment*.[16]

Analysts, however, describe the aforementioned moves by Obama as *ad hoc*, ineffective, and suggestive of Obama's weakness and unclearness. The president's disinclination to intervene against ISIS, and his refusal to assume a more direct role, arguably permitted the emergence of a humanitarian crisis in both Syria and Iraq. His inaction, therefore, could be interpreted as counterproductive to building Muslim trust because of the high rates of civilian deaths, destabilization, and destruction that was left unchecked in ISIS's wake of political Islam. However, this assumption is inaccurate when public opinion is considered. Despite the brutal spread of ISIS, 60 percent of U.S. respondents opposed arming anti-government militias in Syria or becoming directly involved. Similarly, polling data shows that MENA respondents did not support Western intervention in Syria. Those latter respondents also opposed Arab government involvement. Hence, the aforementioned analysts observed that both domestic and international opinion opposed U.S. intervention in Syria despite the humanitarian crises which manifest in Syria and Iraq.[17]

DEMOCRACY PROMOTION

Obama was reluctant to promote democracy in the Middle East and North Africa.

During his tenure, he only moderately criticized undemocratic governments such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and his reservations undermined Muslim public opinion. Simultaneously, he dramatically cut U.S. funding allocated for promoting democracy in the Middle East, which ultimately reflected duplicity analysts argue that Obama should have supported reforms, offered resources, and applied political pressure to remain true to the democratic principles he rhetorically promoted.[18]

Barack Obama seems to be wise in not using his political capital to promote democracy in the six Arab countries which witnessed the Arab Spring. Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yamen, and Syria, which witnessed the Arab Spring can fall within the category of Soft States as described By Karl Myrdal, where, there is no rule of law. Everything is up for sale, be it building permits for illegal construction, licenses to import illicit goods, or under-table tax rebates and deferrals.[19] Corruption is prevailing, civil societies are not well developed and all of these countries have serious restrictions on the freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of association and freedom of assembly. When studying established political regimes, one can rely on relatively stable economic, social, cultural, and partisan categories to identify, analyze, and evaluate the identities and strategies of those defending the status quo and those struggling to reform or transform it. The aforementioned process is not occurring in the six Arab countries which witnessed the Arab Spring according to Cammack, Dunne, Hamzawy, Lynch, Muasher, Sayigh, Yahya of the Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, and Wittes, Cook; Heydemann, Brumberg, Campbell, Diamond, Diwan, Hamid, Hawtharne, Heydemann, Jenkins, Lebaron, Mezran, Mallot, Shehadi, Stephan, and Yahya of the Brookings Institution. It would be difficult and impossible for an outside actor like the United States to do anything in transition from authoritarian rule, particularly ones controlled by the military and security establishments as in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria, during their respective transitions after the Arab Spring. In many cases, it is almost impossible to specify ex ante which classes, sectors, institutions, and other groups will take what role, opt for which issue, or support what alternatives. Political alliances are formed and dissolved or changed rapidly and unexpectedly.

It was wise that Obama, during his two terms in office, did not use his political capital to promote democracy in the Arab countries which witnessed the Arab Spring and presumably started the transition toward democracy.

Reviewing the United Nations Human Rights, Human Rights Watch, and Freedom House Reports from 2009 to 2018 indicate that the political systems of Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, Syria, and Yemen can be described as soft states ruled not by Law, but ruled by coercive leaders and coercive institutions. For instance, Transparency International which developed the world's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), which measures the perceived level of public sector corruption in 178 countries around the world, ranked Tunisia as number 59, Egypt 98, Bahrain 48, Libya 148, Syria 127, and Yemen 146 out of the 178 members of the United Nations with a CPI of 4.3, 3.1, 4, 9, 2.2, 2.5, and 2.2, respectively. The same organization observed deterioration of the same countries in the 2018 report. Tunisia ranked number 73, Egypt ranked number 105, Bahrain ranked number 99, Libya ranked number 170, Syria ranked Number 178, and Yemen ranked number 176 out of the 180 countries members of the United Nations. These countries received the following CPI score out of 100 as the best; Tunisia received 43/100, Egypt 35/100, Bahrain 36/100, Libya 17/100, Syria13/100, and Yemen 14/100, respectively. The Freedom House, which produces the World Freedom Index for members countries of the United Nations, assigned the following aggregate scores for Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Libya, Bahrain, and Yamen, 70/100, 26/100, 1/100, 9/100, 12/100, and 13/100, respectively. Human Rights Watch also observed deteriorations in the six countries which witnessed the Arab Spring from 2010 to 2018 in the following factors contributing to promoting democracy: Freedom of Assembly and Association, Freedom of Expression, Labor Rights, Torture and treatment, Women's and Girls' Rights, HIV/AIDS and Privacy Rights, Freedom of Religion, and Refugees and Migrants.[20]

DRONE STRIKES

Jack Goldsmith, a professor at Harvard Law School who served in the Bush administration's Office of Legal Counsel, argued in his book *Power and Constraints, The Accountable Presidency After 9/11* that President Barack Obama's foreign policy of global targeted killing was consistent with his predecessor George W. Bush. In addition, he significantly increased military and intelligence operations, pursuing the enemy using robotic drones and commando teams, paying contractors to spy, and training local operatives to chase terrorists. In justifying that, John Brennan, senior adviser to President Obama on counterterrorism stated that "obviously, the death of Usama Bin Laden marked a strategic milestone in our effort to defeat al-Qa'ida. Unfortunately, Bin Laden's death, and the death and capture of many other al-Qa'ida leaders and operatives, does not mark the end of that terrorist organization or its efforts to attack the United States and other countries. Indeed, al-Qa'ida,

its affiliates, and its adherents remain the preeminent security threat to our nation." In the face of the aforementioned continued threats, the Obama administration continued to form a counterterrorism structure that was current and operative in increasing the security of the United States. This structure was guided by the following main principles: the highest priority is the safety and security of the American people, employing every lawful tool and authority at our disposal in a pragmatic way and not ideological—making decisions not based on predetermined notions about which action seems "stronger," but based on what will truly increase the security of the United States, and best serves the U.S. national security interests, which includes forming partnerships and alliances with countries around the world as needed. In addition, the administration will apply the principles and core values that guide all our actions, foreign and domestic that characterize Americans—which includes adhering to the rule of law. Finally, Brennan stated that "when I say 'all our actions,' that includes covert actions, which we undertake under the authorities provided to us by Congress. President Obama has directed that all our actions—even when conducted out of public view—remain consistent with our laws and values."

With the aforementioned framework, according to Goldsmith, the Obama administration, for example, invoked the 2001 congressional authorization to use force, his discretion as Commander in Chief, the right of self-defense under the UN Charter, and the right to target and kill combatants under the international laws of war, as a basis to invade Pakistan and kill Osama bin Laden. The president and his team's arguments were sound, but they were also contested, and required justification and explanation.[21]

Shima D. Keene, a British academic and practitioner specializing in matters relating to national and international security and director of the Conflict Studies Research Centre at Oxford University, as well as Director of the Security Economics Programme at the Institute for Statecraft, London, United Kingdom (UK), argues that: "increased lethal use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) comes greater scrutiny and controversy." While supporters claim that drone warfare is not only legal but ethical and wise, others have suggested that drones are prohibited weapons under International Humanitarian Law because they cause, or have the effect of causing indiscriminate killings of civilians, such as those in the vicinity of a targeted person. The main legal justification made by the Barack Obama administration for the use of armed drones is self-defense. However, there is ambiguity as to whether this argument can justify a number of recent attacks by the United States. To determine the legality of armed drone strikes, other factors such as sovereignty, proportionality, the legitimacy of individual targets, and the methods used for the selection of targets must also be considered. The ethical landscape is also ambiguous. One justification is the reduced amount

of collateral damage possible with drones relative to other forms of strike. Real-time eyes on target allow last-minute decisions and monitoring for unintended victims, and precise tracking of the target through multiple systems allows further refinements of proportionality. But this is of little benefit if the definition of "targets is itself flawed and encompasses noncombatants and unconnected civilians."[22]

GUANTANAMO CLOSURE

One act committed by the George W. Bush administration that was perceived as humiliating and offensive to Muslims was the Guantanamo Bay military detention center. The facility contradicted principles and standards often advocated by the U.S. government by perpetrating human rights abuses and violating domestic and international law. Guantanamo Bay epitomized U.S. duplicity, since rhetorical promotion of principles such as the rule of law and democracy were superseded when United States' national security interest was perceived to be at stake.[23]

