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SHIFTING SANDS: POLITICAL TRANSITIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, PART 1

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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SHIFTING SANDS: POLITICAL TRANSITIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, PART 1

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2011

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST
AND SOUTH ASIA,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Steve Chabot (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. CHABOT. The committee will come to order. I want to thank everyone for being here. We are going to have votes here very shortly, so we are going to try to get at least our opening statements in here.

I want to welcome all my colleagues to the third hearing of the Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia. This hearing was called to assess the current trajectory of the political transitions in the Middle East, and to take stock of where the U.S. stands today.

Nearly 4 months ago, Mohammed Bouazizi, a street vendor in Ben Arous, Tunisia, touched off a tidal wave of unrest that continues to share the Arab world to its very foundation. His self-immolation became a symbol around which Tunisians united to overthrow former President Ben Ali, whose oppressive regime had at that point been ruling for over 20 years.

Arab citizens throughout the Middle East looked on, and inspired by the revolution in Tunisia took to the streets in unprecedented numbers. For us sitting here today, it is perhaps the most striking that, unlike in the past, the citizens of the region are not protesting against the U.S. or against Israel, but against the failings of their own governments.

Hidden under a thin veneer of stability, Arab autocracies for decades have allowed the social and political foundations of their countries to fester, and in many cases rot. It was only a matter of time until the citizens of the region stood up and together said, "Enough."

Although each country has its own distinctive history and its own set of unique circumstances, the current unrest is, at its core, about rewriting the social contract throughout the Arab world.

The citizens in the streets stand collectively and demand the same fundamental human rights that are the birthright of every individual on earth. They remind us that the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness do not stop at the water's edge.

Four months into this transition, it is appropriate to pause and assess where the region is heading, and to examine the effectiveness of the administration's policy to date. The regional shifts happening throughout the Middle East place the United States and our allies at a precipice in history.

The entire strategic framework upon which our foreign policy in that region has been based is rapidly transforming. U.S. policy must transform with it. It is, however, unclear today whether the administration's foreign policy is, in reality, adapting as it must.

Over the past months, the administration has dithered in many cases, and vacillated. On several occasions, high-level officials have even contradicted one another, suggesting that not only is there no unified vision, but no clear policy either.

This has left Members of Congress and citizens of the region alike confused as to what the administration's objective actually is, and with what means it seeks to achieve it.

Also missing is a clear strategic vision for the Middle East as a whole. Rather than stepping back and determining first what its desired end state is, the administration is stuck in reaction mode.

The result is that foreign policy becomes slave to each individual development on the ground, and consequently the United States appears in many cases indecisive and non-committal. Instead of leading the way to a more prosperous future for the peoples of the Middle East, the administration looks as if it is waiting to see who ends up on top before picking a side.

Instead of viewing this as an unprecedented opportunity to help spread democracy and freedom to parts of the world that do not currently know it, the administration gives the impression that the protests are more of an inconvenience in many cases, that they are getting in the way of grand plans to extend outreached hands in pursuit of unclenched fists.

Nearly 6 years ago, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stood in front of an audience at the American University of Cairo and declared that, "For 60 years, the United States pursued stability at the expense of democracy in the Middle East, and we achieved neither. Now we are taking a different course. We are supporting the democratic aspirations of all people."

Similarly, over 7 years ago, before an audience at the National Endowment for Democracy, President Bush stated that, "As changes come to the Middle Eastern region, those with power should ask themselves: Will they be remembered for resisting reform, or for leading it?"

These words are, perhaps, more fitting today than at any other time in recent history. Although President Bush was speaking about regional leaders, it is my firm belief that U.S. policymakers should ask themselves the same question.

And I will now yield to the distinguished gentleman, the ranking member of the committee from New York, Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Chairman, very much. 1947, 5th of June. Standing in Harvard Yard, Secretary of State George Marshall tried to explain why additional foreign aid was critical to American security.

Since the end of World War II, America had already given or loaned some $14 billion to Europe. To provide some sense of scale, total Federal outlays in 1947 were $34.5 billion.

But the wave of Soviet-backed takeovers and ubiquitous subversion, along with stark warnings of pending starvation and economic collapse, convinced the Truman administration that more needed to be done to help Europe recover.

America stood alone, at the time, as an economic colossus in 1945, American GDP was greater than all other Allied and Axis economies combined. While much of the world was ravaged between 1940 and 1950, the United States economy, in comparison, grew by 150 percent.

With clear victory in two theaters of war, sole possession of nuclear arms, and a homeland untouched by the devastation of war, American preeminence and self-confidence were justifiably at all-time highs.

But Marshall's words were characteristically understated. Coolly, he explained the downward spiral gripping Europe's economy. Secretary Marshall warned that Europe's needs were, as he said, "So much greater than her present ability to pay that she much have substantial additional help, or face economic, social, and political deterioration of a very grave character."

Secretary Marshall then called for the United States to provide assistance "so far as it may be practical for us to do so," and for full partnership with European recipients to make that assistance effective.

He then departed from his written text. Clearly, he felt something was awry, or missing, or needed to be said. He apologized for having used Harvard's commencement for what he said were rather technical discussions. "But," he said, "to my mind it is of vast importance that our people reach some general understanding of what the complications really are, rather than react from a passion, or a prejudice, or an emotional moment."

He continued, "As I said more formally a moment ago, we are remote from the scene of the troubles. It is virtually impossible at this distance, merely by reading, or listening, or even seeing photographs or motion pictures, to grasp all the real significance of the situation. And yet the whole world of the future hangs upon a proper judgement. It hangs, I think," he said, "to a large extent on the realization of the American people of just what are the various dominant factors, what are the reactions of the people, what are the justifications for those reactions, what are the sufferings. What is needed, what can be done, what must be done."

These are the questions I think we ought to be asking during this amazing wave of change and revolution going through the Middle East. We are not the same nation that we were in 1947, and the world is different now than it was then.

But today, as then, there are still no substitutes for American leadership. And by leadership, I don't just mean rhetoric. Marshall's speech was not a plan. Marshall's plan was nothing without the billions of dollars needed to actually make a difference at the time.

The Middle East today doesn't need the old Marshall Plan, and even if we had the resources to commit—which we don't—it almost

certainly wouldn't work. Post-war Europe and today's Arab world are very different places, in very different times, with very different economies, very different governments, and very different needs.

But that doesn't mean there is nothing to be done to aid both the people in need and to help stabilize the region that is vital to our economic and national security interests. The political transformations that began this year are not likely to be over soon, and the consequences of what have already transpired will unfold over years, not weeks or months.

But one challenge does seem to be the same, and that is to convey to the American public and to the Congress, distant from the troubles abroad and already fed up with the costs of war and the burden of assisting others, why it is so critical not to falter at this point.

It seems likely to me that we are witnessing a profound change in world politics, as occurred following World War II or the end of the Cold War. Lines of alignment are disappearing, and the lines are being redrawn. Different ideologies and models for government are competing in societies without deep institutional safeguards to preserve order and provide stability.

Salafists, Muslim Brothers, Islamist radicals, all see opportunities in the emerging freedom and liberty which we so rightfully celebrate. While brutally suppressing its own people, Iran is racing ahead with its nuclear arms program, bolstering its efforts in subversion of the Arab states, exacerbating Sunni/Shia conflicts, and sending more and more advanced weapons to anti-Israel terrorist groups.

The Middle East is poised at a moment of becoming. One of the—one future offers a new Arab modernity, where culture and space for Islamist radicalism is squeezed by the desire of ordinary people to pursue their own dreams of peace and prosperity.

The alternative future is one of greater tension, more tyranny, deeper regression into ignorance and hatred and violence. Amid all this chaos and change, I am certain of just one thing. Now is not the time for America to go wobbly or withdraw or turn inward. Now is not the time to try to be a superpower on the cheap.

Now is the time for us to live up to the example left to us by President Truman and Secretary Marshall of judicious leadership, built upon a carefully constructed bipartisan consensus at home, and a true partnership with our allies abroad.

Today's problems are different, and the solutions must be different as well. But we may still hope, as Secretary Marshall said, that "With foresight, and a willingness on the part of our people to face up to the vast responsibility which history has clearly placed upon our country, the difficulties that I have outlined can and will be overcome."

To that, I would just add "Amen."

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much, Mr. Ackerman. The committee will be in recess. We have four votes on the floor. We will be back very shortly, and then we will continue.

[Whereupon, at 2:44 p.m., the subcommittee recessed, to reconvene at 3:22 p.m. the same day.]

Mr. CHABOT. The committee will come back to order. The chair and the ranking member have given our opening statements, and we would invite any members of the committee, if they would like to give a 1-minute opening statement. Mr. Higgins? Okay.

And we will go ahead and introduce our distinguished panel here this afternoon. We will begin with Eliot Cohen, who is the Robert E. Osgood Professor of Strategic Studies at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International studies, and is founding director of the Philip Merrill Center for Strategic Studies.

He received his B.A. degree from Harvard University in 1977, and his Ph.D. there in 1982. He has served on the policy planning staff of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, as a member of the Defense Policy Board of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and most recently as Councillor of the Department of State, serving as Secretary Condoleezza Rice's Senior Advisor on Strategic Issues.

He has also served as an officer in the United States Army Reserve. And on behalf of the subcommittee, I would like to thank you for your service to our country.

Next we have J. Scott Carpenter, who is the Keston Family Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, and is the director of Project Fikra, which focuses on empowering Arab democrats in their struggle against extremism.

Mr. Carpenter previously served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, and also as the coordinator for the State Department's broader Middle East and north Africa initiatives.

Prior to this, he served as director of the governance group for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad, and as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, where his responsibilities included overseeing U.S. democracy promotion and human rights policy in the Middle East and southeast Asia. And we thank you for being here, Mr. Carpenter.

And last but not least, Michael Makovsky currently serves as the foreign policy director for the Bipartisan Policy Center. From 2002–2006, he served as Special Assistant for Iraqi Energy Policy in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and Director of Essential Services in the Washington offices of the Coalition Provisional Authority.

Prior to his work in the Pentagon, he worked over a decade as a senior energy market analyst for various investment firms. Makovsky has a Ph.D. in diplomatic history from Harvard University, an M.B.A. in finance from Columbia Business School, and a B.A. in history from the University of Chicago. And we welcome you here this afternoon, Mr. Makovsky.

And we appreciate, again, all three of our distinguished panelists here this afternoon. And I see that another member has entered here, and if Mr. Rohrabacher, the gentleman from California, would like to make a 1-minute opening statement relative to the Middle East and Egypt and the rest, we would love to hear it.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. One thing I know after 22 years here, and 7 years in the White House before that, is peace doesn't happen on its own, and neither does freedom happen on its own. It is a prod-

uct of a lot of hard work, and the right ideas and the right approach.

And if we are to have more freedom in this world, and more peace in the Middle East, we have got to do things that work, and I am very interested in hearing different people's perspective on that.

One last note. I am very supportive of what was the Reagan Doctrine. I was very involved in that in the White House. It worked. It ended the Cold War. We helped people fight their own fights.

People in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, wherever, we didn't send our troops into those countries and risk confrontation directly with the Soviets. We helped those other people fighting for their freedom.

And that brought an end to the Cold War with the Soviet Union in a peaceful way. There has to be some corollary to that in the Middle East and throughout the world, where we would help people like those in Libya who are fighting for their freedom, without actually sending our troops on the ground and thus risking being dragged into a quagmire.

I am very interested in the opinions of our guests today, and I will be paying attention. Thank you.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much. We will begin with Mr. Cohen, and you will be recognized for 5 minutes, as each of the witnesses will be.

We actually have a lighting system, and you should be able to see the yellow light come on, which will tell you that you have 1 minute to wrap up. When your red light comes on, if you could conclude your testimony, we would appreciate it.

And we will restrict ourselves to that 5 minutes as well.

So Mr. Cohen, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MR. ELIOT COHEN, PH.D., ROBERT E. OSGOOD PROFESSOR OF STRATEGIC STUDIES, THE PAUL H. NITZE SCHOOL OF ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (SAIS), THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

Mr. COHEN. Thank you, Chairman Chabot and members of the subcommittee. I have a longer statement, which I would like to have entered into the record, if that would be possible.

Let me just summarize three points. The first, very much along the lines of remarks that have already been made. And that is, we are living in the middle of astounding events, which I think disprove a lot of the truisms and cliches of experts on the Middle East.

But I think we have to remind ourselves of the tremendous uncertainty that surrounds these developments. If there are two phrases I would like to see banned from the public discussion of the Arab Spring, one would be the arc of history, and the other would be being on the wrong side of history.

I don't think history has an arc, that is to say a curve that we can calculate. And I certainly don't think that history chooses sides. It is what people decide to do. And although I think we have to be tremendously impressed at the courage of Arab demonstrators, there iss nothing that guarantees that these revolutions are going to have a happy outcome.

Ours did. The Velvet Revolutions did. The French Revolution did not. The Russian Revolution did not. The Chinese Revolution did not. The Iranian Revolution did not. So the first point is, we simply cannot take for granted the triumph of liberal forces in the Middle East.

