



**DEFENSE FORUM FOUNDATION
Defense and Foreign Policy Forum**

**“The Middle East Revolts:
What Caused Them,
Who Led Them,
What is Their Future?”**

**Welcome and Moderator:
Suzanne Scholte,
President,
Defense Forum Foundation**

**Speaker:
Professor Walid Phares**

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TRANSCRIPT

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SUZANNE SCHOLTE: Good afternoon, if I can have everybody's attention please, we're waiting for a couple of other guests but Professor Phares told me that we should probably go ahead and get started because they are on North African time, they might be showing up in the next few minutes.

I'm Suzanne Scholte, president of the Defense Forum Foundation, and I want to welcome you all to our forum, for those that are coming for the first time, the Congressional Defense and Foreign Policy Forum started in the 1980's as an opportunity for Congressional staff to meet together to hear from important speakers in a non-partisan, collegial environment, and I hope those of you who've come for the first time will become regular participants. And before I introduce our speaker I want to acknowledge just a few special guests we have in the audience. First of all a wonderful human rights activist and a terrific writer, somebody I've known for many years, Faith McDonald's here. Faith is the director of religious liberty, programming for New Sudan with the Institute of Religion and Democracy.

Also, a long-time Hill activist for religious freedom now with the Beckett Fund for Religious Liberty, Tina Ramirez, the director of government relations from the Beckett Fund, over here. [Applause] With her fan club! [Laughter]

We're also honored to also have a journalist who has been writing and working for 15 years from Tunisia, Lamia Bouroгаа, and I pronounced it right? Thank you, thanks for being with us.

Also, couple of dear friends of the Defense Forum Foundation are here. Korean War hero, head of the Korean War Memorial Foundation, he's been a great friend to DFF for many years, Ed Borchardt's here. And also, Mike Farrell is here with us, and finally, Blair Mixon, Legislative Director for Congressman Steve Southerland is also with us. And from our Defense Forum Foundation staff Henry Song there in the back.

Our speaker today, Professor Walid Phares, serves as an advisor to the Anti-Terrorism Caucus, in the US House of Representatives, and has served since 2009 as co-Secretary General of the Trans-Atlantic Legislative Group on Counter-terrorism, which is a European –American caucus. A professor teaching Global Strategies at the National Defense University, and I know he has a couple of students here. He regularly briefs and testifies before Congress, the European Parliament, and the U.N. Security Council on matters related to international security and Middle East conflict.

Previously he served on the advisory board of the Task Force on Future Terrorism of the Department of Homeland Security, and on the advisory task force on nuclear terrorism. He's currently a Fox News Channel Middle East and terrorism expert and has also served as NBC's terrorism analyst. He's published several books since 9/11 including 'Future Jihad: Terrorist Strategies against the West', 'The War of Ideas: Jihadism against Democracy', and 'The Confrontation: Winning the War against Future Jihad'.

A prolific writer, he also published another book just last December which was extremely timely and prescient entitled "The Coming Revolution: Struggle for Freedom in the Middle East". And I just want to say that we are so honored to have Professor Phares here because I know he's in great demand and probably works 20 hours a day because he does a lot of interviews in the middle of the night for overseas but we're just really, really honored to have him at our Defense Forum Foundation. Professor Phares. [Applause]

PROFESSOR PHARES: Thank you very much for the prolific introduction. Thank you all for coming. It's a pleasure to be here with many friends and others who are in the house, in this institution which today is going to decide if it's going to shut down, or if it's decided already. But the Middle East is not shutting down, the revolutions are on, so I'm very glad that you found the time to come. I would like to first of all thank the Foundation and Suzanne for extending this invitation – it's a great pleasure and honor to be speaking on their behalf. The list of speakers who have preceded me is very prominent, so I'll try to be at their level as much as I can.

I'm glad also that among you, if not all of you, you have great interest in foreign affairs, defense, national security, international relations and all topics related. Without further thanking, I would like to begin quickly because time is of the essence here and I would like to keep some time, most time, for interaction for question and answer, and I

know there are a lot of opinions, and analysis, concerns about what's happening worldwide in the region particularly, and of course we are in Libya, we are involved in Libya. I'll reserve some time for Libya, but it is important in my introductory remarks to talk about the region as a whole, what basically the title is – the Middle East revolts, what caused them, who led them, what is their future, and obviously you can conclude immediately that I can't do that in less than 45 minutes. This is probably, not even a course on campus can really address those issues. Thus what we'll like to do during this lunch break is to basically go from mountain to mountain, we have very high altitudes, stratospheric altitude and look at the big picture. It's always difficult to draw conclusions from the big picture but it's the best way to look at the direction. If you want to look at the direction you have to go very high.

So, many of the details you are interested in, I may not cover. But then that will be covered during the Q&A period. So if you have a specific issue you would like to develop please feel free to do so after I finish my remarks.

Indeed my experience with publishing in issues has been very interesting. I started basically, I was very, very young, when I published my very first book in Arabic first, then translated to French, Spanish, and finally when I came to the States, I started to publish in English. My very first book, which is found in the Library of Congress but not in bookstores because it was in Arabic, actually projected many of the theses I have developed over the next few decades, three decades. It was titled 'Pluralism in the Middle East.' Pluralism meant that there are diversities, and these diversities are on religious, ethnic, nationalistic, ideological, political grounds and as we know in the genome, we already predict what would be the conflict of the future. So my specialty among other things is to project, not predict - project into the future the trends to come.