As Barack Obama campaigned for the presidency, he promised that he would close the facility if inaugurated. To his credit, one of his first actions in office was to sign a directive that closed Guantanamo. While initial efforts to close the facility were demonstrative of his determination to uphold principles of justice and rule of law, Obama left office with the detention facility still in use. Despite repeating his desire to close Guantanamo throughout his two terms in office, Obama eventually backpedaled. During his tenure, prisoners continued to be detained and denied certain rights, including the right to a trial and legal representation. One reason the facility continued to operate was because of the U.S. Congress. Congress repeatedly blocked Obama's efforts to release or relocate inmates, while individual state legislatures often refused to accept prison transfers. Ultimately, Obama was unable to broker a political compromise or find locations that would accept inmates. As a result, the facility remained operational. The president's failure in this regard meant that Obama did not live up to his promise.[24]

OUTREACH AND NEGOTIATION WITH IRAN

Outreach and negotiation with Iran have received equal, if less doctrinal, attention from Obama, probably due to overwhelming events of the Arab Spring. Iran has been the major test case. Because of the violence after the 2009 Iranian presidential elections, he abandoned his initial outreach to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei in favor of an international sanctions

regime to drive Iran to serious negotiations about its nuclear program. Initially, he avoided threats of force implicit in his predecessor's repeated statements that "all options are on the table." As the P5+1 negotiations stalled and Israeli pressure for a firm U.S. stance heightened, he added not only this rhetoric but also a mantra that "our policy is not to allow Iran to get a nuclear weapon," implying that he would back diplomacy with force if necessary.

With the election of Rouhani and the serious P5+1 negotiations, the prospects were bright enough that these implicit threats of the use of force were again muted. They were replaced by the suggestion that Iran would face increased international sanctions if negotiations failed to produce a satisfactory result. Still, it seems clear that Obama would have seriously undermined U.S. credibility if he failed to use force as a last resort to prevent Iran's obtaining nuclear weapons.[25]

OBAMA'S SCOPE OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

This Section evaluates whether and how Barack Obama's public diplomacy has moved forward the United States toward conciliation with the international Muslim and Arab community, as a part of realizing U.S. national interests in the Middle East and reinforcing its leadership role in the world.

Following his inauguration, Obama set out to alter the image of the United States in the eyes of the international Muslim community. He made his diplomatic introduction promising to change the way in which the United States interacted with Muslims, and he sought to reinforce his rhetoric through tangible action. While some scholars believe that Obama's conciliatory approach was prudent and timely, others criticize his foreign policy as lacking teeth and determination. What both camps generally agree on is that particular (in)actions by the Obama administration produced inconsistent strategy in the Middle East.[26]

Obama's Softening Rhetoric

The manner in which a leader articulates their goals affect policy perceptions and implementation. While articulating his foreign agenda, Barack Obama was perceived as more conciliatory in tone than George W. Bush. Consequently, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning president piqued Muslim interest as they anticipated a change in Obama's approach. By way of example, Obama spoke of dialogue and soft power as a method of improving bilateral relations. Leading credence to his rhetoric, he was a vocal opponent of the 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Obama repeatedly reminded his domestic and international audiences that the United States was not at war with Islam or its followers in speeches in Cairo, Egypt, and Jakarta, Indonesia. While Obama's conciliatory rhetoric was designed to demonstrate that U.S. politicians and citizens were capable of altering their perceptions of and behavior toward Muslims, his message was not without its critics. On the 2016 presidential campaign trail, for instance, a campaigning Donald J. Trump denounced Barack Obama for not using the phrase "radical Islamic terrorism." Trump's critique was designed to portray the sitting president as someone who pandered to foreigners as opposed to taking a tough stance on Islamic terrorism by clearly identifying the perceived threat. Trump's rhetoric, however, has been largely viewed as populist, racist, and inflammatory to Muslims In this case, Obama was obviously more accommodative in his tone than other U.S. politicians, but his rhetoric needed to be supported by actions to bridge the relational divide.[27]

Obama's Interfaith Dialogue

Dialogue is a practice that is widely accepted by public diplomacy, communication, and conflict resolution scholars to alter perspectives of "the other." In this frame, Obama took the following steps to improve dialogue across cultures.

First, he appointed a Special Envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation as a means of institutionalizing interreligious dialogue, although George W. Bush actually established the envoy. The objective of this organization was to engage foreign leaders, religious representatives, and civil society to bridge understanding across cultures.

Second, a Special Representative to Muslim Communities was also established to improve interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Finally, the State Department was instructed to develop and implement religious educational training for all members of the Foreign Service. Although these mechanisms increase understanding and respect of other cultures, they were counterbalanced by other manners in which faith was incorporated into U.S. foreign policy.

As the Obama administration was promoting interfaith dialogue and claiming that the United States was not engaged in war with Muslims, the federal government increased its utilization of Christian groups to implement its soft policy. For instance, Samaritan's Purse, a Conservative Christian group that received government funding, operated in predominantly Muslim countries including Iraq. During their operations, Samaritan's Purse not only distributed U.S. government aid but also engaged in proselytizing. Naturally, such activities counter the assertion that the United States does not threaten Muslims or Islam, and instead gives the impression that the U.S. government

is openly promoting the spread of Christianity in predominantly Muslim countries. This arrangement undermines the utility of soft power and dialogue. It equally raises questions about the altruistic nature of humanitarian assistance offered by the United States.[28]

Presidential Summit on Entrepreneurship

During his Cairo, Egypt, speech of 2009, Barack Obama promised to hold a summit on entrepreneurship between U.S. businesspersons, organizations, and entrepreneurs and their international Muslim counterparts. The two-day summit was held in Washington, D.C., in late April 2010 and was designed to spur innovation, increase partnerships, and enhance employment opportunities globally. The event, sometimes referenced as the Global Entrepreneurship Summit, has been repeated annually since it began. It has been hosted in various locations, including the United States, Morocco, and Turkey. In conjunction with the summit, the Obama administration also advanced bilateral cooperation by creating new opportunities for foreign exchange, acquiring direct U.S. government financial assistance, and new types of partnerships. Each will be briefly addressed below[29]:

First, several exchange programs were established to provide entrepreneurs and educators the opportunity to share, be educated by, and mentored in the United States.

Second, in terms of financial access, the State Department partnered with numerous government agencies, such as USAID, to make funding available to startups, healthcare, education, and other sectors.

Finally, one partnership is a Silicon Valley-based venture that provided mentorship, financing, and technology to a program based in certain Middle East and South Asian countries. These soft power approaches offer multiple economic and social benefits to participants, but they, more importantly, impact on participant perceptions of "the other," and thereby are useful to transform relationships over time.

Obama's Science and Technology Envoy

Since U.S. advances in science and technology are often admired by Muslims, Obama established an envoy. The envoy was dispatched to individual countries to acquire insight into how the United States and each country could cooperate in the fields of science and technology. Local representatives provided their points of interests and the envoy then sought to create the appropriate partnerships to provide the requested assistance. Its

soft power approach is designed to promote cooperation through exchange and partnership.[30]

Another positive act of public diplomacy toward the Muslim world was President Obama's May 23, 2013, speech at the National Defense University, which has been cited primarily for its assertion that the war against Al-Qaeda has largely been won and that methods for countering violent extremism will change. The president stated that the United States "cannot use force everywhere that a radical ideology takes root,"[31] and said that "the next element of our strategy involves addressing the underlying grievances and conflicts that feed extremism."[32] Doing this, he argued is not a military job, but facing those grievances includes admitting that the plea of radicalism to be rooted in economic injustices. There are many individuals all over the world who feel shamed by not being able to find work or put food on the table for their families. That kind of frustration easily turns into aggression tendencies that can be exploited by those who embrace violence. In his NDU speech, Obama said that the United States must help other nations "modernize economies, upgrade education, and encourage entrepreneurship,"[33] and must "connect with people's hopes, and not simply their fears."[34] In doing so, emphasis should be placed on establishing direct links to publics, rather than to their governments. That is the essence of public diplomacy. The "public" element is important because delivering assistance in this way can help to strip away some of the perceptions of America that have taken root during the past decade. Public opinion analyst Shibley Telhami has reported that pervasive cynicism exists in the Arab world about American promotion of democracy, with such efforts seen as "a fig leaf for wars designed to control oil and help Israel."[35] Even if the United States has the best of intentions in its work to improve people's lives, it must overcome a presumption that it has ulterior motives. The strength of public diplomacy is its transparency. When a tech workshop for young entrepreneurs or an academic exchange takes place, people see exactly what they are getting. Their government is less likely to get in the way than would be the case with traditional government-to-government aid. A part of Obama's National Defense University's speech that did not attract much attention was the president's comment that some extremists believe "that Islam is in conflict with the United States and the West, and that violence against Western targets, including civilians, is justified in pursuit of a larger cause."[36] The president rightly asserted that "*this ideology is based on a lie*,"[37] but the lie has taken on a life of its own and must be debunked.