My second broad point is that in the Middle East we are going to face—we do face—that age-old clash between American ideals and American self-interest. That, of course, is a tension that goes back even before our independence from Great Britain.

There are numerous cases, of course. One that comes to mind is that of Bahrain, where our democratic instincts will tilt to the Shia population, our geopolitical interests, to include our alliance with Saudi Arabia, our concern about Iran, will tilt in favor of the regime.

What should we do about that? I would say, first and foremost, the United States should always be the friend of the cause of liberty. And I have used the word liberty advisedly and in preference to democracy.

We should care about fundamental rights: Impartial courts, freedom of conscience, security of life and property, representation in any of a number of forms, and the opening of opportunity, particularly for women. We should care more for those things than we necessarily do for elections, per se.

I think we also have to accept the fact that in some cases our interests and our values will not coincide, and there will be times when we have to act in ways which will appear—and may in fact be—inconsistent.

And I think there is a great need for America's leaders, not only the White House but in Congress, to be up front explaining why that is so, because it will be so.

And we need to consider not only these countries as individual cases, but the region as a whole. And that leads me to my third point, which is about Libya, even though I know that that is not necessarily within the remit of this subcommittee.

I believe it was the right course of action to intervene on behalf of the Libyan rebels. I wish we had done so earlier. Both our ideals and our self-interest are engaged there.

I can understand why people opposed the use of force in Libya, but that debate is over. We are committed to getting rid of Colonel Gaddafi. I have to say, though, I am dismayed by a number of things.

I am particularly dismayed by the half-heartedness of our effort in this war. And it is a war, because we are dropping bombs on people. We are killing soldiers. We are destroying equipment.

Having committed the United States to this conflict, we really do need to see it through to the end. I think if Colonel Gaddafi were to remain in power at the end of this, after President Obama has said that he has to go, we will live to regret it.

And I believe that unless he and his sons are really, permanently put out of the way, there is a good chance that we will have at least another Lockerbie, if not something worse.

And I think beyond that, we have to think about the demonstration effects of Libya. What is at test right there is whether regimes can use extreme ruthlessness toward their own populations. That

is what is being tested. And we really don't, I think, have the ability simply to stay out of that.

And that is my last point, really, which has to do with where we stand in the Middle East. Our country is not in the mood for grand projects in that part of the world, and for perfectly good reasons. Nor do I think we should embark on any.

But even so, to paraphrase that highly experienced agitator, Leon Trotsky, we may not be interested in revolution, but revolution—including the Arab revolution—is definitely going to be interested in us.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Cohen follows:]

Dr. Eliot A. Cohen
Robert E. Osgood Professor of Strategic Studies
Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies
Testimony to

House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia
"Shifting Sands: Political Transitions in the Middle East, Part I"
13 April 2011, Rayburn 2172

I would like to make observations about three topics: the revolutionary turmoil sweeping the Arab world; the challenge it presents to American statecraft, and the Libyan conflict.

These events are astounding. They are all the more so because they were so unexpected, even by our most learned Middle East experts. There is a lesson there: the truisms and clichés of so many of those experts turned out to be fallacious. The demonstrators in Tahrir Square may have loved neither the United States or Israel, but it was the predicament of their own society that animated them to act. The preeminence of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the supposed need of the United States to curry favor with "the Arab street," or to apologize for its actions during the last decade, were assumptions altogether exploded by these events. Rather, we are living through a revolutionary moment that gives the lie to the excuses and ploys of the authoritarian regimes which we and others tolerated, accommodated, and even truckled to for way too long.

Where will all this go? No one knows. If there are two phrases that I would like to see struck from our discussion of the Arab Spring, it would be "the arc of history" and "being on the wrong side of history." The terms are profoundly misleading, because they imply that History does indeed have an arc – a curve that we can calculate, however crudely – and that History chooses sides, specifically, ours. It doesn't work that way.

No sensible observer can be anything but impressed at the courage of Arab demonstrators against dictatorships and authoritarian regimes; encouraged and even inspired by the cries for basic rights that Americans take for granted; and, with some exceptions, the largely peaceful nature of protests against heavily armed forces of order. But there is nothing that guarantees that these revolts and upheavals will have a happy outcome. They may be repressed; they may yield to chaos or new forms of dictatorship; their energy may even end by serving the purpose of fanatics, indeed, monsters.

We Americans are the fortunate products of a revolution that conserved basic rights: it too could have gone differently, but we remember it, appropriately, as an extraordinary triumph of free people securing the rights of self-government and

civil liberties. Most revolutions have not followed that pattern. The French Revolution did not. The Russian Revolution did not. The Chinese Revolution did not. The Iranian Revolution did not. And even apart from these well known cases there are others – the revolutionary movements that swept Europe in 1848, for example – whose outcomes were complex and contradictory.

My first point, then, is that we should not take for granted the triumph of liberal forces in the Middle East. We just don't know, and probably will not for years, if not decades to come. And we are quite likely to see some states veer in directions that will trouble us from the point of view of either our values, or our interests. We most definitely cannot assume that if we assume the role of spectators all will be well. Rather, the challenge is to define our role and to exercise our influence with a prudent regard for what it is that we can actually do.

This brings me to my second point. In the Middle East that age old clash between ideals and self-interest in American foreign policy – a clash that dates back even before our independence from Great Britain – is particularly acute.

The most notable case is that of Bahrain, where our democratic instincts tilt to the Shia population, and our geopolitical interests – to include our alliance with Saudi Arabia, our concern for our naval position in the Persian Gulf, and our opposition to Iranian interference and expansionism – tilt in favor of the existing regime. There were and will be other cases – our embarrassment of how to handle President Mubarak is a case in point. What should be the guidelines for our policy given that this is the case?

First, the United States should always be the friend of the cause of liberty. I use the word "liberty" advisedly, and in preference to "democracy." We should care more about fundamental rights – impartial courts, freedom of conscience, security of life and property, representation in any of a number of forms, and opening of opportunity (particularly for women) – than we do for elections, which, important though they are, can serve the interests of demagogues or well organized extremists. The time is right for greatly expanded activities to encourage, support, and develop the kinds of grassroot movements and individuals who can, over time, lead their countries to much greater freedom and prosperity than we have known before.

Secondly, within the larger framework of our commitment to liberty, we must accept that although in some cases our interests and our values coincide, in others they will not. We may not always be able to act immediately on what we think is right. It is particularly important for our political leaders to identify, and explain seeming inconsistency or hypocrisy to a larger audience, including, of course, the American people. We are hurtling through rapids, and some times we will have to paddle for one shore, and some times the other. It has ever been thus. But we should not fool ourselves into thinking that we can act simply in accord with cherished values, or exclusively in the service of geopolitical interests. This task of balance is one of the most acute faced by the administration.

Thirdly, we need to consider countries as individual cases, but also the region as a whole. In particular, we need to consider the demonstration effect throughout the region of success or failure in the construction of free governments.

This leads me, finally, to Libya. It was, I believe, the right course of action to intervene on behalf of the Libyan rebels, although I wish we had done so earlier as the regime tottered before the same kind of popular unrest that toppled authoritarian rule in Tunisia and Egypt.

Both ideals and self-interest are engaged here: ideals, because Colonel Gaddafi is a particularly odious tyrant, murderous, unprincipled, with American blood on his hands; interests, because we do not wish to see the southern littoral of the Mediterranean, and an important oil producer, destabilized by the kind of unrest that would follow even successful repression by the regime. Nor do we want the demonstration effect of successful uninhibited brutality before the likes of, say, Bashar al Asad of Syria.

I can understand those who opposed the use of force in Libya: they have a point. But that debate is over. We are committed to getting rid of Gaddafi, and we have employed lethal force against his regime. I am, however, deeply troubled by the way we have done so. It is wrong that Congress was not asked for its consent and support, or, so far as I can tell, consulted in the run up to this conflict. I am disturbed that the President did not address the American people about his decision to launch American forces into action for ten days, and his silence since then. And I think it unworthy as well as imprudent to grudge our allies, and the French in particular, the praise that is due their courage in leading the way on this issue.

I am perhaps most disturbed by our half-hearted effort in this war – and war it is. If you drop bombs on someone, if you kill their soldiers and demolish their military equipment, you are waging war. The United States has chosen to do so, however, under the pretense of distinctions that make no sense – we desire regime change, but we bomb only on shifting humanitarian grounds. We employ too little air power for the shock effect that it can provide – instead, we seem to be in the business of inoculating our opponents by giving them small doses of it. We allow a conflict to drag on that increases the suffering of the Libyan people, and increases the opportunity for Colonel Gaddafi to maneuver.

Having committed the United States to this war, we need to see it through to the end. We should have special forces on the ground to help train and guide the rebels; we should arm them; and we should employ the most effective weapons in our air arsenal to ensure their success.

When the President of the United States decides to use force, or says that some foreign leader "must go," our credibility as a country is on the line. And for a superpower, credibility is essential, for everyone, and not just in the Middle East,

will be watching us closely. Moreover, the penalties of failure to remove Colonel Gaddafi and his sons from the scene could be severe. For my own part, I tend to think that even if they were sent off into exile we would not have heard the last of them, and another Lockerbie bombing would be only a matter of time.

Let me conclude by saying that the turmoil we are seeing today will not, I suspect, die down for weeks, months, and years to come. We will need to be vigilant and prudent. There are real limits to what the United States can do in this part of the world – but we can do a lot, with our money, our strength, and above all, our ideas. Our country is not in the mood for grand projects in the Middle East, for perfectly good reasons, nor do I think we should embark on any. But even so, to paraphrase that highly experienced agitator Leon Trotsky, we may not be interested in revolution, but revolution, including the Arab revolution, will be interested in us.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much.

Mr. Carpenter, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MR. J. SCOTT CARPENTER, KESTON FAMILY FELLOW, WASHINGTON INSTITUTE FOR NEAR EAST POLICY

Mr. CARPENTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. Having just returned from a fact-finding mission to Tunisia and Egypt, I look forward to sharing my observations, and request that my full statement be included in the record.

Mr. Chairman, the revolutions currently sweeping the region create new opportunities for the United States, but also dangers. I recognize those dangers, but on the whole I would say that there is more to celebrate here than to fear. There is little doubt in my mind, for instance, that the Tunisians will be the first in the Arab world to successfully transition to a true representative democracy.

Egypt, however, is the bellwether. If Egypt succeeds in its transition, it will transform the rest of the region. Its population, strategic location, and traditional role practically guarantee it.

There is new confidence in Egypt, and a democratic spirit I found that pervades the country. And if it is institutionalized in the new Egyptian state, a democratic Egypt that respects human and political rights, including religious freedom, is an Egypt that will make a better partner for the U.S. than the declining Mubarak regime ever was. Such an Egypt may not see eye to eye with the United States or Israel about various aspects of policy, but no one I spoke with on my last trip advocated or believed that Egypt would abrogate the peace treaty with Israel or envisioned a war with Israel.

The if in that previous paragraph, Mr. Chairman, is a big one. The transition there is bound to be rocky. Short-term challenges include stabilizing the economy, restoring law and order, and securing the Sinai region. Still, prominent businesspeople and other political actives with whom I met were remarkably bullish about Egypt's future, including the ability to compete politically with Islamists.

To manage toward a positive outcome, I believe it is critical that the U.S. do everything it can to help Egypt and Tunisia consolidate their democratic transitions. Doing so will require creativity, some resources, and the intestinal fortitude to weather the ups and downs of the countries' domestic politics.

The Muslim Brotherhood, for instance, will play a role in the respective elections that are quickly approaching. This will require the U.S. to strike a wise balance between on the one hand being alive to the dangers the Brotherhood and its allies pose to critical U.S. interests and on the other hand providing the Brotherhood with a political gift through lightning-rod statements or actions that could motivate voters otherwise indifferent to the Brotherhood's message to support the movement.

It is important the administration send a clear message to the political elites and voting publics in Egypt and Tunisia that indicate the sorts of governments that we will support: Those committed to universal freedoms, including religious liberty and practice.

In the case of Egypt, we must clearly also state that we support a government that fulfills its international obligations, including upholding the peace treaty with Israel. The administration must also act to create incentives encouraging Egyptians and Tunisians to choose the sort of leadership with whom we will build new and lasting relations.

In the case of Egypt, such incentives might include opening negotiations for a free trade agreement or expanding the QIZ programs. For both governments, I would recommend an early loan, collateralized by seized assets of the ancien regime, which could be a powerful incentive.

Mr. Chairman, even now the prospect of successful democratic transition is posing challenges to reactionary powers in the region, including Syria and Iran. Iran's primary influence derives from its soft power and revolutionary rhetoric. If democracy succeeds in marginalizing Islamist political ideology, Iran's theocratic pretensions will be similarly marginalized.

As we have already seen in Egypt and Tunisia, anti-Americanism and a fixation on the Palestinian conflict, the twin diets of Iranian rhetoric, have been subsumed completely by a newfound preoccupation with domestic affairs and practical concerns.

What is true for Iran, however, is also true for America's ally, Saudi Arabia, another theocracy with pretensions to leading the Islamic world. The U.S. and the Kingdom perceive regional developments through different prisms.

