

*Review*

## Arab African Northern revolt states (2010-2014): The missed path of re-institutionalization and democratic transformation

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The quick current of revolt spread rapidly from Tunisia to Egypt, and then from Egypt to Libya, in one timing date, threatening entrenched regimes and the status quo. For example, Libya's revolt turned into a bloody civil war, spilling over armaments, everywhere in the country. By the end of 7th of February, 2014, the General National Congress will end its mandate, which will lead into political vacuum in the country. In Tunisia, the Muslim movement (Nahda Party) led the country into social unrest, only in the end of January, 2014, and after four years, Tunis launched its new constitution. In addition, Egypt and its revolt turned into Christian-Muslim confrontations, and it turned its destination twice (January uprising, 2011 and the road to 30 of June, 2013) with widespread of unrest and instability between the civic moments and the ousted Brotherhood. This progress was led by the military rule under the Commander, Assisi, who called his Egyptian people to march against the Brotherhood presidency, Morsi, in 30, June, 2013, that led to the interim government, and hunting of all the brotherhood elites.

**Key words:** Revolt, re-institutionalization, democratic transformation, upheavals, turmoil.

### INTRODUCTION

While many observers have drawn parallels with the rising of the American control of the International Order and the domination of the Western alliances, and its major leading role in combating terrorism, and the eastward spread of democracy to Eastern Europe, the outcome of the Arab revolts is far from bringing political and social stability in the AANS's region. This popular revolt has challenged authoritarian rule in the whole region, and highlighted the widespread desire for a

responsible government. Libya, in particular, is an evidential and exclusion example among other Arab revolts, that NTO played a major powerful militarized intervention in the name of supporting Obama's terminology of "Arab Spring". In this regard, the Arab revolt states could be described as immune towards democratic transition and transformation, revolts stolid in, overthrowing some regimes and shaking each other (Kaplan, 2011). Four years (2010/2014) have passed since the

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arrival of the Arab uprising, turmoil, and leaders and decision-makers have been trying to analyze such historic transformation in order to find traction in the region that has been looking different from bad to worse, with new dynamics, unknown elites and political topography. Observers noticed, during these events, the timing of the whole changes in leadership and state's political system, and new elites occupied the political landscape of the region. This would suggest that the external factor was an essential motive in advancing such stages of sudden changes in the region.

To repeat our previous notion of immunity, it appeared that this region is still not well prepared, culturally, politically and economically, to conceive, or perceive, or to advance, any external ideas. The region seems still in need for a charismatic leader, as usual, to lead the community in the region, away from the modern aspects of democracy. This societal phenomenon of the region requires further analysis and observation, in order for one to search for the uncover conceptions and other incidents and circumstances.

This article tries to read the indications of this societal and political phenomenon and connects it to other. This search is often a worthless one especially due to the unavailability of the literature, which mostly is not adequate to explain the various aspects of what has happened during these changes. In addition, first we must articulate the term of revolution in the light of what happened exactly. In other words, what happened in these states of revolt is not a revolution, in its exact mean, but it was just stages of uprising, turmoil and upheavals. Having said that, and within this framework, the current continuing uprising, turmoil and upheavals have proved not to express their own characteristics and features which require further analysis

This personal articulation may reveal another face of the current picture, and will try to analyze the current political and geopolitical surroundings in the AANS's revolt, in an attempt to illustrate some applicable conclusions and provide a feasible setting of the future course in these revolt states. As a regional observer, who followed the region events moment by moment, it can be argued that the events of the current Arab revolt states were molded within two combined factors, the external factor, the strongest one, and the weakest internal factor; both were operating under the roles of the international factor.

### **ARAB AFRICAN NORTHERN STATES: CURRENTS OF CHANGE**

The AANS have never had one state that assembles all the AANS's society. However, as they had common history, language, religion and traditions, they have always felt closer to other Arabs and Africans rather than any other nation. Tribal links and kinships remain evident

and one family can exist in two or three or more Arab Northern states, mainly in Libya and Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, Libya and Algeria. The notion of Arab identity of states (as of today) had never been revealed before (Sykes–Picot of 1916), which separated the Arabs of North Africa into stateless, regimes and nationals.