Successful public diplomacy directed toward the Muslim world must be firmly grounded in the recognition that Islam is a dominant factor in the daily life of hundreds of millions of people and in the public sphere of many countries. The concept of church-state separation, which is so important in

America's constitutional system, is unacceptable to many Muslims, and that belief—not American domestic issues—should be determinative in deciding religion's role in U.S. public diplomacy. Public diplomats working with Muslim publics should be knowledgeable about the Qur'an and tenets of Islamic faith and they should understand how Islam is interwoven with many Muslims' worldview.

President Obama's NDU speech does not mark the end of the struggle against terrorism, but rather puts new emphasis on remedying the discontent that nurtures extremism. That is a task for which public diplomacy is well suited, but only if public diplomacy is pursued in a sophisticated and thoughtful way, and if it is accorded a more significant role in U.S. foreign policy.[38]

Public Diplomacy of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and John Kerry

Philip Seib of the Center of Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School documents the successful efforts of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during Obama's first term. He argued that public diplomacy directed toward the Arab world has begun to more assertively incorporate women's issues:

> When Hillary Rodham Clinton was the U.S. Secretary of State, she moved women's rights to the top category of American foreign policy priorities. During a 2010 visit to Saudi Arabia, Clinton said, "I, of course, believe that educating young women is not only morally right, but it is also the most important investment any society can make in order to further and advance the values and the interests of the people." The Egyptian poet Hafez Ibrahim said, 'A mother is a school. Empower her and you empower a great nation.'[39]

Another positive public diplomacy gesture toward Arab and Muslim women was Tara Sonenshine's (United States under secretary of state for Public Diplomacy) speech at the Brookings Institute in Washington DC on April 4, 2013, titled: *Women in the Arab World-Do They Matter?*

In her speech, she advocated increasing the role of women in the Arab world politically and economically during the chaotic transition of the Arab Spring.[40]

Clinton and Sonenshine presented fundamental arguments in backing of public diplomacy that are relevant not just for women, but for all in the Arab world. The newly opened media environment promoted by Obama and his secretary of state Clinton in the region offers itself to communicating public diplomacy messaging, directly and indirectly. Clinton's travels in the Middle East were particularly important because her message was perceived as coming from the highest levels of the American government.

If a nation values public diplomacy and can develop coherent policy to back up their outreach, the incremental advantages accrued by public diplomacy are within reach. In the second term of Obama's administration, Secretary of State John Kerry stressed, in many public diplomacy forums directed to the Muslim and Arab Communities, the importance of economic development assistance in U.S. foreign policy. Public diplomacy mechanisms are the best way to ensure maximum results from such efforts. Obama referred to the cost-effective nature of aid when he said at NDU that "foreign assistance cannot be viewed as charity. It is fundamental to our national security. And it's fundamental to any sensible long-term strategy to battle extremism."[41]

It is clear and that Obama's public diplomacy was consistent in his soft power approach and messaging in the beginning and prior to the outbreak of the Arab Spring. His efforts at directly addressing perceptions of the United States through cooperation and outreach appear to have been successful. In terms of rhetoric, the president remained conciliatory. He likewise created opportunities for partnerships to students, teachers, and businesspersons in the international Muslim community. Soft power measures are effective at altering opinions yet limited in the volume of individuals fortunate enough to participate. Comparatively, foreign policy is generally observed or felt by the masses and therefore more evident, while soft policy is often directed at a few and takes more time to impact the wider population. For this reason, when evaluated by the masses, Obama will be viewed as changeable due to his foreign policy.

Rob Kroes argues, when Barack Obama ran for the presidency of the United States, he promised a new beginning. As a master of political rhetoric, he had spoken of a new start following the dismal years of the George W. Bush administration. He would take America back to its inspiring principles of freedom and democracy. He augured a break with policies invading on civil liberties and government under the law.

> From the first moment he entered public life, none of the templates that Americans use to handle the racial and ethnic diversity of their compatriots seemed to apply to Obama. He seemed equally at ease presenting himself as a person of white origin or as the son of an immigrant from Kenya. His life history and formative experiences allowed him to affiliate with black and white, with poor and rich, with the world of Christianity and Islam.

Once in office though, and the sudden occurrence of the Arab Spring in 2010 and 2011, the power of rhetoric that had carried him into the White House and impressed his audience in the Arab and Muslim World ran into the hard reality of political rule under conditions of ongoing wars and revolutions in far-away countries and the threat of terrorism, prowling

at home and abroad. Since the sudden outbreak of the Arab Spring, it is observed that President Obama initiated inconsistent foreign policies and public diplomacy statements. The president's unpredictable policies may have been a result of the gravity of an evolving and synergetic mixture of domestic and regional challenges, and as the Arab Spring evolved in various countries, Obama found it necessary to deal with each revolution on its individual merits. In some cases, according to Hillary Clinton and Derek Chollet, political reform was invigorated and assisted, while at other times it was not. At the same time, the complexity of international events also hindered the administration's chances of altering the value of U.S.- Arab/Muslim relations.[42]

The aforementioned interrelated events may have forced the president's decisions on issues ranging from the degree of support provided to the Arab Spring to the size and location of U.S. troop deployment in the Middle East. It correspondingly impacted on modes of counterterrorism, as well as Israel-Palestine negotiations. In short, the number and nature of events that contributed to regional instability likely caused Obama to perceive conciliatory moves as untimely. Hence, Obama seemed to adjust his policies to respond to regional changes. Being forced to alter his initial strategy, Obama had no choice but to increase U.S. troop presence in the Middle East to combat ISIS and was hesitant to bring to bear the necessary resources to pressure Israel to negotiate. Both actions countered Muslim expectations. Also counterproductive, Obama intermittently supported Arab Spring movements and increased dependence on drones to limit American troop contact or the costs of counterterrorism. The former practice reflected discrepancies between rhetorically contained principles and practice, while the latter made it reasonable to conclude that the United States continued to threaten Islam.

At the same time, U.S. domestic influencers were also at play—such as hyperpartnership, and public opinion. With this in mind, domestic political and popular support for specific actions helped restrict Obama's freedom to make changes that would have been viewed by the Arab and Muslims as demonstrative of change in foreign policy. Foremost, U.S. citizens and many politicians preferred the economic advantages of drone strikes as a means of counterterrorism, although this practice is largely opposed by Muslims throughout the Middle East. Second, public tolerance for directly assisting Arab Spring revolutions or deploying a large contingent of U.S. troops against ISIS was modest. Finally, the U.S. Congress undermined Obama's attempts to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility. In certain instances, Obama's (in)action carried political risk, which included the potential loss of a reelection. Therefore, the administration had to balance its foreign policy objectives with domestic expectations. The overall, complex

and fluctuating internal, regional, and international factors helped to reduce the probability of initiating or maintaining a consistent foreign policy and public diplomacy.