For the U.S., the changes are natural consequences of poor governance being expressed through unstoppable popular protests. For the Saudis, who see Iranians under every bed, there is an absolute paranoia about Shia ascendancy. At this critical moment of cascading change, the Saudis are creating a self-fulfilling prophecy which will be wholly negative for U.S. interests, in my view.

The violence used against Bahrain Shia in recent weeks is contributing to the radicalization of Shia across the region. For this reason, it is critical that the U.S. find some way to convince Riyadh that the focus should be on managing change, rather than trying to stop it or roll it back.

At the same time, if the U.S. is to fundamentally leverage the changes taking place in the region, the administration must find a way to reinvigorate the Green Movement in Iran. In April 2009, the administration missed a golden opportunity to do so, because it was convinced that it would risk efforts to broker a nuclear deal with Iran. This was a strategic mistake, but it has a second chance.

I strongly believe the Arab revolutions of 2011 pose an insurmountable challenge to Iran's regime, but accelerating the impact will require a comprehensive strategy. Forging such a strategy and pursuing it aggressively, however, will do little to calm Saudi Arabia, whose greatest nightmare is a democratic Iran that becomes a strong U.S. ally. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Carpenter follows:]

Testimony prepared for delivery to the

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Committee on Foreign Affairs

Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia

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"Shifting Sands: Political Transitions in the Middle East, Part 1"

By J. Scott Carpenter

Keston Family Fellow, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

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Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee to discuss the ongoing political earthquake and consequent tsunami currently washing over the Middle East as well as its implications for the United States. Having just returned from a fact-finding mission to the two countries where it all began, Tunisia and Egypt, I look forward to sharing my view that there is more to celebrate than to fear in these upheavals. If we manage to help the various transitions succeed, our strategic position in the region could be greatly improved. This is not a wishful thought nor is it a guarantee of success. Riding the current wave of change will not be easy and will require creativity, resources, and an ability to convince wary allies that change has to be managed, not stopped or rolled back.

Before discussing what the region looks like after the dramatic events in Tunisia and Egypt, I'd like to first take a look at what the region looked like through most American eyes just days before Mohamed Bouazizi ignited himself and the region in revolutionary fervor.

With the exception of a few years during the Bush administration, policy toward the region has been quite conservative, with American interests narrowly limited to three

core interests: 1) guaranteeing the world's access to petroleum to fuel the global economy; 2) defending Israel's right to exist and promoting Arab-Israeli peace as the best way to guarantee its continuation, and, 3) developing on-going cooperation with the governments of the region to fight terrorism and the ideology that fuels it, particularly after 9/11.

Achieving these core objectives required building relationships with a number of key allies in the region, principally Egypt and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, traditionally the twin leaders of the Arab World; Egypt, due to its ancient civilization, large population, and critical cultural contribution to the whole of the Arab world and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, due to its natural resources and the huge assets generated by those resources. During this period, Turkey was viewed primarily as a close European, NATO partner separate from the Middle East while Iran, since the fall of the Shah, was seen as the fundamental challenger to the United States and a rival for influence in the region.

For a period of nearly 60 years, the coincidental shared interests between the United States, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and, after the historic signing of the Camp David Accords, Egypt, managed to maintain the status quo. During the 2000s, however, the United States began acting as an anti-status quo power, deposing Saddam Hussein in Iraq and challenging the governments in the region to liberalize both their economies and their politics. This stemmed from the recognition after 9/11 that the vitality of U.S. allies was beginning to erode while a number of reactionary forces interested in reshaping the region to their liking began to emerge. Comprised of both state and non-state actors—including Hamas, Hezbollah, Turkey under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Iran under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomenei, Syria under President Bashar al-Assad, and even Qatar with its business power, Al Jazeera, and unlimited natural gas resources—these reactionary powers began to challenge the U.S. and its allies for primacy.

On the eve of the revolutions in the Tunisia and Egypt, the forces of reaction were on the move and feeling their oats. The United States would soon be leaving Iraq. Hezbollah had consolidated de facto control of the Lebanese state through a blocking minority in state institutions. Syria had been rehabilitated from the Bush administration's international isolation. Iran was under pressure, but had survived both another round of sanctions and an internal uprising. Turkey, following a policy of neo-Ottomanism, was beginning to exercise its new found diplomatic muscle.

Many of us thought that this uneasy disequilibrium would be shattered by another regional war, likely launched by Hezbollah against Israel which, unlike the first Israeli-Lebanon War of 2006, would spark a regional conflagration that would include Syria at the very least and possibly Iran, with destabilizing implications for the entire world.

Instead, a third force was building that analysts failed to identify. This force was exemplified in the fall of Saddam Hussein from power and his subsequent trial; the success of a people power movement in Lebanon to push Syria from the country; the partial liberalization of the media and even politics in certain countries across the region, including Bahrain and Egypt; the new found power of Arab satellite stations; and an

American policy that, for a critical period, prioritized a freedom agenda. All were ingredients, if not a recipe, for translating a rising demand for greater political and economic opportunity into real change. Moreover, below anyone's radar, a critical mass of young people was being socialized online and experienced freedom through this developing platform. Their experience caused them to wonder why they tolerated the stupid reality surrounding them, a reality in which they couldn't dress the way they wanted, talk to the people they wanted to talk with, or have any input on political decisions that shaped their lives.

Instead of a war, then, the frustrations associated with a lack of human dignity and a desire for change ignited the exceedingly dry tinder of grievance in a small town in the interior of Tunisia. That spark led to the popular revolts and revolutions we are witnessing today. These popular revolutions have almost nothing to do with the U.S. or with the geopolitics I previously discussed, but they will similarly and dramatically impact how the broader geopolitical drama plays out.

The revolutions that took place and are taking place create new opportunities for the United States, but also dangers. On the whole, I would say that there is much more to celebrate than to fear. The transitions in Tunisia and Egypt, for instance, will be rocky in the short-term, but as I heard from a number of prominent businessmen in Egypt last week, the people are bullish about the future of their countries in the long-term for reasons we can discuss. There will be very real short-term challenges in stabilizing the economy and securing the Sinai region, for instance. A democratic Egypt may also not see eye to eye with the U.S. or Israel about the blockade on Gaza or about other traditional aspects of policy. So far, however, no one I spoke with on my last trip advocated or believed that Egypt would abrogate the peace treaty with Israel or envisioned a war with Israel.

In the new Egypt, I experienced a renewed confidence and pride, something I have never felt in all the times I have visited in the past. For the most part, there is a democratic spirit that pervades the country. If it is institutionalized in the new Egyptian state, a democratic Egypt that respects human and political rights, including religious freedom, is an Egypt that will make a stronger partner than the declining Mubarak regime we were dealing with over the past ten years. The "if" in the previous sentence is a big one, especially with newly empowered Salafist movements gaining ground. Still, as I departed Cairo, I left feeling a measured optimism that the Egyptians will successfully navigate their political transition if supported in the right ways by the United States and other friends.

As for Tunisia, there is no doubt in my mind that the Tunisians will be the first to successfully transition to a true representative democracy in the Arab world. Even in Libya, where an anti-Qaddafi future has not yet been secured, I believe the small population coupled with the wealth of the country will create opportunities for a positive outcome.

Taken together, the developments in North Africa, especially if Egypt succeeds in its transition, will transform the rest of the region. Egypt's population, strategic location and

traditional role practically guarantee it. Already, the threat of success has altered the dynamics of the political competition between status quo and anti-status quo powers. Egypt has been temporarily removed from the regional equation and will remain preoccupied with internal politics for the near future. Syria is now under remarkable internal pressure and can only resort to violence in attempt to salvage the regime. Hezbollah and Hamas are equally unsure of how to proceed and are trying to assess how they will be impacted by the developments of the past months. The prospect of successful democratic revolutions is also posing challenges to Iran.

Since Iran's primary influence in the region derives from its soft power and its legacy of revolutionary rhetoric, the prospect of newly emergent democratic governments in key places like Egypt are anathema. If successful, such political transitions will rob Iran's propagandistic tools of much of their remaining power, undermining state legitimacy in the process. If democracy succeeds in marginalizing Islamist political ideology, for example, Iran's theocratic pretentions will be similarly marginalized over time. As we have already seen in Egypt and Tunisia, anti-Americanism and a fixation on the Palestinian conflict, the twin diets of Iranian television, have been subsumed completely by a new found preoccupation with domestic affairs and practical concerns. Clearly, the implications of successful democratic transitions for the future of Iran's theocracy are profound.

What is true for Iran, however, is also true for Saudi Arabia, another theocracy with pretensions of leading the Islamic world. Since the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an important U.S. ally, this is fast emerging as a key challenge for the United States at this critical juncture of unprecedented regional change.

Similarly to Iran, a successful democratic transition anywhere in the region presents a real challenge for Riyadh. This might explain the reports in Egypt of Saudi money flowing into the coffers of the Salafiyun and the Muslim Brotherhood in advance of the coming Egyptian parliamentary elections. In my view, the bigger challenge is the different prisms through which the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia perceive developments in the region. For the United States, the changes being wrought in the region come as a consequence of legitimate grievances than have built up over years of poor governance and are being expressed through unstoppable popular protests. The mantra of the Bush years of "evolution to avoid revolution" went unheeded and we are now reaping the results.

For the Saudis, however, there is an absolute paranoia surrounding the Shia, who they believe are being supported wholly by the revolutionaries in Tehran. They hear Iranian propaganda about the Egyptian revolution being a continuation of Iran's revolution as truth. It is for this reason that the Saudis have pressured the King of Bahrain and bankrolled the hard-liners within the Khalifa family to guarantee that Bahraini Shia demands are in no way met.

The Saudis risk creating a self-fulfilling prophecy which will be wholly negative for U.S. interests in the region. By urging the King of Bahrain to crush the uprising there, the government of Saudi Arabia has handed Iran, Hezbollah, and other Shia reactionaries, such as Iraq's Muqtada al-Sadr, a new rallying cry. The Saudis are increasing public

pressure on the government of Iraq, for example, which provides Hezbollah with a welcome distraction at a time when its patron in Damascus is under pressure. Clearly, the vehement anti-Shia rhetoric and violence used against Bahrian's Shia in recent weeks is contributing to the radicalization of Shia across the region who, until Saudi troops rolled across the causeway, were content to be Iraqi, Kuwati,Yemeni, Saudi or Bahraini.

Ultimately, in my view, the forest fire that has been burning will continue to spread and no fire break of money alone will stop it. For this reason, it is critical that the United States convince Riyadh in some way that the focus should be on managing change rather than trying to stop or roll it back. Constitutional monarchies in Jordan, Bahrain and elsewhere can be tolerated and should even be considered enviable end states.

Going forward, American interests in the region will remain rather consistent with the past, but the environment in which we try to advance them will be radically different, for both good and ill. As my remarks hopefully make clear, the key to successfully managing the political transitions across the region lies in Egypt and, to a lesser extent (but no less critical), Tunisia. In my view, it is of utmost importance that the United States do everything it can to help Egypt and Tunisia consolidate their democratic transitions since their relatively successful transitions are necessary to create a strong foundation for a new relationship with the region.

Doing so will require creativity, resources, and intestinal fortitude to weather the ups and downs of these countries' domestic politics over the next two or so years. The Muslim Brotherhood—in some political guise—will play a role in the respective elections that are quickly approaching. How big a role the MB will play remains unclear, but the United States will have to strike a wise balance between, on the one hand, being alive to the dangers that the Brotherhood and its allies pose to critical U.S. interests and, on the other hand, providing the Brotherhood with a political gift through lightning-rod statements or actions that could motivate voters otherwise indifferent to the Brotherhood's message to support the movement. Privately, the Administration should engage with the Supreme Military Council in Egypt concerning elements of the political transition that might inadvertently abet the Islamist current's political prospects.

Publicly, it is important for the Administration to send a clear message to the political elite and voting publics in Egypt and Tunisia that we support transitions producing governments that show, through action, their commitment to the universal freedoms of speech, assembly, thought, and religion, and to a free press; that encourage religious liberty and practice and enforce religious tolerance for all minorities; that support the rights of people to communicate freely, including through the internet, without interference; and that combat extremism in all its forms, including those based on religion. In the case of Egypt, we must clearly state that we also support a government that fulfills its international obligations.

It is also important for the Administration to act now to create incentives encouraging Egyptians and Tunisians to choose the sort of leadership with whom we can build new and lasting relationships. In the case of Egypt, such incentives might include opening negotiations for a free trade agreement and the expansion of the QIZ program. For both governments, an early loan collateralized by seized assets of the ancien regime could be a

compelling incentive. In addition, the United States should dramatically expand financial support to traditional democracy promotion NGOs such as the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute through either the Middle East Partnership Initiative or USAID. The United States should also look to help consolidate democracy through new media tools that could, for instance, safe guard the electoral process or assist in capturing and remembering the legacy of the revolutions.