And that was during the Cold War. I mean, no one knew that the Cold War at some point going to end, the wait ended, meaning through democratic revolutions, reforms, dissent, democratic revolutions – we all lived it – either coming from there or watching it happen – and that is something I can compare with what's happening today in the Greater Middle East.

I have experienced 7 years when I published my first post-9/11 book, titled 'Future Jihad: Terror Strategies against America', it was later on subtitled 'Terrorist Strategies against the West.' In it, I've projected a phenomenon which is urban jihad. How the jihadist are going to be in a variety of countries, both sides of the Atlantic, developing their, networks, their sui generis, meaning born in, developed in, these societies. And soon enough, 4, 5 years later, most of the conclusions of experts converged into that same direction, and many of my students who have read the book since then, and now, do see that there is a trend that was established. So it is possible to establish trend over the years, which would not help policy-makers in making an immediate decision about a situation, but would help strategists to look at long-range solutions or policies.

The second experience I had was with this book, but that was a very peculiar one. I decided to write the book in 2008, with as much time as I was able to get, and by the time I finished with the final page, July 4, 2010, I have done some projections which you

can read in the book, that is a series of revolts and revolutions are going to be taking place in the Middle East, based on couple observations, or couple serious analysis.

One of which was that civil societies have reached a critical level, or a point after which they will have to proceed into political change, that was one. And second, a race, an ideological race, between two trends, which has been very clear in the previous three books, my post 9/11 books. Each of these books I've dedicated one or two chapters about what I now call, one of the chapters here, the Middle Earth race – I took that term from the Lord of the Rings, you know, the series. Middle Earth is where the final battle is going to take place and the outcome of this battle is going to actually impact the whole Earth-ian politics. Of course, not very serious, but that's how I coined it at the time.

The second most important finding that led me to the publishing of the book was that the battle for Middle Earth, meaning between those two trends was already taking place on-line, on the Internet. Those among us of course who have the language skills, but it's not just the language, it's the cultural skills to understand the ideologies at play, understood somehow that those forces are battling on-line, and we've seen them battling off-line on the streets of Beirut, Tehran, and Cairo and elsewhere, are actually the forces of the future, one tending to look towards the actual future, that will be the secular democratic forces, and the other ones looking backward, that is, their attempt to reestablish what they believe would be quote, unquote the 'caliphate' or 'emirate'. So a real battle, ideological battle, between the caliphate jihadists and jihadists of all kinds, and the secular democracy forces, and they are as diverse as one could imagine.

So I published a book, 'The Coming Revolution: The Struggle for freedom in the Middle East' at the end of November, and a few weeks later, we had what we had, and we are still living with what we are observing in the Middle East. I made the case in the book that these revolutions are happening now, although I've projected before, because of what I coined as the 'missed' century – the 20th century was supposed to be a century whereby these populations, these nations in the Middle East, as was the case in Latin America, because I am a comparatavist by trend, have been able to go through those changes from modernization to acceleration of modernization, and this is in international relations textbooks, nothing unusual. And then after de-colonization, into some sort of instability, military regimes, and then slowly into the world of transitional democracies and democracies. With setbacks. That's Latin America. That's part of South Asia.

In the Middle East, there was a very interesting 20th Century, and specifically last decade of the 20th century which impeded the rapid unfolding of these revolutions. Of course, the 20th century had the colonial part of it, were France, Great Britain, occupied most of these areas. Then it had the post- 1945 era where the Cold War immediately surged and stopped basically the possibility of revolts or revolutions because the regimes split between pro-American and anti-American and they used actually the Cold War to make sure that no democratic movements will surge. So those who are with us, told us 'you're not going to now support the dissidents because we're your guys, we're containing the Communists, we're containing the Soviets', so that's fine. On the other hand, the Baath regimes, the Nasser regime, and more on the left side of it, suppressed

those forces, accusing them of being pro-American, and now we see that what has been happening in Syria, and Yemen and other places are the result of the old attempts to overthrow these regimes and move towards democratization.

So the 20th century had the colonial part of it, and by the way was the one that equipped many of these societies with democratic institutions, although under colonial rule. And when a regime is now falling anywhere, in Iraq, half of Libya, the first reaction is to go back to these old institutions which were forged during the old French and British rule and move on from there. And the second one was the Cold War. The '90s which I've experienced, well from the '80s to the '90's which I've experienced in the Middle East and then I relocated to the United States, was supposed to be the decade whereby after the fall of the Soviet Union, Eastern and Central Europe and Russia rose to democracy, they call it mediocre democracy but democracy in that direction. That decade was supposed to see in the Middle East the rise of sister revolutions. There was no reason for Syria, Algeria, Egypt could not have the same behavior. But again there were two forces that basically stopped this from happening.