Exercising Presidential Powers

In line with the presidential powers invested in him by article II of the Constitution as commander-in-chief, Obama authorized the use of force in clear-cut cases such as drone strikes against terrorists in Pakistan and Yemen, and approving high-risk special operations to kill Osama bin Laden and to rescue kidnapped Americans. He also consistently supported strong military ties and precedent-setting arms sales to regional allies, especially Israel and the GCC states. Less clear-cut has been implementation regarding situations covered by the consequence. The pattern is a reluctance to use force followed by diplomatic maneuvering to transform the conditions to a formula fitting the criteria Obama outlined. It brings to mind Winston Churchill's supposed quip that "You can always count on Americans to do the right thing—after they have tried everything else." Libya and Syria offer the prime examples. Obama's policies on the use of force, negotiation and collective action, and democracy promotion initially sought to recognize the constraints he believes are hard-bought lessons of Bush's invasion of Iraq. They have been habituated and custom-made as he has developed experience in office. In Libya, Obama's subsequent agreement to use unique U.S. military resources to protect civilians came only after ratification of a collective response by the UN Security Council, NATO, the Arab League, and the GCC. He accepted NATO's liberal interpretation of its directive that led to NATO forces assisting in the ouster of Muammar Qaddafi, often cited as the exemplar of "leading from behind," In late 2012, Obama disallowed the common recommendation of his senior National Security advisers, including the secretaries of state and defense, the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, and the director of the CIA, to arm the moderate Syrian resistance. In June 2014, he dismissed this idea as "a fantasy." Yet, two months later, he proposed congressional action to do exactly that. Why the switch? The analysts interpretations were that the rise of ISIS, its brutal beheading of two American journalists, its threat to the stability of the region (especially in Iraq), and its recruitment of Western passport holders (including Americans), moved it up to Obama's category of action justified by a direct threat to U.S. interests. Similarly, the administration repurposed the risky assistance from ousting the Assad regime to debasing and terminating ISIS. Nonetheless, the Obama administration has trouble answering the argument that earlier mortal assistance could have blocked ISIS's rise. Former Director of the CIA and Secretary of Defense

Leon Panetta have pointedly criticized his decision in their recently published memoirs.

Promoting the release of his new book "Worthy Fights," former Secretary of Defense and Director of the Central Intelligence Agency Leon Panetta embarked on a media tour full of criticism of President Barack Obama's foreign policy. Panetta's criticism was squarely aimed at the president's handling of the situation in Syria and Iraq.

He has painted Obama's decision not to enforce his own "red line" against the Syrian regime of President Bashar Assad as a mistake that hurt U.S. credibility. And he has said Obama has made decisions that have created a vacuum for the rise of extremists like the group calling itself the Islamic State (also known as ISIS or ISIL).

"It was damaging," Panetta told Yahoo's Katie Couric of Obama's decision to draw a "red line" over Assad's use of chemical weapons and then back away from military action.

It "sent a mixed message, not only to Assad, not only to the Syrians, but to the world," said Panetta, who served as Obama's CIA director from 2009 to 2011 and secretary of defense from 2011 to 2013. "And that is something you do not want to establish in the world, an issue with regard to the credibility of the United States to stand by what we say we're going to do."[43]

In retrospect, Obama may have indeed made a calculated choice, but his choice of diplomatic action over military strike had three damaging consequences: it called into question Obama's readiness to use force even when his red lines of deploying military force are clearly crossed; it demonstrated unnecessary to the central issue of the removal of the Assad regime, which Obama has declared must go; and it fed fears in the Gulf of American retrenchment in the Middle East to the extent that Saudi Arabia declined a seat on the UN Security Council to show its disappointment.

Democracy Promotion

In addition to the aforementioned high-profile policy subtleties, a third has been the promotion of democracy. When he took office, Obama sought to differentiate his approach from Bush 43s by affirming that democracy could not be forced. In January 2011, when the administration sensed rising public frustration in Egypt and elsewhere, Secretary Clinton warned just weeks before Arab Spring events gathered momentum, "In too many places, in too many ways, the region's foundations are sinking into the sand."[44] Obama marked the high point of his administration's promotion of democracy in remarks in May 2011, after the fall of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt and Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia, when he declared that the Arab Spring uprisings presented "a

historic opportunity" and that "it will be the policy of the United States to promote reform across the region and to support transitions to democracy."[45]

This dynamic of democracy promotion program has played out differently in the various Arab Spring states. In Tunisia, it has largely worked because it has aligned with indigenous forces directed in that direction. In Yemen, GCC-led negotiations strongly supported by the United States for the transition to new, democratically oriented leadership launched a process whose result is still very much in doubt. In Egypt, after the June 30 mass demonstrations against the Morsi government and the army's removal of Morsi by military coup force, the United States has found creative ways of pursuing close strategic cooperation with Egypt while urging a return to a democratic path. In Iraq, the United States finally brought its heft to bear to help oust the authoritarian and sectarian regime of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki after his misrule awkwardly enabled the rise of ISIS and once more raised the situation in Iraq to a level threatening U.S. security interests. In short, diplomatic realities have tempered any enthusiasm for democracy promotion into particularism; as explained by Deputy Secretary of State William Burns, there is no "cookie-cutter" approach, and U.S. policy is to regard each situation on a case-by-case basis.

In his Audacity of Hope book, the president describes himself as a *realist-idealist*. This philosophical framework may explain the fluctuations in his administration's approach across the region that has veered between democracy promotion and preservation of core strategic interests. Obama's ambivalence toward an assertive role in the region is also facilitated in his belief in a post-American world order. Under this conception, the United States is in relative decline and must act in concert with a host of national and international actors to resolve key problems. Given financial constraints, innate limits to American power and commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States could ill afford another costly military intervention.[46]

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Chapter 9

Judging Obama's Foreign Policy and Diplomacy toward the Arab Spring

In this research, President Obama's foreign policy and diplomacy toward the Arab Spring was analyzed and evaluated within the context of U.S. national interests in the Middle East through two levels of analysis—the *Idealism* and *Realism* theories of international relations. Also, these two illuminating lenses are used to inject greater precision or conceptual rigor into both the *realist* and *idealis*t theories, and their applicability to President Obama's foreign policy and diplomacy toward the Arab Spring. Furthermore, a kaleidoscopic analysis is used to contextualize how the interplay among the following five drivers of the U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East shaped Obama's reaction to the Arab Spring: First, the historical evolution of U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy toward the Middle East. Second, the interrelationship between U.S. domestic and foreign policy-intermestic politics as related to the Middle East. Third, the rise of political Islam at the World's stage. Fourth, the challenge of democratization and the compatibility of Islam and democracy. And fifth, Obama's effective use of U.S. power and public diplomacy in response to the sudden occurrence of the Arab Spring for realizing the U.S. strategic interests in the Middle East region.

HOW OBAMA'S FOREIGN POLICY CAN BE JUDGED

In judging the foreign policy of a president, Benjamin Goldsmith argues that a measure is needed. A key consideration in evaluating the success or otherwise of a president's foreign policy is of course the standard to be used. He believes that much of the criticism of Barack Obama uses implausible measure or parameter. In social science, the problem (and necessity) of counterfactual reasoning is well known. There is no factual answer to questions

that begin: "What would have happened if . . .?" But these are the sorts of questions that have to be asked if we are to assess a president's performance. For example, if we want to pin the Iraq War on George W. Bush, we'd need to know whether Al Gore would have done something similar, had he been elected. If so, the choice would be due to other, more general, national imperatives, not some nonconforming preferences held by Bush but few other potential White House occupants.

One reasonable benchmark for measuring Obama's presidency, Goldsmith points a comparison with other actual presidents, rather than speculation about what would have worked better or what amounts to "fantasy politics" about missed opportunities. This facilitates a sound comparative analysis, using general counterfactual logic, but thinking across types of successes and failures, rather than trying to ask "what would Franklin. D. Roosevelt has done after 9/11?" for example. Each president confronts the reality of domestic and international constraints of his time.[1] These have perhaps become more severe over time since the end of World War II. The proper evidence to compare, it seems to Goldsmith, and the author agrees with him is *major accomplishments and failures*, rather than *the smaller setbacks and successes* that appear large at any given moment of any presidency. Obama expressed his "*don't do stupid stuff*" guideline in the following way in his West Point speech:

> Since World War II, some of our most costly mistakes came not from our restraint, but from our willingness to rush into military adventures without thinking through the consequences—without building international support and legitimacy for our action; without levelling with the American people about the sacrifices required. Tough talk often draws headlines, but war rarely conforms to slogans.[2]