At the same time, if the United States is to fundamentally leverage the changes taking place in the region in order to secure its interests, the Obama Administration must find a way to reinvigorate the Green Movement in Iran. In April 2009, the Obama Administration missed a golden opportunity to support a similar revolution to the one that swept Hosni Mubarak from power in 2011 because it was convinced doing so would risk its efforts to broker a nuclear deal with Iran. This was a historic, strategic mistake, but it has a second chance. As I elaborated earlier, I strongly believe that the Arab revolutions of 2011 pose an insurmountable challenge to Iran's regime, but accelerating the impact will require a comprehensive strategy. Forging such a strategy and pursuing it aggressively, however, will do little to calm Saudi Arabia, whose greatest nightmare is a democratic Iran that becomes a strong ally of the United States.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much.

Mr. Makovsky, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MR. MICHAEL MAKOVSKY, PH.D., FOREIGN POLICY DIRECTOR, BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

Mr. MAKOVSKY. Thank you very much Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Ackerman, and members of the committee for giving me the opportunity to speak to you this afternoon. I want to highlight three key points I made in my written submission, my written testimony: What are U.S. interests in the region, the impact of political turbulence on Iran, and U.S. energy security.

Winston Churchill wrote during the Second World War, "Everything for the war, whether controversial or not, and nothing controversial that is not bona fide needed for the war." He approached all world issues with such single-mindedness. I believe we have to do the same during the fog of events.

So what are our interests, first of all, in the region? I would say our top interests in the region are three: A secure flow of oil, a secure Israel, and reducing and defeating Islamic radicalism and terror.

A single threat, more than any other, would undermine all three of these interests: A nuclear Iran. Therefore, I believe that preventing a nuclear Iran should remain our paramount goal and guide our policies among the fog of events.

I support, like my colleagues here at the table, that liberalization, if it took root in the region, would serve the U.S. interest and would undermine Iran. However, there have been some disturbing events that have gone on in the turmoil, and I will just highlight how they have also affected Iran.

I think so far the turmoil has been rather beneficial for Iran. It has weakened some of its allies. Mubarak is gone, Lebanon is moving the Hezbollah camp. The one interesting development that could go the other way is what is happening in Syria. I think the

anti-Iran coalition in the region has frayed due to a lack of confidence in U.S. leadership and support, which Secretary Gates and Tom Donilon have been trying to address in their recent trips to the region.

Also, the international attention on Iran's nuclear development has been diverted. Meanly, Iran has been only—despite Stuxnet and international sanctions, which have really been tough, Iran has been not only making its way, but actually advancing in its nuclear program.

And I think going forward, we need to have a new phase of our Iran policy. I think the administration needs to enforce sanctions on the books. We should consider new sanctions, but try to avoid sanctions that would be counterproductive, which my initial sense is that—some talk about banning Iranian oil exports, and that would actually come under the latter category.

I think we should pursue a triple track policy: Diplomacy, sanctions, and a visible and credible preparation for a military option. These de rigeur comments by the administration that all options are on the table, often followed by remarks about how risky it would be, are actually not doing the trick.

The Iranis don't seem very afraid of a U.S. strike or a U.S.-allied strike. And until we are, we don't have a chance of a diplomatic solution to this problem. I think then, of course, whatever we threaten we have to be prepared to do. Because as I said, this is the primary strategic threat we have.

I would like to switch and move on to how this affects—what has been going on in the region, how it affects our energy security. I anticipate this upheaval will be extended, and I think that it will lead to less oil supplies and higher prices, undermining our energy security. And I will highlight four reasons why, and what we can do about it.

First, we should expect that production disruptions are not only going to occur in countries experiencing turmoil, like you see in Libya, but then that there will be a prolonged disruption even after there is some peace that comes to that country.

History is littered with such examples: Iran, Iraq, Russia, Venezuela, all experienced significant turmoil politically, and their oil production has never returned to their previous peaks, even as of today.

Transit will be more risky. We could talk about several of the choke points, but I will just highlight the Bab el-Mandeb choke point off of Yemen, which could become even more dangerous if there is even more of a collapse of authority in Yemen.

Third, oil demand is likely to rise and export will shrink among the oil exporting countries that are experiencing turmoil, because the regimes need to continue to subsidize fuel to mollify their populaces. And I should add that the oil exporting countries in the Middle East have actually been one of the growth—they have had actually the biggest growth of demand, actually, one of three, China and the United States are the other two, in the last decade.

The fourth factor, oil exporting regimes need higher prices and revenue to pay for higher social spending. Witness the Saudi expenditure, or commitment to spent $130 billion. Thus, I think gulf

Arabs are unlikely to undercut Iran's economy by supplying more oil and lowering prices.

Iran could only increase its revenue by higher prices, because its oil production has declined 17 percent in the last 3 years. In the remaining seconds, I will just say Iraq actually offers some hope in all this. Iraq could be—is actually breaking out of its ban in oil production, and could be an energy superpower. And this not only serves U.S. interests in providing more oil to the market, but I would add there are some challenges there. Because they have to expand and diversify export routes, Turkey and the Persian Gulf, I think they should go into Jordan. And I see my time is over. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Makovsky follows:]

BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

Michael Makovsky, PhD
Foreign Policy Director of the Bipartisan Policy Center
Testimony for Hearing, "Shifting Sands: Political Transitions in the Middle East, Part 1"
House Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia
April 13, 2011

Introduction

Chairman Chabot, Ranking Member Ackerman, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for inviting me before this Committee this afternoon to discuss the current turmoil in the Middle East and North Africa, and the challenges and opportunities it presents to U.S. foreign policy. I focus my testimony on U.S. interests in the region, and how this political turbulence impacts the Iranian nuclear threat and U.S. energy security.

U.S. Interests

One of Winston Churchill's notable traits, as I wrote in a diplomatic history about him, was to rigidly prioritize objectives and pursue them vigorously at the expense of lesser concerns. That is how he approached the Soviet threat, the Nazi threat and wartime goals. As he wrote during the Second World War, "Everything for the war, whether controversial or not, and nothing controversial that is not bona fide needed for the war." We need to approach global affairs with the same single-

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mindedness, especially during this very turbulent and fluid time in the Middle East and North Africa.

To do so, it is important to determine and spell out America's fundamental interests. I believe the top strategic interests the United States has in that part of the world are: a secure flow of oil, a secure Israel, and reducing and defeating Islamic radicalism and terror. A single threat, more than any other, would undermine all three of these interests: a nuclear Iran. Therefore, I believe preventing a nuclear Iran should remain our paramount goal and guide our policies amid the fog of events.

Of course, we must also care deeply about the preservation of innocent life, and the right of foreign people to have greater liberty, which are important American (and universal) values. These values should inspire our actions whenever possible, as they have in Libya. However, a nuclear-capable Iran would threaten not only the lives and liberties in much of the region but also U.S. strategic interests.

The Arab awakening or Arab Spring, as many have referred to it, is the result of two main factors. First, broadly, a number of the states caught up in the recent turmoil are not cohesive nations but artificial constructs. Second, and more immediately, there are distinct local factors at play, including, depending on the country, authoritarianism, corruption, lack of economic development, sectarianism, secessionism and religious extremism. Since these revolts are the result of

structural factors, these issues will not all be resolved immediately, and the upheaval will likely continue to percolate and occasionally erupt over the years. But a nuclear Iran will offer a booster shot to such instability.

Iranian Threat

Over the last few years I managed a three-volume series of reports, *Meeting the Challenge*, written by a working group co-chaired by former Senators Chuck Robb and Dan Coats and retired General Chuck Wald. In that series we argued that a nuclear Iran could not be contained as the Soviet Union was. Circumstances are very different now. The United States does not now have vis-à-vis Iran the same credibility or the same kind of allies and opponents that ensured effective containment, with great effort, in the Cold War. A nuclear Iran would set off a proliferation cascade across the Middle East, and Iran would gain the ability to transfer nuclear materials to its terrorist allies. While it continued to threaten Israel's very existence, Tehran would be able to strongly influence OPEC, dominate the energy-rich Persian Gulf, intensify its attempts to destabilize moderate Arab regimes, subvert U.S. interests and efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, violently oppose the Middle East peace process, and support terrorism across the region. There is a very real danger that a nuclear weapons-emboldened Iran would overstep its boundaries, pulling the Middle East and the United States into a treacherous conflict.

Amid all this tension, risk and uncertainty, oil prices would likely endure a sustained rise, undercutting global economic growth.

A powerful antidote to the destabilizing influence of Iran on the region would be if freedom can spread and take root over time in Arab lands. This would prove very beneficial not only to the people involved, and the region as a whole, but also to American interests. By freedom I mean liberalization—such as greater political rights for men and women, and greater tolerance for minorities—and not elections alone, which, when conducted in the absence of basic freedoms, can at times produce greater extremism, as was the case in the West Bank and Gaza in 2006 when Hamas won the election.[1] The Arab awakening offers a hopeful beginning, but its outlook remains murky, and it is too soon to pass a verdict on it. Certainly, not all change will be for the better, at least in the near-term. For instance, the mistreatment of Coptic Christians and the reported rising strength of Muslim extremists in Egypt are very disturbing.

A change of power in Yemen could also lead to greater threats. The U.S. Government and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries have reportedly signaled they would prefer for President Ali Abdullah Saleh to step down. That is an understandable view; the country is in upheaval, and Saleh is not a Jeffersonian democrat or a flawless partner in the fight against terror. However, as two

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[1] Please see an illuminating interview of prominent Near Eastern scholar Bernard Lewis in the *Wall Street Journal* on April 2, "The Tyrannies Are Doomed."

colleagues and I argued in a recent Bipartisan Policy Center report, *Fragility and Extremism in Yemen*, Saleh's departure could lead to prolonged internal turmoil, if not collapse of the Yemeni state, creating an even more favorable environment for al-Qaida, more piracy in the Gulf of Aden, and greater instability in Saudi Arabia.

Yet, despite the potential of these public uprisings to bring meaningful political reform to the region, in reality the past few months of Arab revolution and turmoil have generally been very beneficial to Iran. Lebanon may soon have a pro-Hezbollah government, after the Iran-allied terrorist organization toppled the pro-Western prime minister, Saad Hariri (currently a caretaker prime minister). Many Sunni-led countries allied with the United States and opposed to Iran have experienced significant internal turmoil. Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, a key anchor in the region's anti-Iran coalition, is gone. Bahrain's leadership continues to face opposition from its majority Shia population, drawing Saudi troops and Iranian agitation. Shiites in the oil-rich Eastern Provinces in Saudi Arabia have staged intermittent demonstrations. Jordan too has experienced demonstrations. There have also been demonstrations in Iran but the regime responded by clamping down harder, and evinces continued willingness and ability to harshly, even bloodily, put down any opposition.

However, the collapse of the Assad regime in Syria would be a huge setback to Iran. There are many possible post-Assad scenarios in majority-Sunni Syria, such

as another Alawite regime, a Muslim Brotherhood government, or even state collapse. None of these would serve U.S. interests. But since Assad has pursued a course so inimical to U.S. interests—allying closely with Iran, supporting Hezbollah in Lebanon, funneling jihadists to Iraq, and supporting Palestinian terrorists—there is good reason to believe that almost any successor regime could be no worse than Assad's. Therefore, at a minimum the United States should offer greater rhetorical support for the courageous demonstrators in Syria.

The recent turmoil seems to have frayed the anti-Iran coalition in the region. By all accounts, our Sunni Arab and Israeli allies were displeased with how the United States initially handled the recent events in the region, undercutting their faith in American support and leadership. Feeling less secure, leaders of these countries are less likely to take constructive risks (the Arabs for reform, and Israelis for peace with the Palestinians) and may even look to hedge their risks by improving their relationships with some of our rivals. The disappointment of our allies also invites more provocations from our enemies, such as Iran, as they sense a diminished U.S. commitment to its friends. Hopefully, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' trip to the region last week and National Security Advisor Tom Donilon's trip this week have begun to address this, but it will take time and require tangible actions on our part.

Moreover, the turmoil and the conflict in Libya have diverted international attention from Iran's continued nuclear development. This follows an apparent over-confidence here and abroad that the Stuxnet virus and killing of Iranian scientists have delayed Iran's nuclear program by years. On the contrary, Iran has not only raised the efficiency and output of its antiquated (IR-1) centrifuges by over 50% in the last year, it is also, as announced just yesterday, making ready to install a new generation of centrifuges that could enrich uranium up to 6 times faster. These advances mean that, according to estimates (based on IAEA data) made by my colleague, Blaise Misztal, Associate Director at the Bipartisan Policy Center, in consultation with outside expert Greg Jones, which I have appended to my testimony for your consideration, Iran could produce enough highly enriched uranium (HEU) for a nuclear device in as little as 65 days.

Going forward, the United States needs again to re-focus on preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons. The last negotiations by the P5 + 1 countries with Tehran earlier this year ended in failure, despite new, more robust sanctions passed by Congress, the United Nations Security Council and the European Union last summer. We can expect any future negotiations will end the same way, unless we first raise significantly the pressure on Tehran, thereby increasing our leverage.

I applaud Congress for passing tough Iran sanctions legislation last year, and President Obama for signing it, which has clearly added pressure on the Iranian

regime. However, given that Iran continues to develop its nuclear weapons capability, that pressure so far clearly has not been sufficient. The Administration needs to enforce the sanctions already on the books, and Congress should consider ideas for new sanctions. I am concerned, however, about sanctions efforts that will have little or no impact on Iran and thereby offer false hope and waste precious time. My initial sense is that sanctioning Iranian oil exports, as some have suggested, would fall into that category of counter-productive measures.