One force was obviously what I call in my book the brotherhood against democracy. The brotherhood against democracy meaning all the regimes combined. Within the Arab League, within the OAC, within OPEC, all these regional organizations. Once one of these countries would witness the rise of a democratic movement, and that regime would be in trouble, all these other regime would come and act brotherly. We've seen it in Sudan, for example with the struggle in the south. We see it in Iraq, many hated Saddam Hussein, but when it came to the Kurds, you know, they call it in Arabic the 'unity of territories; so you can't do much about it. On the other hand, to engage in a democracy, you got to have democratic forces. There is no democracy without democratic forces. So, we had the debate in Washington and Brussels about you remove a dictator and you hold elections – no, there is a missing link. Between removing a dictatorship and holding an election is you got to partner with a democratic force, that would shape up the debate and the culture, and the results would be a democratic revolution.

In the '90's basically we have this course of action whereby most of civil societies were suppressed on the one hand by authoritarian regimes, across the board, on the other hand by the rise or re-rise if you wish, of the jihadist forces. The jihadist forces were the only alternative to the regimes. And we saw it for example in Egypt. Where by either Mubarak or the Muslim Brotherhood. In Tunisia, either Ben Ali, or another. The international, western interests, in finding out, identifying, partnering with democracy forces, was not part of our policy, although we in Washington and in Brussels – the Europeans, we have what we call democratic agencies and this is something I would like to talk about probably at another event, at another time, I would be very happy to discuss it in Q&A. Now that we are seeing this happening since let's say January, now that the President and Congress are saying how come we didn't know about it, and I can see it at some point and sometime in the future, a sort of a commission that should look into it, how come we were not able to capture those signs? And 9/11-like commission that would say 'hey wait a minute, we've been spending millions if not hundreds of millions of dollars in democracy agencies across the board, it's not political, it's

Republicans and Democrats and independents and yet we are not able to determine that move and that move is going to explode across the region. That is something that we have to go through no matter what happens and we need to review why is that we were not able to determine that Middle East is going to go through a revolution.

One of the aspects that determine why the west was not able to first of all predict and project, second of all, partner with the right people and now most of our partner in the region are about that. The choice that is given to us is either you know, with a regime if it's an issue of national security, like Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and or when we push the regime out because there are demonstrators in the streets, then we are rushing to find who will be the most organized forces, and the most organized forces obviously are the Islamists, or the Jihadist Islamists. And then we rush our think tanks, rush even further to see who among them are the most rational and moderately can partner with since they are coming. And it is interesting that a few weeks ago a Washington Post article already established that we would have to deal with Islamist regimes and governments across the region before that has been decided even by the people of the region. It is going to be there so who are we going to be talking to? That's the '90's, the political culture of the '90s's – we've surrendered to the idea which was shaped up by our academic elite if I may have a little hint here, that, the alternative is going to be either the regimes or the Islamists and there is nothing in between. Well the region told us that there is something in between, and that is the essence of my book.

There were four battlefields which already have shown the international community that those democratic revolutions or let me say to be more specific, those revolutions that could become democratic. They're not yet democratic revolutions – are going to show up in the Arab world. Ironically, the two places we visited physically, campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, had something to do with it, the inception, not the actual regime change, nor the battling with the Taliban or with the insurgency in Iraq. But what has been created meanwhile in civil society, if you looked at Afghanistan for example, when the Taliban were removed, we had a government, but next to the government we had a more active political debate. The political debate is very important because before under the Taliban there were no political debates. After the Taliban, there is now you can go on-line, you have the burgeoning, the rise of women's movements, the students' movements, people on-line, you know, activism, local community, that type of debate sent a strong message that in post-totalitarian regimes in the Middle East, there is a rise of this other than the Islamists and or the communists before them and or other authoritarian or totalitarian regimes. That was one. The more diverse one and vivid and seen by the Arab world was not in Afghanistan, it was in Iraq. When Saddam was gone and despite the civil war, the rise of 120 political parties is not something the Arab world outside Lebanon has seen. So, the rise of multiple political parties, the fact that in this large hall which is the Iraqi National Assembly, I mean to us we take it for granted - of course the people are going to be angry with each other, the differences are more polite, here and in London – the Israelis are the same – they use very bad language in their Knesset, but the setting of a democratic debate is something that we take for granted. But after Saddam Hussein, to see an assembly whereby they are negotiating coalitions, now they kill each other on the streets, alright, it takes some time, and those doing this are the terrorists, but there are people trying to move towards

that culture. Plus the fact that the Kurds have an autonomous area, the Shia have their own, the Sunni have their own – these two examples have generated what many have missed in America and in Europe – a debate. And that debate is going to increase and increase now with two more things.

2005, 1.5 millions demonstrated in the streets of Beirut. That was the single largest demonstration ever in the history of the region. 1.5 million of a population of 4 million, that's unseen before; unarmed, non-violent, provoking the paralysis of the Lebanese Army, and you can see the comparisons elsewhere – I mean the Lebanese Army was supposed to execute the orders of the Lebanese regime which was under the Syrian regime. They did not. Breaking the wall, that was the first thing.

Number two, it had results. Not many, but one of the results was actual, physical withdrawal of the Syrian Army from Lebanon. So, this was not happening in an isolated matter- people, youth, others, were looking at what this Cedar Revolution had been achieving. Although it was reversed later, that is not important; it's what you have achieved.