Historically, (Helmreich, 1974) the compartment of the Ottoman Empire (1911 /1922) was a political incident that carried the strategic vision of neutralizing expected threat from the Turkish Empire and terminating any likely mount through partitioning and dividing the massive mass of territories and peoples that formerly comprised the former Turkish emperor into several new nations. In this historical context, the existing power during the collapse of the Turkish Emperor, dominated and fragmented the region into a multitude of comparatively weak and, to an extent, artificial states, at odds with each other. The weakening of the state effectiveness and unpopular ruling elites amongst Arab Northern region was referred in the political history of the region as foreign imposition characterized as illegitimate post-colonial entities.

Correspondingly, Bernard Lewis condemns the false democratic practice in the Arab political debate, when pointing out the fraud parliamentary systems that were installed and bequeathed by Italian, British and French rule in the former colonial states. As a matter of fact, we can see that in the removal of several Arab leaders (poisoning Yasser Arafat, hanging Saddam Hussein, Jamal Abdel Nassir's heritages of Pan-Arabism, and assassinating Gaddafi) part of a plot aimed to get the region from any regional power, in terms of leadership, which can be serious qualification trying to re-organize the local traditional systems for more independent policies, from outside intervention.

Furthermore, comparatively scrawny states, emerged as Western protectorates against opposition, seeking external patrons and means for the regional power struggle and survival, have remained dependent for their security on the Western former colonial powers long after formal independence. Fearing the vistas of changes, the superiority of security issues over social issues in the region is evidenced, when experts noticed that most Arab states went strongly, for military expenditures, while about 34.6 million Arabs were living under the two-dollars-a-day international poverty line, and double-rate unemployment.

It can be argued that the current round of uprising, turmoil and upheavals, now termed wrongfully "the Arab Spring", does not constitute the first manifestation of Arab mass protests that have led to a change in the social and political structure of (AANS) societies. In fact it comes as unknown current of changes, each possessing its own grounds, circumstances, ideologies, slogans and outcomes. Right or wrong, the term of Arab Spring has been used by Barrack Obama, when advancing his policy toward the region and describing the street movements in the capitals of Tripoli, Tunisia, Cairo and Damascus.

### The Arab currents of change

First of all, first current of change attempt took place in 1914. It was called the Arab Revolution that characterized that it had a leader, who led the revolution and the main target was ending Turkish rule in the land of Hejaz (Saudi Arabia now). This current overlapped, while the disappearing and finally the collapse of the Turkish, was the major regional episode. This development was on the internationally driven, as the revolutions were supported by two major proceedings, regionally and externally. World War I was the major global episode

The British were targeting and aiming to end and replace the Turkish presence in the region. Consequently, the outcome of the revolt current was transitory as they were bereft of their independence, when the colonial powers planned their way in that region. Throughout this period, a number of ideologies were legitimized through this current of revolt, and the main slogan was nationalism. It was considered important; in order to give confidence Arabs to get purge of any other subordination, mainly political Islam, which unavoidably meant wrenching out of any association to the Turkish rule, and the warding off of any desiring for the Turkish culture.

Secondly, the second current of the Arab revolts took place during the 50s and 60s, and the term the Arab Spring was used and invented for the first time in the French writings. For example, Jacques Benoist-Méchin (1959) described, in his book, "the Arab revolts" that took place in the Arab region, and tried to link them to the European Revolutions of 1848, known as the 'Spring of Nations' or people's springtime. Comparable to the first current, the second current of Arab revolts came after two most important events, one regional and another external. It was the World War II, which had a great collision on the revolt currents and caused them to be driven by external factors. The foreign powers and forces encouraged and even motivated these revolts as eastern powers wanted to fight the Western presence and colonizing in the Arab region. For that reason, "justice", 'fighting Imperialism', 'progressivism', "freedom", "democracy" were among other key themes during this period.