It is time for U.S. policy toward Iran to evolve into a new phase. President Obama pledged in February 2009 at Camp Lejeune, "to use all elements of American power to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon." In practice, the Administration first just focused on diplomacy, then sanctions and diplomacy. In the Bipartisan Policy Center's Iran reports, we have always advocated pursuit of a concurrent triple-track policy of diplomacy, sanctions, and a visible and credible preparation for a military option. The last element has been noticeably missing, aside from the de rigueur statement of "all options are on the table," often followed by remarks about how risky military action would be.

Certainly, military action is not desirable; in fact, it involves a host of serious risks. The best solution, of course, would be regime change, and we should do what we can rhetorically and in action to support the political opposition in Iran. Still, we must keep expectations in check. We cannot be sure who would lead a new

government; the Green movement includes leaders who presided over Iran's nuclear program and who opposed a possible swap deal 1.5 years ago. In any case, it seems unlikely that the regime will fall before it develops nuclear weapons capability. With regime change unlikely to resolve Iran's nuclear threat, we should consider stricter sanctions and pursue visible and credible preparation of military action. That combination might convince the Iranian regime that it is in its interest to negotiate a cessation of its nuclear development. Other possible outcomes, if we fail to act, include Iran achieving nuclear weapons, the worst scenario, and Israel or another state launching its own military strike, the second worst scenario.

To signal its determination, the United States should: augment the Fifth Fleet presence in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman, including the deployment of an additional carrier battle group and minesweepers to the waters off Iran; conduct broad exercises with its allies in the Persian Gulf; and intensify our enhancement of the defensive and offensive military capabilities of our Persian Gulf allies. If such pressure fails, we might consider blockading refined petroleum imports into Iran. A blockade would effectively be an act of war, however, and the U.S. and its allies would have to prepare for its consequences. If all else fails, the U.S. military is capable of launching an effective targeted strike on Iranian nuclear and military facilities. This would only set back Iranian nuclear development, not end it, and it would require continued vigilance in subsequent years. Force should be our last option, but, as noted, Iran's nuclear program has

accelerated over the past year and we have no choice but to address it. I believe it would be constructive for Congress and the Administration to begin soon a public discussion on the next phase of our Iran policy.

Energy Security

Energy supply and prices are important elements of our economy and national security, and I will now address what the turmoil means for the global oil market. There are four main implications, separately relating to: 1) production; 2) transit; 3) demand; and 4) revenue. All four factors will likely contribute to higher oil prices.

Immediate threats to oil production obviously are most acute in those oil producing and exporting nations suffering turmoil, such as Libya. Out of global demand of approximately 88 million barrels per day, Libya produced about 1.6 million barrels per day and Yemen about 300,000 barrels per day. While these are not large numbers, there is no spare global capacity to replace the high quality of Libyan crude oil. More important, we should expect further oil production disruptions over the years as the Arab awakening plays out. Further, we must expect, as a leading energy analyst, Edward Morse, has pointed out, that any energy-exporting country experiencing conflict will not restore quickly its energy production to pre-conflict levels. Such has been in the case in recent decades: Iran's current oil production is only about 60% percent of its peak output under the Shah

in 1974; Iraq's output is only 77 percent of the 1979 peak, the year prior to the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war that began Iraq's economic spiral; Venezuela production is only about 69 percent of the pre-Chavez peak in 1998; and Russia's output is 87 percent of the 1987 Soviet-era peak, after dropping significantly in the 1990s. Of these four examples, only Iraqi oil production has been recently trending upward. Each country has distinct reasons for its output problems, but often political turmoil leads to long-term declines in the country's oil industry.

The second implication for the energy market is that transit will become more risky. There are three key chokepoints in the region: a) the Strait of Hormuz, through which 17 million barrels per day, or one-third of global oil trade, passes; b) Suez Canal and Sumed Pipeline in Egypt, through which 3-4 million barrels per day pass; and c) Bab el-Mandeb, between Yemen on one side and Somalia, Djibouti and Eritrea on the other, through which over 3 million barrels per day of oil pass. Conflicts in any of these areas will disrupt the flow of oil. I'm sure the Committee is most familiar with the first two chokepoints so I will just comment on the last one. Already there are a great many pirate attacks off the Yemeni coast, since Yemen does not secure its borders well and, despite hundreds of millions of dollars of U.S. military assistance, does not have a functional coast guard. Somalia, of course, is a failed state and a base for pirates. If President Saleh loses further grip of Yemen or

steps down, there will likely be even more of a power vacuum in an already very fragile state, and oil tankers will be further endangered.

A third factor is that domestic oil demand in the many oil-exporting countries in the region will likely continue to rise, meaning that there will be less oil to export than otherwise. The reason, as Morse has argued, is that regimes in the region with energy resources will continue to subsidize domestic fuel consumption lest a domestic price spike create more political turmoil. This will lead to continued growth in consumption. In fact, oil-exporting countries in the Mideast have been among the leading sources of global energy consumption growth over the last decade. Iran and Iraq, notably, have reduced their gasoline subsidies in recent years.

The fourth factor, which is closely related to the third, is the likelihood that oil-exporting regimes, fearful of domestic uprisings, will likely seek higher prices in order to maximize revenue and lubricate the social welfare system. For example, the Saudi king has committed in recent months to about $130 billion in additional social spending, which equates to about two-thirds of the country's approximately $200 billion in oil export revenue in 2010. Other countries have also committed to do the same, though in smaller quantities. This means that these countries need higher oil prices to fund their additional social programs. The Saudis and some other countries with large energy reserves and smaller populations have historically sought relatively more moderate prices than OPEC price hawks like Iran and Venezuela.

That might still be relatively true but the former countries' desired price range has now risen.

A rise in the price of oil is obviously bad for the economies of the United States and other net oil-importers, but it also renders highly unlikely any prospect that Gulf Arabs would seek to undercut Iran's economy by supplying more oil and lowering prices. Iran's oil production has been declining—about 17 percent over the last three years--and it can only increase its revenue through higher oil prices; about half of state revenue derives from oil exports. No one non-military factor would likely limit Iran's revenue and therefore hinder its nuclear program as much as low oil prices. But the turmoil in the region makes that prospect far less likely.

One recent development in the region that can partly offset these bullish implications for oil price is the growth in Iraq's energy production. It is vital for the United States and global economy for that growth to continue and be sustained. As leading energy expert Lawrence Goldstein said, "A supply increase anywhere is a price decline everywhere." The least developed OPEC country, Iraq offers the greatest growth potential in oil supply over the next decade, as well as the possibility of supplying Europe and Asia with significant quantities of natural gas and liquid natural gas. A relatively stable Iraq would be an energy superpower. Its oil reserves could equal Saudi Arabia's, and its production capacity could potentially equal current Saudi capacity. After making deals for oil production in 2009, oil

companies are investing a great deal of money and Iraqi oil output is rising, finally breaking out of a production range it has endured since 2004. Iraq's challenge, beyond maintaining political stability and security, will be to expand the capacity of existing oil export routes to Turkey and the Persian Gulf as well as to diversify into new routes such as Jordan, which can serve both Asian and Western markets. Diversification of exports is key for Iraq's energy security as well as the global economy's. Iraq is intending to build a new export line through Syria, which makes little sense from an energy standpoint; more crude oil can be shipped to the Mediterranean by expanding the Turkish pipeline, while growing demand is in Asia. A Syrian line also would undermine U.S. strategic interests since it would offer greater revenue to the Assad regime and help it stay afloat in these turbulent times. The Obama Administration should discourage Baghdad from pursuing a Syrian pipeline. More important, it is vital for the U.S. Fifth Fleet to continue to help protect Iraq's offshore oil export terminals until Iraq's navy is strong enough to do so alone. This should be part of the discussions with Iraq about possible post-2011 U.S. military deployments there.

Whatever the United States can do to support and secure Iraq's energy growth will not only facilitate Iraq's economic development but will also help the U.S. and global economies. Moreover, in the zero-sum game of the global oil market, growth in Iraq's oil and gas sector will come at the expense of Iran. Constrained by

declining output volume, Iran's energy revenues can only grow significantly by higher prices, while Iraq—after long under-utilizing its vast potential--has demonstrated its interest in improving its economy through increased export volume. Iranian and Iraqi goals are in direct conflict, and it is an important U.S. interest to help Iraq and hurt Iran.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the events in the Mideast and North Africa, offer some long-term hope for liberalization of the Middle East, which would surely benefit the region and the United States. However, in the near and medium terms, Arab world political turmoil will likely lead to lower oil supplies and higher oil prices, to the benefit of Iran. As possible, we should nurture liberalization in the region, but our response to developments in the region must nevertheless be guided, first and foremost, by the need to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons capability, our primary strategic threat. Other strategic goals are important but, for the foreseeable future, they are secondary.

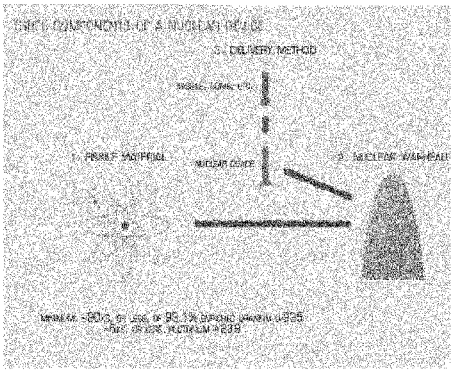
Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to address this Committee.

Iran's Nuclear "Breakout" Capacity[1]

Blaise Misztal, Associate Director of Foreign Policy

Overview

- *Iran has advanced far enough in its nuclear program to be able potentially to construct a nuclear device in 3 – 4 months, despite the temporary setback of Stuxnet.*
  - Iran has enough low enriched uranium (LEU) to create 20kg of high enriched uranium (HEU: 90%+ enriched)—the minimum necessary for nuclear device.
    - Known stockpile: 2,437kg of 3.5% enriched uranium; minimum needed: 1,850kg.
  - *Iran is enriching uranium over 50% faster than in 2009.*
    - Its enrichment rate has averaged over 87 kg/month since 2010. Compare to average of 56 kg/month in 2009.
  - Given known current capabilities and enrichment rate, could realistically "breakout"—produce 20kg of HEU using LEU stockpile *in as little as 65 days.*
  - Unknown is how advanced their weapons design program is.
    - IAEA says military nuclear activities "may have continued beyond 2004."



- After a year of decline, Iran is increasing the number of working centrifuges, which are used to enrich uranium.
  - Now 5,184, was 4,592 at last inspection (Nov. 2010) and in July 2009; held steady below 4,000 from October 2009 to August 2010.
- But overall number of installed centrifuges has declined.
  - Now about 8,000; reached high of 8,856 in August 2010.
- Continues to turn its 3.5% enriched uranium into 19.8% enriched uranium.
- Announced it is installing more advanced IR-2m and IR-4 centrifuges.[2]

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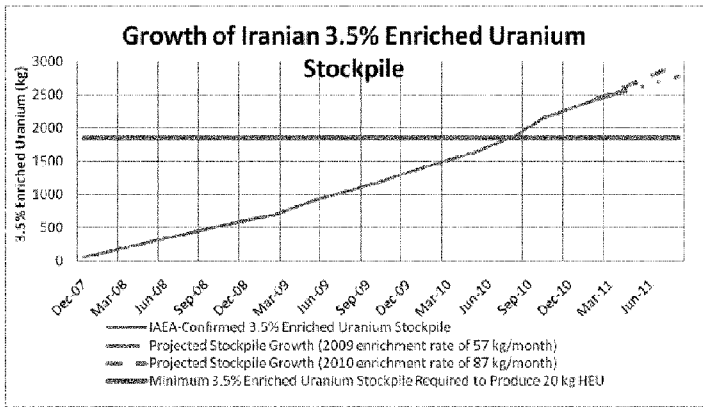
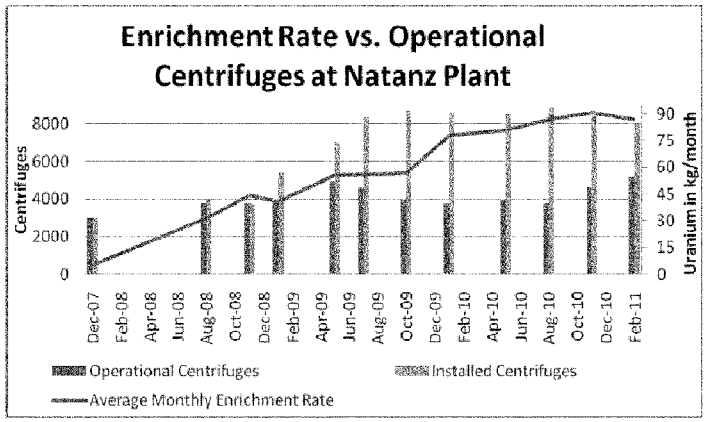
[1] As of latest IAEA report: "Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran," Board of Governors Report, International Atomic Energy Agency, February 25, 2011 (GOV/2011/7)

[2] Joby Warick, "Iran touts major advances in nuclear program," *Washington Post*, April 11, 2011.