Then, four years later, and the debates in the region, and the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon have taught more people in a more dangerous place, and that's Iran. June of 2009 as a result of the elections and all the problems that came with the elections, another 1.2 or 1.5 million people in Tehran took to the streets, and they sent strong messages to the world. And what was interesting about Iran's revolution in a fundamentalist country had 60 to 70% of its participants under the age of 20, 19, and 18. It's huge. Now, for those who are young, 40% were female. The Cedar Revolution and the Green Revolution were the only revolutions you see boys and girls running together, you know, the symbol of the Iranian Revolution, Neda, the girl who was shot, all of these are an important message. So, young people in Cairo and Tunisia and elsewhere who have their own problems with authoritarian regimes, they were looking and relying and not just on regular TV and satellite TV, which is important, but from YouTube.

And here comes the fourth elements. Like the movie 'The Fifth Element', this is the fourth element. The fourth element was that all of this was happening live. That was not the case in the '90's. There were many revolts, many demonstrations in Lebanon – did you hear about them in the '90's? Nobody. There were many student activities on campuses and violence and more people were killed in the previous demonstrations in Tehran – did we know about them? No – I mean we did, those who are interested. Did the public know about them? No. Did other Iranians inside Iran know about them? No. Because there was no communications! Forget about the pre-1990's, in the '80's when Hafez Assad took his army to crush a revolt - which now we may see a repeat of – in the city of Hama, 18,000 people were killed. What would 18,000 people killed do today? They will do a non-stop Security Council resolution to remove the regime without even the Chinese saying 'we'll see'. At the time other Syrians in other cities did not even know what was happening. So, the fourth element is basically the rise of free communications – Internet – Internet and everything that comes out of Internet – YouTube – and it was all the electronics. The Cedar Revolution was known as the SMS revolution, because you know the Lebanese middle class they all

have cell phones and they do the SMS. So, that's one. Then, the Twitter revolution in Iran. And we're going to see that the other countries in the Arab world such as Egypt, is the Facebook revolution, and on and on and on.

Now, all of these activities have left a tremendous impact on the youth, secular societies, civil societies, within the Arab world. Because these are – Lebanon and Iran are – at the edge of the Arab world – but the heart of the Arab world, that will be Egypt, that will be the Arabian Peninsula, certainly be North Africa, so on and so forth.

So, when Tunisia's revolt began, people thought that one event, the burning of, the self-immolation of the young man whose name now is all over the Arab world, is just the beginning. I mean, everything was fine, and then this young man sacrificed himself, and everybody was upset, but that's not how revolutions are born – this was the ultimate, the tip of the iceberg of a lot of suffering of civil society in the region at the hands of dictators. That was a break in moment whereby civil society was able to communicate with each other and the Tunisian Revolution is one I would recommend we focus on the most in terms of its outcome – its institutional outcome. I don't want to expand on Tunisia – we have a good friend here who can explain even more if we want to, but basically from my observation, Tunisia had a larger segment of secular people, larger segment of middle class, they had an interesting union system, and union in the Middle East meaning it's a real war against fundamentalism. This is more actually on the left and the progressive side but it plays better in the Middle East because it's more secular. All these combined basically prompted the departure of President Ben Ali.

Now, what is a missing component is that the revolt rose – and in Tunisia there were previous demonstrations or revolts which we didn't care much about – and one institution was able by saying yes or no to make it possible, and that institution is the army. Had the army followed instructions to shoot, we would have seen Libya. But, because the army decided not to, so it's a very important institution in other places, and therefore we need to pay more attention to that.

After Tunisia, of course Egypt, Egypt only because we've lived through the events and I would only mention that in the genesis of the Egyptian revolution, the beginning of it is more telling. Why? Because even in Egypt we've have many demonstrations before. Even the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt – I mean if you are a watcher of Al Jazeera, every two, three weeks there is a problem somewhere and MB's would demonstrate, the unions would demonstrate, and the Mubarak regime will suppress. That's a daily business in Egypt. What made the success of this revolt was that a federation of bloggers in Arabic, there is a new term for it – a federation of bloggers, young men and women, who called for demonstrations against the regime.... Put the Facebook up, got 85,000 hits in a few days, that's big. And in the Arab world, under authoritarian regimes, to put your face up on the Facebook, it's your face, it's what you like, don't like, information – this is suicidal – this is extremely courageous. So, 85,000 of those, but what they have discovered is that if they arrest all 85,000, the complete uncovering of identity en masse will actually win the day. So, the first thousands of people took to the streets. It pleased many in the middle class, because they saw that these are people who are transparent, these are not MBs, or burning flags, so they

followed. Unions followed. So in the beginning, the first one, two, three, four days, it was civil society, period. Now, civil society, not very trained, not very sophisticated in those marches, that's a different discussion. When we in the international community realize that this is really civil society and we don't see the usual flag burning and all that, - you know, Zionism is responsible, etc – then the extended support and umbrella. Then you saw that the position in Washington and Brussels was that you know the government has to respect that, so it was changing. And when it was changing and got more support, and had a strong umbrella, who came in? I mean it's very easy – any political scientist will realize that the radical forces, the MBs – the Muslim Brotherhood, and the other radical ones, they have tried for the previous 30 years, they tried and they couldn't – they tried and they couldn't. The only time, the only window they had was when the whole society surged so they came underneath. The issue is when they came underneath that umbrella in Tahrir Square, they are absolutely the most organized, centralized, well-funded and I'd say even more important, well-covered- air, meaning, Arab TV, satellite, Al Jazeera, and the others in the region, were giving every 10 interview, 20 interviews to the MB's or to their friends. And there were many of those sitting on set, as we say in the media, already making the commentary. So the airwave space was occupied by the actual, more militant. Because, where do you want the bloggers and the regular people in Egypt to go to? To which TV? To which organization? What is their political party? No.