Under Obama's two terms, there has been no equivalent of the Bay of Pigs, the Vietnam War, Iran-Contra Affairs, withdrawal from Somalia, or the Iraq War. No major scandal such as Clinton and Monica Lewinski has tied up his presidency, seriously impairing its effectiveness domestically or internationally, and he has not been impeached. There has been no Rwandan genocide. In spite of criticism regarding inexperience, Obama has avoided the self-inflicted messes the country suffered under Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Reagan, Clinton, and George W. Bush. And he has spared us the (often great) costs in terms of lives, prestige, and money. It is important to consider seriously just how difficult a job the presidency is, and how often those we choose actually make overwhelming or humiliating mistakes. Also, to be fair to Obama, it is important to point out that from the beginning of Obama's political career, domestic issues took priority; he devoted

a large portion of his political capital on domestic issues. Reflecting on the remaining three years of his second term in early 2014, he argued, "I will measure myself at the end of my presidency in large part by whether I began the process of rebuilding the middle class and the ladders into the middle class, and reversing the trend toward economic bifurcation in this society."[3] With the aforementioned context in mind, the research findings indicate that Obama's foreign policy had the following characteristics: First: According to Indyk, Lieberthal of the Brookings Institution, Obama began his presidency with good decision by placing experienced and effective individuals in key jobs. Retaining Bush's secretary of defense, Robert Gates, was a wise and unprecedented move. The appointment of his political rival Hillary Clinton as secretary of State unified the Democratic Party while giving the nation a highly effective and diligent lead diplomat whose political skills proved critical in sustaining the president's determination to improve America's standing in the world. Furthermore, Obama has made good use of General David Petraeus as well, first in Afghanistan and then as director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Second: Barack Obama's foreign policy generally has many elements of continuatively with his predecessors according to Indyk, Liberthal and O'Hanlon's of the Brookings Institute. The continuity is perhaps greater with the first Bush, H. and Clinton administrations. But even relative to the latter days of the administration of George W. Bush, many policies have been continued or modified only modestly, notwithstanding Obama's determination to set a different course. Paradoxically, the continuity from George W. Bush to Obama has been most evident in regard to war fighting on the one hand and democracy promotion in the Middle East on the other. Perhaps, Obama's greatest concrete foreign policy achievements have been on the battlefield in the war against terrorism—the showground that was the central focus of Bush presidency. Particularly, the killing of Osama Bin Laden in May 2011 and, more generally, the annihilation of mush of Al-Qaeda's leadership abroad. Third: After his inauguration, according to Derek Chollet, Obama was determined to play the long game. He wanted to take a hard look at America's existing foreign policy priorities and see how they square with the country's long-term interests. Obama wanted to know where we were "underweighted" or "overweighed" in the world and how we could regain and sustain America's leadership position in the world. Obama's initial approach to handling the difficult inheritance of Bush administration was his attempt to devise a strategy for the future foreign policy which has three components: *rebalance, reset, and resurge.*[4] Fourth: Obama has managed to isolate certain regional extremist actors such as Iran in the Middle East, and North Korea in the far East. He extended a hand to leaders in Tehran and Pyongyang. In his inaugural address, Obama had called on them to do, the United States was better placed to persuade others to tighten sanctions

on these countries. Here, Obama was more effective than Bush at pursuing Bush's own agenda. Of course, one may argue that both countries have continued to develop their nuclear weapons programs despite the sanctions. To respond to this argument, Obama's accomplishments are thus better understood as an *effective damage control* than *historic breakthrough*. That said, in foreign affairs. Limiting the fallout from problems—*practicing the art of the possible*—is more productive than attempting the *impossible* and failing." When asked about his legacy in foreign affairs, he cited his main initiatives in the Middle East region at that time—Iran, Syria, Israel, and the Palestinians (but not countries of the Arab Spring). Evaluating their chances of success of countries of the Arab Spring toward political development and opening economic opportunities, Obama stated, "at less than 50 percent," he assessed, "We may be able to push the boulder partway up the hill and maybe stabilize it so it doesn't roll back on us." In the words of his adviser and friend, Valerie Jarrett, "The President always takes the long view" of history.[5]

Fifth: Despite Obama's domestic priorities over international priorities, the Middle East issues dominated the foreign policy of his presidency, particularly after the sudden occurrence of the Arab Spring, and would largely determine his foreign affairs legacy when he left office in 2017. The greater Middle East—from Afghanistan to Morocco—has been a testing ground for the Obama administration's ideas about projecting U.S. power through the use of force, negotiation, and collaborative public diplomacy with other allies, the United Nations, and the promotion of democracy.

Sixth: As the first African American president, Obama has been aware of his legacy from the beginning of his term. Even before taking office, he made clear that he had "no desire to be one of those Presidents who are just on the list. I really want to be a president who makes a difference." Terms such as "being on the right side of history" have punctuated his remarks across diverse topics ranging from the Arab Spring to gay marriage.

Seventh: One measure of how Obama's record in foreign policy and diplomacy toward the six countries of the Arab Spring, according to Chollet is to explore how his approach, priorities, and management style compares to those of other presidents. Another is to test Obama's policy by its own terms, measuring the long game strategy against the eight fundamental components of his foreign policy agenda which is identified in this research *as balance, sustainability, restraint, precision, patience, fallibility, skepticism, and exceptionalism*. Obama's political opponents and analysts argued that he is like presidents Jimmy Carter, Warren Harding, and Calvin Coolidge who have left behind a foreign policy legacy of weakness, regret, and humiliation. The research findings indicate that Obama's foreign policy's model generally and in response to the Arab Spring in the six countries was close to moderate Republicans like Dwight Eisenhower and George H. W. Bush.[6]

Both Obama and Eisenhower, according to Chollet inherited a country battered by unpopular wars they were determined to undo. They were dubious of an excessive faith in military force to solve problems and were wary of the idea that once unleashed, military power could be completely controlled. They were completely confident in their own abilities, but valued modesty. They both focused on returning to a sustainable balance between an ambitious global agenda and domestic resources to support it, worried that if they didn't better match its means with ends, the country would be on the road to bankruptcy. (Footnotes 5 same source), Eisenhower and Obama—deserve credit for "deliberative process of decision-making, a disciplined evaluation of costs and benefits and perhaps above all an instinctive feel for the power of restraint."

Although both Eisenhower and Obama will be remembered for military restraint, they also expanded the role of modern military tools significantly in their respective time. Eisenhower presided over a massive build-up of nuclear weapons; Obama innovated the military's cyber strategy. Eisenhower emphasized covert operations as an instrument of foreign policy; Obama vastly expanded the use of drones and the size and deployments of special operations forces. And both presidents stressed the importance of building indigenous forces that would be able to provide, as Eisenhower put it, "the maintenance of order, the safeguarding of frontiers, and the provision of the bulk of the ground capability' to fight local conflicts."[7]

According to David Brooks, Obama was even more demonstrative about the lessons he learned from George H. W. Bush in foreign policy generally and the Middle East particularly. Although Obama framed his 2008 campaign as a necessary corrective to the actions of the 43rd president (George W. Bush), he said at the time that he had "enormous sympathy" for the foreign policy of the 41st president (George H.W. Bush) toward the Middle East, particularly the way Desert Storm operations was handled. On the campaign trail, Obama described his foreign policy as a "return to the Traditional bipartisan realistic policy of George Bush's father." Like Bush 41, Obama believed he was in a pitched battle between what he described as "ideology" versus his brand of "foreign policy realism." The Ike-Bush 41-Obama approach—*powerful yet modest, ambitious yet aware of limits, decisive yet suspicious of impulse—tries to steer a middle path*. This aforementioned approach can be illustrated in how Obama responded to the Arab Spring as explained below.[8]

Reviewing the work of Joe Scarborough, *The Right Path: From Ike to Reagan, How Republicans Once Mastered Politics—And Can Again*, and E. J. Dionne, *Why the Right Went Wrong: Conservatism from Goldwater to the Tea Party and Beyond,* may indicate that Obama's foreign policy has some similarity to another Republican president that is Richard Nixon. Nixon became a president at a moment when America was in deep crises, bogged

down by a controversial war, an unruly domestic environment, and a geopolitical context that saw America's power in eclipse. He privately worried that when it came to addressing the world's problems, the United States "cannot—and will not—conceive all the plans, design all programs, execute all the decisions and undertake all the defense of the free nations of the world."[9] America needed to be more careful with its commitments and husband its power, helping "where it makes a real difference and is considered in our interest."[10] When it was in America's interest to act, Nixon was ready to, as he put it, "go for broke"—just like Obama set out to "do big things." Both Nixon and Obama believed that extracting the United States from costly entanglements would open the opportunity for bold strokes. They sought, in Henry Kissinger's words, a "new period of creativity" where the United States would tackle problems through "maneuver, originality, and imagination" and by empowering others.[11]