1225 Eye Street NW, Ste. 1000 Washington, DC 20005 Tel: 202-204-2400 Facsimile: 202-637-9220

Michael Makovsky, Ph.D., Foreign Policy Director
Jason Grumet, President





Time to Produce 20 kg HEU at Natanz (assuming 3.5% enriched uranium feedstock and .87 SWU/machine year)		
Centrifuges Used:	*Required Stockpile of 3.5% enriched uranium*	*Time to Produce:*
3,772	1,860 kg	105 days
5,184*	2,000 kg	65 days
8,528	1,920 kg	50 days

*indicates most likely scenario using current number of operational centrifuges.

Findings of Latest (February 25, 2011) IAEA Report

Uranium Enrichment

- Between October 18, 2010 and February 5, 2011, Iran produced an additional 318kg of 3.5% enriched uranium.[3]

- Iran's total stockpile is now 2,437kg of 3.5% enriched uranium.

- Iran is further enriching its 3.5% enriched uranium to about 19.8% enrichment.
  - This process is being conducted at a separate facility at Natanz (known as PFEP).

- Iran has produced 29.5kg of 19.8% enriched uranium at the PFEP.

Centrifuges

- On February 5, 2011 the IAEA found 5,184 centrifuges to be operating at Natanz.
  - Up from 4,592 at last inspection in November 2010.
  - Operational centrifuges were below 4,000 from October 2009 to August 2010.

- A total of about 8,000 centrifuges were installed.
  - Down from 8,426 at last inspection in November 2010.
  - Reached high of 8,856 in August 2010

- Iran announced in January 2011 that it will install one cascade (164 centrifuges) each of the more advanced IR-2m and IR-4 centrifuges at PFEP.
  - In April, announced centrifuges were tested and ready to be installed.
  - These centrifuges could be as much as 6 times more effective than current design.

- PFEP has two 164 centrifuge cascades installed, designed for 6 cascades total.

Qom Facility

- Facility is designed to hold 2,624 centrifuges.
  - No centrifuges installed yet; "construction of the facility is ongoing."
  - Iran plans to begin feeding uranium into centrifuges "by this summer."

Military Dimensions

- IAEA report raises "concerns about the possible existence in Iran of past or current undisclosed activities involving military related organizations, including activities related to the development of a nuclear payload for a missile."

[3] For enrichment, uranium must be in gas form as uranium hexafluoride (UF6). However, for this paper, we will refer to solid form uranium. One kilogram of UF6 yields roughly 0.67kg uranium metal.

- Report states, *contra* the U.S. 2007 NIE, that "There are indications that certain of these activities may have continued beyond 2004."

Analysis

- Iran has stockpiled sufficient LEU feedstock to create 20kg 90%+ enriched uranium, minimum needed for nuclear device.
  - Minimum LEU feedstock needed is 1,850kg 3.5% enriched uranium; Iran has over 2,400kg 3.5% enriched uranium.

- Significant increase in production rate of low enriched uranium since 2009.
  - In 110 days between November 2010 and February 2011 inspection, Iran produced 318kg of 3.5% enriched uranium.
  - This is a production rate of 87kg of 3.5% enriched uranium per month.
  - For most of 2009 the production rate was 57kg/month.
  - This is an increase of over 50%.
  - Yet Iran has not dramatically increased number of centrifuges used.
  - Suggests that Iran has been able to increase the efficiency of its centrifuges.
    - This would significantly impact Iran's breakout capability and timing.

- The disconnection and removal of centrifuges from the Natanz facility has not affected advances in enrichment efficiency.
  - Removal could be due to malfunctions, perhaps related to Stuxnet worm.

- Using 164 centrifuges at the PFEP facility, Iran will be able to produce about 2.5kg of 19.8% enriched uranium per month, using 30kg of 3.5% enriched uranium/month.
  - The Tehran Research Reactor uses about 7kg of 19.8% enriched uranium/year.
    - PFEP only needs to run for 3 months/year to meet Iran's stated fuel needs.

Iran's Breakout Potential

- A nuclear device requires at minimum of about 20kg of 90+% enriched uranium.

- Iran could produce 90+% enriched uranium for a nuclear device in two ways:
  - Starting with 3.5% enriched uranium:
    - This requires a feedstock of at least 1,850kg 3.5% enriched uranium, which Iran already possesses.
  - Start with 20% enriched uranium:
    - This requires a feedstock of at least 157kg 19.8% enriched uranium, Iran only has 29.5kg of 19.8% enriched uranium.

- The time it would take to produce the 20 kg of 90+% enriched uranium depends upon a variety of factors:
  - Number of centrifuges used;
  - Efficiency of centrifuges;
  - Enrichment level of feedstock.

- Realistically, given current known capabilities at Natanz, Iran could produce 20 kg of 90+% enriched uranium, *in as little as 65 days*.
  - 5,184 operating centrifuges;
  - Average 2010 centrifuge efficiency (0.87 separative work units per machine year);
  - Using 3.5% enriched uranium feedstock.

- Breakout time less than two months is in effect undetectable by current safeguards.

- Three scenarios:
  - 2010 average centrifuge efficiency, 3.5% enriched uranium feedstock, variation in number of centrifuges (*most realistic*):

Time to Produce 20 kg HEU at Natanz (assuming 3.5% enriched uranium feedstock and .87 SWU/machine year)		
Centrifuges Used:	*Required Stockpile of 3.5% enriched uranium:*	*Time to Produce:*
3,772	1,860 kg	105 days
5,184	2,000 kg	65 days
8,528	1,920 kg	50 days

  - 2009 average centrifuge efficiency, 3.5% enriched uranium feedstock, variation in number of centrifuges:

Time to Produce 20 kg HEU at Natanz (assuming 3.5% enriched uranium feedstock and 0.5 SWU/machine year)		
Centrifuges Used:	*Required Stockpile of 3.5% enriched uranium:*	*Time to Produce:*
3,772	1,960 kg	181 days
8,528	1,920 kg	84 days
10,004	1,930 kg	73 days

  - 2010 average centrifuge efficiency, 19.75% enriched uranium feedstock, variation in number of centrifuges:

Time to Produce 20 kg HEU at Natanz (assuming 19.75% enriched uranium feedstock and .87 SWU/machine year)		
Centrifuges Used:	*Required Stockpile of 19.75% enriched uranium:*	*Time to Produce:*
3,772	157 kg	19 days
8,528	162 kg	10 days
10,004	163 kg	8 days

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much. We may be able to get into some of the things you were going to go into in our questions here, and I will recognize myself first for 5 minutes.

And I will begin with you, if I can, Mr. Cohen. Since taking office, the administration's policy toward Syria has been focused almost exclusively on engagement with Damascus. Two years and one ambassador later, I think it is fair to conclude that the engagement path has not exactly borne fruit.

Despite what he may say, Assad has made clear through his actions, both past and most recently, that he couldn't be further from being a reformer. Along this line, I would like to ask you about a recent statement Secretary of State Clinton made in an interview with Bob Schieffer.

Most of the focus on this statement has been about Secretary Clinton's suggestion that Bashar al-Assad, a ruthless dictator, might in fact be a reformer. But I want to ask you about a different portion of her statement, specifically what she said before that particular gaffe. In response to Bob Schieffer asking why, given the ruthless assault against peaceful protestors, Secretary Clinton viewed the situation in Syria as different from that in Libya and why we did not take action in Syria and we are in Libya, she had this to say.

This is her quote: "Well, if there were a coalition of the international community, if there were the passage of a Security Council resolution, if there were a call by the Arab League, if there was a condemnation that was universal—but that is not going to happen, because I don't think that it is clear what will occur, what will unfold."

So what would you have to say relative to Syria, and what would your comments be about those comments?

Mr. COHEN. Let me break that in two. First, on Syria, I quite agree. Look, this is a regime which throughout the Iraq War, during part of which I was in government, was really fostering the worst kind of attacks on American Servicemen and Women serving in Iraq, and we really never called them to account.

We never called them to account for their nuclear program, and we have continued to allow ourselves to be, I think, gulled by the Syrian regime. So I don't think Bashar al-Assad is really a reformer. I don't think it is a regime that we should be dealing with. I don't think we should have sent an ambassador in return for nothing, which is what we did.

And I do think we have to realize that there is an opportunity here. Not simply a humanitarian opportunity for the people of Syria, but if that regime were changed by an uprising of the Syrian people, that would break one of Iran's major links to the Middle East.

Syria is Iran's most important Arab ally, and I think strategically that is the way to think about it. The other comment I would make would be about the tone of the remark, and it does disturb me the extent to which the administration, throughout all this, has referenced the U.N. Security Council, the Arab League, world opinion. I mean, the issue is really what American policy is, and to be perfectly frank with you, to go back to Libya for a moment, I would have been happier if congressional consent had been asked——

Mr. CHABOT. Right.

Mr. COHEN [continuing]. And not just the consent of the United Nations.

Mr. CHABOT. Right, and that is one of my objections, is really that I think like both President Bushes did, they should have come here, I think, and gotten Congress' approval. And I think they would have gotten it.

Let me ask you, Mr. Carpenter, next. You used the term "half-heartedness" when you referred to our actions in Libya thus far. What do you think we should have done differently? Obviously not being able to go back and redo what we didn't do, or undo what we did do, how should we move things differently? Because it looks like we may well be on our way to a divided country, at least at this point. And I don't think that is in anybody's best interest.

Mr. CARPENTER. As you suggest, Mr. Chairman, there is no use crying over spilled milk. But I would say that the United States had an opportunity to lead earlier, that a no-fly zone could have been imposed earlier and more robustly, well before Benghazi came under direct threat and sparked the global concern that led to the Security Council resolution.

In terms of what I think needs to happen now, again I understand that the administration has been loath to want to lead from the front, but only to encourage from behind.

But clearly the situation is deteriorating there, and I think for the importance of American power and because I think that Gaddafi returning to power in any way in Libya would be extremely destabilizing for both Tunisia and Egypt in the medium-term, it is critical that we devote additional air assets to the struggle, including those that could be used against ground forces, for instance AC–130 gunships.

Mr. CHABOT. Okay. Thank you very much. Unfortunately, my time has expired. If we do a second round, I will get to you, Mr. Makovsky.

The ranking member, the gentleman from New York, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I thank the chairman. I am trying to find a sense of direction here that everybody is encouraging us to do, and trying to understand the position of the administration, which I think has not been as articulate as I would like to see it.

The chairman has very appropriately called this hearing Shifting Sands, and if you have ever been on shifting sands I guess you know it is kind of difficult to get your footing. It is also difficult for the critics to get their footing, as well, so let me just observe that I am not sure that Secretary Clinton—and she can certainly speak for herself, or misspeak for herself if that is your view—actually said that Colonel Gaddafi was a reformer—Assad, I am sorry.

But what she said was Members of Congress, I believe that includes Senators, have told her that. I am not sure that that is her view, or that she was just observing what she was told.

But nonetheless, my dad served in World War II. I was a little baby when he came home. But I remember two expressions he came home with that I can repeat here. One was, "He who hesitates is lost." And the other was, "Look before you leap."

Whenever I would do something, he would impose one of those two if I screwed up my guess. And I asked him, "How do you know when to look before you leap and how do you know that you are going to be lost if you hesitate?"

And he says, "Experience. You make a lot of mistakes first." I am not sure what we are supposed to be here listening to advice, not just from our panel but from others as well. If you were to pick any three countries in the region that are in a state of transition, on a scale of one to 10, with one being just saying, "Hey guys, we wish you a lot of luck" and 10 being full-fledged support, which includes U.S. military support, troops, and a blank check commitment, name the country and give me 1 to 10 what you would do if you were the administration.

Mr. CHABOT. Is there one particular——

Mr. ACKERMAN. Let us start with Mr. Cohen. Just the order you went in.

Mr. COHEN. That is a difficult question. I think in the case of Libya, once having committed ourselves to the use of force and having committed ourselves to the overthrow of Colonel Gaddafi, which is really where we are——

Mr. ACKERMAN. Did we commit ourselves to the use of force in Libya?

Mr. COHEN. Well, we have done it. And the President has indicated that we are in this to back up our European allies, but for sure we have used it. And for sure he has said that——

Mr. ACKERMAN. Sometimes that means "I will hold your coat."

Mr. COHEN. But the first week was very far from holding the coat, and we are doing a lot more than holding the coat. And as I think we are already——

Mr. ACKERMAN. How far do we go, is the question.

Mr. COHEN. I would be willing to go, I think, where Mr. Carpenter would go, that is to say——

Mr. ACKERMAN. What is the number?

Mr. COHEN. I don't think there is a need for troops on the ground beyond trainers and advisers to the rebels. I think we probably need a lot more in the way of lethal air power.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Is that a 3 or a 7?

Mr. COHEN. I am not quite sure. I find it hard to think about it in that way. I mean, I can think concretely what I would be in favor of doing in Libya, which is AC–130s, A–10s, Special Operations Forces to train the rebels. I would be against putting in the 82nd, but I don't think we need that.