So now you have in Tahrir Square, about 75% civil society of all sorts, and the rest 25% are MBs and their allies. And that led to the events that we know about, and again in Egypt the army was very important in playing the game and changing – Mubarak left, and now there's a process in Egypt – I can talk about it if we have time at the very end.

Moving quickly, because we're going to come back to Libya and finish there, to the other spots – the other spots are mirror phenomena. Yemen's' situation is not new. This is not a new revolution. They were surging against Ali Abdullah Saleh, President – Yemen is the most problematic place, if it goes into an explosion, more than Libya, because Libya is clear – you have the east, you have the west. You have Kaddafi and the anti-Kaddafi. And the anti-Kaddafi element we'll talk more about that later.

But Yemen, already initially you have the south of Yemen that wants to separate. And then in the northern part of Yemen, you have three players. The very, very north you have small enclave in the Sa'dah area, where you have a majority of Shia, versus most of, all of Yemen is Sunni. They are on a revolt of their own. And what complicates that is that there is an Iranian influence. The Iranians of course have penetrated, and it's a long story.

Then inside the remainder of northern Yemen, outside the north, north of Yemen, you have Al-Qaeda. And the caliphates. And in the remaining enclave in the center you have secular forces, anti-Ali Abdullah Saleh, so that's a, we call it in the Middle East, a tabbouleh salad, little pieces of everything, and nobody, no diplomatic engineer can know how to fix it. Now the Arabs are trying, Saudi Arabia and others are trying.

Let's move across the desert to Bahrain. Bahrain is a very interesting place because it's very small, has a lot of cash, but most of the cash is concentrated in the

upper layer of the regime, who happen to be Sunni, versus the lower layer of the regime who are Shia, or most of them whom are Shia. So you have a sectarian divide, and the sectarian divide immediately translates into what – into regional confrontation. Saudi and the gulf in general terms consider that the regime being Sunni, if it's overthrown by an Iranian-penetrated Shia faction, that will take over, it will change the balance of power in the region, and it will have a domino effect.

Let me quickly go over the domino effect we see there. Bahrain has a majority of Shia and obviously the Iranians have a hand. But they are liberal Shia, so that complicates a lot of things for us in the West. So you want to support the liberal Shia who actually want to work certainly with the liberal Sunni but the liberal Shia are basically surrounded by the pro-Iranian Shia, who are certainly more sophisticated in terms of support – they get the support, they get the air support, and what have you. And, any success by that community versus the small community means Iran will basically have the upper hand in Bahrain. But it won't stop there. Across that bridge, you know for those who have visited Bahrain into Saudi Arabia, you have the eastern part of Saudi Arabia, the entire eastern part of Saudi Arabia, has a majority of Shia, in a very, very Sunni country which is Saudi Arabia, the mother of all Sunnis is Saudi Arabia. So you have a Shia part in the eastern and to complicate our lives, the majority of oil reserves of Saudi Arabia are in that part. So it's a no-go, no-go, no-go for the Saudis, and a ten thousand no-go's for us as well. You don't want to see Iran controlling Bahrain's oil, and Saudi oil, first of all kicking our base out, from Bahrain, and sitting on this side of the gulf.

So for all these reasons on the one hand, that's where the drama is. Among those who are surging, there is no doubt about it, there are true civil society people surging against authoritarians both in Bahrain – mild authoritarians – and very tough authoritarians in Saudi Arabia – we're talking about the Wahabis here. So that is true. On the other hand, surging with them next to them, walking with them, speeding up and taking over, of course later on, are the very bad guys, that would be the fundamentalists and in this case the pro-Iranians, at a time where we are engaged in a confrontation with the Iranians.

That's the dilemma that is happening in that part of the Gulf and it will have ramification for Saudi Arabia. Now if you are the Saudis, it's getting geo-political here, you look to your south, you see Yemen going down with the possibility of an Iranian, pro-Iranian enclave. Pro-Iranian. You look to you east, you see Bahrain is threatened, you see your own provinces threatened. And you see that the United States, dumped Mubarak and Ben-Ali, in their mind. They dumped 'two of us', two pro-American leaders. So the Saudis are now nervous about Washington not standing by them with regard to the eastern front, and the eastern front is Iran.

Let's go quickly to Jordan. In Jordan, again the general surprise that continues on this side of the Atlantic is that you know this is a new revolution. NO, it's not! In Jordan for the past 20 years I can remember there was always something called [unintelligible], the 'Bread Revolution'. Always segments of society, the lower level of

course, mostly in the south, suburbs of Amman, who have been calling for improvements and for reforms. But again, in Jordan you have the same story – the Islamic Action Front, which is obviously an emulation of the Muslim Brotherhood that accompanies this, so there is a social upheaval that comes with the Islamists who are trying to destabilize the pro-American, pro-Western and establish a Sharia regime.