Thus far, the major regional episode that occurred during that period was the establishment of "Israel" and the Egyptian revolt of 1952. This led to the backing of "Pan-Arabism" to oppose "Zionism movement", which led to the creation of "Israel" in 1948. Pan-Arabism was proficiently endorsed by late Egyptian President Jamal Abdel Nasser, as his heritage of Pan-Arabism was associated with the second current of Arab revolts. Moreover, some scholars see that when the great powers were prevented, divided during the Cold War and hegemonic involvement was thus deterred; the conditions for regional sovereignty could have been better and the region was more probably united against the external rule.

Pan-Arabism prevalent struck a harmony with and inspired other Arab leaders who guided revolts in their home countries. As a result, Pan Arabism expanded attractiveness in Arab streets, as "Nasser" belongs to Nasser the late Egyptian president (1952/1970), and had an evident influence on Arab political movements ( Ba'ath parties in Syria and Iraq (1970/2003), Gadhafi in Libya (1969-2011) and others. This current of revolts did not target "Israel" only, but 'other colonial' presence in the region- regarded to be the real instigator of the Zionist movement and therefore the State of "Israel". In this view, a number of circlets, destined by their association on Western "imperialistic" powers, paid the price and were toppled in Libya, Iraq, and first and foremost in stick .

Pan-Arabism, which mainly intended sticking to Arab identity of unity, turns downed increasingly over the course of the past 60 years. For instance, the position of Arab states was united and remarkably rock-solid facing the establishment of "Israel" in 1948 and opposing the UN partition plan. Parallel position was upheld during the 1973' war or 'oil crisis'. Nonetheless, the peace agreement, which signed between Israel and Egypt (1979), gravely announced the decline of Pan-Arabism. In this line of revolt development politics, most Arab states stayed away from Egypt, and the Arab League headquarter was removed from Egypt to Tunisia. A number of episodes chased and boosted this division, including Arabs controlled reaction on Israeli invasion to Beirut, the Iraqi- Iranian war. The later war put Iraq, the neighbouring sister state to Syria in the opposite camp with Iraq and US's military strike on Tripoli and Benghazi in 1986, with a modest reaction of Arab states, was just a box in point.

In short, Iraqi invasion of its neighbouring sister state of Kuwait (1990) had serious ramifications and a direct role in the declining of Pan-Arabism and solidarity; predominantly, Iraqi invasion separated Arabs into two entities, one of which was enthusiastic to call for foreign intervention to attack their Arab sister states. Conceivably, the US occupation of Iraq in 2003 and the hanging of Saddam Hussein, the stem supporter of Pan-Arabism, affirmed the past its best of Pan-Arabism.

The second path of the analysis comes within the thoughtful context. Debatably, the current confusion of revolts or uprising, upheavals or turmoil or temporary societal disorder in the AANS might be well thought-out as the fourth current of democratization, not democracy with reference to the concept developed by Milad ELHARATHI: democratization is not related to the family of democracy, each notion is followed by a reverse one. Each notion has its own environmental society to be implemented; democracy must be born and implemented when society creates its own state, and initiated by society, in order to be its servant; thus democratization is not a society's initiative, it is created by the modern state, it is a state's initiative, for the society to be a servant of the modern state.

Samuel (1991) in his book went further in defining the stages of the revolutions waves, as he termed it, in which he classified the waves into three stages of revolutionary waves. Huntington argues that each wave was followed by a reverse one and the first wave occurred between 1828/1926, with its roots in the recent French and American revolutions. This wave swept Europe and Latin America, and was manifested by military coups. It lost momentum in the interwar period between World War I and World War II when a number of dictators rose to power, which led to a shift away from democracy toward traditional despotic or new ideologically-driven, mass-based one-party regimes.