Mr. ACKERMAN. You have a number of troops or a dollar amount?

Mr. COHEN. What?

Mr. ACKERMAN. You have a number of troops, or a dollar amount?

Mr. COHEN. At this point, given what we have chosen to do, I really don't think that is what I would be thinking about. Because I really do think that the stakes are very high. If we fail, if the President having said Gaddafi has to go, Gaddafi stays, if he ends up having stood up against NATO and a large coalition——

Mr. ACKERMAN. So it is like President Bush saying, "That is unacceptable," referring to behavior from any number of——

Mr. COHEN. I think that is unacceptable. Do I think this is $100 billion commitment? No, I don't.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Okay.

Mr. COHEN. But can I tell you whether it is 40,000,000 or 150,000,000? I can't.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Carpenter?

Mr. CARPENTER. I would just say very quickly I would invest very heavily—no need for troops, but I would invest very heavily—in helping Egypt succeed. Frankly, I think Yemen is a basket case no matter what happens, and I would not invest a ton of money there, although I understand the rationales for doing so. It is in the Saudis' backyard, and I think we can coordinate with them and help.

In terms of Libya, I would say it is probably a 6, because it doesn't warrant ground troops but it is very, very important. But I think there are different categories here. I think, as Mr. Cohen suggested, that the United States, whether we think we have committed ourselves or not, we have committed ourselves, and people around the region and the world believe we have. So success is important.

Mr. ACKERMAN. With the chairman's indulgence, if Dr. Makovsky can——

Mr. CHABOT. Yes.

Mr. MAKOVSKY. Thank you. I concur with what Eliot and Scott said about Libya. Once we have committed, then we have got to do our best, short of ground troops, to get Gaddafi out. The only other country I think we should consider doing any heavy military investment in is Iran.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHABOT. The gentleman's time has expired. The gentleman from California, Mr. Rohrabacher, the chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. All right. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me remind Dr. Cohen and the other two witnesses, yes, the stakes are very high, you said, but so is our level of deficit spending. We no longer can do what we did 10 years ago, and 20 years ago, and 30 years ago. The United States—we are not just broke, we are on the edge of an economic catastrophe.

We have $4.5 trillion more in debt after 2 years of this administration than we were before. What is the interest rate on that? If we keep going the way it is, and especially when the interest rate starts going up, it will crowd out all spending, and there will be a collapse, and none of the things that you are talking about will be affordable, because the money will have gone into inflation. Everyone's savings will be gone.

We are on the edge of a catastrophe in a number of ways, but we still face these major challenges that we are talking about today. But it has to be within the context of what we can afford to do now. And we no longer—certainly, we can no longer afford to send our troops all over the world and garrison the world, and try to use American troops as the shock troops that will play the deciding factor in every war that is going on, that concerns us.

Thus we have got to have another strategy. As I stated in the beginning, I think we can possibly afford a strategy that does not

put American troops on the ground. And I am going to add one more factor here, and that is—and I agree with you, maybe AC–130 gunships would be good—if we have already committed ourselves, if you are going to help them out—you know what Teddy Roosevelt said was the worst sin? Does anyone know there?

Teddy Roosevelt said the worst sin is hitting someone softly, because you just make them mad. So if we are going to do it, let us do it. But that doesn't mean sending troops in.

I have had discussions with people representing the Libyan Council there in Benghazi, and they have insisted to me that they are willing to, and will be making public statements to the point that they are willing to pay all the expenses of the United States in what we are doing to help them win their freedom.

Would you say that is a major factor, or would be a major factor in our consideration?

Mr. COHEN. It sounds like a great idea. I mean, we managed to fight the first Gulf War with other people's money. If I could, Congressman, could I just say, I don't think any of us are in favor of massive financial aid programs. And I am not in favor of military intervention in Syria. I do think Libya is a very distinct case, and for better or for worse we are committed.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Right.

Mr. COHEN. And part of the price—I don't know how we price out a Lockerbie.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Well, let us note this, that the cost of sending troops to another country and doing warfare there is far more expensive than aid programs, although I generally am not in favor of nation-building aid programs either.

But it is $1 million a head per troop in Afghanistan, and so we are spending about $100 billion a year over there, and guess what? The Gross National Product of that country is only about $12- or $14 billion. Something is wrong there, somewhere.

So I would hope that we are able to think creatively enough to utilize our resources and our financial resources to the maximum. For example, in Afghanistan, I think we could buy off every leader in that country, all the way down to the village level, for $2- or $3 billion, not $100 billion a year.

Mr. Chairman, that is a deal. Three billion dollars to get us out of a $100 billion liability. So I think that—and I agree with the panel, let me just say. I agree with what each of you had to say. We need to do what is right in Libya, and it will be a message to everybody else in the Gulf if we do. But we need to do it with letting them do their fighting, but us backing them us, and them paying for it. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Mr. Rohrabacher. I think the ranking member and I have both agreed that if we can get out of Afghanistan for $3 billion and you can make it happen, we are with you.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I can guarantee it right now.

Mr. CHABOT. All right. We need to talk further. The distinguished gentleman from the great State of Massachusetts, Mr. Higgins, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIGGINS. New York.

Mr. CHABOT. Oh, I am sorry. New York, I am sorry.

Mr. HIGGINS. It is an even greater state.

Mr. CHABOT. An even greater state.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was, I suppose, more confident about the changes that we saw occurring in the Middle East and north Africa a month ago than I am today.

Mr. Carpenter, you had said that there is a feel in Egypt, a democratic spirit and a confidence. Yet we see that the army that is overseeing the democratization process just arrested a blogger for insulting the military.

A month ago, I believed that there were the two most powerful forces in the world, that being youth and technology, youth and technology that was empowered to not only organize, but the inspiration, if you will, for what was going on in these revolutions, at the basis.

In other words, they would see what was going on in the rest of the world, and find that under their repressive regimes, these countries, and in particular the youth, had been held down. And what they wanted to be were citizens, not subjects.

So when you look for a coherent center to all this instability, with uncertain outcomes, you can't find it, because there isn't one. And while I would agree, a month ago, that Egypt perhaps is the place that can set the model for a democratic, more or less, Middle East and north Africa, I am less certain of that today.

So I would be interested in each of your assessments as to where this is likely to go, who potentially is the emerging leader, and what kind of democratic government can we see in that part of the world that can serve not only as an inspiration but as a model for other countries, including Turkey.

I traveled the region last month and was particularly impressed with what I saw in Turkey. If you go to the airport in Istanbul and you look at the departure board, they are going to places that I can't even pronounce, which is a good sign. It shows that it is a functioning economy that is seeking to build economic relationships with other people. So I would be interested in your assessment, each of you, relative to those issues.

Mr. CARPENTER. I will try to be very short. I am not saying that this has—that there is any inevitability in the direction that this is headed. What I will say, that your concerns about the arrest and sentencing of a blogger in Egypt by the military is not only our concern, but it is an Egyptian concern.

And I can guarantee you that the people will be out on the streets on Friday, and this will be an additional command. Last week, it was that the military do more to hold President Mubarak and his sons accountable, and guess what? Today it was announced that they are proceeding with the detention of the President and his two sons.

The military wants, desperately wants, to get out of the business of governing the country. Every petition—if you can imagine, every petition, from everyone in the country, whether it is the Muslim Brotherhood or a demonstrator in the street, or a professor at a university—are all being directed at the Supreme Military Council. They are in a position to have to meet all of those demands. They need to get out of that business. They want to move quickly to elections.

And there is a hunger for those elections. People argue about whether it should happen sooner, faster. But everyone also believes that to have the military stay in charge is not a positive thing, and will lead to a military dictatorship, because they won't be able to sustain this level of interaction.

So it is not inevitable. We cannot sit on our hands, because I think if we do, it could create a self-fulfilling prophecy. We have to get in the game, much as we did with Indonesia, much as we did with the transitions in Latin America and Eastern Europe.

Mr. COHEN. As you know, my view is that we have entered a very unpredictable time. And I suspect some of these revolutions will turn out well, and some of them will turn out poorly.

I think where our investments should be to help shape this is in doing things which are really not expensive at all, to help develop civil societies.

So some of this is the kind of thing that the Republican and Democratic Institutes do to teach people how to set up political parties. Some of it could be the kinds of things that we did after the end of the Cold War with Eastern European militaries, for example, getting them used to the idea of being subordinate to civilian authority, and so on. It is really about helping to shape and educate a generation, and I think that is where we will have our greatest payoff, which is not a particularly expensive investment.

Mr. MAKOVSKY. I share your concern about how this will play out. Eliot cited a few examples of revolutions that didn't go the way we thought. As we all know, the French Revolution had a counterrevolution, things played out—the Russian Revolution, and so on.

I expect that a lot of these upheavals in these countries are going to take a long time to play out. They might settle down for a bit, but it is going to take a while. And it is understandable that it should take a while, given the histories of a lot of these countries.

I share the idea about doing anything we can on civil society. Perhaps we should also revisit what we could do in terms of our public diplomacy tools, and try to convey our values and our interests with these countries, and perhaps we could influence things.

Again, I think that a lot of these protests are organic, they are local. And the United States was not a part of that, so we don't want to be too much out in front of these. I don't think that would be too constructive. We want to be supportive.

To answer your question about which of the countries you think you have the most faith in, obviously, given that this will play out for a while, it is hard to know. But I would say, of all the countries, I think Iran is actually possible. I am not 100 percent convinced of the leaders of the Green group as actually that they are the ones that we want to be supporting fully. We don't know who exactly would take charge, but the Persians—Iran is a coherent country, and the people seem very hungry there, if ever we could get past this awful regime.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much. The gentleman's time has expired. We are going to go into a second round, and I will recognize myself for 5 minutes.

I will get to you this time, Mr. Makovsky, because I didn't get to you last time. You had touched on energy in your talk, which essentially in that part of the world means oil, obviously. And it

is my understanding that Libya puts out, ballpark I think it is 1.2 or 1.3 million barrels a day, versus Saudi Arabia which I think is 8.3 million a day.

And obviously we have seen—that is my first question, really. How much do you think the instability in the region, and Libya most particularly, how much impact has that had on what we are seeing in the U.S. now versus, perhaps, the moratorium on oil rigs after the spill in the Gulf, and the natural tendency of oil to go up as the summer driving season is approach, and those other things which are obviously factors? How much do you think it is related to the instability?

Mr. MAKOVSKY. Thank you. A few parts on that. I agree with you, what you last said. Production anywhere is supply everywhere, so whether we produce it in North Dakota or we produce it in Libya, it is oil in the market, and that is important.

You were right, Libya was producing about one and a half, 1.6 million barrels a day. And the Saudis are estimated to have produced around 9 million barrels a day. The lower number that you cited is closer to their OPEC quota.

I think that the issue with Libya is twofold. One is that it is a particularly desirable crude oil and there is no spare capacity for that sort of crude oil in the world, so the Saudis aren't fully able to fill that void. It is what they call sweeter, and it is lighter, to use the terminology in the industry.

So that is one problem. Price usually balances that. When you have supply issues, prices will go up. The second issue is I think it made folks in the market worry that other countries will follow. Libya, as you point out, is generally a small player, but it just raises concerns. It is the first of the oil producing countries to really experience deep turmoil, so it made the market worried.

I personally feel that the market has underestimated, frankly, the risks in the region.

Mr. CHABOT. Really?

Mr. MAKOVSKY. Yes.

Mr. CHABOT. But you do think it has had a substantial impact? From what you are saying now, it really should have been or could have been even higher than it has been.

Mr. MAKOVSKY. It could. Again, there are two parts of it, as you kind of alluded to. One is the actual supply that is missing from the market, and then there is what people call the risk premium, or a political risk premium that other countries could follow. And so those are the two pieces.

Mr. CHABOT. My follow up question is, if Libya has had such an impact, and the rest of the region, with the instability, were Saudi Arabia to become unstable, what would the possible impact of that be? And how stable is Saudi Arabia right now?

Mr. MAKOVSKY. I——

Mr. CHABOT. The other gentlemen, I would welcome your input on that as well, if you would like to——

Mr. MAKOVSKY. If I could punt the ladder to my other colleagues on the stability—if Saudi Arabia would be destabilized significantly, it would have a huge impact on the oil market. If I could add something to this?

Mr. CHABOT. Yes.

Mr. MAKOVSKY. I want to finish up. I think Iraq here could actually be very helpful. They are now producing more oil than they have for many years, since before the war. There is a lot of money pouring in, billions of dollars from a lot of companies.

And it is not just oil. Natural gas is also very important, and they could supply a lot both to Asia and to Europe, and reduce the European dependency on Russian supplies.

So I think anything we could do to help Iraqi oil—and I think there are too many things. I would say one, when we talk about what forces hopefully could stay in Iraq after 2011, the 5th Fleet should continue to protect the export terminals in the south. And anything that we could support having to do with diversifying and securing their export capacity.

Mr. CHABOT. And I would remind folks that one of the criticisms of the United States was that we were going into Iraq to take their oil. We obviously didn't take their oil.