Now, let's travel to Syria. Syria is, probably could be, potentially the most dangerous place in any direction the events could go, but the slowest place, at the same time. It's so hard rock in the sense that the regime is strong, and the regime is basically supported in the east by Iran, to the west, Hezbollah. So, any policy that's going to have with the Syrian regime, we will have to plan, we will have to factor in, the whole axis, from Tehran to southern Beirut.

In Syria, there is a long history of protests against the regime. And the reasons are obvious, for those who have studied a little bit of Syria. 80% of the country is Sunni. 20% is non-Sunni, and the 20%, you have 10% Christian – not really a political factor, and then you have the Druze, 3, 4%, and Kurds, and then you have 8% or more, Alawites. And the Alawites are an offshoot of Shia-ism. So read it as proto-Shiite Alawites, 8%, controlling the Baath Party, controlling the Syrian army, controlling the economy, controlling every aspects of life, and forming the regime, in control for the last 30 years, since 1970, since Hafez Assad came to power.

So there were many spasms against that regime, one of them was Hama, which was a revolt that took place which was organized by civil society first, let's remember the equation, and then immediately seized by the Muslim Brotherhood of the time. It turned to be very bloody. But nobody could intervene at the time because Syria was part of the Soviet umbrella. You can't actually go into Syria in the '80's and help the civil society, that wasn't the policy.

Now, today, civil society in Syria is surging in many places, in many cities. It began in Daraa in the south, going to Ar-Raqqa, it's moving by the day, and my projection which could be tested by the way, is that it's not going back. The demonstrations in Syria are not going to end. They are small sized, repetitive, reminding us of similar situations that happened in Yemen, all of those demonstrations, and at the same time in Egypt, there were demonstrations before, but reaching in national scale. The drama in Syria is, the regime knows that it cannot reform. They are moving everyday and declaring some sort of reform, they have no way to reform because there is a bloody history. And those regimes with bloody histories, they know that short of packing and leaving, saving the country and reforming, is not going to work. At some point they will be a majority in parliament, from the opposition, and it will take them minimum, mildly, to justice, that's mildly, if not during the process of getting to power.

So, my expectation is that the Assad regime will fight. Will fight as much as it can. And the changes that occur in Syria, those changes will be dramatic in all directions. In terms of who will come after Assad. And that raises the concern of the peace treaty with Israel, that raises the concern of what would happen in Lebanon with regard to

Hezbollah, the influence in Iraq, you name it, it's just too dense to go over in detail. And, from that, let me go to Libya.

I want to add to what we all know in Libya, because we are in Libya, we are everyday on TV and in reality across waters from Libya but I will say a couple things about Libya. Kaddafi is not going basically in view of his own history, unless something cataclysmic that would happen, is not going to surrender. He would have surrendered in the last two months. He is going to try to fight it. And, it seems to me that in his own calculation and the advisors he has he believes that he could outlast us in the sense that, 'okay, they took out my AA, my anti-aircraft missiles, all the batteries' – he's not a functioning regime anymore, to threaten anybody around him, not even Malta, he cannot defeat Malta, it's over. [Laughter] So he has been transformed into a very powerful militia, the Kaddafi forces are the biggest militia on earth, because they have tanks, they have long-range artillery, they have lot of cash by the way, and they do have friends, and contacts outside Libya. I mean, the question about what the Algerian intelligence services are doing is something that many are looking at. The Russian, Chinese role is really has accepted the resolution but at the same time has said 'you can't put troops on the ground, otherwise it will be illegal'. The Russians have been very clear on that issue.

So what we can see there is really is the establishment of unless we change dramatically, and that would leave it to unless, unless we change strategy dramatically, I can see a balance of power being established. And guess what, look at the actual map, it looks really like World War 2 between you know, the Italians, and then the British, and the Germans and then the British, it is along the same coast, from Tobruk and back to Benghazi, so it looks like it's going to be a balance of power between both until a dramatic change will happen at some point somewhere.

The second last question about Libya, and I have been pounding on this in the media for a couple of weeks now is the composition of the East, of the Benghazi forces. And you know what it's not that absolutely different from other parts of the Middle East. You have the same race. You have the secular forces, the former bureaucrats, the former diplomats, the former military, the upper crust players of the East army of Benghazi, and are all officers who were in the Libyan army and the doctrine was socialism at the time. So they are not Islamists. But, in the lower layer, and that's where you need expertise to understand that, of course you see the caliphates and the militias going out, there's no doubt about it, all you need to do is spend one day on Al Jazeera, you get it, easy. And sometimes there are footage whereby, although they are given instructions by their bosses 'don't show the flag, just show the old Libyan flag', and then they basically see the inscriptions on the jeeps, on the 4 by 4 running, the same inscription that you know could have in the Sunni Triangle, or in Afghanistan. There's a joke in the Arab world where by we know that many of those small size came from Iraq from many other places, and they were trained to fight in Iraq and where are they coming from? You have hundreds and hundreds of miles, most of them are Libyan, they are not foreign Al Qaeda like Kaddafi is trying to convince us. These are Libyans, Libyans who happen to be Jihadists. Are they the majority of the troops? We don't know. I think the majority of officers in structure, those who don't go on Al Jazeera, are ex-Libyan officers, and

soldiers. But those who go into the media to boost and to say well we're there to recruit more, happen to be from the other side. So, here you have in Libya a dictator and his forces who are, you know, going to fight it as much as they can. In the eastern side of Libya which on the outer layer are committed to democracy and pluralism and not into detail. I always ask officials from that side give me your agenda – we'll see when we get to Tripoli – wait a minute, when we get to Tripoli it's too late, because if we get to Tripoli and it happens that the militias you're training now will take over, we're going to end up with what, with the Islamic Republic of Libya, you've got to basically make sure there is a platform and an agenda that everyone will sign off when you are in Benghazi. I want to see in Benghazi so that the civil society of Libya will not be taken over later by more radical elements.