The second wave started from 1943 to 1962, and featured coups and the creation of authoritarianism across Latin America, South and East Asia and allied occupation post- World War II. Huntington proposed that the beginning of the end of Western colonial rule fashioned a number of new states with democratic inclinations. Nonetheless, he argues that political development, especially in Latin America, took on an authoritarian cast, and the decolonization of Africa led to the largest multiplication of authoritarian governments in history. Therefore, one third of the working democracies in 1958 had become dictatorial by the 1970s.

Ali Sarihan (2011) in the co-author work observed the collapse of the former Soviet Union, Southern Europe, South America and Africa. In consequence, a number of scholars have opted to insert the current Arab revolts within this framework. They discuss that with the commencement of the current Arab Spring, the fourth wave of transformation or "Democratization of Communist and Islamic Regimes" began as per the fact that it has an impact on other regions and inspired revolts and demonstrations in Europe, Asia, Latin and North America; it gained its international curves.

He embraces the changes, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, leading to democratic transitions of varying success in Eastern Europe in the fourth wave of democracy. However, Sarihan inserts the current Arab revolts within this framework. He orates that with the arrival of the current Arab Spring, the fourth wave of transformation or "Democratization of Communist and Islamic Regimes" began. The collapse of the former Soviet Union, the disappearing of Arabism, overthrowing a number of Arab regimes and the declining of historical Arab leader states led to a power vacuum and blankness future in the region and the intervention of foreign powers (either regional or international) became foreseeable. The conventional super powers are still seeking a bigger, newer role in the Arab region, mainly among USA, China and Russia, in response to the changes. The US, Russia, China and Europe compete with each other in order to guarantee the larger scale of influence and wider traction in the region, at times using their soft power instruments, at others their historical cooperation, not forgetting economic inducements.

Iran, Turkey, and Israel, on the other hand, are the most favoured regional powers with this end in view. Nonetheless, Israel's chances hinge greatly on a peace agreement with the Palestinians, not to mention the obvious fact that "Israel" is culturally different from the rest of the states in the region. Religion, History and culture overshadow Iran's probabilities over Israel, as it has also succeeded in building a network of allies within the region. However, Iran does not appear to be an attractive model for many Arab states, more than ever when it comes to freedom, human rights, economy and relations with the rest of the world.

Turkey, historically which is a part of the culture, history and religion of the region, comes into view to have the best probability in its preferences. It presents a charming model, in theory, for its democracy, freedom and modernity, human rights, booming economy and relations with the West, along with the presence of Islamic elites in power. Up till now, the term "the Turkish Model of the Brotherhood Deep state (BDS)" has been ham it up and has put Turkey's reputation on the line, and among other challenges, Turkey's potential in the Arab region is spoiled by its explicit eagerness and blatant use of its soft power, which may lead to untoward effects.

Hitherto, striding the path into the Arab region should be graphed suspiciously. It is well known for being one of the most hot-blooded regions, and for its convulsion is often described as a cold-blooded in quick sand. At this instance, it is not difficult to fathom out the feeling of dissatisfaction that pervades, nearly every Arab society, who believes that their fate should not pivot on others, but stay on in their own hands. Unfortunately, this considered necessary outcome will not materialize until historical Arab leadership states rise and shake the dust of weakness and reluctance from their societies' bears.

### **Why NATO's assignment in Libya was not in Egypt or Tunisia?**

Libya is a major exporting oil country in the region, while Tunisia's economy depends on its limited resources, and its economy depends on tourism revenues, and Egypt's economy depends on foreign aid, mainly from the United States and from international agencies' donors. This is because it is a populated state with diversity of religions.

In fact, Libya holds approximately 46.4 billion barrels of oil reserves, the largest in Africa and in close proximity to Europe. In 2010, Libya produced an estimated 1.8 million barrels per day bbl/d of the world's 88m barrels a day of oil, of which 1.5 million bbl /d was exported. The ousted regime had planned to up its production to 3 million barrels a day by 2020, and further develops its natural gas sector in an effort to stimulate economic recovery against the backdrop of US and international sanctions during the 1980s and 1990s. France, Britain, Italy and Spain accounted for nearly 85% of Libya's oil exports.