Mr. MAKOVSKY. No. And I would argue, if anything, I think we were a little spooked by that idea so we didn't actually do enough. The idea was—we didn't go in for oil, and we were getting plenty of Iraqi oil before the war. In fact we were one of the biggest buyers of Iraqi oil before the war.

That said, it is in our interests that Iraq develops its energy sector. It also hurts Iran. It improves the oil market. It improves our economy.

Mr. CHABOT. Well, it was one of the Democratic amendments that I agreed with and voted for years ago that we should have used, I think it was half of the rebuilding of Iraq should have been paid for by their oil, as opposed to the U.S. taxpayer. But we failed on that amendment.

Because, my recollection is, the Bush administration was concerned that it would send the wrong message to Iraq, and might be consistent with those criticisms of the United States that we were just going in to take their oil, which was absurd from the start.

But if you took a poll in the Middle East, I am guessing it would be pretty high that people would agree that that is why we went in there, and what we did. Which we clearly didn't.

Stability in Saudi Arabia, if either one of the other gentlemen might like to take that very quickly, because then I will turn it over to Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. CARPENTER. I think that, on the face of it, all of the aspects for instability do exist in Saudi Arabia. The Al-Saud family, we are talking about 2,000-plus princes and members, a very large population, the average age probably being around 20, 22, which means that the leadership is about 60 years older. You have a succession crisis coming up.

But on the whole, they do have resources, and they are using them to deploy against this, as Mike mentioned, in a massive way. So I think they are going to buy themselves some time. The question is, what do you do with it?

Mr. COHEN. You know, 6 months ago we would have told you Egypt is massively stable, so I wouldn't count on Saudi Arabia. That is point one. I mean, I agree with everything Mr. Carpenter just said. I also think because of the succession problem that they

have, you are going to have a geriatric leadership as far as the eye can see, and that is not a good thing.

And the third thing is, the Iranians clearly have an interest in messing around with them, and particularly with the Shia population, which is of course in some of the oil producing regions. So I would not rule out some sort of major shock. And if that were to happen, then the world really is going to look like a very different kind of place.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much. Very good answer. The gentleman from New York, and not Massachusetts, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much. The world indeed is going to look like a different place no matter how some of these situations turn out, it would appear. I didn't mean to trivialize before by asking the assignment of a number, but I was trying to get a perspective in scale of which countries were worth investing more in than others, and how much we are willing to invest in those countries.

I know it is very fuzzy, and the answer really is, "It depends," but what I did get from the general remarks was basically that Egypt is too big to fail, that Yemen is too crazy to get involved with, and that Libya is okay because we said it was okay and therefore we have to do it. Do what, I am still not entirely positive.

But take Egypt. The question is, I see a danger in the high expectations that exist among the Egyptian people, that we are not as involved as we are committed, that the Muslim Brotherhood and even others are planning at a rapid rate of how to take advantage of the situation as quickly as they can.

The military is probably figuring out how to get out of this business while remaining in business business. And both the military and those who are more mischievous are probably looking at the possibility of being in business together to satisfy their mutual interest. At the same time, the people are going to become frustrated because those high expectations cannot be possibly met in an expedient amount of time.

Question two is if we ignore basket cases, do we do so at our peril? What happens when that happens? A lot of people will tell you we are in Afghanistan because we can't put Pakistan at risk, whatever all that means. What happens in Saudi Arabia if nobody intervenes in Yemen and the bad guys take over in full force?

And I will leave it at those two questions, and we will start with Dr. Makovsky.

Mr. MAKOVSKY. Your second question was what do we do in basket case countries?

Mr. ACKERMAN. Yes.

Mr. MAKOVSKY. Well, the best we have——

Mr. ACKERMAN. My colleague from California made very strongly, as he often does, that the cost of getting involved is too high.

Mr. MAKOVSKY. That is right.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I tried to make the case earlier that the cost of staying out of it may not be acceptable in the world either, because there is a high price for that, too.

Mr. MAKOVSKY. That is right. And if you stay out of it, often the cost only rises. So I would argue that with what are called often

fragile states, like a Yemen or a Pakistan, sometimes putting some money down—and I recognize the budgetary constraints that the country is facing, which are very significant—but some money to help on governance issues and on security forces could help, because it is seen as some money down could save a lot of money later if things collapse, and we have seen that in some of the countries that you mentioned, so that would be one issue.

And I agree with you about Yemen being a country that is very scary. One of the dangers with Yemen is that if things collapse, that if President Saleh leaves, the country is an artificial construct. So some of the consequences could be al-Qaeda getting even more room for maneuverability, more piracy off the shores, which will raise oil prices, and also instability in the Arabian Peninsula. I thought my time was up.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Carpenter?

Mr. CARPENTER. Just about Yemen, Yemen has been a nearly failed state for a very long time. I think we have been trying to keep it on life support the best we can, but there has been no political will by the Saleh regime to address very basic issues, whether it is basic education or water allocation, or anything.

I think that ultimately Michael could be right about al-Qaeda in Yemen, but the problems in Yemen go much beyond al-Qaeda in Yemen. And that in fact, if the country were to split, the south might be a better partner, in fact, for issues related to piracy or any other issue.

But these are real problems, and I don't see really how the United States intervenes. But minimal investments in the security aspects, to safeguard what are our real, true interests in Yemen, which is going after al-Qaeda, I think, is critically important.

In terms of Egypt and raising expectations, look. I think you are right that people have very high expectations, but I also think that having the opportunity to express themselves and be able to organize is going to go a long way to being able to vent some of those frustrations.

And people are very, very poor. And because they are very, very poor, even a modest increase in their living standards will be, I think, greatly appreciated. There are businesspeople in Egypt, and they are not fleeing with their capital.

They want to invest in the country. They want to invest in its future. They believe in its future. So I think, yes, this is going to be a rocky time. The Muslim Brotherhood is organizing. In my view, based on my conversations with people there, I think they are way overconfident. I think there is a vast silent majority of people that do not want to see Islamists come to power in Egypt, and I think that they have a fighting chance of creating a bulwark against them.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Cohen, did you want to respond?

Mr. COHEN. Just real quickly. Actually, I do think I have to note that I am from Massachusetts, so I appreciate the compliments to Massachusetts.

Mr. CHABOT. I was reminded, by the way, it is not a great state. It is a great commonwealth.

Mr. COHEN. Yes. In answer to the question, I think really quickly, pretty clearly Egypt is the most important country in the Arab

world for all the obvious reasons, and it would seem to me that that is where most of our efforts should focus.

The second point I should offer is that although it is important to think about each of these countries individually, there is also regional dynamics, and to some extent I think we have to think about this as almost as much of a regional issue.

Because a country like Tunisia might not be intrinsically important, but it is Tunisia that set off this whole wave of events. Which leads to the last point, which is the weights of these countries may change depending on events.

We may think Yemen is just such a basket case that there is not much good you can do there, leave it alone. And tomorrow developments may occur which are just going to force us to think about it differently, the way we thought about Afghanistan on September 10th, 2001.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired, and we will conclude this afternoon with questions by the gentleman from New York, Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it is a good point that this is—to look at this from a regional context, I think, is very important. And when you look at countries like Syria and Libya and Yemen and Bahrain, countries that are fractured by tribal, ethnic, and religious divisions—you look at Saudi Arabia, and it is 90 percent Sunni, 10 percent Shiite. Bahrain, a Sunni minority rules over a Shiite majority.

How significant in this regional context is the Shiite/Sunni divide, and how will that play out moving forward?

Mr. CARPENTER. We all have many aspects of our identity, and if you touch on any one part of that identity in a negative way, all of a sudden that becomes the preeminent element of your identity. I think that is why in my testimony I said that Saudi Arabia right now is, unfortunately in my view, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Because the Shia in Bahrain were Bahraini first, and now are Shia to the core. And I think it is true, it is happening in Kuwait now where it wasn't the case before. So I think that this issue is going to become a very real one, the sectarian issue.

You see it forcing Prime Minister Maliki to makes statements which I don't think he would have made before. It gives opening to Nasrallah, Mukhtar al-Sadr all of a sudden appears on the scene to defend the rights of the Shia in Bahrain.

This is not healthy, and it is not good for American vital interests in the region. Because I think if the sectarian fire gets going, it is going to be very hard to stop, and it is going to be destabilizing.

Just one other very quick point. I would say that when we talk about regional, we need to change the way we think. I think we really do need to have a north African strategy. You have Egypt, you have Tunisia, you have Libya, Algeria, and Morocco.

If somehow that area gets its act together, that is where all of the population in this region is, and that would be a huge win for all of us. And so the Gulf is another challenge, and we need to begin to separate the two, in my opinion.

Mr. COHEN. I guess just two thoughts. Again, I agree with everything that was just said. I think this is why, for example, in the case of Bahrain, although our geopolitical interests really require that we support that government to some extent, it means that we should not let go of sort of quietly pushing for reform that will ease that tension. And that is not just on humanitarian grounds. It is on long-term enlightened self-interest grounds.

I also think this really shouldn't color our overall policy toward Iraq. I think it is unfortunate that so much of the administration's approach to Iraq has been, "How do we liquidate with dignity this commitment that we never wanted and that we opposed?"

And whether one was in favor of the Iraq War or not, the fact is we have an Iraq that is a Shia-dominated country that is aligned with the United States. That is an asset, and we should begin treating it as an asset rather than as a liability to be liquidated.

Mr. MAKOVSKY. I agree with that. That is why, because of Iraq, we can't see things exactly only on sectarian grounds between Shia and Sunni. Clearly, it is an issue. Clearly, it is an opening for the Iranians. And certainly Bahrain is a perfect example which the Iranians feel belongs to them, and they have had a lot of historical involvement.

So clearly with some countries it is an issue. I don't think it is a decisive issue. It is certainly an important issue, and it obviously matters in Lebanon. But in Iraq I would also agree with what Eliot Cohen just said, that it doesn't break down exactly that way. There are a lot of Shia Iraqis that are not in favor of more Persian influence in Iraq.

Also, there are Shia that are, of course, but just because they are Shia does not mean they want more Iranian influence in southern Iraq. And I agree with what Eliot just said, that we should really do whatever we can to help make Iraq a success.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, gentlemen. Your testimony has been very helpful and insightful. Thank you.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. And I would like to echo the gentleman from New York, that I think the panel this afternoon has been particularly helpful, and your testimony, I think, has really been excellent. So we appreciate it very much.

And I would remind members that they have 5 legislative days to insert any statements or questions in the record. And if there is no further business to come before the committee, we are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:27 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia
Steve Chabot (R-OH), Chairman

April 6, 2011

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building **(and available live, via the WEBCAST link on the Committee website at http://www.hcfa.house.gov)**:

DATE: Wednesday, April 13, 2011

TIME: 2:30 p.m.

SUBJECT: Shifting Sands: Political Transitions in the Middle East, Part 1

WITNESSES: Mr. Eliot Cohen, Ph.D.
Robert E. Osgood Professor of Strategic Studies
The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)
The Johns Hopkins University

Mr. J. Scott Carpenter
Keston Family Fellow
Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Mr. Michael Makovsky, Ph.D.
Foreign Policy Director
Bipartisan Policy Center

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON MESA HEARING

Day Wednesday Date April 13 Room 2172

Starting Time 700 Ending Time 430

Recesses [ ] (245 to 320) (to) (to) (to) (to) (to)

Presiding Member(s)

Steve Chabot

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [X]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [X]

Electronically Recorded (taped) [X]
Stenographic Record [X]

TITLE OF HEARING:

Shifting Sands

Regional Transitions in the Middle East Part 1

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gary Ackerman, Ben Chandler, Joe Pitts, Allyson Y Schwartz, Donna Christensen, Gerald Connolly, Brian Higgins, Steve Chabot, Ted Deutch, Dana Rohrabacher

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: *(Mark with an * if they are not members of full committee.)*

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [X] No [ ]
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED _____

Subcommittee Staff Director

Committee Members (Updated 1/25/2011)

320 - 430

APR 13 hrg

- ☒ Ackerman, Gary L.
- ☐ Bass, Karen
- ☐ Berman, Howard L.
- ☐ Bilirakis, Gus
- ☐ Buerkle, Ann Marie
- ☐ Burton, Dan
- ☒ Cardoza, Dennis
- ☐ Carnahan, Russ
- ☒ Chabot, Steve
- ☒ Chandler, Ben
- ☐ Cicilline, David
- ☒ Connolly, Gerald E.
- ☒ Deutch, Ted
- ☐ Duncan, Jeff
- ☐ Ellmers, Renee
- ☐ Engel, Eliot L.
- ☐ Faleomavaega, Eni F. H.
- ☒ Fortenberry, Jeff
- ☐ Gallegly, Elton
- ☐ Griffin, Tim
- ☒ Higgins, Brian
- ☐ Johnson, Bill
- ☐ Keating, William
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- ☐ Marino, Tom
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- ☐ Murphy, Christopher S.
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- ☐ Royce, Edward R.
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- ☒ Schwartz, Allyson Y.
- ☐ Sherman, Brad
- ☐ Sires, Albio
- ☐ Smith, Christopher H.
- ☐ Wilson, Frederica
- ☐ Wilson, Joe