Finally, in *The Audacity of Hope, Obama* drew attention to the worldview of another American leader, from the nineteenth century that is John Quincy Adams. In the words of historian John Lewis Gaddis, Adams was "the most influential American grand strategist of his time." In addition to his single term in the White House, Adams was one of America's most important Secretaries of State, and his foreign policy is best remembered for his statement "America goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy." This is usually seen as warning against interfering in the affairs of others and as a justification for isolation.[12] While Adams believed that the United States must be a political, economic, and moral model for the world, first it needed to become stronger at home—whether that meant improving its economy or achieving greater social justice by ending slavery. Adams believed that America is exceptional, but counseled restraint because he feared overextension. In this sense, Adams had a grand strategy domestically and internationally, driven by an abiding confidence in America's capability and what could it do.[13] In broad terms, Adams's strategy for both domestic and foreign policy is similar to Obama's. Obama cites Adams's influence, observing that "if suspicion of foreign entanglements is stamped into our DNA, then so is the impulse to expand-geographically, commercially, and ideologically."[14] Both presidents had a holistic view of strength, seeing "nation building at home" as a vital component of projecting influence abroad. Both focused on the limits of power and how best to manage trade-offs with restricted resources. Both presidents proved willing to take risks but cautioned against adventurism for fear it would divert away attention and resources from long-term goals. And while both believed that the United States should rarely impose its will, they shared the conviction that the country must play a unique global role as an exemplar of freedom and opportunity. Although Adams and Obama governed nearly two centuries apart, they had a firm grasp of the essentials of domestic

and foreign policies and how they are interrelated to each other, and how to use those to pursue a grand strategy to advance America in the Globe.

Eighth: The research findings indicate that Obama's exercise of presidential powers, foreign policy development, and the use of diplomacy in response to the Arab Spring, was very much within the parameters of worldviews of Presidents Adams, Eisenhower, Nixon, and Bush. It was prudent and well acquainted. It strikes a balance that can serve the United States well in the short and long term toward the six Arab countries who witnessed the Arab Spring. Content analysis of Obama's May 28, 2014, speech at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point indicates that Obama energetically defended some of his core foreign policy principles when dealing with the Middle East. He shows the likelihood of a United States that sincerely sees force as a last resort, values allies enough to use conciliation and patience to work with them, sets priorities based on the relative importance of the issues and countries concerned for U.S. interests, and has a clear sense of what it takes to keep the United States safe. He also identified what tangible steps—using all existing tools—the United States can take to make the world of the near- and mid-term future a place where the United States can do well, and in the process can contribute to making the world a safer and freer place. In this analyst's view, this is among the most prescient combinations of a strong realism feature and conformity to the United States' best principles that a president has realized since World War II as it will be expounded on below.

OBAMA'S EXERCISE OF PRESIDENTIAL POWERS

Glenn Hastedt argues that the separation of power found in the Constitution provides the basis on which congressional participation in foreign policy rests. It comprises of four powers: first, the power of advice and consent in making treaties, second, the power to confirm presidential appointments, three, a set of war powers, and four, the power to regulate commerce. However, over time, the president has developed a number of strategies for circumventing these restrictions.

While the president divides up domestic issues with Congress and the states, the Constitution gives the president broad power to command the armed forces, make treaties, and appoint diplomats. Furthermore, in accordance with the War Powers Resolution of 1973, the president can deploy troops for up to sixty days without congressional approval.[15]

The research findings indicate that a good foreign policy is one that serves the United States' best interests, that is, the security of the nation and the well-being of its people, and a good American foreign policy president is one who understands this, acts accordingly, rather than pursuing idealistic

dreams. America's interests change in different times and places, so realism means different meanings to different presidents, and includes a broad range of policies. But realism does not mean an open-ended war on a strategy, terrorism, nor does it mean constant intervening in other countries' internal affairs aimed at changing the domestic institutions of other countries. Of course, the United States can still serve as a role model for other countries in terms of human rights, sound democratic practices, well-developed civil society, and economic prosperity.

With the aforementioned framework in mind, the research findings indicate that Obama exercised all the aforementioned responsibilities during and after the Arab Spring with efficiency, tact, and diplomacy. It is by clear evidence that President Obama's foreign policies and public diplomacy in responding to the Arab Spring were very much within the parameters of his approach to politics generally, both domestic and international. It was prudent and mature to balance *idealism* and *realism*, as he expressed in his book Barack Obama, *The Audacity of Hope, Thought on Reclaiming The American Dream*, published in 2006 when he was a senator.

Research findings indicated that Obama's administration inherited from the Bush's Administration a complex, contentious, and contagious foreign policy and diplomacy challenges in the Middle East and the Islamic world generally, likewise in other parts of the globe. The sudden and unexpected occurrence of the Arab Spring in six countries that witnessed the events (Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Syria, and Yemen) in the span of few months and almost in tandem starting in December 2010, exacerbated the already multifaceted Anti-Americanism sentiment in the Middle East and the Islamic world which has been developed by the Bush administration's central foreign policy themes of "global war on terrorism," and "fighting Islamic Fascism."

Obama's decision-making, collegial, scholarly cognitive style—which is based on working with a foreign policy team of key aides, advisers, and cabinet officers with varying perspectives on policy matters—sought to enable him to articulate a clear vision and message to the countries of the Middle East and the Muslim world. Running the foreign policy decision process as a kind of graduate seminar seems to fit Obama's background as a law professor.[16]

In responding to the events of the Arab Spring, Snow and Hany argue that Obama proved to be a highly skilled communicator similar to former president Bill Clinton when he responded to the events of the Arab Spring. He proved that he clearly has a high sense of self-efficacy around foreign policy materials when dealing with the events of the Arab Spring. He was clearly the center of power and ideas within his foreign policy team. As Brzezinski put it, "Obama himself is a major source of strategic direction"[17] on foreign policy and the team of advisers he assembled seems admirably able to meet

the criteria both by providing contrasting perspectives on issues and of being able to unite behind policy decisions once they are reached. The aforementioned attributes are confirmed by two participants of Obama's foreign policy team—Hillary Clinton, secretary of state in her autobiography *Hard Choices*, published 2014, and Dereck Chollet, Senior White House staff in his autobiography titled *The Long Game-How Obama Defied Washington and Redefined America's Role in the World*, published 2016. And endorsed by the Brookings institute's focus book *Bending History—Barak Obama's Foreign Policy*—coauthored by Martin Indyk, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Michael O'Hanlon, published in 2012. The later valuable research is an interim assessment of three years into President Obama's presidency.[18]

One of the innovations that Obama made, according to Snow and Hany (2013) is to enlarge the National Security Council staff group to include members of the National Economic Council, where there is somewhat more disagreement than within the traditional security team. The major limit on the operation of the Obama collegial model in responding to the Arab Spring events was the limits of presidential time, which, by itself is a constraint on presidential power to act in response to events. As Brzezinski argues, "He is only able to play this role (as foreign policy leader) on a part-time basis."[19] The reason, clearly, was the need for presidential concentration of effort in dealing with the domestic economic crisis that crippled much of the United States for several years (starting in 2008), compounded by the partisan disagreements on how to confront it.[20]

In dealing with the Arab Spring, it is clear that Obama decided not to take a single, blanket approach to avoid that rapidly moving events drove administration policies. Events in the Middle East seemed to be part of a long-term transformation, with important risks, including the potential rise of Islamism in Egypt and potential civil war in Syria. Apparently, Obama realized that the process will take decades to play out and will remain a challenge for the U.S. presidents to come. The administration's response to the Arab Spring very much reflects the interest in not being marginalized by the events and of placing itself on the "right side" of history. In the process, Obama had to alter the *idealistic* and *realistic* whims that have marked his foreign policy. Thus, at the beginning, an initial caution was removed and the administration was driven by the emotional reaction of the street of the six Arab countries. It appears that it was only later that a policy was formulated—a policy that tries to conciliate particular U.S. interests in the region and pointedly American values. As a result, the Obama administration's response to the Arab Spring may seem to be equally indecisive, hesitant, and fragmented: reluctantly supporting the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, uninterestedly backing limited military action in Libya, projecting a nuanced attitude to the unrest in Bahrain, and confusing U.S. traditional allies.[21]