From here I would like to visit one more country and that's Sudan. Sudan has a very interesting and dramatic aspect as well, because in the early part of January, there was on process that also sent a lot of messages which was the referendum that took place in the south. Now the south got the referendum in August, they are going to be forming their own state, but this leaves Sudan with a northern part. Now the northern part of Sudan is also going to be witnessing two challenges. One challenge is to the west, the other is to the east. The challenge to the west is Darfur. Now the question is where are we on Darfur? And are the Darfuris basically going to be uprising again? And that has got to be after the south becomes independent then there will be the issue of Darfur and what will be our policy regarding Darfur.

But there is the other issue not so well known in America and in Europe. And I don't want us to be surprised again. There is another Darfur in Sudan. There is another province in Sudan to the east of Sudan, it's East Sudan; the majority of the population there is Beja, Beja ethnicity, and they are different from the rest of Sudan. They too are going to be rising for their own autonomy; they too are going to be unleashing democracy. So I'm making a case here that what we are seeing now is not the end of it, it's not all the revolts and revolutions, we're going to be seeing more of this, more areas, are going to be looking at other examples and also calling for more. For example, Algeria, the demonstrations that hit Tunisia, actually a few weeks before have hit Algeria. And in Algeria you have a similar situation to Iraq whereby you have a majority of Arab Sunnis in which you have progressive, liberal, and you have the caliphates as well, and you have the area of Algeria known as the Kabyl, Berbers. And those Kabyls as I understood three to four weeks from now are going to start demonstrating for their own autonomy.

Which brings me to my conclusion, that we are still in the era of the coming revolutions. The coming revolution in the sense of more countries are going to probably experience revolts and changes. And the countries that have already experienced revolts and changes, there's going to be a second layer, that you're going to see again in Egypt and in Tunisia and elsewhere which is going to be the final confrontation between the secular, democratic forces and those who are on the fundamentalist side. And all of that is not going to be finished in 6 months or 7 months – the projection is what we have in front of us is at least half a decade – 5 years, if you do any calculation, any in terms of you know, measurement, quantitative or qualitative, at least we have 5 years of upheaval

in the Middle East; I do hope Washington is going to be able to cope with these challenges as well as its own challenges. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity. [Applause]

So I'll be very happy to answer questions. If there is one. Yes sir?

Q: Well I wanted to ask you, how does a nuclear Iran, a nuclear-capable Iran, play into all the events that are unfolding now, how will that change the unfolding events?

PROFESSOR PHARES: A nuclear enabled Iran or capable Iran, basically we have two things. Number one, what is happening right now, is going to speed up the process of Iran's regime equipping itself with all the toys that they want- it's not just the nukes, it's the delivery system, so while the strategy was that we'd isolate Iran from everyone else, and try to put pressure on it through sanctions and everything else, now the Iranians feel that they have the wind with them because we are in Libya, Yemen is going down, there is a confrontation between Iran and Saudi Arabia, Hezbollah in Lebanon is making more progress, Syria is close to chaos – so all this situation is going to logically give the Iranians the impetus to go faster, but they are rational and they're not going to go at a speed whereby we're going to go confront them. And if they equip themselves with I don't know how they're going to inform us about it – are they going to inform us with a test? Are they going to inform us with you know a declaration, like the Pakistanis and the Indians test and declaration? But if this happened, then obviously a balance of power has been established in the region. That is not going to look like anything we've seen before, because many of the places that Iran is intervening will be places protected by their umbrella. There will be a different ball game.

Q: Can you speak about what the future of democratic freedom movements in the region and then also how are religious minorities throughout that region going to fare in the long run?

PROFESSOR PHARES: The first part is the future of democratic movements?
Or –

Q: For the groups that are legitimate reformers in the region, what is it going to take for them to actually win out and...?

PROFESSOR PHARES: Okay, that's very important, and of course the minorities; the equation is that the democracy forces in the region are not going to reverse – they will continue their struggle, they've discovered all the tools, such as Internet, communications, so on. But they are hitting a wall, and that wall is us, it's the international community, the United States, and it's Europe. We can make a bit of difference in shortening the time of their struggle if we identify with them, partner with them, at least on the principles state that they exist and they are received by us that will give them a lot of strength to move forward. And the difference is very clear, the way we treated the dissidents of the Soviet Union, the way we treated South Africa's anti-apartheid forces, all of that is so different from the way we approached the democratic movements, for example, the highest example, is June of 2009. We had 1.5 million

people, unseen before, in the streets of Tehran. This is not something we can see every day. Very close, that's my assessment, to tipping the decision making process in within many corridors of Tehran, that's where things started to change. It's not that they're going to take over the regime on their own strength. But Washington's position was that we do not meddle in that. And when that happened it was like a hit against the democracy forces. But more important than these statements is the fact that, what I call the democracy industry in Washington, if you look at the final findings that they had in the past 5 to 10 years, and we could do this on-line, and what their experts have recommended, in their majority, what kind of partnership and with whom, that they have recommended. Anybody?