Of these nations, Italy received over 28% of its total oil imports from Libya which amount to 370,000 barrels of oil per day. Italy's role was also outstanding as Silvio Berlusconi's government offered the use of seven air and navy bases for the Libyan operation at the early stages of the military operations .

Regarding France, it receives 17% of its oil from Libya, along with Britain who receives 8% of its oil from Libya as well. It is also interesting to point out that France, UK and Italy were the first NATO countries that undertook sorties and military logistical assistance across Libya as part of collective efforts to enforce a no-fly zone during the initial phases of the intervention. Furthermore, Libya is, also, awash in natural gas resources with an estimated capacity of 55 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of proven natural gas reserves. According to estimates by the International Energy Agency (IEA 2011) prior to the upsurge of popular revolution, Libyan production by 2012 could be increased by as much as 50 percent if planned pipelines and gas-fired power plants would have been built.

The natural resources of Libya attracted NATO members to organize and lead a major military campaign in the binging of the second decade of this century. Certain advanced questions remained without imperative answers; and how such NATO's involvement, in supporting Libya's revolt that created a large amount of debatable political and economic impacts on Libya's affairs? The above arguments could explain why the NATO's intervention happened in Libya, as a show business for testing new weapons and creating new bazaar of arms supply to the region (Nick, 2011). On the other, Egypt and Tunisia would be less interesting marketplace and not enriched oil supply.

## Conclusion

There is no feasible path that the Arab revolt states will move societal and politically from the current state of immunity against democracy, in its the fashionable style, in which, these states could be described as immune entities towards democratic transition and transformation. Yes, the currents of changes overthrow some regimes and shake each other. Four years (2010/2014) have passed since the arrival of the Arab uprising, turmoil, and leaders and the new region's elites are still trying to analyze such historic transformation in order to find traction in the region that has been looking different from bad to worse, with new dynamics, unknown elites and political topography. Observers noticed, during these events, the timing of the whole changes in leadership and state's political system, and new elites occupied the political landscape of the region.

This would suggest that the external factor was a crucial motive in advancing such stages of sudden changes in the region

At this stage the mission of uprising, upheavals and turmoil in the AANS might have developed an appetite

for collapsing despots political systems in the region by using the smart power, in directing street movements from distance , but the question would be whether the hitherto vague outcome of these currents of change adventure could turn into a Pyrrhic victory for the old regimes in the region since concerns are running high that the western leaders are pertaining to exporting democracy, the regional medley and its fanatic resources for sole-problem, might fall into the hands of Islamist rulers in the region again . For that reasons, as far as AANS and exporting democracy to the region, re-institutionalization and democratic transformation in this particular region, remains a difficult and long-far term course to be reached; indeed, it is the missed path toward those undefined causes of the region's upheavals, uprising and turmoil.

In short, the Arab uprising spring started the transformation of long-lasting regimes in the AANS region into democracies from the bottom up, as a series of grassroots, leaderless movements, with the people's cry for change facilitated by, among other things, new communication technologies. But overall, the so-called Arab revolutions would have been impossible without the help of the military, externally, as the case of Libya, and internally as the cases of Tunisia and Egypt.

The military was the cornerstone of the former authoritarian regimes, but when it allowed the change, part of these 'revolutions' became top-down managed by military elites. This article postulated that these social uprisings were not true revolutions, but rather calls for a transition or transformation of the existing regimes into different institutional patterns. Toppling the regimes and having the first free elections is not enough to consolidate these young democracies. This article argued that there are four criteria for the consolidation of democracy: constitutional consolidation, constitutional institutions need to be consolidated; consolidation of representatives, political parties and interest groups need to be consolidated; consolidation of behaviour, will the veto-actors defy and challenge the new democracy?; consolidation of democratic political culture, will the values of the people challenge the values of a democratic regime, and if so, will the values of Islam challenge democracy?

## Conflict of Interests

The author(s) have not declared any conflict of interests.

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