The administration's apparent inconsistencies (e.g., calling for Hosni Mubarak's departure just days after Cairo's protests mounted, while refusing to denounce Syria's regime, combined with a determination to a forceful regime change in Libya), highlight the contrast between the administration's determined approach toward some of the Arab Spring regimes and much of the rest of its Middle East policy. As for friendly countries which have weathered the storm, the Obama administration settled on a strategy to help keep allies who are willing to reform in power, even if that means the democratic demands of their newly inspired citizens might have to lag behind. The administration's commitment to democracy and human rights is weakened by its search of countervailing economic and security interests. Growing U.S. concern about stability in the Persian Gulf and Iran's regional influence seemed to be prompting the administration to largely put aside democracy priorities for the sake of good relations with strategic allies.[22]

Obama, according to Carothers is not the only president who, as far as the democracy agenda is concerned, has demonstrated "a split personality," For decades, Washington considered the Middle East a region of vital U.S. interest, in part because it sits over the world's largest reserves of oil and natural gas. To maintain its strategic influence in the region, Washington has often relied on friendly Arab governments that suppressed the democratic aspirations of their people. Like his predecessors, until the outbreak of the Arab Spring, Obama focused on building bridges with Arab leaders and governments. In cultivating relations with the Muslim world, there is a gap between U.S. political ideals and the realpolitik of its strategic national interests created by Bush's Administration as a result of the 9/11. The Obama administration eventually concluded that it must shape its response country by country, knowing a simple, *realistic* fact that American national security interests in the Middle East weigh as heavily as *idealistic* impulses. The administration's cautious response to the popular uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa is the reflection of a *realist policy* motivated by strategic interests, such as oil security, fighting terrorism, Iran's rise in the region and, equally important, its realization of the limits of American power and its capacity to project that power to shape events.[23]

Obama himself explained the trade-offs in these terms at the Clinton Global Initiative in September 2014. After publicizing U.S. programs to promote civil society in the Middle East and elsewhere, he made a refutation:

> The reality is sometimes . . . for the sake of our national security, the United States works with governments that do not fully respect the universal rights of their citizens. . . . I will never apologize for doing everything in my power to protect the safety and security of the American people. . . . But that does not mean that human rights can be simply sacrificed for the sake of expediency. So

> although it is uncomfortable, although it sometimes causes friction, the United States will not stop speaking out for the human rights of all people, and pushing governments to uphold those rights and freedoms.[24]

When Obama came to office, he promised his electorates that he will end America's over-investment in the Middle East. He vowed to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq, fight the "real war" in Afghanistan, "rebalance" resources toward Asia to meet the rising power of China, and take a hard line against terrorism by increasing deployments to Afghanistan and approving the use of drones in Pakistan and Yemen,[25] but the unexpected occurrence of the Arab Spring forced him to re-prioritize his foreign policy goals, as indicated by the research findings, to focus more on Libya, on Syria where Russia and Iran are active players, and the rise of ISIS which beheaded two American journalists.

OBAMA'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

First: The research findings indicate that, at the first glance, the Obama administration's approach to public diplomacy reflects the growing lessons learned over the last seven-and-a-half years during the Bush administration about how to communicate—or not communicate—with the Arab and Islamic world. Most prominent is the vigor and sense of determination in the way the administration appears to be reaching out to the international community in general and the Middle East and the Muslim world in particular. Obama's public statements directed to the aforementioned population indicated its emphasis on *listening* and *engagement*. It can be characterized as the deliberate effort to communicate respect and understanding of the demands and aspirations of both the Middle East and Islamic world. Obama's rhetoric was less shrill, less demanding, and less confrontational.

Second: Representationally, Obama projected the image of U.S. public diplomacy toward the Arab and Muslim population as one of open hands rather than scrunched fists. This new style according to Zahama repeats the White Oak recommendations on public diplomacy, which were the result of a January 2009 gathering of experts at a plantation in Florida. The White Oak document captures the latest consensus on the shape and direction of U.S. public diplomacy. For example, it articulated a "holistic" vision that expands U.S. public diplomacy beyond its narrow focus on Muslim publics, security, and terrorism, to get involved with other publics across a variety of issues. Similarly, it reaffirmed the need for U.S. public diplomacy to coordinate its internal structure, improve personnel, expand exchange programs, and increase funding. A more coordinated internal structure was seen as the key to enhancing external integrity. The document also highlighted the balance between the

usefulness of new information technologies and the need for old-fashioned human contact and relationships. Finally, the recommendations recognized the role of average citizens (citizen diplomacy) in U.S. public diplomacy, as well as Congress and the president. Maybe most interesting in the recommendations is that it extended definition of public diplomacy, which expands upon the traditional State Department definition to suggest a role for public diplomacy considerations in foreign policy formulation. "Public diplomacy is not just a 'war of ideas' but a multipronged effort to understand, inform, engage and influence the attitudes and behavior of foreign opinion leaders and publics, in ways that both promote better foreign understanding of American values, polices and goals, and better inform the U.S. policymaking process."[26]

One also sees in the White Oak document as a conceptual change from public diplomacy as "soft power" to public diplomacy as "*smart power*." Joseph S. Nye, originator of the term soft power, was one of the participants sitting around the table at White Oak. Public diplomacy as soft power carries with it a rather limiting meaning of communication, persuasion, or influence and is presented as oppositional to military, political, and economic hard power tools. By contrast, smart power is the combined strategic use of soft and hard power. Alliance building to gain the cooperative advantage is a key element of smart power. John Brown, author of a daily public diplomacy press review, suggested that the Obama administration leaned toward a more muscular smart power approach to foreign policy at the expense of making public diplomacy a high priority.[27]

Zahama points that while White Oak recommendations may be suggestive of the long-term direction of U.S. policy in dealing with the international publics, the Obama demonstration of immediate focus on the Muslim world very closely parallels the recommendation of another high-level—but perhaps less publicized—recent report titled "Changing Course: A New Direction for U.S. Relations with the Muslim World." The report was prepared by a bipartisan, interfaith group of thirty-four American leaders, including eleven Muslim Americans, concerned about the deteriorating relations between the United States and the Muslim world. It highlighted four broad areas as part of a strategy for improving United States–Muslim relations, including using diplomacy to engage allies and adversaries in dialogue to resolve key conflicts, supporting efforts to improve governance and promote civic participation in Muslim countries, helping to catalyze job-creating growth in Muslim countries, and improving mutual respect and understanding between Americans and Muslims around the world. This last area of improving understanding focuses specifically on public diplomacy to "reinforce changes in policies and actions."

In addition to public diplomacy, the report suggests expanding exchange programs, promoting cultural diplomacy, enhancing news coverage of United

States–Muslim relations, and involving the Muslim American community as a bridge to the Muslim world. Significantly, the report says the strategy will only be successful if there is a reciprocal effort by Muslim leaders and publics.[28]

Third: The Obama administration seemed to realize the need to build a new comprehensible policy framework that can deal comprehensively with the challenges posed by the rising revolutionary waves in the Middle East as a result of the Arab Spring, an area where the United States has vital interests. Obama's most comprehensive response came on May 19, 2011, in a speech at the State Department. Obama's speech clearly intended to be the formulation of a Middle East policy, a blueprint for policymaking, rather than just a showcase for speech-making, "reflecting a shift in strategy if not the declaration of a new doctrine."[29]

A content analysis of that speech indicates that Obama put the United States as squarely standing behind the struggle for freedom and democracy, specifying that Washington supports them for all Arab peoples, not only for some. Obama based U.S. policy on core principles: opposing violence, universal rights, and the right of people to choose their own leaders. He asserted: "we can, and we will, speak out for a set of core principles—principles that have guided our response to the events over the past six months."[30] However, he also reckoned with the uncertainties the United States faces in the process: "There will be times when our short-term interests don't align perfectly with our long-term vision for the region."[31]

In this context, the content and substance of Obama's speech was important, for two main reasons. First, he considered the Arab revolts as a fight for "self-determination." This was a particularly significant acknowledgment of the Arab peoples' right to ultimately determine their outcome, as well as an advance on previous hesitant American responses to the uprisings. Second, he also made it clear that the right to live in freedom and democracy is a universal right that should be enjoyed by Bahrainis—who are strategically important to the United States—as well as by Libyans and Syrians. Obama said the United States has a historic opportunity to grip this change and the responsibility to support the rights of people demanding for freedoms, and he announced for "a new chapter in American diplomacy."[32] He also revealed mainly a set of economic incentives aimed at steering the region toward lasting democratic change.