They have recommended partnership with political movements. Which ones? That should be easy. With the Islamists, with the Muslim Brotherhood. This is something the papers have written about. I've attended Congressional, European Parliament, sponsored funding and across the board they are under the impression that if you don't want authoritarians, you should talk with the alternative, and the alternative are not the secular, liberal democracy forces, because they look like us, so the recommendation has been that these are the alternatives, and they were wrong, over the past 6, 7 months, because the majority of those who initiate civil society are not the Muslim Brotherhood, rather regular, secular society people. A change has to happen strategically in the west, so that we can extend partnership, meaning if we direct our US-funded media, our European-funded media, US, you know, aid, and other into other and more intelligent and more brighter policy to partner with, to partner, then they can make a lot of progress.

Minorities that's a different story because minorities they are the weaker, and the jihadists are waiting for our change of policy. I mean, you better than anyone else in this room along with Faith know that the attacks against the Christians in Iraq, Egypt, and Sudan, and other places are unstoppable. And really I don't have an answer to that because to stop those you've got to partner with them, we don't have a partnership with the United States, and the Christian communities, if anybody can give me evidence I would say there isn't. We do have partners with other religious groups and non-religious groups, and there is back and forth, but not with the Christian communities in the Middle East, not with the Copts, not with the Assyro-Chaldeans, not with the evangelicals, or others, so that basically tells me their status is going to be the most difficult, more so than the democracy forces because the democracy forces are basically part of the majority, they have time, they have energy, they have possibilities. Yes.

Q: I know there's US Special Forces presence in Yemen, could we use that as a premise, without a U.N. authorization to intervene military since we are already there?

PROFESSOR PHARES: In Yemen? That would be the most difficult place to intervene at this very difficult juncture because even the armed forces of Yemen, are now divided. I mean, had it been 20, 25 days ago, and want to do it through or with them, it would have been easier, now there are some commanders who say we don't work with Ali Abdullah Saleh or we work with his CTP people, the other people won't work with us, on the one hand. On the other hand, there's the issue of infiltration. I'll

be very concerned to send Special Forces to coordinate through Yemeni commanders now because their units can also be infiltrated by Al Qaeda in terms of information. So, then, can we do it without the consent of the Yemeni authorities, well that I will leave it to the commander of special forces, this is will be a jungle to go into a situation like that, you will need a Rambo, you know, Rambo, to go into a situation like that where you have Al Qaeda, warlords, dissidents, divided army, is going to be Hollywood-ian dimension.

SUZANEN SCHOLTE: One more question? We'll take one more question.

Q: My guess is Israel has a considerable interest in how all this plays out, and kind of surprised that you haven't mentioned Israel once throughout your talk, which is excellent by the way – how do you see them playing into this and to what degree can they influence the outcome?

PROFESSOR PHARES: One of the reasons I didn't mention Israel and the Arab-Israeli and the Palestinian-Israeli issue is because that would need a whole [Laughter], you know, outgrowth by itself. As we all know, it's not secret, that the Israelis are very nervous about all these changes because the first ones to be affected is going to be them, before us, before the Europeans, before everybody else. And, really it doesn't take too much observation to realize that by looking at the borders of Israel, the most important border they are looking at is the south now. Because the north, they know, it's Hezbollah, it has seized power. Next to Hezbollah, Syria, so they are nervous about Syria, they know Assad is solid for now. Jordan they are observing the demonstrations but it's not for tomorrow. But, tomorrow, is the Sinai. And the Sinai is Egypt, and Egypt has now a growth of Muslim Brotherhood. The Egyptian armed forces are still going to strategically try to keep, maintain, the strategic peace, meaning – I don't think we're going to see an Egyptian army moving and becoming hostile in the Sinai – that is not now. But the Muslim Brotherhood are going to put a lot of pressure on the Egyptian military council to allow changes that have never happened before. One, the Iranian ships passing through the Suez Canal – that is catastrophically important. Then, inside the Sinai, allowing support groups that would begin political, logistical, and then more to the Gaza 'struggle', would be a *causus belli* for the Israelis, so I would just summarize they are very much concerned about what is happening.

SUZANEN SCHOLTE: Thank you so much.

PROFESSOR PHARES: Thank you. [Applause]

SUZANEN SCHOLTE: I can't believe how much he covered, that was amazing, amazing. Thank you all for being here with us today, and I just want to recognize Ibrahim Ahmed here with the Beja Congress of Sudan, and also Aisha Mohammed with the Beja Organization for Human Rights and Development, thank you for joining us.

Again thank you all, Professor Phares that was outstanding, and thank you all for joining us at the forum. And hopefully, well if you RSVP'd by email you will be on our email list and you will get the announcement for our next program. Thank you. [Applause]

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