In a general sense, the speech did not really resolve the tension at the heart of the question: that between Obama's rhetoric of support for reform and the United States insisting to Arab governments that are trimming reforms. Obama's speech left many observers and people in the region disappointed. He was attempting to square a difficult circle: he wanted to endorse America's support for democratic aspirations, but at the same time did not want to worsen

a split with allies, such as Saudi Arabia, about the pace of democratic development. Obama also said little about political grievances in Saudi Arabia, a major oil supplier, where Shia protesters have been violently dispersed. Human rights groups have called the Obama administration's approach to the so-called "Arab spring" inconsistent, charging that U.S. policy toward some countries has a double standard. The speech tried to combine policy interests which are not easily reconcilable and might even produce different outcomes, at times hostile to American interests: the fact that "America's interests are not hostile to people's hopes; they're essential to them . . . and [that] we will keep our commitments to friends and partners." The speech represented an escalation of rhetoric but failed to adequately shift policy or even render it more coherent.[33]

U.S. policy toward the Arab Spring, according to Gerges, has been a divided policy marked by sincere but reactive support for democratic advances when it occurred, but no real proactive support for democracy where dictatorship remains. Where political change has occurred, the United States usually backed democratic change, sometimes actively, as in Libya; sometimes more reluctantly, as in Egypt. But where autocratic stability continues to rule, the administration held fast to the decades-old U.S. policy of support for friendly dictators who are reliable on matters of security and economics. It must be argued, however, that, in its seeming inconsistency, the administration tried to strike the right note of "cautious optimism and seriousness of purpose" in countries undergoing a democratic transition. First, it circumvented getting involved in complex internal politics of democratic transitions. The United States has been cautious by avoiding to put itself in the center of internal political change, for fear of compromising the standing of democracy advocates, of being accused of interfering, or ultimately of assuming responsibility for a yet uncertain process. Second, it has accepted the popular will of Arab societies even if it takes the form of Islamist electoral victories, such as in Tunisia and Egypt.

One of Obama's important and successful public diplomacy efforts (to build coalitions with other countries of the world, to deal with the complicated realities of the Middle East) was his initiative articulated at the UN General Assembly in 2013, after the occurrence of the Arab Spring. Obama set forth his foreign affairs agenda, a triptych of initiatives for negotiation about Iran's nuclear program, the situation in Syria, and Israeli-Palestinian differences. Despite the aforementioned public diplomacy initiative, the negotiations on Syria disastrously failed as the number killed approached 200,000. ISIS further complicated the situations in Syria and Iraq, signaling the failure of the administration's strategy to contain the regional complications of the Syrian crisis.

The president found himself faced with conflicting preferences: his uncertainty about the deployment of U.S. military assets to Iraq and the Levant,

and his strong commitment to protect the United States from terrorism in the wake of ISIS atrocities, including the beheading of two U.S. journalists.[34]

Content analysis of Obama's 2014 public diplomacy address to the UN General Assembly, indicates that he had changed his 2013 agenda to put the complicated reality of ISIS front and center, stating that it was time for the world—especially Muslim communities—to reject violent extremist ideologies. Calling for all nations "to observe and enforce international norms," he appealed to Iran's leaders and people to take "this historic opportunity . . . to reach a solution that meets your energy needs while assuring the world that your program is peaceful."[35]

Allen Keiswetter argues, while acknowledging the great differences between Palestinians and Israelis, he gave minor justification of the two-state solution, stating, "So long as I am President, we will stand up for the principle that Israelis, Palestinians, the region, and the world will be more just with two states living side by side, in peace and security."[36] In Obama's second term, the Israeli-Palestinian talks, in which Secretary of State John Kerry and veteran negotiator Martin Indyk so heavily invested, "stopped" in April 2013—after nine months of frantic diplomacy, amid reports that this time the two-state solution may actually have suffered a temporal setback. This impairment set the stage for another round of fighting in Gaza ending in an uncertain late summer ceasefire.[37]

Elsewhere in the greater Middle East, Libya has disintegrated into factional fighting in which UAE aircrafts, with Egyptian help, bombed parties supposedly supported by Qatar. In the other Arab Spring countries, except Tunisia, the bright hopes of 2011 have remained unsatisfied—including steps toward democracy. In Afghanistan, Kerry intervened personally to resolve charges of election fraud so a new Afghan president could assume office and sign an agreement for NATO force withdrawals. For Obama's legacy of public diplomacy, the difference is that Afghanistan was Obama's war and Iraq was Bush's.

Equally important, these Middle East events occur in the context of a new threat of Russia to the Ukraine and East European NATO allies, following the Russian annexation of Crimea, an uprising among ethnic Russians in eastern Ukraine, and the shooting down of a Malaysian Airlines plane killing all 298 aboard (in which Russia has been strongly implicated). These international crises provoked extensive calls for broad-scale policy reconsideration. Obama's response has been slow. He successfully used ISIS's advances as a weight for the formation of a new, more inclusive government in Baghdad, a prerequisite to attract alienated Sunnis back to supporting the central government. Despite his long-lasting opposition to further U.S. military involvement in Iraq, he authorized U.S. airstrikes justified on the grounds of protecting U.S. facilities and personnel and of providing humanitarian relief to besieged

Yazidis and Turkmen minorities. He also advanced assistance to Iraqi Security Forces and the Peshmerga of the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Fourth: On September 10, 2014, the eve of the thirteenth anniversary of 9/11, Obama took another public diplomacy step by announcing his strategy for dealing with ISIS, including extended use of air strikes to target ISIS assets in both Iraq and Syria. He also sent Kerry and Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel to the Middle East to build an international coalition to confront ISIS in an effort that would extend beyond his presidency. The administration claimed support from more than sixty countries.

Fifth: Another important public diplomacy initiative was Hillary Clinton's speech at the US-Islamic World Forum, where she provided some insights to clarify the U.S. approach, stating it strongly supports democratization in the region, although rejecting a "one-size fits all approach" to the Arab uprisings. Clinton said the administration had reoriented U.S. policy in the Middle East to focus more on people and less on governments, but qualified that the response to the democracy movements would vary from country to country. Indeed, U.S. policy looks different in Bahrain and Syria than it does in Libya because American interests are very different in each arena.[38]

Sixth: John Kerry, Obama's Secretary of State in his second term, responded in an aliquant public diplomacy statement to critics who have charged that Obama's policies during and after the Arab Spring—and in the Middle East generally—have transformed America into "a self-contained" power. Kerry stated that Obama pointed to the 35,000 troops that the United States maintains in the region and the fact that the United States remains the world's indispensable power, not only militarily, but also politically and economically. Kerry declaims:

> The most puzzling version of this disengagement myth is about a supposed retreat by the United States from the Middle East. Now, my response to that suggestion is simple: You cannot find another country—not one country—that is as proactively engaged, that is partnering with so many Middle Eastern countries as constructively as we are on so many high-stake fronts.[39]

Obama's public diplomacy initiatives have only partially silenced his critics, some of whom claim "boots on the ground," not just air power, are necessary for military *s*uccess.[40]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Despite the fact that Barack Obama's foreign policy has come under constant criticism during and after the Arab Spring, described by Anthony Celso as

a *Strategic Confusion of a Realist-Idealist*,[41] the research findings indicate that considering the context of his time and the complicated realities of the occurring events of the Arab Spring, a case can be made and based on reliable and valid evidence that Obama was a truly exceptional chief diplomat of U.S. foreign policy and diplomacy toward the Arab Spring.[42] He provided wise and moral leadership, strengthened with political realism as practiced by presidents Adams, Eisenhower, Nixon, and Bush 41st. He pursued worthy and important goals, and achieved a great deal, advancing core U.S. national interests in the Middle East, and reinforced its continued leadership in the world, while at the same time working on improving the seriously declining domestic economy to reinforce U.S. power. He (Obama) should be given credit for avoiding major foreign (or domestic) policy disasters. While bad luck can (and does seem to) knockout every occupant of the United States presidency, Obama's circumvention of major mistakes and miscalculations is something for which he is due significant credit and indeed for that he rightly takes credit. But "*don't do stupid stuff*" is only one logical implication of his broad and well-crafted foreign policy and public diplomacy vision and practice, which he stated clearly and consistently, and which brought significant actual results particularly in dealing with the six countries of the Arab Spring.[43]

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